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2020 Annual Report on the Administration of Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
February 2021

To:  
House Agriculture, Livestock, and Water Committee  
Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

**I. Statutory Requirements**

On June 6, 2011, Governor Hickenlooper signed Senate Bill 11-208 into law, merging the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Division of Wildlife into the Division of Parks and Wildlife, referred to herein as Colorado Parks and Wildlife or CPW. On June 4, 2012, House Bill 12-1317 was signed into law to finalize the merger of the Divisions and to create the Parks and Wildlife Commission. Among the requirements of HB 12-1317 is the delivery to the Legislature of an annual report, more fully described below:

**C.R.S. 33-9-106 (2)**

“Beginning in 2013 AND NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11), C.R.S., the executive director shall report annually to the joint house agriculture, livestock, and natural resources committee and the senate agriculture, natural resources, and energy committee, or any successor committees, regarding the administration of the division, including an evaluation of division resources and their utilization and an identification of opportunities for efficiencies. Each such report must summarize stakeholder outreach conducted during the prior year and must also identify disposition of assets and cost savings, both planned and realized, since the previous year, including savings pertaining to personnel, equipment, services, and provisioning.”

**II. Division Resource Utilization**

Utilization of division resources is reported to the Parks and Wildlife Commission. The FY 19-20 report on sources and uses of funds is available on the Commission’s [website](#).

**III. Stakeholder Outreach**

CPW is committed to engaging Coloradans and visitors to inform park, wildlife and outdoor recreation management. In 2020, CPW conducted a variety of stakeholder outreach including, but not limited to:

- A. Park Management Plans.** For each park management plan, CPW solicits input from the public prior to drafting the plan as well as on the draft plan itself, most often received via online surveys/comment forms. The plans are also presented at Parks and Wildlife Commission meetings. In 2020, CPW worked on management plans for Eldorado Canyon State Park, Golden Gate State Park, Lathrop State Park, and Steamboat Lake and Pearl Lake State Parks.

CPW is also helping write a master plan for Colorado’s newest state park, Fishers Peak. The master plan will help identify desired future conditions to guide long-term management and development for the park. The approach to developing the master



plan includes onsite data collection and analysis, community involvement and outreach, stakeholder engagement at the regional and statewide levels, and collaboration and guidance from a variety of subject matter experts (largely from partner organizations). The stakeholder engagement process includes inviting Colorado's recognized tribes to consult with the Division, organizing stakeholder interest groups and collaborating with the Trust for Public Land to convene an inclusivity review panel. Through a collaborative and iterative approach, the Fishers Peak Master Plan will be informed by both science and community sentiment, striving to balance resource conservation with the opportunity for access and recreation.

- B. Future State Parks Criteria.** In keeping with the Future Generations Act (SB 18-143) which calls for CPW to identify and begin planning the development of a new Colorado state park, in October 2020 CPW invited Coloradans to share their ideas for properties or partnerships that may become the next Colorado state park. CPW promoted the nomination opportunity through social, print and TV media, partners, CPW email contact lists and on CPW's website. CPW also created a [story map](#) to help visualize prospects across the state and inform nominations. CPW has received eight nominations at the time of this report.
- C. Visitor Satisfaction Survey.** In spring 2020, CPW concluded a pilot project to assess the recreation preferences, interests, and satisfaction of visitors to Colorado state parks. The pilot included eight parks where on-site surveys were conducted or standard mail surveys were distributed to park visitors. Based on the pilot results, CPW determined the methodology to use for surveying visitors at the remaining parks in the park system. The information collected will help CPW develop programs, communication efforts, and recreation opportunities that resonate with current (and prospective) state park users and they will help park staff remain responsive to potential changes in recreation preferences and trends. Additionally, these data will be used in a separate project to measure the economic contribution of individual state parks and the state park system as a whole.
- D. Partners in the Outdoors.** Through the annual Partners in the Outdoors Conference, CPW facilitates a signature platform for organizations to collaborate around the shared vision of advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. The 2020 conference theme contemplated the ways that we can find common ground as we explore the complicated relationship between outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. Although the 2020 Partners in the Outdoors Conference was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, program staff, partners and sponsors were able to quickly transition to a virtual platform hosting 21 interactive sessions over an eight week period, the majority of which were partner-led. The use of a virtual platform significantly expanded the conference reach by drawing over 740 participants representing 375 different organizations. Further, because of CPW's partnership with the podcast Mountain & Prairie, the three conference keynote podcasts have reached several thousand individuals to date. This year's conference received financial and in-kind support for conference operations and expenses from nearly 30 sponsors.
- E. Colorado Outdoor Partnership and Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative.** The [Colorado Outdoor Partnership \(CO-OP\)](#) was formed in 2017 to advance a conversation on how to address growing pressures on outdoor resources. The CO-OP is the lead entity on the Regional Partnership Initiative formalized when Governor Polis signed the [Executive Order](#) creating the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships



Initiative at Fishers Peak State Park on October 30, 2020. To expand and balance representation on the CO-OP, a call for new members went out in December 2020. 177 membership applications were received for 8 seats.

Through the Initiative, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in consultation with CPW and the CO-OP, will establish a state-level vision for balancing recreation and conservation and to ensure equitable and sustainable access to outdoor recreation. This vision will inform a Statewide Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan that incorporates priorities set by the Regional Partnerships.

- F. **Social Media.** Since 2019, CPW continues to see growth in engagement across all social media platforms, with a 22% increase for this reporting period and more than 3 million post engagements. For 2020, CPW focused on increasing content that highlights behind-the-scenes work, conservation success stories and informative education about the state's wildlife and wild places. Overall, the agency's followers on social media grew by more than 17% and total impressions increased to more than 49 million.

In an effort to expand access and to encourage public dialogue, CPW leveraged Facebook Live to broadcast Sportspersons Caucus meetings. The regional caucus meetings provide an opportunity for the interested public to meet with CPW staff and caucus delegates to discuss issues pertaining to hunting, fishing, and trapping in Colorado. The addition of live online broadcasts increased participation by thousands of attendees from across the state.

Since launching in the spring of 2019, the "Live Life Outside" tagline has been promoted through the posting of more than 6,750 photos to Instagram with the hashtag #livelifeoutsideCO. The agency continues to look for new and innovative ways of utilizing social media to build a broad community, centered around outdoor recreation with a focus on conservation.

- G. **Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program.** Wetlands (and other aquatic habitats) are significant to wildlife as they sustain a high level of biodiversity of plant and animal species. These aquatic habitats also provide important wildlife based outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing. In addition, wetlands improve water quality, assist with flood control and contribute to groundwater recharge. Colorado has lost 50% of its wetlands, and 95% of riparian areas in the West have been degraded by human activity. CPW's Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program (WWCP) conserves wetland and riparian habitats and their ecological functions for the benefit of wildlife, by planning and delivering conservation actions on a landscape scale. WWCP supports wetland/riparian restoration, enhancement and creation via a competitive grant program. CPW is gathering feedback from our partners, grant applicants, grant reviewers and others on program goals and the grant process. In October 2020, CPW distributed an online survey to individuals involved in the grant program in the last 5 years. CPW will use the responses to update the grant applications and review process as well as WWCP's strategic plan. Overall respondents expressed support for the program, provided helpful suggestions for making the process more efficient, and support conservation of Colorado's wetlands into the future.
- H. **Other Planning and Management.** In 2020, CPW continued to collaborate with stakeholders through roundtables and workgroups to share information and discuss



issues related to outdoor recreation and wildlife management. These included the Sportsperson's Roundtable, the Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable, the Sportsperson's Access Workgroup and the State Wildlife Area Working Group.