

C O L O R A D O P A R K S & W I L D L I F E

# Great Outdoors Colorado

FY 2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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Cover Photo: Red Cloud Peak Natural Area ©CPW

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# Letter from the Director

I am pleased to share the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Annual Report for the 2022-23 fiscal year with the Board of the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust. The work described in this report is a continuation of the mission we've served for more than 125 years. The agency's dedicated staff have used their time and talents to perpetuate the wildlife resources of Colorado, provide a quality state parks system, and provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of our natural resources.

GOCO funding contributes to nearly every aspect of CPW's mission, from the day-to-day management of state parks and wildlife areas to providing educational opportunities for youth and families to long-term research to protect Colorado's native plant and animal species. GOCO funding helps CPW protect and maintain Colorado's beautiful landscapes for recreation, outdoor education, hunting, angling, and species conservation.

In this report, you will see specific examples of the way GOCO benefits Colorado, including:

- › Operating support for Colorado's state parks, which continued to host record visitation, totaling over 17 million visitor days in FY 2022-23.
- › Conserving non-game species and habitat through research, population status monitoring, reintroduction, habitat protection, and restoration benefitting threatened and endangered species.
- › Support for more than 295,000 volunteer hours at Colorado's wildlife areas and state parks.
- › Awarding 16 non-motorized trail grants totaling nearly \$2 million.
- › Funding 16 regional partnerships to join a statewide initiative working to ensure that Colorado's land, water, and wildlife thrive while also providing equitable access to quality outdoor recreation experiences.

We're recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources. We engage with the community and youth to increase their knowledge, appreciation, and connection with the outdoors and natural resources management. We are identifying and beginning to plan the development of new Colorado state park areas and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue. We're investing in habitat and conservation efforts and reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution, abundance monitoring, and disease prevention efforts. Our staff works tirelessly to ensure that the Colorado we all enjoy today will remain available and enjoyable for future generations to come.

We thank you for trusting Colorado Parks and Wildlife and are proud to present the 2023 Annual Report.

Warm regards,



Jeff Davis  
Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

# Working Together for Colorado

Colorado is recognized across the country and around the world for its beautiful landscapes and diverse and healthy wildlife populations. Access to outdoor recreation and the state's wildlife is a cornerstone of the Colorado lifestyle and quality of life. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) is a major funding partner in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) efforts. GOCO funding supports a wide variety of volunteer, youth, and education programs, as well as park operating and management activities. GOCO investments also support statewide initiatives in species conservation efforts, habitat protection and enhancement, maintenance and development of trails, and infrastructure projects.

GOCO grant programs are rooted in the core values of its strategic plan: Resource Conservation, Outdoor Stewardship, Community Vitality, Equitable Access, and Youth Connections. GOCO's mission is to help preserve, protect, enhance, and manage the state's wildlife, park, river, trail, and open space heritage. CPW's mission is complementary: to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. There is significant overlap between the missions of CPW and GOCO, and a myriad of programs, projects, and activities managed by CPW are supported with GOCO funding. This annual report highlights the great things CPW has accomplished in the state fiscal year 2022-23 with GOCO's help.

CPW receives minimal general tax support, and GOCO funding is vital to the ongoing mission of CPW, making many of these accomplishments possible. At the end of this report, you will find financial tables detailing GOCO's support for CPW in FY 2022-23, organized by Constitutional purpose and grant. CPW leveraged GOCO funding to conserve natural resources, promote outdoor stewardship, enhance community vitality, improve equitable access to the outdoors, and connect youth and families with nature.

**\$17,389,550**

**FY 2022-23**

INVESTMENT PLAN TOTAL  
AWARD FOR STATE PARKS

**\$11,963,588**

**FY 2022-23**

INVESTMENT PLAN TOTAL  
AWARD FOR WILDLIFE

# Resource Conservation & Outdoor Stewardship

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*Protecting Colorado's most valuable natural resources.*

Protection of Colorado's resources is the shared mission of GOCO and CPW. GOCO funding helps CPW protect new habitat and landscapes, and maintain areas that are already under CPW's care.



In addition to managing Colorado's wildlife and state park system, CPW is responsible for acquiring, protecting, and managing lands, water resources, and water rights in coordination with private landowners and local, state, federal, and non-governmental partners. Colorado's 66 million acres of land includes 31.8 million acres of agricultural lands, which sustain more than 39,000 ranches and farms.

Without private landowner support, the conservation of Colorado's abundant wildlife habitat and access to world-class recreation opportunities would be severely limited. GOCO funding helps CPW leverage opportunities to protect these resources in perpetuity<sup>1</sup>.

**16,286**

**FY 2022-23**

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
EASEMENT ACRES FUNDED

**16,949**

**FY 2022-23**

FEE TITLE ACRES  
ACQUIRED

**\$3,139,036**

**FY 2022-23**

GOCO REIMBURSEMENTS  
FOR LAND ACQUISITION

Crystal Creek Ranch State Habitat Area © CPW

# LAND AND WATER PROTECTION

## GOCO-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN FY 2022-23

### RALSTON CREEK STATE WILDLIFE AREA

1,176 ACRES

This acquisition is Phase I of The Conservation Fund's three-phase project to eventually protect approximately 3,155 acres in the rapidly growing Denver Metro area. The landscape-scale effort expands the Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area (SWA) by over 50 percent. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) has recognized this property for its "nearly pristine hydrology, and the steep rocky slopes, (that) have likely protected many ecological processes that support the diversity of plants, plant communities and animals that currently exist. There is a low degree of anthropogenic disturbances, including some areas that apparently have never been logged." CNHP finds the plant species diversity to be very high and the percentage of non-native species to be low. The land offers exceptional habitat for elk, mule deer, and moose; provides related outdoor recreation; and supports a big game migration corridor - a true balance of conservation and recreation. Partners and supporters included The Conservation Fund, Jefferson County, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, and the Mountain Area Land Trust.

"Kim (Rogers, CPW Real Estate Section Manager)-The Mount Tom Savior! You rescued this deal numerous times and I can't thank you enough. Your problem-solving philosophy was critical to achieving success in this iconic, collaborative effort!"

— JUSTIN SPRING  
COLORADO STATE DIRECTOR & SOUTHWEST REGIONAL  
DIRECTOR AT THE CONSERVATION FUND

### CRYSTAL CREEK RANCH STATE HABITAT AREA

3,451 ACRES

The 3,451-acre Crystal Creek Ranch is a beautiful property where mule deer, elk, moose, waterfowl, grouse, and numerous species of songbirds make their home. The ranch lies within a critical migration corridor between the Routt National Forest and the lower elevation winter range that is used by mule deer and elk from two of the largest herds in Colorado. Species of Concern known to inhabit the property include greater sandhill crane, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, bald eagle, Colorado River cutthroat trout, mountain sucker, and northern leopard frog.

The property contains a great variety of wildlife habitat, including conifer and aspen forests, mixed mountain shrub communities, sagebrush shrublands, hay meadows, riparian vegetation communities, significant cottonwood stands, and wetlands. Approximately three and a half miles of the South Fork of the Williams Fork River cross through the property in addition to several tributaries, including Pagoda Creek, Crystal Creek, Alkali Creek, and Pine Creek.

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick\\_Stats/Ag\\_Overview/stateOverview.php?—=COLORADO](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?—=COLORADO)

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

## PARKS LARGE CAPITAL

### CRAWFORD STATE PARK SOUTHERN TRAIL CONNECTION

\$1,248,200

Located near the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Crawford State Park's major draws are its reservoir and camping facilities. It is a rare place on the western slope where people can enjoy fishing, water-skiing, swimming, and even scuba diving.

However, before this project was completed with the installation of an ADA-accessible bridge, trail access in the park was a major challenge due to disjointed trail segments with significant hazards and natural landscape barriers. Visitors can now more safely enjoy an integrated trail system that connects the southern part of the park and allows for walking even when the water level is high.

### STAGECOACH STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER CONSTRUCTION

\$3,508,000

Stagecoach State Park is an amazing focal point for recreation in the Yampa Valley. The 820-acre reservoir provides renowned lake and river fishing, and the park's campsites provide visitors with a great base to explore a variety of sports and attractions in the area. The park itself is leased from the Upper Yampa Water Conservation District, which has proved to be a rewarding partnership. However, investment in infrastructure has been minimal since the park's inception in 1989.

CPW recently completed construction of the 4,000-square-foot Visitor Center and associated infra-

structure. This new facility replaced the existing building that was too small to provide the excellent level of customer service that park visitors have become accustomed to. CPW began welcoming visitors in fall 2023, and the Center is a place for the public to gather and learn about the natural environment.

### CHERRY CREEK STATE PARK DOG OFF-LEASH AREA IMPROVEMENTS

\$270,000

Cherry Creek State Park is one of the most visited parks in the system for a reason. It borders several major cities in the Denver Metropolitan area and offers an oasis from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The park boasts a wide array of outdoor recreational opportunities. One of the most popular year-round activities is walking dogs off-leash at the designated Dog Off-leash Area (DOLA). The DOLA is so popular that some would say it is being 'loved to death.'

This project helped to balance recreation with natural resource management. A hard surface concrete trail near the southern entrance of the DOLA was added, making the area more accessible. Other work included trail maintenance, fencing to support natural area reclamation, and a variable messaging sign at the entrance to the southern end of the DOLA to convey information to visitors before entering the busy parking lot.

## WILDLIFE LARGE CAPITAL

### ALBERTA PARK RESERVOIR STATE WILDLIFE AREA DAM REHABILITATION DESIGN

\$750,000

Located in Mineral County and just minutes away from the Wolf Creek Ski Area, Alberta Park Reservoir SWA offers superior wildlife habitat and a beautiful location to catch trout. CPW owns and operates the dam associated with the reservoir and has the responsibility to properly maintain it.

This project continues CPW's commitment to public safety by bringing dams needing repair into compliance with Colorado Dam Safety Standards. With this funding, CPW continued the design process for repairs. As of fall 2023, the dam is in the construction and implementation phase based on this project's design work.

### SPINNEY MOUNTAIN STATE WILDLIFE AREA WESTERN BOUNDARY FENCE REPAIRS

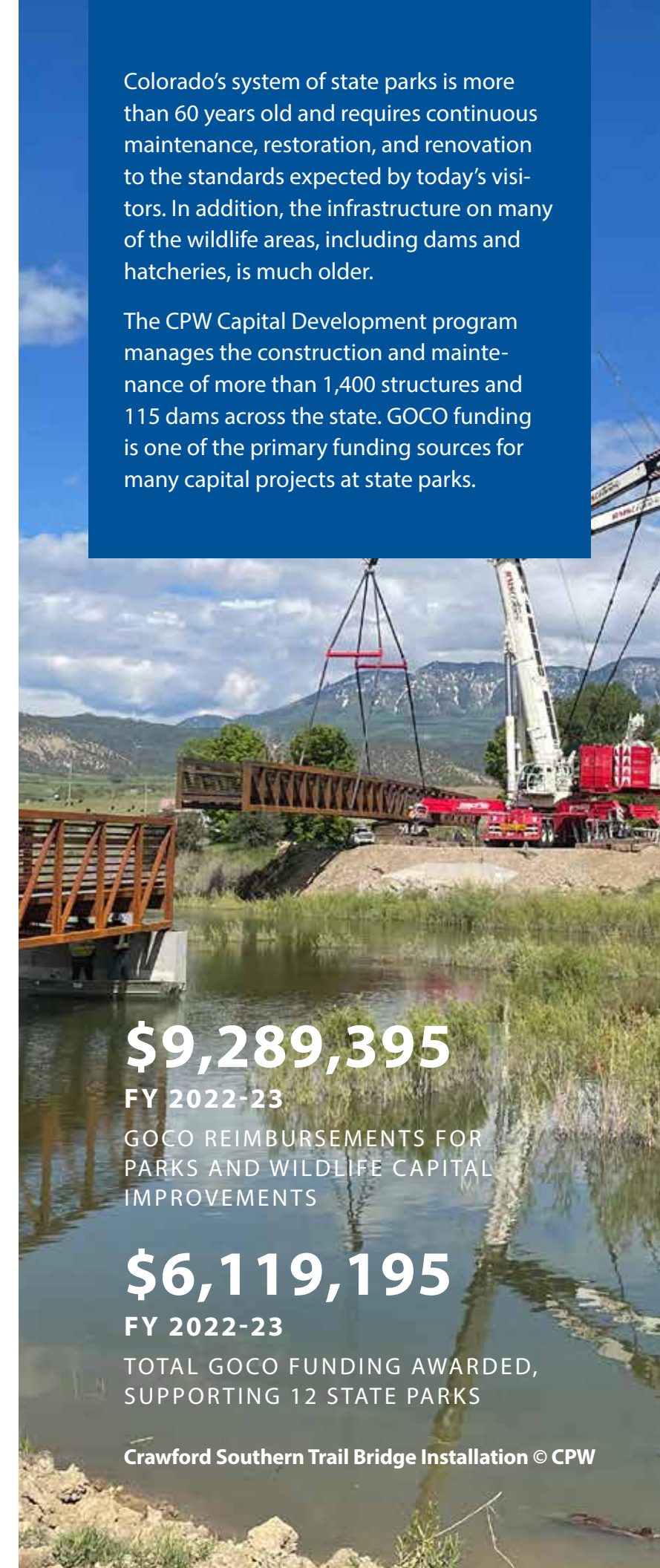
\$250,000

Spinney Mountain SWA is connected to Spinney Mountain State Park in Park County, near the town of Hartsel. The area offers wildlife habitat and viewing opportunities, as well as stream fishing and waterfowl hunting opportunities. The property was previously fenced with traditional fencing, which clearly delineates property boundaries for hunters and anglers and prevents neighboring herds of cattle from grazing in the area.

However, this type of fence also disrupts wildlife movement throughout the area and poses collision risks for birds and entanglement risks for big game. The fence was converted to wildlife-friendly fencing, which allows for proper wildlife crossings and reduces the risk of injury or death for wildlife, while still maintaining the integrity of the property boundary.

Colorado's system of state parks is more than 60 years old and requires continuous maintenance, restoration, and renovation to the standards expected by today's visitors. In addition, the infrastructure on many of the wildlife areas, including dams and hatcheries, is much older.

The CPW Capital Development program manages the construction and maintenance of more than 1,400 structures and 115 dams across the state. GOCO funding is one of the primary funding sources for many capital projects at state parks.



**\$9,289,395**

FY 2022-23

GOCO REIMBURSEMENTS FOR PARKS AND WILDLIFE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

**\$6,119,195**

FY 2022-23

TOTAL GOCO FUNDING AWARDED, SUPPORTING 12 STATE PARKS

Crawford Southern Trail Bridge Installation © CPW

# SPECIES CONSERVATION

## SOUTHERN WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN

In response to the 2010 petition to list the southern white-tailed ptarmigan, CPW launched a seven-year research project to help inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife review. CPW's research found that the ptarmigan is a resilient species occupying all suitable alpine habitats in Colorado, with stable populations that have high genetic diversity and low extinction risk in the future.

Though populations appeared to be healthy, in 2022 CPW continued to monitor the statewide population to assess changes in distribution and evaluate demographic changes in response to alpine climate changes. Since this species' survival is reliant on adult female survival, negative impacts on populations may be predicted by continued or increasing shifts in adult sex ratios, and therefore continued monitoring is needed and is planned for 2024.



Southern White-Tailed Ptarmigan © CPW

## BLACK-FOOTED FERRET

Black-footed ferrets are a federally listed endangered species that was once thought to be extinct. Colorado is a hotbed of black-footed ferret reintroduction efforts, with eight new release sites since 2013. GOCO funding is vital in supporting pre-release mapping and plague management efforts as well as post-release monitoring.

Colorado's reintroduction efforts have kicked into high gear, with releases occurring on public and private lands in Larimer, Adams, Pueblo, Prowers, Baca, and Bent counties. Ferrets are one of many species that are highly dependent on prairie dogs, which means that plague management and conservation of prairie dog colonies for black-footed ferrets also benefits burrowing owls, swift foxes, raptors, reptiles, and other wildlife.



Black-footed Ferret Release, Prowers County © CPW

## EASTERN BLACK RAIL

CPW continues to monitor the elusive eastern black rail, a federally threatened subspecies facing steep declines across its range. The eastern black rail is the smallest of the rails and inhabits wetlands with dense herbaceous cover. Most known populations are concentrated in coastal marshes along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Unfortunately, many of these populations are threatened by rising sea levels.

Southeast Colorado appears to have a relatively stable and dense population of black rails. CPW has conducted six years of surveys and is supporting graduate research in southeast Colorado to estimate occupancy and abundance through time and understand habitat relationships associated with black rail presence. Improving our collective understanding of black rail habitat requirements and using inland marshes will be critical for range-wide conservation management as currently occupied areas are lost to sea level rise.

## INTEGRATED MONITORING IN BIRD CONSERVATION REGIONS



CPW partners with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and multiple other partners to monitor bird populations across Colorado and much of the central U.S. The Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program began in Colorado in 2008 and has since expanded across the Great Plains to the Great Basin.

It is now the second-largest bird monitoring program in the country, encompassing Colorado, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and portions of 12 other states. CPW has provided funding for Colorado IMBCR surveys from 2008-2023. Data from these annual surveys are used to estimate occupancy and abundance for priority species and trends through time. CPW uses these data to inform and prioritize bird conservation efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of those efforts. See the IMBCR Story Map<sup>2</sup> for more information.

<sup>2</sup> <https://birdconservancy.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=bf23599f073b4d8b97f876283dbb3ffa>

Colorado boasts some of the most diverse and abundant wildlife populations in North America, including an astonishing 960 wild-life species. CPW species conservation and wildlife reintroduction programs help many of the state's most cherished and iconic species prosper today despite emerging habitat and climate challenges.



Graduate Student Nora Hargett and CPW Technician Owen McGowen conducting eastern black rail surveys in southeast Colorado. © Liza Rossi/CPW



TOP: Boreal toad metamorphs at NASRF ©Ted Smith BOTTOM: Stocking bluehead suckers ©Jenn Logan, Assistant Native Aquatic Species Coordinator



The J. W. Mumma Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility (NASRF), located in Colorado’s beautiful San Luis Valley, was constructed in 2000 to facilitate the conservation of rare aquatic native species through captive propagation, genetic conservation, scientific research, and public education and awareness. Among the first facilities of its kind in the United States, NASRF works proactively to keep state species of greatest conservation need from reaching levels warranting federal protections.

In 2022-23, the hatchery produced and stocked over 280,000 threatened and endangered fish and boreal toad tadpoles. Since its inception, NASRF has stocked over 4 million aquatic animals into suitable waters and wetlands throughout Colorado. The facility rears and stocks a wide variety of species ranging from Arkansas darters and other plains fishes in the rivers of the Eastern plains, to Rio Grande chub and sucker in the Rio Grande basin, to “three species” (bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker, and roundtail chub) in the Colorado and Yampa Rivers, and boreal toads in montane wetlands.

Through the continued development of improved culture techniques and new technologies, NASRF continues to maximize its production while ensuring a safe and ethical culture environment for its native aquatic species at risk. The dedicated management and staff at NASRF bring over 100 years of combined fish culture experience in their overall Mission to Recover Colorado Native Aquatic Species in Decline. They are viewed as leaders in the field in Colorado and the nation. To date, NASRF has been successful in the captive propagation of all 12 species of fish currently on the unit as well as the boreal toad.

# PROPAGATION OF AQUATIC SPECIES AT RISK

## BOREAL TOAD

Once common throughout most of Colorado’s high country, boreal toad populations experienced serious declines that were first documented in the 1990s. While its preferred habitat of montane wetlands and ponds remained relatively intact and widely available, the cause of the decline was a mystery until an invasive pathogen was identified and linked to amphibian declines and extinctions worldwide.

CPW participates in extensive research seeking effective responses. Meanwhile, reintroducing populations in areas where the pathogen is not found is a key strategy to maintaining the species on the landscape. CPW has bred and reared boreal toads in captivity at the NASRF since 2005, with intermittent breeding success. NASRF also rears eggs that biologists collect from the wild and bring into the facility. This approach consistently produces animals for reintroduction. Staff at NASRF rear the eggs until they become late-stage tadpoles, and biologists then release them back into the wild at carefully chosen locations. Monitoring shows toads are surviving at several of these sites. At the longest-running reintroduction site, stocked tadpoles have matured to adulthood - which takes four to six years - and are themselves successfully breeding.



Boreal toad ©Jenn Logan, Assistant Native Aquatic Species Coordinator

## BLUEHEAD SUCKER

The bluehead sucker is one of the so-called “three species,” which are large-bodied fishes native to the Colorado River basin that are not federally listed, but experiencing declines throughout their range. Confounding factors threaten their populations, including drought, habitat and hydrologic alterations, and the introduction of non-native fish species. Colorado’s State Wildlife Action Plan identifies the bluehead sucker as a Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and CPW has taken action to boost their populations through augmentation.

In 2015, CPW began annually stocking bluehead sucker produced at CPW’s J.W. Mumma Native Aquatic Species Restoration Facility in the Yampa River basin. Since then, over 35,000 bluehead sucker have been released. Fish are implanted with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags before release. PIT tags uniquely identify individual fish, enabling biologists to monitor their survival and movement with portable submersible antennas. Monitoring has indicated that stocked individuals survive and behave similarly to their wild counterparts by using tributaries during the spring spawning season and exiting the tributary during low water periods. This effort highlights the feasibility of augmenting wild populations of bluehead sucker with captive-reared individuals.



Bluehead suckers ©Jenn Logan, Assistant Native Aquatic Species Coordinator



# COLORADO NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM



Pagosa Skyrocket Natural Area monitoring © CPW

The Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) has been showcasing and protecting Colorado's natural treasures since 1977. With the support of GOCO, the program works to identify, designate, and protect Colorado's most significant natural features through voluntary agreements with various landowners. Colorado's Natural Areas contain the state's rare and unique plants, wildlife, invertebrates, natural communities, geologic features, and fossils. CNAP helps to monitor and protect over 150 species of greatest conservation need on State Natural Areas. CNAP accomplishments during FY 2022-23 are highlighted below.

## NEW STATE NATURAL AREA AND EXPANSIONS

CNAP has been working with the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks for over a decade to designate Coal Creek Tallgrass Prairie Natural Area - a 1,470-acre property containing high-quality tallgrass prairie on Colorado's Front Range. The property contains important habitat for a multitude of prairie-dependent flora and fauna, including several species of greatest conservation need. CNAP has also been working with the City of Boulder to expand two other previously designated properties: White Rocks and Colorado Tallgrass Prairie Natural Areas. The new designation and expansions are nearly complete and were approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission in June 2023.

## CNAP VOLUNTEER STEWARD PROGRAM

CNAP's volunteer program consists of nearly 60 dedicated volunteers who are assigned one or more State Natural Areas to steward. During FY 2022-23, CNAP volunteers contributed 1,200 hours conducting annual monitoring of their assigned State Natural Area and reporting on site conditions; conducting photo-monitoring; and documenting rare species.

This data helps to provide valuable insights about each site for CNAP staff and the landowner. Volunteers get to know their assigned sites over many years; about half of the volunteers have been monitoring their sites for over 10 years.

## RARE PLANT CONSERVATION

CNAP continues to serve as a leader in rare plant conservation and works closely with partners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Much of the program's work focuses on prioritizing and implementing conservation actions for the state's 117 plants of greatest conservation need.

The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) at Colorado State University tracks and ranks Colorado's rare and imperiled species and habitats, and provides information and expertise on these topics to promote the conservation of Colorado's valuable biological resources.

During FY 2022-23, CNAP supported multiple projects conducted by CNHP, including upgrades to the Colorado Rare Plant Guide<sup>3</sup> and modeling potential habitat for Colorado's rarest plant species<sup>4</sup>. These projects addressed major conservation actions outlined in the State Wildlife Action Plan, and are also integrated into the Colorado Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX)<sup>5</sup>.

## EVALUATING CLIMATE RESILIENCY IN THE NATURAL AREAS SYSTEM

The Colorado Natural Areas Council - a seven-member Governor-appointed advisory council - and CNAP staff continue to implement the program's five-year strategic plan. One of the plan's objectives includes evaluating climate resiliency in the Natural Areas System.

In FY 2022-23, program staff evaluated multiple tools, including The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Resilient Land Mapping tool, which combines a multitude of data to assess a given piece of land's ability to adapt to a changing world. Adopting new technologies and tools to analyze existing and potential Natural Areas will help strengthen CNAP's understanding of our portfolio and prioritize new additions to the Natural Areas System.

<sup>3</sup> <https://cnhp.colostate.edu/rareplant/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Waj5O9yy1VLbzXh-oRsZ1zNwIFm2HeL6/view>

<sup>5</sup> <https://codex.cnhp.colostate.edu>

"CNAP has continued to persevere, grow, and remain an incredibly valuable conservation program over the course of its nearly five decades of existence. The program's success can be tied to many things, but the dedication of staff, Council members, volunteer stewards, and positive partnerships stands out the strongest.

**RAQUEL WERTSBAUGH**, CNAP COORDINATOR

"The biological diversity and settings where natural processes are represented, protected, and allowed to function within the State Natural Areas are exceptionally valuable to our state and the region.

In the late 1970s, when a formidable group of conservation-minded citizens worked to support the establishment of a Natural Areas Program in Colorado, they recognized the value of even small sites across the state with unique and high-quality natural features. Especially in the face of Colorado's population growth and associated development, it became imperative to document and protect the best examples of the state's natural areas."

**LYNN RIEDEL**, CNAP VOLUNTEER AND FORMER COLORADO NATURAL AREAS COUNCIL MEMBER AND CHAIR



Globe Gilia at Hoosier Ridge © CPW

# RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Thanks to the continued support of GOCO, the CPW Resource Stewardship Program exists to protect, preserve, restore, and enhance the natural, scenic, scientific, and outdoor recreation values of Colorado's State Parks and Recreation Areas. GOCO funding supports full-time and part-time staff, conservation and planning projects, and program operations.



Archaeologist Dr. Rachel Egan provides cultural resources training to new rangers. © CPW staff

## THE RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM ADDRESSES SIX MAIN TOPIC AREAS:

- (1) The development of Resource Stewardship Plans and resource management standards for each state park;
- (2) The development and management of GIS natural and cultural resource data;
- (3) Environmental and cultural resource reviews to promote resource conservation during capital projects;
- (4) Invasive species management, revegetation, and restoration;
- (5) Forest management; and
- (6) Volunteer citizen science project management.

During FY 2022-23, CPW's Resource Stewardship Program utilized GOCO funds to accomplish many significant projects ►

## RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP PLANNING

The first step in building a Resource Stewardship Plan for a state park is the collection and creation of natural and cultural resource data specific to each state park property. Research stewardship plans help to maintain the ecological integrity of parks now and for future generations, while still providing the best possible recreational experience for park visitors. During the past fiscal year, inventory projects were performed at state parks including Elkhead Reservoir, Fishers Peak, Highline Lake, John Martin Reservoir, Lone Mesa, Sweitzer Lake, Ridgway, Sweetwater Lake, and Yampa River. Staff completed surveys of breeding birds, raptors, reptiles, amphibians, rare plants, vegetation, paleontology, and cultural resources. Inventories also included geologic mapping and vegetation monitoring.

## CASTLEWOOD CANYON AND STAUNTON STATE PARKS

Resource Stewardship staff are collaborating with CPW Policy and Planning and Park staff to finalize park management plans for Castlewood Canyon and Staunton State Parks. Plans incorporate data from resource stewardship plans, visitation information, and park operations to formulate a comprehensive path for the future of these properties. Plans balance the provision of recreation opportunities with the conservation of each park's valuable biological, natural, and cultural resources.

## FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

The Resource Stewardship Program continues to work with the CPW Policy and Planning and Southeast Region staff to collect and apply resource inventory data to park development activities. The program is involved in the design of Fishers Peak State Park to meet the goals of conservation and the provision of recreation opportunities in the park. Program staff provide natural and cultural resource data, analysis and interpretation of this data, and application of the information to construct new infrastructure in the park. Biological data from surveys for the federally endangered New Mexico meadow jumping mouse are being used to create habitat mapping for the project to help infrastructure development projects avoid impacts on this protected species. Botanical surveys continue to reveal new and rare plant species, and projects are being developed to search for more important plant species on the property. Surveys and monitoring of specific breeding locations of raptor species, analysis of the use of forest habitats for wildlife breeding, and surveys for bat species on the property were completed. Additionally, data from cultural resource inventory work and paleontological surveys, geological surveys, and a geologic hazards assessment, including fault lines, landslide areas, and rock fall areas, are being compiled into maps and reports to help development projects avoid areas that are unsuitable for infrastructure development. The program also collaborates with staff working on park management and capital development projects to guide park infrastructure development activities away from important park resources.

## HIGHLINE LAKE STATE PARK

Highline Lake State Park was expanded by acquiring a neighboring property where the development of visitor access is being planned. The Resource Stewardship Program has been a part of the property design team and has managed biological clearance projects to help ensure that development avoids sensitive resources. Avian surveys, prairie dog surveys, and invasive weed surveys were performed. Of note, burrowing owls were observed on the property, and the timing of construction projects was altered in an attempt to avoid impacts on this Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan Tier 1 listed species. Other SWAP species observed include the northern harrier, American white pelican, bald eagle, long-billed curlew, and Brewer's sparrow.



Resource Stewardship Team mapping invasive weeds © CPW staff

## SWEETWATER LAKE

Resource Stewardship continues to collect biological and cultural data to fill remaining gaps in the data collection process. This information is being compiled into a comprehensive resource stewardship plan for the park. Surveys include rare plant and vegetation community mapping, condition assessments, reptiles and amphibians, birds and raptors, and invasive species. CPW staff are collaborating with partners at the U.S. Forest Service and their planning, biological, and cultural resource staff, as well as with local partners on park planning. Outcomes of these efforts are currently being used to inform designs for potential new infrastructure, potential management strategies for the property, and outreach to the public on the property planning process.

## KESTREL NEST BOX PILOT PROJECT

The Resource Stewardship Program continues to guide the installation of nest boxes for American kestrels, a small falcon native to Colorado that is declining across the U.S. This pilot project aims to increase nesting habitat in state parks by providing nest boxes. During the 2022-23 season, successful use of kestrel boxes occurred at each of the pilot locations. Additional analysis of box locations occurred, and in some state parks, placement of boxes was altered and new nest boxes were installed to enhance the use of these nesting features.

## INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The Resource Stewardship Program surveyed invasive plants (noxious weeds) in ten state parks and created management plans for each park. Management plans include maps of known weed populations, weed species identification aids, identification of priority treatment areas and weed species, treatment method recommendations, seasonal treatment calendars by species and park location, and revegetation specifications and seed mixes, all created specifically to each state park and their unique on-the-ground conditions. Tools were created and included in each plan to facilitate improved herbicide treatment efforts by contract sprayers and tracking of herbicide use by field staff.

## ULTRASONIC BAT DETECTION PROJECT

The Resource Stewardship Program is working to better understand the populations of bats at each state park. To date, detectors have been deployed in 20 of the 42 state parks. Detectors record the high-frequency calls of the bats and this data is analyzed using software that identifies the bat species by their call. Additionally, the software gives a confidence rating to the identifications. Program staff cross-reference the species identified and confidence ratings with distribution maps to create baseline bat species lists for each park, and potential bat habitat in each park are identified.

## REVEGETATION AND RESTORATION

Seeding specifications and seed mixes have been shared with the CPW dam safety engineers, capital development team, regional project managers, and state park land management partners to ensure that, where ground-disturbing projects occur, appropriate native plant species are seeded. Additionally, specifications to support the creation of pollinator habitats in state parks are being adopted by some parks for implementation. Seeding specifications outline how to perform seeding and planting projects; provide plant lists and seed mixes; and outline maintenance, care, and success criteria for pollinator habitat projects. Plant species are selected based on their presence in each park, their value to pollinators, and their availability with commercial seed and plant providers.

## VOLUNTEER CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science is a critical tool for providing consistent real-time natural resource data and monitoring for use in park management decisions and projects across the state park system. In the last year, citizen scientists provided observation and location data on reptiles, amphibians, pollinators, invertebrates, rare plants, breeding birds, and nesting raptors. In FY 2022-23, the raptor monitoring program operated in all state parks and had over 200 participant volunteers. The annual meeting of the State Park Raptor Monitoring Volunteer Program has moved to a hybrid of in-person and online format so that volunteers and staff participants from all areas of the state could attend in real time.

In addition, Resource Stewardship has expanded the iNaturalist State Park NatureFinder project, which has over 56,000 observations, 4,000 species, and nearly 4,000 participants. The program continued to utilize lessons learned during the pandemic via virtual resources with online tutorials, trainings, and volunteer resources to support these important citizen science projects.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE TRAINING FOR NEW STATE PARK RANGERS

The Resource Stewardship Program continues to support and lead natural and cultural resource training for the classes of new state park rangers. These trainings are provided by CPW Resource Stewardship staff and through collaboration with partner organizations. Training occurs in the areas of cultural resource management, plants forestry and invasive species, bird biology and identification, pollinators and butterflies, reptiles and amphibians and state park resource stewardship planning.

## COLORADO CONSERVATION DATA EXPLORER

The Resource Stewardship Program continues to lead agency efforts in collaborating with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program for the development and use of the Colorado Conservation Data Explorer or CODEX (<https://codex.cnhp.colostate.edu/>). This web-mapping tool allows users easy access to comprehensive spatial data related to habitats, occurrences of wildlife and rare plants, and other important natural resources. CODEX provides a critical decision support tool in advancing efforts to ensure that future development happens in ways that can maintain Colorado's rich wildlife and natural heritage. The tool has over 400 organizations regularly utilizing its features, including many of the coalitions participating in the Regional Partnerships Initiative.

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

The program's forest management efforts responded to changing conditions in the state and successfully coordinated with partners to obtain funding and perform forest management projects in key areas to keep parks open and safe. A forest management plan was completed for Lone Mesa State Park. Priority forest management projects were implemented on 108 acres at Golden Gate Can-

yon State Park, 43 acres at Lory State Park, and 8 acres at Jackson Lake State Park. Jackson Lake State Park is also the focus of a native tree/shrub revegetation project and saw 525 trees planted across the park as part of the long-term forest improvement effort. Significant amounts of slash pile burning occurred on Lathrop, Lory and Golden Gate Canyon State Parks over the winter thanks to an ongoing partnership with the Division of Fire Prevention and Control. Continuing to invest in these forest management activities helps improve the resilience and ability of state parks to recover from the effects of wildfires, insects, and diseases, and helps reduce the risk of wildfire to communities within the vicinity of many state parks.



Rare Plant Capulin Goldenrod with pollinator at Fishers Peak State Park  
© Dr. Jennifer Ackerfield

# WETLANDS CONSERVATION

CPW's Wetlands Program annually awards competitive grants to CPW staff and partners for projects that restore wetlands and riparian areas. These projects create new managed wetlands, improve the function and efficiency of existing managed wetlands, remove non-native invasive vegetation and replace it with native vegetation, manage invasive cattail growth in wetlands, restore riparian habitat impacted by mining, and reconnect incised creeks with their floodplains. Projects are conducted on state wildlife areas, state parks, and other public and private lands. The program drives funding priorities to those projects benefiting species of greatest conservation need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Wetlands are lands affected by water that support unique plants and soils, making up just two percent of Colorado's landscape, but providing benefits to over 75 percent of the state's wildlife species. The protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas is vital to conserving wildlife diversity in the state. Wetland and riparian landscapes provide crucial feeding, resting, and rearing habitat, and movement corridors. They also improve water quality and quantity and create open space, educational opportunities, and economic benefits from hunting, fishing, and bird watching.

In FY 2022-23, CPW awarded funds for 10 new wetlands projects and three previously funded projects that will help to restore or enhance nearly 4,000 new acres of wetland and riparian habitat. The projects will improve habitat in two State Wildlife Areas, two National Wildlife Refuges, one National Park, two municipal open space properties, and five private properties. These projects will benefit eight waterfowl species and 17 Tier 1 or 2 species of greatest conservation need as identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan, including greater sandhill crane, southwestern willow flycatcher, western

yellow-billed cuckoo, Preble's meadow jumping mouse, boreal toad, and northern leopard frog. Each CPW dollar invested in these projects resulted in \$3.10 in matching funds contributed by 21 different partners, stretching GOCO and CPW funds further.

Also, in FY 2022-23, CPW staff and partners achieved nearly 6,000 acres of wetland and riparian restoration in 26 completed projects. Highlights included shallow wetland improvements on CPW properties, including the Jensen, Horsethief, Rio Blanco, and Rio Grande State Wildlife Areas, and at Navajo State Park.

A 250-acre wetland and wet meadow restoration was completed on City of Boulder property along the Boulder Creek corridor. This project involved recontouring former gravel mines and reseeding with native wetland, riparian, and mesic grassland plant species. This project will benefit waterfowl and several Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including the northern leopard frog, northern redbelly dace, and plains topminnow, and will enhance habitat for the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, a federally threatened plant species existing on the site.

Finally, working with private landowners continued as a program emphasis. In conjunction with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, 17 projects were completed on private lands across Colorado in the Colorado Headwaters, Gunnison, San Juan, South Platte, Rio Grande, and Yampa/White/Green River watersheds.

10

FY 2022-23

NEW PROJECTS

26

FY 2022-23

COMPLETED PROJECTS

6,000

FY 2022-23

ACRES RESTORED OR ENHANCED IN  
WETLAND/RIPARIAN HABITATS

Navajo State Park ©Dustin Doskocil

# Community Vitality & Equitable Access

*Connecting all Coloradans to the outdoors.*

With GOCO's support, CPW provides opportunities to connect Coloradans with outdoor experiences statewide. GOCO funding helps CPW manage and maintain 43 state parks and more than 300 state wildlife areas across the state. More than 4,500 volunteers and hundreds of partner organizations help CPW expand programs and activities. GOCO-supported trail projects provide a physical connection to Colorado's natural resources.

Outdoor Equity Grant recipient The Cycle Effect teaches mountain biking to girls and young women. ©Ryan Jones/CPW



# RECREATION MANAGEMENT ON STATE PARKS

## CASTLEWOOD CANYON STATE PARK

Castlewood Canyon's Park Manager used operating funds to visit a local elementary school in Parker and give a 'Leave No Trace' presentation for 100 4th-grade students. In addition to learning about traveling on durable surfaces and respecting wildlife, they also hosted a general Q&A that covered questions like what working as a ranger is like, what makes state parks special, and how to safely feed birds without attracting bears.

## CHATFIELD STATE PARK

Park staff offered pine needle basket making and botanical illustration educational events. Basket weaving has a long tradition throughout the Americas, and pine needle baskets, in particular, had been a traditional part of life for native Coloradans for countless generations before Europeans first touched this soil.

Attendees practiced the basic techniques for turning pine needles into aromatic baskets while learning about the people who first wove them here. Participants in the botanical illustration with Ranger Jake learned how to make sketches like the botanists of old. Ranger Jake holds a degree in fine arts, and as a Master Naturalist, he is often out in the trees recording observations of the many plants one finds in Colorado. Participants can come by and hone the practice of sketching all the right details so that even if it's a rendering of a plant you've never seen before, someone could still positively identify your work later.

## ELDORADO CANYON STATE PARK

Park staff organize and implement educational programs like "Little Critters" and "Junior Rangers" for kids interested in learning about Colorado's natural resources.

## GOLDEN GATE CANYON STATE PARK

Park staff used operating funds for staff and materials to improve a high-use area at the Red Barn picnic area for groups and families to enjoy.

## JAMES M. ROBB COLORADO RIVER STATE PARK (FRUITA SECTION)

The Fruita section of James M. Robb-Colorado River State Park enjoyed another successful year in 2023, hosting two riverfront concerts and the City of Fruita's 4th of July fireworks show. With a stunning backdrop of the Colorado National Monument, the riverfront concerts serve as One Riverfront's primary fundraiser each year. This is a non-profit entity that supports the continued expansion of the Riverfront trail. Due to concerns with local fire conditions, the City of Fruita partnered with CPW to host the annual fireworks show. Park staff look forward to maintaining these partnerships in the future.

## STEAMBOAT LAKE AND PEARL LAKE STATE PARKS

Throughout the summer, park staff held a weekly "Craft Sunday" event. During these events, youth and adults were invited to make painted rocks, friendship bracelets, salt paintings, light globes, natural wind chimes, bird feeders, pine cone bears, and lighted jars. Between 25 and 100 people attended each event. A great time was had by both adults and kids!

## SWEITZER LAKE STATE PARK

Every spring and fall park staff bring Delta County 5th graders out to the park for an event known as "Explore your local state park." Over 700 5th graders had opportunities to fish, practice archery, canoe, and stand up paddle board at these events. For a lot of these kids, it is their first opportunity to try these activities. Park operating funds were used to purchase all the equipment used in these activities.



GOCO partnerships protect the places that Coloradans enjoy and support the people who work there. GOCO funding helps cover staff and operating costs at all of Colorado's state parks.

This historic support for state park operations has been invaluable to CPW and has contributed to the enjoyment of millions of park visitors since the inception of the GOCO program.



**17,930,033**

FY 2022-23

STATE PARKS VISITATION

**\$4,111,420**

FY 2022-23

GOCO REIMBURSEMENTS FOR PARK OPERATIONS

PHOTOS Clockwise from top left: "Craft Sunday" at Steamboat/ Pearl Lake State Park ©Darlene O'Connell, Cecilia Garza/CPW; Fruita section of James M. Robb-Colorado River State Park riverfront concert at the City of Fruita's 4th of July fireworks show © CPW; Participants in the botanical illustration class with Ranger Jake at Chatfield State Park © CPW.



# VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism is a cost-effective way to help manage Colorado’s natural resources while cultivating stewardship and building stronger connections between CPW and local communities.

The CPW Volunteer Program provides recruitment, screening, training, retention, support, and resources for state parks, wildlife areas, hatcheries, educational programs, and administrative offices across the state.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND TRAININGS

- ★ The volunteer program continued statewide partnerships with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) and the Friends of Colorado State Parks (FCSP). VOC engaged volunteers to complete stewardship projects on CPW properties, and FCSP supported local Friends groups in their missions to support state parks.
- ★ Thanks to GOCO, the statewide volunteer program funded four large volunteer projects at state wildlife areas. Projects featured tree planting, habitat management and improvements, and camp host site construction.
- ★ 55 staff attended the annual Education and Volunteer Training. The theme was: Back to Basics - Growing Your Taproot. Sessions focused on volunteer management basics, coaching and feedback, retention and reactivation, and our volunteer database.
- ★ Volunteers were invited to attend continuing education opportunities throughout the year, including: Methods for Interpretation and Education for Indigenous History by Dr. Rachel Egan, ADA Overview and Disability Awareness by the Rocky Mountain ADA Center, and a Mental Health First Aid Training by the National Center for Mental Wellbeing.

**297,305**

**FY 2022-23**

VOLUNTEER HOURS

**143**

**FY 2022-23**

FTE EQUIVALENT OF  
VOLUNTEER HOURS

**4,681**

**FY 2022-23**

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

**\$10,215,400**

**FY 2022-23**

VOLUNTEER VALUE

**\$231,000**

**FY 2022-23**

GOCO REIMBURSEMENTS FOR  
STATE PARKS VOLUNTEER  
PROGRAM

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CPW VOLUNTEERS TO KNOW?

“Volunteers have made significant contributions to Colorado’s [natural resources] over the years. Future generations will find the same wonderful opportunities to carry on this work and make it possible for others to follow with the same love of the outdoors and the can-do spirit to serve for many more generations yet to come.”

**DORIS CRUZE**  
ROXBOROUGH STATE PARK, VOLUNTEER SINCE 1982

“Put your toes in the water and you’ll see how easy and rewarding it is, and how nice everyone is. It’s such an amazingly rewarding experience.”

**ROLF ASPHAUG**  
MULTIPLE STATE PARKS, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2020

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE?

“I’m a raptor monitor at Cherry Creek State Park and enjoy winter monitoring as well as nest monitoring. Volunteering for CPW is very important to me and brings a lot of joy to my life.”

**JEANETTE AUMAN**  
RAPTOR MONITOR AND NATURALIST, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2014



Friends of Mueller State Park volunteers landscaping and renovating the park's Visitor Center entry garden. ©Friends of Mueller State Park

## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

**RUSTY MERRIL**

VOLUNTEER SINCE 2017  
WITH 625 HOURS AT MUELLER STATE PARK

**As much as you can remember, tell us about the first time you volunteered with CPW.**

I joined the Friends of Mueller State Park group, helping raise money for projects around the park, then got trained as a naturalist, and still do both.

**What is your favorite volunteer memory / experience?**

Working with kids! Seeing their eyes light up when they experience nature, or learn a new skill. They are the future of our state parks, and I want them to learn to respect and love the parks as much as I do.

**What would you like future generations of CPW volunteers to know?**

Volunteering is a wonderful experience! You learn constantly, and work with amazing staff and volunteers! Plus you get to be outside in the BEAUTIFUL environment!



Get Outdoors Day 2023 ©CPW Staff

## GET OUTDOORS DAY

Get Outdoors Day 2023 was an “all hands on deck” event and our volunteers and staff came through, as always! Despite the rainy weather, Area 14 Manager Tim Kroening said, “We still had several thousand people attend. The line for the fishing pole giveaway was around the boat house for well over an hour!”

Tracy Predmore, SE Region Education Coordinator, noted that most participants were still having fun and happy to be there, despite the soggy conditions.

## RIDGWAY STATE PARK BIRD BANDING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Ridgway State Park collaborates with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to host a two-week public bird banding station. Ridgway is fortunate to have 10+ volunteers whose knowledge and expertise keep the park current with the scientific community and provide quality programs to all ages. Over the two weeks, 111 species were recorded, and among them, the Orchard Oriole was spotted - a rare bird for the area! A Steller’s jay was also banded, which has not happened since 2014.

The park had 10 elementary schools visit to learn about migration, habitat, banding the birds, adaptations, identification, and how to use binoculars. Volunteers ran a station for each topic, making each morning quite the production!



GOCO continues to provide much-needed funding for non-motorized trails projects. The requests for funding are increasing every year, as Colorado sees more and more residents and visitors using the vast network of trails in the state. Subsequently, a variety of new trails have been constructed, and many existing trails received much-needed repairs and annual maintenance. In fiscal year 2023, the projects funded by GOCO include planning and development, organization support, trail maintenance and reroutes, and new construction on state and federal lands.

The Colorado the Beautiful Initiative grant program originated in 2018. This stand-alone offering was divided into two cycles, 2018-19 and 2019-20. While most of the projects are now complete, several were granted time extensions. All will be closed no later than June 2024. This initiative represented a statewide effort to grow, enhance, and connect outdoor recreation opportunities with the vision that within a generation every Coloradan will live within ten minutes of a park, trail, or vibrant green space. All of the Colorado the Beautiful Trails grants are funded by GOCO.

**19**  
FY 2022-23  
GOCO-FUNDED TRAIL  
PROJECTS COMPLETED

**96**  
FY 2022-23  
MILES OF TRAIL MAINTENANCE  
AND RECONSTRUCTION

**34**  
FY 2022-23  
MILES OF NEW TRAIL  
CONSTRUCTION

**\$3,265,845**  
FY 2022-23  
GOCO TOTAL REIMBURSEMENTS  
FOR THE TRAILS PROGRAM

Trail crew member working on one of the three major trail systems in Mesa County county. ©CPW

# TRAILS

## HIGHLIGHTS

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, 19 GOCO-funded trail projects were completed:

- › Fremont Pass Recreational Pathway (Summit County Open Space) **\$600,000**
- › Great Western Trail (Great Western Trail Authority) **\$250,000**
- › Devil's Playground, Phase II (National Forest Foundation) **\$280,720**
- › Frisco Nordic Center Trails (Town of Frisco) **\$168,390**
- › Divide Ranger District Maintenance (US Forest Service Divide Ranger District) **\$68,900**
- › Fountain Creek Greenway Plan (Fountain Creek Watershed District) **\$100,000**
- › Pagosa Regional Trail Connection (Archuleta County) - **\$100,655**
- › San Juan 14ers Trail Reconstruction (Colorado Fourteeners Initiative) **\$250,000**
- › Project Raghorn (USFS Pagosa Ranger District) **\$106,000**
- › Partnership for Stewardship 2020-22 (Wildlands Restoration Volunteers) **\$84,617**
- › Salida Ranger District Maintenance (USFS Salida Ranger District) **\$96,300**
- › Devil's Playground Improvement Project (Rocky Mountain Field Institute) **\$31,792**
- › Trail Training Enhancement (Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado) **\$41,614**
- › Daniel's Pass Phase I (Colorado Springs PRCS) - **\$250,000**
- › Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Phase I (City of Idaho Springs) **\$249,487**
- › Mesa County Trail Maintenance (Mesa County Public Health) **\$114,500**
- › Carhart Trail Maintenance (Southern Colorado Trail Builders) **\$5,377**
- › Riparian Park to Refuge (City of Alamosa) **\$45,000**
- › Volunteers Leadership Development and Tools (Wildlands Restoration Volunteers) **\$45,000**

## FEATURED PROJECT

### MESA COUNTY TRAIL MAINTENANCE MESA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

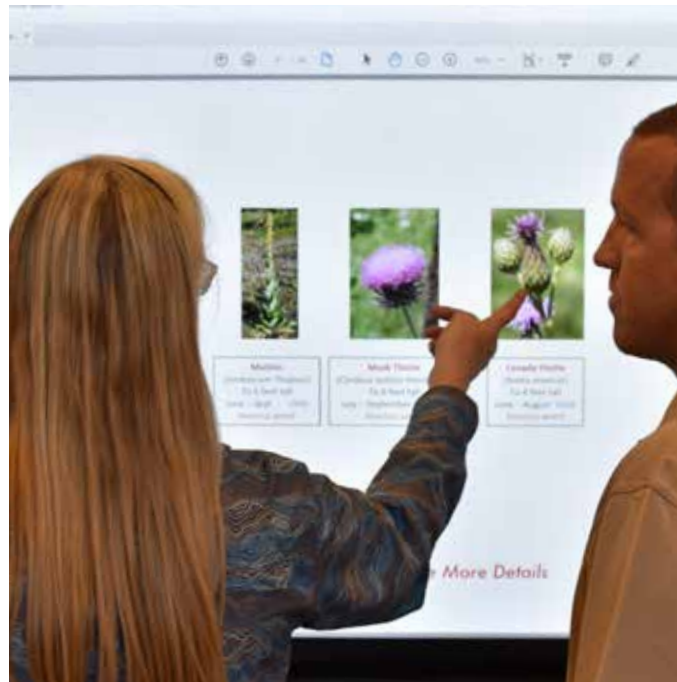
The Mesa County Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed in 2018, and Mesa County Public Health (MCPH) houses a trails coordinator position. The individual's placement in a public health agency gave the initiative a unique direction, with a primary focus on promoting individual and community health through trail development. The TAC developed a plan to create the first professional trail crew in Mesa County. Funding from GOCO provided a foundation to get the crew off the ground in October 2020.

This maintenance grant funded trail work throughout Mesa County. Led by MCPH with support from the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association, and Western Colorado Conservation Corps., crews worked on three major trail systems in the county - Kokopelli, North Fruita Desert and Lunch Loops. Technical rock work, re-vegetation of social trails, and erosion control were some of the issues addressed. They also worked with volunteers on how to educate users on 'Leave No Trace' ethics, etiquette, safety, and wildlife impact. This crew has since evolved into a more expansive unit, handling trail construction, restoration, fuels mitigation, volunteer projects, and habitat enhancement. None of this would have been possible without the support from GOCO.

## CPW WEBSITE REDESIGN

Utilizing GOCO grant funding, the CPW branding and communications team worked with a design and development partner to create and begin to build an entirely modernized website for the agency. The site design focuses on a more approachable customer interface that improves accessibility.

Content is also being refined, aiming to provide answers based on a customer journey, whether a visitor seeks to purchase a license or pass or simply learn more about the conservation work being done every day by CPW staff. Current work includes developing the new website in a new platform, which is a major effort by CPW staff and the vendor. This portion of the work is expected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2024.



© CPW Staff

## COLORADO OUTDOOR REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative (RPI) convenes a broad spectrum of interests to collaborate in advancing solutions to conserve Colorado's outdoors for people and wildlife. CPW and GOCO launched the initiative in 2021, offering grant funds to coalitions to join the Colorado Outdoor Partnership and commit to both regional and statewide conservation and recreation collaboration and planning. CPW is now in the 5th grant cycle, having awarded over \$3 million to 16 regional partnerships across the state. Partnerships that cover more than half of Colorado and over 80 percent of the western slope are committed to bringing regional perspectives to Colorado's Outdoors Strategy, a process led by GOCO, CPW, DNR, and the Governor's Office to advance a collaborative vision for conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable recreation.

There are countless success stories from these regions, including development of landscape assessments that are informing conservation and recreation, a collaborative plan where conservation and recreation interests are pursuing funding for trail reroutes and riparian corridor protection, and another where the partnership leveraged \$200,000 additional funding for on-the-ground pilot projects. CPW produced an annual report and story map to capture and share these stories. This past year, CPW supported a CU capstone student team to help strengthen the program into the future. Students interviewed RPI leads and agency partners to better understand the program and its needs and then presented their findings in numerous forums with conservation and recreation partners, gathering their input. Their final report is expected in December 2023.

## OUTDOOR EQUITY GRANT PROGRAM

For FY 2022-23, GOCO reallocated \$100,000 from the Director's Innovation Fund to the Outdoor Equity Grant Program's inaugural grant round. By leveraging GOCO funds, the Outdoor Equity Grant Board (Board) was able to invest an additional \$100,000 in outdoor equity projects to meet the high demand for grants during the inaugural grant application period. In its first year of operation, the Board received over 300 requests for funding and distributed nearly \$3.1 million in grants to 69 organizations across the state.

In FY 2022-23, the inaugural Board also created and refined the grant application and selection process and balanced ease of application with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that the Outdoor Equity Grant Program is accessible to organizations that haven't traditionally had access to state grant funds.

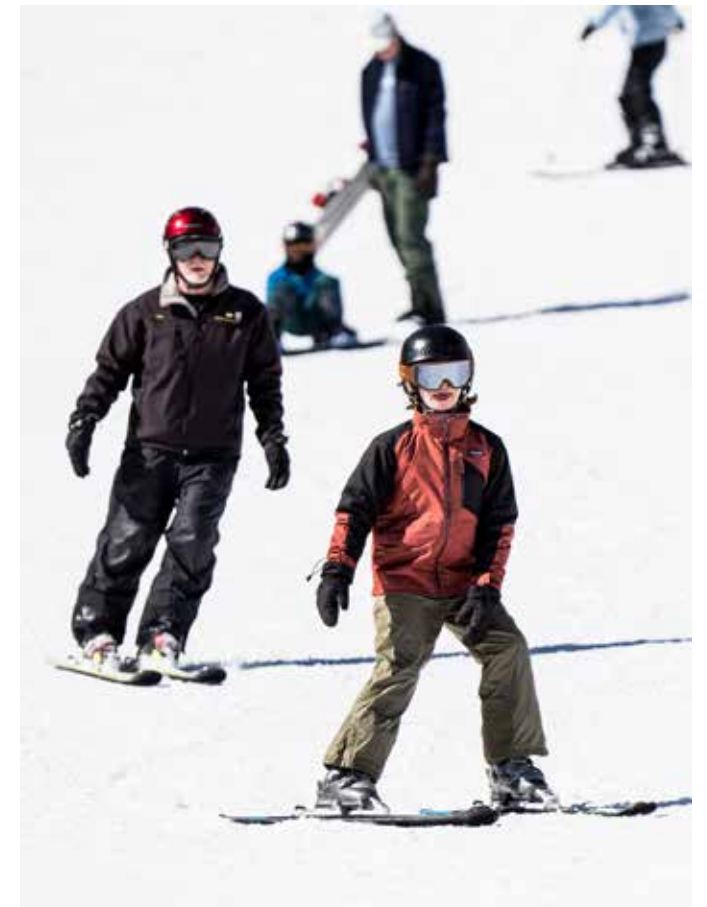
The Board also began to work with a contractor to refine Board values, which will help with the grant solicitation and selection process in future grant cycles.

### FINALIZED OUTDOOR EQUITY GRANT BOARD VALUES:

- ★ We value opportunities that respect the community's ability to define their own priorities so they can obtain the resources to achieve their goals.
- ★ We value opportunities that instill a sense of wonder, excitement, and responsibility for the environment in Colorado youth and families.



Asian Girls Ignite received an Outdoor Equity Grant to support AGI Outdoors, which addresses the lack of AAPI representation in outdoors spaces by providing AAPI girls access to learn outdoor skills, build confidence and self-efficacy, and connect with community © CPW



Adaptive Sports Association in Durango received funding to support outdoor recreation programs for youth with disabilities. © Ryan Jones, CPW

# Youth Connections

*Inspiring the next generation of Coloradans.*

GOCO-supported programs help CPW provide opportunities to youth and students to learn first-hand about Colorado's natural resources.

With GOCO support, CPW is able to offer a wide variety of programming throughout the year to students, families, park visitors, teachers, and volunteers. While the goals of these programs vary, they all work to spread CPW's passion and mission for the incredible parks and wildlife resources of the state



# OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

## ANGLER EDUCATION

CPW's angler education program staff continued to hold fishing clinics statewide in FY 2022-23. These clinics included large-scale events with hundreds of participants, like Get Outdoors Day, Dia de Pesca (Hispanic Fishing Day), and St. Vrain State Park's Fishing Experience. Dia de Pesca was a huge success with over 400 attendees, thanks in large part to the partnerships with Denver Parks and Recreation and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. We look forward to hosting it again next year!

The Angler Education program is also attempting to introduce a more diverse audience to fishing through hands-on clinics. Partnerships with Environmental Learning for Kids, Latino Outdoors, Colorado Treks, and Mercy Housing have been successful in reaching new audiences.

In FY 2022-23, CPW was awarded Mercy Housing's Impact Award for "Outside of School Time" programs. Staff are also actively performing outreach to adults and women with adult-only beginner classes and women-only classes taught entirely by female instructors.

Angler Education has also started several new programs in 2023 that will carry into 2024. We've expanded our involvement with the National Fishing in the Schools Program and helped finance the program for four new Colorado schools (one from each region of the state). We were also awarded a GOCO Director's Innovation Fund grant to work with the United Way of Weld County over the next three years, aimed at helping 300 people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity to obtain fishing licenses and equipment. The long-term goal is to materially help resolve housing and food insecurity for these individuals, while at the same time encouraging their investment in the conservation of local aquatic resources.

## FISHING CLINICS AT STATE PARKS

### CHATFIELD STATE PARK

Chatfield staff offered regular Fishing 101 Clinics at Lake Lehow as well as Blackbird Pond, Muskrat Pond, and the main reservoir. Plans are underway to offer ice fishing clinics this winter and additional fly fishing clinics next summer.

### MUELLER STATE PARK

Fly fishing clinics are a popular activity at Mueller State Park. Classes are held almost weekly throughout the summer at Dragonfly Pond, where catchable-size rainbow trout have been stocked. Adults seem to really appreciate the hands-on learning and expert instruction from park staff and volunteers. Kids like it too!

### RIDGWAY STATE PARK

Ridgway State Park led 15 fishing clinics in FY 2022-23 and gave away over 300 fishing poles to youth and adults alike. Most fishing clinics were staged at the Pa-Co-Chu-Puk ponds and led by the park's naturalist and volunteers. Many clinic participants were first-time anglers. The clinics covered fish species, anatomy, ecosystems, how to handle a fish, and angler ethics, in addition to casting a pole and practicing fishing from shore. Nothing replaces that ecstatic smile from someone who has just caught their first fish!

### ELEVEN MILE STATE PARK

Crawfishing is a popular activity at Eleven Mile State Park. Youth and adults have fun learning about the facts, features, and design of crawfish. CPW staff taught the group how to pick up a crawdad and also showed them how to tell the difference between males and females. Staff distributed fishing poles that were rigged up with string, a paperclip, and a piece of hot dog on the end. Participants learned the importance of sustainability by debating whether to keep caught crawfish or throw them back in the water.



Angler education partnership with Mercy Housing. ©CPW Staff

## 2023 GET OUTDOORS DAY COLORADO SPRINGS

Despite the rain, the June 2023 event was a success, with several thousand people in attendance. Get Outdoors Day is an annual partner event hosted by CPW, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance, and the City of Colorado Springs. Many other partners, such as Pike Peak Generation Wild, Cata-mountain Institute, and Fountain Creek Nature Center, provided hands-on activities for families to learn about the local outdoor opportunities in the Pikes Peak Region.

While the conditions did not allow for the stand up paddleboards and kayaks to be out on the water, all of the other events, including archery, touch-a-truck, .22 shooting, and many partner booth activities, carried on. CPW also distributed 800 fishing poles to youth at no cost and helped participants fish.

**278**

**FY 2022-23**

NUMBER OF ANGLER  
EDUCATION CLINICS

**8,777**

**FY 2022-23**

NUMBER OF  
PARTICIPANTS



PHOTOS Clockwise from top left: Students, teachers, and Tribal Elders from the American Indian Academy of Denver ©CPW; ELK Rangers sharing during an ice breaker activity ©CPW; Archery with Outdoor Asian in a partnership with District Wildlife Managers, Eldorado and Golden Gate Canyon state parks.

# INTERPRETATION PROGRAMS

As storytellers, CPW Interpreters teach people to care for Colorado by connecting them to places, objects, and topics. Interpreters help foster stewardship of natural and cultural resources by facilitating relevant, meaningful, and memorable educational experiences.

## CERTIFIED INTERPRETIVE GUIDE TRAINING

In November 2022, the Statewide Interpretation Program provided a five-day Certified Interpretive Guide training for 15 individuals at Ridgway State Park. Amongst the class were local teachers, seasonal rangers, full-time rangers, nonprofit representatives, and volunteers. This internationally recognized professional certification teaches the essential skills for creating meaningful place-based experiences for formal and informal education programs held in public venues. The course is taught with a course book and example programs led throughout the week showcasing the different teaching techniques. It culminates with each student leading a 10- to 12-minute program on a topic of their choice.

## AMERICAN INDIAN ACADEMY OF DENVER

### INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING IN STATE PARKS PROJECT

Over the last several years, CPW interpreters have been working with students, teachers, and Tribal Elders from the American Indian Academy of Denver (AIAD) to rectify the erasure of Indigenous stories and perspectives in our educational signage and programs. The initial focus has been on one state park in each region (Mueller, Navajo, Roxborough, and Vega State Parks). AIAD visited the parks to connect to the land and met with CPW staff to learn more about what current Indigenous interpre-

tation exists. At these April meetings, students met with Elders to develop their recommendations, which they then presented to CPW staff. Park staff helped ensure the students felt welcome at site visits and heard during their presentations. Stay tuned to hear more about how the students' ideas will be implemented!

In May 2023, staff and participants experienced a bitter-sweet park visit at Mueller State Park with AIAD staff, students, and Elders, as we shared our last time together since Denver Public Schools announced the school would be closing due to lack of enrollment. Students had a wonderful experience, hiking through the park, shooting archery, watching a raptor presentation, and bonding around a campfire.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING FOR KIDS (ELK) INTERPRETIVE TRAINING

Staff spent several fun and interactive days in June training the ELK Urban Rangers on best practices and techniques for developing and delivering educational programs for the audiences they serve. Park rangers presented on various topics, including finding art and music in nature, mindfulness and how nature helps our mental health, the importance of fish adaptations, and more. One highlight was learning how bees communicate by “shaking their booties.”



# SCHOOLS AND OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The mission of the Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE) program is to connect schools with CPW and its network of partners to increase youth and family interest in the outdoors. Over the last 10 years, SOLE has provided funding for field trips, in-class programs and school-based family events called 'Family Nature Nights' for more than 50 schools across the state, representing approximately three percent of all Colorado public K-12 schools. Last year, program staff began to dive into the question: How do we meet the needs of more students and educators across the state within CPW's capacity?

This began a transition year for SOLE and the start of an exciting conversation about what SOLE will become in the future. The SOLE program will move away from focusing solely on 4th-grade classrooms and instead become CPW's overarching formal education program. SOLE will serve early childhood, kindergarten through 12th grade, community college and university level students, and educators by creating impactful connections to Colorado's natural resources and the outdoors.



SOLE group at state park ©CPW Staff.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022-23

During this transition year, funding was provided directly to 38 schools. Schools were asked to prioritize which funding was most critical to support getting students outside and to connect students to Colorado's natural resources through their science and social studies standards.

SOLE group hike at a State Park ©CPW.



"Our school is located in a lower-income rural area so the opportunities for exploration provided by this funding cannot be understated. Many of our students have never been out of the area. When we visited the capitol we were able to get a private tour by the assistant to our district's State Representative. It was a great opportunity for our students to broaden their environment as well as increase their knowledge of our government. With our funding, the students and I have decided to build an outdoor learning area outside of our classroom, including two picnic tables and improved landscaping. It is located near our school entrance and will not only improve the look of our school but provide students with a space to enjoy the outdoors and learn at the same time."

**CALICHE SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER, ILIFF, CO**

# EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

## ARKANSAS HEADWATERS RECREATION AREA

A 3rd grade 'River Safety in the Schools Program' was piloted at Longfellow Elementary and Salida Montessori Schools, which reached 105 students.

This River Safety in Schools Program for 3rd-grade students is a partnership with the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), FIBArk, the City of Salida and the Recreation and Fire Department, and the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association. The Arkansas River unites this community, and river safety knowledge is essential to keeping the next generation safe as they play in and around the Arkansas River. 3rd graders received a basic river safety curriculum taught by partners covering topics such as proper life jacket fit, hazard recognition, and self-rescue. Upon completion of the course, students received a free youth life jacket to keep and use in all their river adventures. When they grow out of their first life jacket, students can exchange it at the AHRA office for an adult universal life jacket that will keep them afloat through adulthood. The program is free, and we plan to expand it to Buena Vista next year; we will look to bring it to Cañon City and Leadville in the future.

## TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE NATURALLY (T.E.N.)

### PUEBLO

This summer, the Southeast Region offered teachers a four-day professional development T.E.N. class. The theme, Shedding Light on the Prairie, highlighted various topics related to the short grass prairie. Teachers learned about geology at Lake Pueblo State Park and local ranching history at the nearby Goodnight Barn. They also toured the Pueblo Chemical Depot to learn about prairie

restoration, endangered plains fish, and the reintroduction of the black-footed ferret. The Pueblo Nature and Wildlife Discovery Center hosted the teachers for a day and shared their Where the Prairie Meets the River curriculum and a presentation about prairie raptors. Teachers appreciated the hands-on learning that is integral to the T.E.N. program through activities as well as visiting different locations in the Pueblo County region.

### UPPER ARKANSAS

Though the 2023 Upper Arkansas T.E.N. course for teachers consisted of a small group this year, the class was very successful. This is the 20th year of this T.E.N. group, so the week consisted of several favorite themes and activities from the past, along with a few new topics. There was also considerable focus each day on how nature benefits mental health. The class started by learning about wildlife forensics and wildlife tracking with local District Wildlife Managers. Partners from Get Outdoors Leadville and the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association shared information about their gear libraries as a resource for the teachers and their students. The participants took a field trip on Cottonwood Pass to learn about ecosystems and visited the Hayden Ranch to learn about local history and current ranching practices. At Twin Lakes, Liz Cook from History Colorado presented the Ute STEM kit curriculum, and Good Natured Learning presented a mini workshop on best practices for taking kids outdoors. The final day brought everything together by blending science, art, and mindfulness in making clay skull models.

## OUTDOOR UNDERSTANDING FOR TEACHERS (OUT)

Delta OUT offered five new professional development workshops for Delta, Montrose, and Ouray county K-12 educators. A three-day July Backpacking course in the Uncompahgre Wilderness included training for the Leave No Trace curriculum, Wilderness First Aid, and team-building activities for teachers to apply with students in outdoor education settings. In the fall, teachers visited the Ute Indian Museum and Shavano Valley petroglyph site in Montrose to uncover Ute understanding of, and connection to, the Colorado landscape and environment over time while applying History Colorado's 'Ute Knowledge History' Kit. The subsequent cold-season workshop at Ridgway State Park, 'Winter Wonders,' facilitated an exploration of life in the cold in connection to wildlife, ecology, and recreation. In the spring, a 'Bear Aware' offering at Cedaredge Middle School involved background knowledge and tools for teaching about black bears in Colorado and how to co-exist responsibly. Additionally, a 'WILD About Water' workshop at Sweitzer Lake State Park brought Aquatic WILD aquatic habitat content, curriculum, and activities to life.

## DURANGO MAPS STATION AT OXBOW PARK & PRESERVE

The monitoring avian productivity and survivorship (MAPS) program is a continent-wide collaborative effort among public agencies, non-governmental groups, and individuals to assist the conservation of birds and their habitats through bird banding. FY 2022-23 continued the 10th year of CPW and the City of Durango's jointly funded MAPS Station on the City's Oxbow Park and Preserve property. The large group pictures include Dr. Lehmer's Field Zoology Class from Ft Lewis College attending a MAPS station. Several pictures of the birds were caught and recorded at the station. Over ten years, the MAPS Station has added substantive and important data on bird populations in the SW Region of Colorado. It is currently one of only two MAPS stations in the state. It is staffed mostly by local volunteers and provides the public with a unique opportunity to engage in research and data collection. Its efforts have helped inform the City's management of the property to balance recreation and habitat protection.

"This is fantastic material to bring to my classroom. The well-planned, standards-based lessons will be such a great tool and learning experience for my students. I plan to use as much of the materials as possible."

"I feel it was all so motivating and useful. Having the opportunity to hear other groups share the different lessons was great."

### TEACHER EVALUATION FEEDBACK FROM UTE MUSEUM TRAINING

"I really enjoyed all of the activities and I am planning to incorporate several of them into my team building lessons. I also plan to incorporate the 'Leave No Trace' activities into some of my outdoor lessons."

### TEACHER EVALUATION FEEDBACK FROM SUMMER BACKPACKING TRAINING



Mancos museum field trip ©Staci Greenlee

# YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of the CPW Youth Internship Program (YIP) is to employ and expose youth to natural resource careers and recruit new and diverse talent into the CPW workforce. YIP internships are designed to engage and mentor youth; provide practical experiences, skills, and opportunities; facilitate networking opportunities with CPW professionals; and provide exposure to various CPW career paths.

YIP places interns in a variety of positions throughout CPW. In FY 2022-23, 62 internship positions were funded, utilizing over \$1 million of GOCO funds. YIP interns assisted CPW program areas, including state parks, aquatic biology, wildlife biology, fish hatcheries, engineering, water quality monitoring, administrative support, and education and interpretation.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

One of the YIP Interns this year, Georgia Horne, conducted an evaluation of CPW's Urban Rangers Program as part of their internship. The results were presented to agency staff and showed a cross collaboration between different programs working with youth in CPW. Their results highlight successes and areas for growth and actively engaged the youth in the Urban Rangers Program.

An interesting part of this project was the use of Photovoice to capture the Urban Rangers' thoughts and emotions. Photovoice is a process in which people – usually those with limited power due to poverty, language barriers, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, or other circumstances – use video or photo images to capture aspects of their environment and experiences and share them with others. The pictures can then be used, usually with captions composed by the photographers, to bring the realities of the photographers' lives home to the public and policymakers and to spur change. Below are some of the Photovoice images. The images have a theme like "Health and Wellness" and combine the image the students took and their words for what it meant to them.



YIP intern Georgia Horne used PhotoVoice to capture the thoughts and emotions of Urban Rangers thoughts and emotions. The images have a theme like "Health and Wellness" and combine the image the students took and their words for what it meant to them. ©Georgia Horne

YIP Intern Makenzie Neil assists middle school students with fly fishing at Bel Aire State Wildlife Area ©Trina Romero/CPW.



"Overall this was a very rewarding and enjoyable experience. I was able to see and participate in a variety of what CPW had to offer. This internship allowed me to see many different aspects of the agency that I was not familiar with before such as school programs, fishing clinics, and conferences. I enjoyed meeting new people and learning more about their roles with CPW and also getting to participate in what their job entails. I was also able to do some once-in-a-lifetime things such as writing an article for a published magazine!"

**MACKENZIE NEIL, YIP INTERN**



# COLORADO YOUTH CORPS ASSOCIATION



**\$450,000**  
GOCO FUNDS INVESTED  
**13,733**  
HOURS OF CYCA LABOR

**46**  
WEEKS OF WORK AT:  
18 STATE PARKS  
13 STATE WILDLIFE AREAS  
3 STATE FISH HATCHERIES

Participants in the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) on their way to a trail construction project ©CPW

Colorado Parks and Wildlife recently completed its 22nd season of partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA), a statewide network of locally run youth corps. Youth corps crews made substantial contributions to CPW's lands and the people who visit them.

Work included trail construction and maintenance, habitat restoration, fence removal, fire mitigation, and invasive plant removal.

In addition to the valuable work completed, the partnership also provides young people with opportunities for professional development, skill building, environmental education, and career exploration.

Corps members gain an awareness of the agency, meet and work alongside CPW staff, and learn about the various job pathways available. CYCA engaged 298 corps members during the year, many of whom identify with traditionally underrepresented races, ethnicities, and genders.

Ultimately, this partnership is helping to improve our lands, inspire stewardship, and train and recruit the next generation of natural resource professionals.



Colorado Youth Corps Association participant ©CPW



Colorado Youth Corps Association participants ©CPW



LEFT: CYCA Powerline Trail Corridor Cleanup and Repair at Roxborough State Park. RIGHT: CYCA Highline Lake Trail Building at Highline State Park ©CPW

# WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

Wildlife Viewing programs help connect people to wildlife through educational festivals, outreach programs, and other events to promote ethical viewing skills, provide experiences to observe wildlife, and share biological and ecological information to encourage awareness and understanding of Colorado's wildlife.



District Wildlife Manager Tyler Cerny hosts CPW education table at Crane Festival ©Cathy Dolder/CPW.

## WILDLIFE VIEWING

Intentionally observing, feeding, or photographing wildlife, or visiting or maintaining natural areas to benefit wildlife - is one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the United States. In fact, the 2016 National Survey of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reported that there are approximately 86 million wildlife viewers aged 16 or older in the U.S. - more than one-third of the adult population - and participation in wildlife viewing has been increasing since the mid-1990s. While we have this great data from the national survey, we haven't had Colorado-specific information to tell us the story of wildlife viewing in Colorado.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife partnered with Virginia and other states as part of a multistate conservation grant effort to conduct national and state-level surveys to gather more information about wildlife viewers; Colorado was one state that requested state-specific data. The data that will be gathered through these surveys will be critical in creating more meaningful and effective experiences for the public and, in particular, ways to better connect to underserved communities.

## GRAND MESA MOOSE DAY

This annual event was hampered by rain, and that did not deter folks from learning about moose! CPW provided presentations indoors that were well-attended, and there were activities on the deck of the US Forest Service visitor center. CPW wildlife officers hosted a telemetry hike to learn the "science behind the collars" and talked to visitors at the Operation Game Thief trailer learning about anti-poaching efforts. The highlight every year is someone spotting a moose on the Mesa.

## YAMPA VALLEY CRANE FESTIVAL

This multi-day event hosts many activities, from art exhibits to guided crane viewing tours and a CPW-led family activity event. All things Sandhill Crane are at your fingertips! The family activity day includes engaging activities such as a crane matching game, measuring your wingspan, origami crane folding, crane scavenger hunts, and a great migration game. Biologists, volunteer coordinators, and a host of volunteers make this a great event for the attendees. We hear cranes flying overhead in the mornings and evenings, and CPW is a partner hosting the shuttle tours to view the cranes.

## STEAMBOAT LAKE AND PEARL LAKE STATE PARKS

The Steamboat Lake State Park and Pearl Lake State Park's manager hosted guided birding by pontoon on Steamboat Lake, and the boat was at full capacity on each trip. The park manager is an expert birder with so much knowledge of the park and surrounding area. One pontoon adventurer mentioned, "this is such a fun and unique experience - we plan to be back each year!"

## ARKANSAS HEADWATERS RECREATION AREA (AHRA)

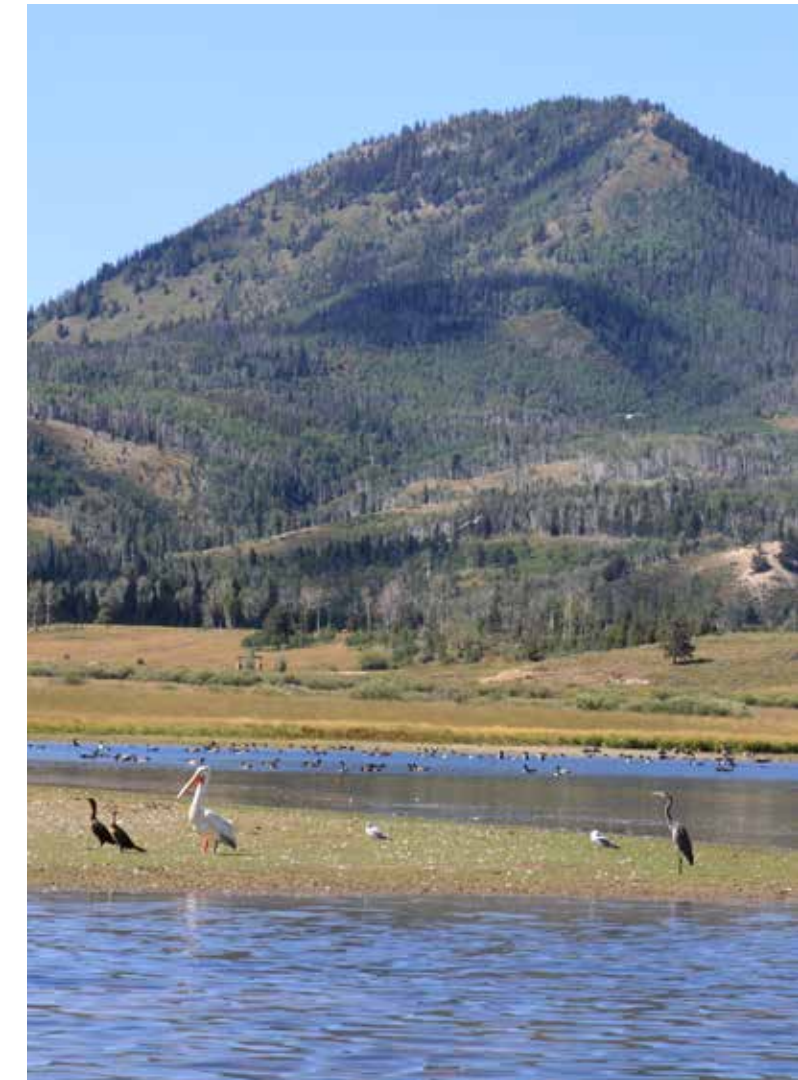
AHRA hosted an all-staff work day along with YIP Interns, Rec Rangers, and seasonal park ranger staff to clean up and improve the trail at Five Points Campground, a popular bighorn sheep viewing area in Fremont County. This year, Wednesdays were dedicated to group projects that focused on key areas of the park that needed attention to enhance the visitor experience. This also gave our staff the opportunity to bond as a team and feel like they were giving back while taking care of the area.

## MONTE VISTA CRANE FESTIVAL

"This is one of the great wildlife migrations in the country that people can actually get out and see," said CPW Education and Volunteer Coordinator Catherine Dolder. "The Monte Vista Crane Festival is an exciting event that CPW and our wonderful volunteers take pride in being a part of, and we love this chance to reunite with some volunteers who have assisted with this for decades."

The highlight of the three-day festival, held in March 2023, was the spectacle of more than 20,000 greater sandhill cranes making their annual spring migration and stopping over in southern Colorado as they transition from winter habitat to breeding range in the north.

CPW staff and volunteers supported outdoor scope sites and were on hand to help answer questions from the public.



Birds at Steamboat Lake SP pontoon tour with Park Manager Julie Arington ©Trina Romero/CPW.

# Grant Detail FY 2022-2023

Section I of Article XXVII of the Colorado Constitution describes eight basic objectives for GOCO investments in outdoor recreation and wildlife programs ►

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

- ★ Establish and improve state parks and recreation areas throughout Colorado.
- ★ Develop appropriate public information and environmental education resources on Colorado’s natural resources at state parks, recreation areas, and other locations throughout the state.
- ★ Acquire, construct, and maintain trails and river greenways.
- ★ Provide water for recreational purposes through the acquisition of water rights or through agreements with holders of water rights, all in accord with applicable state water law.

## WILDLIFE

- ★ Develop wildlife watching opportunities.
- ★ Implement educational programs about wildlife and wildlife environment.
- ★ Provide appropriate programs for maintaining Colorado’s diverse wildlife heritage.
- ★ Protect crucial wildlife habitats through the acquisition of lands, leases, or easements and restore critical areas.

The following tables contain information about GOCO reimbursements to CPW in FY 2022-23 organized by the structure outlined in the Colorado Constitution.

STATE PARKS PURPOSE: ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE STATE PARKS AND RECREATION				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
18200	Eldorado Canyon State Park Entrance Station Relocation	650,000	224,441	344,796
19200	Park Improvements	8,352,917	6,624,079	739,904
19201	Park Improvements 2	3,942,000	2,874,665	268,859
19223	Fuels Mitigation Management Program	300,000	138,942	161,058
20171	Land Acquisition and Leases	700,000	10,741	89,259
20200	Park Improvements	6,991,024	3,213,608	1,833,210
20223	Fuels Mitigation Management Program	300,000	84,658	134,672
20225	Director's Innovation Fund	75,000	63,242	-
21200	Park Improvements	5,054,334	664,325	1,622,736
21223	Fuels Mitigation Management Program	300,000	5,033	60,627
21225	Director's Innovation Fund	75,000	40,413	20,307
22172	Capital Development Program	1,020,000	-	1,020,000
22173	Natural Resource Management Program	1,292,500	-	1,292,500
22174	Invasive and Noxious Weed Management Program	350,000	-	225,530
22175	Recreation Management on State Parks	4,111,420	-	4,111,420
22194	Water Acquisitions and Leases	300,000	-	56,621
22200	Park Improvements	6,119,195	339,684	2,035,178
22223	Fuels Mitigation Management Program	300,000	-	-
22225	Director's Innovation Fund (Parks)	25,000	-	21,819
23172	Capital Development Program	1,010,749	-	-
23173	Natural Resource Management Program	1,292,500	-	-
23174	Invasive and Noxious Weed Management Program	266,726	-	-
23175	Recreation Management on State Parks	4,111,420	-	-
23200	Park Improvements	5,183,550	-	-
23223	Fuels Mitigation Management Program	100,000	-	-
23225	Director's Innovation Fund (Parks)	75,000	-	-
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$52,298,335</b>	<b>\$14,283,831</b>	<b>\$14,038,494</b>

STATE PARKS PURPOSE: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
21222	Website Redesign	700,000	–	325,589
22187	Public Information Program	296,000	–	296,000
22188	Environmental Education and Youth Programs	1,323,500	–	1,323,500
22189	Volunteer Programs	231,000	–	114,581
23187	Public Information Program	296,000	–	–
23188	Environmental Education and Youth Programs	1,167,603	–	–
23189	Volunteer Program	189,459	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$4,203,562</b>	–	<b>\$2,059,669</b>

STATE PARKS PURPOSE: TRAILS AND RIVER GREENWAYS				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
18192	Trails Grant Program	1,000,000	834,329	–
18230	Colorado The Beautiful Trails Grant Program	2,988,006	1,488,247	623,176
18233	Legacy Loop - Rock Island Trail	500,000	–	–
18234	Great Western Trail	250,000	197,500	52,500
18236	Fremont Pass Rec Pathway	600,000	450,000	150,000
19192	Trails Grant Program - Capital	1,000,000	741,629	243,690
19221	Trails in State Parks	500,000	241,983	233,012
20192	Trails Grants Program	1,000,000	180,035	785,535
20221	Trails in State Parks	500,000	256,727	176,332
21192	Trails Grants Program	1,000,000	–	314,542
21221	Trails in State Parks	500,000	130,486	292,589
22191	State Trails Program - Operating	370,935	–	370,935
22192	Trails Grants Program - Capital	1,000,000	–	71,123
22221	Trails in State Parks	500,000	–	56,290
23191	State Trails Program - Operating	352,039	–	–
23192	Trails Grant Program - Capital	1,500,000	–	–
23221	Trails in State Parks Program	500,000	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$14,060,980</b>	<b>\$4,520,936</b>	<b>\$ 3,369,725</b>

STATE PARKS PURPOSE: WATER FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
20194	Water Acquisitions and Leases	300,000	247,920	52,080
21194	Water Acquisitions and Leases	300,000	131,908	74,555
22193	Water Program	150,000	–	85,138
23193	Water Program	86,919	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$836,919</b>	<b>\$379,828</b>	<b>\$211,773</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL, STATE PARKS PURPOSE</b>	<b>\$71,399,796</b>	<b>\$19,184,595</b>	<b>\$19,679,661</b>

WILDLIFE PURPOSE: HABITAT MANAGEMENT				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
19169	Spring Creek Dam Phase 2	1,070,000	860,651	206,630
19253	Aquatic Habitat Improvement	2,000,000	1,331,873	452,456
19259	Fort Collins Service Center	2,500,000	170,481	1,057,742
19260	Fuels Mitigation	1,000,000	–	18,400
20150	Acquire High Priority Habitat - Capital	3,848,589	2,274,053	1,574,536
20153	Wetlands Conservation	1,100,000	367,215	278,651
20250	Protection and Restoration of Wildlife Habitat	3,600,000	1,934,971	1,180,342
20252	Wildlife Small Capital	2,000,000	2,000,000	–
21153	Wetlands Conservation	1,100,000	212,407	581,318
21252	Wildlife Small Capital	2,000,000	1,266,329	676,788
22150	Acquire High Priority Habitat- Capital	1,223,088	–	–
22151	Acquire High Priority Habitat- Operations	693,000	–	624,225
22152	Enhance Habitat on Lands and Water	1,000,000	–	1,000,000
22153	Wetlands Conservation	1,100,000	–	522,466
22154	GIS Habitat Information	475,000	–	420,767
22531	FY22 CPW Centennial Projects	1,564,500	–	1,564,500
23151	Acquire High Priority Habitat - Operations	519,659	–	–
23152	Enhance Habitat on Lands and Water	1,000,000	–	–
23153	Wetlands Conservation	1,100,000	–	–
23154	GIS Habitat Information	464,419	–	–
23531	FY23 CPW Centennial Projects	6,250,000	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$35,608,255</b>	<b>\$10,417,981</b>	<b>\$10,158,820</b>

WILDLIFE PURPOSE: SPECIES PROTECTION				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
22155	Propagation of Aquatic Species at Risk	575,000	–	575,000
22156	Native Species Protection	4,480,000	–	4,480,000
22157	Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery	610,000	–	610,000
23155	Propagation of Aquatic Species at Risk	488,129	–	–
23161	Threatened,Endangered&Native Species Conservation	4,740,346	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$10,893,475</b>	–	<b>\$5,665,000</b>

WILDLIFE PURPOSE: WILDLIFE EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
20163	Director's Innovation Fund	75,000	38,014	23,250
21163	Director's Innovation Fund	75,000	23,241	28,398
21166	Website Redesign	1,300,000	–	604,665
22158	Youth Programs	1,071,317	–	1,071,317
22159	Education and Volunteer Programs	400,183	–	377,359
22160	Angler Education	161,000	–	161,000
22163	Director's Innovation Fund	25,000	–	24,450
23158	Youth Programs	918,637	–	–
23159	Education and Volunteer Programs	400,183	–	–
23160	Angler Education	161,000	–	–
23163	Director's Innovation Fund	75,000	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$4,662,320</b>	<b>\$61,255</b>	<b>\$2,290,439</b>

WILDLIFE PURPOSE: WILDLIFE VIEWING				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
22162	Wildlife Viewing	150,000	–	150,000
23162	Wildlife Viewing	144,899	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$294,899</b>	–	<b>\$150,000</b>
	<b>Grand total, Wildlife Purpose</b>	<b>\$51,458,949</b>	<b>\$10,479,236</b>	<b>\$18,264,258</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL, INCLUDING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND RESTORE</b>	<b>\$127,248,745</b>	<b>\$29,882,959</b>	<b>\$38,425,787</b>

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, RESILIENT COMMUNITIES, AND RESTORE				
GOCO LOG	DESCRIPTION	AWARD (\$)	TOTAL PRIOR REIMBURSEMENTS (\$)	FY 2022-23 REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST (\$)
21049	Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships (comp)	320,000	109,564	146,549
21249	Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative	160,000	54,782	73,275
21298	RESTORE Program	250,000	–	133,679
21299	Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative	160,000	54,782	73,274
22351	Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative (Capacity)	500,000	–	55,090
22352	Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships (Regrant)	3,000,000	–	–
	<b>Totals this section:</b>	<b>\$4,390,000</b>	<b>\$219,128</b>	<b>\$481,867</b>

## **CPW MISSION**

The mission of Colorado Parks and Wildlife is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources.

## **GOCO MISSION**

To help preserve, protect, enhance, and manage the state's wildlife, park, river, trail and open space heritage



Colorado Parks & Wildlife  
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(303) 297-1192 • [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)