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## 2022 Annual Report on the Administration of Colorado Parks and Wildlife January 2023

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 21-22 report on sources and uses of funds is available [here](#).

### III. Stakeholder Outreach

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is committed to engaging Coloradans and visitors to inform park, wildlife and outdoor recreation management. In 2022, CPW conducted a variety of stakeholder outreach including, but not limited to:

- A. **Wolf Restoration and Management Plan.** In 2022, CPW continued the planning process to develop a wolf restoration and management plan (hereafter the Plan) as called for by the passage of Proposition 114 in November 2020. CPW and its vendor Keystone Policy Center continued monthly meetings with the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) and Technical Working Group (TWG) to provide input in developing the Plan. Between June 2021 and August 2022, the SAG met 15 times, and the TWG met 14 times. All SAG meetings included opportunities for public comment. Public comments are also collected on an ongoing basis through a website developed for this effort, [wolfengagementco.org](http://wolfengagementco.org).



On December 9, 2022, CPW presented the [Draft Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan](#) to the Parks and Wildlife Commission. The draft Plan is also [available in Spanish](#). The public may provide feedback on the draft Plan by completing an [online comment form](#) or attending statewide hearings convened by the Commission in January and February 2023. Public comment opportunities will continue through May 2023 when the Commission is slated to approve the final Plan.

- B. **Keep Colorado Wild Disproportionately Impacted Community Outreach.** In June 2021, Governor Polis signed the Keep Colorado Wild Pass Act, which creates an optional discounted pass for accessing Colorado's state parks that can be purchased at the time a motor vehicle is registered starting in January 2023. CPW hired Upstream Consulting to conduct a public outreach campaign to educate and gather information from Colorado residents and stakeholders, with an emphasis on disproportionately impacted communities, on the new Keep Colorado Wild Pass. The feedback that was gathered was then used to inform policy and regulatory changes related to income eligible passes. More information on this disproportionately impacted community outreach is available in [this document](#) (starting on pg. 23).
- C. **License Distribution.** At the request of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, CPW began gathering comments from resident and nonresident big game hunters related to the distribution of limited big game licenses. In 2022, CPW completed a new [Big Game Attitude Survey](#) to understand hunters' attitudes, concerns, and preferences regarding big game license distribution and season structure in Colorado. The agency also convened [public focus groups](#) in April and May 2022 to discuss the current big game license distribution systems and potential changes. Based on these efforts, the Commission [approved changes](#) (see agenda item #14) to big game license allocation in November 2022 and encouraged staff to continue hunter outreach on allocation and preference points into 2023.
- D. **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 or comment forms. The plans are also presented at Parks and Wildlife Commission meetings. In 2022, CPW worked on management plans for Golden Gate State Park, Steamboat Lake State Park, and Pearl Lake State Park. Public comment on these draft plans is planned for 2023.

The Master Plan for Fishers Peak State Park was completed in fall 2022. The draft plan was released earlier in the year, and the public had opportunities to comment via an in-person meeting in Trinidad, Colorado and an online comment form.

CPW also began work to improve park visitation data that will be used to inform future management plans. While CPW has sound methods that produce excellent trend data, actual counts of cars and people entering state parks needs improvement. Accurate data is essential for a comprehensive understanding of park visitation. Consequently, CPW will increase the number of vehicle and pedestrian counters at park entrances as well as audit and update existing attendance formulas.

- E. **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. In 2022, the conference returned to an in-person platform hosted at The Hythe in Vail, Colorado. Around 600 people attended the conference, representing 211 different organizations. Due to the generous sponsorship by Great Outdoors Colorado, CPW was able to award 36 scholarships that covered registration and



lodging costs for first-time conference attendees. In addition, CPW set registration fees on a sliding scale, which made attending the conference more accessible to smaller organizations and individuals. Session organizers hosted around 40 sessions for conference goers to attend. Session topics supported the priority areas identified in our Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Most exciting, due to an increase in sponsorships to help cover conference costs, CPW was able to increase the amount of our Partners in the Outdoors Grant Program - providing \$163,642 to 26 partner organizations working to advance the SCORP priority areas.

F. **Colorado Outdoor Partnership and Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative.** The [Colorado Outdoor Partnership \(CO-OP\)](#) was formed in 2017 to advance conversations on how to address growing pressures on outdoor resources. The CO-OP is the lead advisory board on the Regional Partnership Initiative formalized when Governor Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) creating the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative. The Regional Outdoor Partnerships are focused on making sure that our State remains a world-class outdoor destination while preserving our land, water, wildlife, and quality of life. In 2022, CPW announced four new coalition partners that were awarded support through the Regional Partnerships Initiative and held a second, fall funding round, expecting to bring on four new partnerships in early 2023. Regional Partnerships as of December 2022:

- Central Colorado Recreation Partnership
  - [Envision Recreation in Balance Partnership](#)
  - [Gunnison Sustainable Tourism Outdoor Recreation Committee](#)
- [Metro Denver Nature Alliance](#)
- [NoCo PLACES 2050](#)
- [Northwest Colorado Outdoor Coalition](#)
- [Ouray Regional Recreation and Conservation Alliance](#)
- [Outside 285](#)
- [Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance](#)
- [Routt Recreation and Conservation Roundtable](#)
- [San Luis Valley Great Outdoors](#)
- Two Rivers Conservation and Recreation Roundtable

Through the Initiative, the Department of Natural Resources, 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 the SCORP and a Colorado Conservation, Outdoor Recreation & Climate Resilience Plan.

G. **Social Media.** In 2022, CPW's presence on social media continued to work on our main strategic goals - to build awareness and trust for our CPW brand while showcasing noteworthy agency content. Content aimed to be fun, approachable, informative, transparent, and genuine, while also providing educational value to CPW's social media followers. CPW's flagship social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn have 521,197 followers collectively, an increase of 25% gained during 2022. Notably, Twitter followers grew by 103%. Additionally, CPW received over 47 million impressions and nearly 11 million video views collectively.

Some notable content from 2022 includes the following:

- [Elk Herd Crossing](#)
- [Moose Walking in Snow](#)



- [Lynx in Snow](#)
- [No Garbage on Trails](#)
- [New Year's Resolutions](#)
- [Bears are Gonna Bear](#)
- [Fish Stocking](#)

CPW's social media channels continue to be a place for digital customer service - CPW staff received over 6,000 inbox messages in 2022 with questions ranging from easy to answer to difficult to answer. Questions often required collaboration with multiple subject matter experts for CPW staff to effectively develop responses.

In addition to organic social media content, CPW placed paid digital advertising for our marketing efforts surrounding the Keep Colorado Wild pass and officer recruitment.

- The Keep Colorado Wild digital ads ran on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, and Google Search and used new imagery (both photo and video) that focused on the pass' key funding benefits. The digital ads drove nearly 100,000 new users to the Keep Colorado Wild webpage, generating over 18 million impressions and over 250,000 clicks on ads.
- The officer recruitment campaign placed digital ads that ran on Facebook, Instagram, Google Search, and LinkedIn. These digital ads drove 24,706 new users to the officer application webpage, and generated 960,648 impressions and over 55,000 clicks on ads. As a result, after declining consistently for many years, CPW saw significant growth in the number of people who applied for Park Ranger and District Wildlife Manager Trainee Positions in 2022 - a 111% increase in Ranger Trainee applications and a 143% increase in District Wildlife Manager Trainee applications over the previous year. Additionally, CPW was able to secure a waiver to recruit non-resident applicants, with approximately one-third of applicants being non-residents. The officer recruitment campaign was targeted towards residents in Colorado as well as residents in California, Texas, Florida, West Virginia, Illinois, and Michigan.

H. **Other Planning and Management.** In 2022, CPW continued to collaborate with stakeholders through roundtables, regional caucuses, and workgroups to share information and discuss issues related to outdoor recreation and wildlife management. These efforts included the statewide Sportsperson's Roundtable and four Regional Sportsperson's Caucuses that met eleven times, bringing sportspeople and CPW leadership together to discuss pressing issues. In addition, the Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable convened throughout the year, providing a forum for non-consumptive wildlife user groups to engage with CPW leadership on nongame wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation issues.