

Principles for Advancing Outdoor Recreation and Conservation



8.2.17

Colorado's Adoption of the Shift Principles

Preamble: We believe the uniquely American public land heritage is a privilege and a birthright, and Colorado's abundant open space and outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to our quality of life and economic vitality. Combined with the North American Model of wildlife management and private land conservation, Coloradans and our visitors enjoy spectacular landscapes in which to work, play and live. We celebrate the contributions of all sectors of our economy to sustaining a healthy balance of our State's ecosystems. Responsible recreation respects all interests on lands and waters, and works to eliminate conflicts.

For these reasons, Coloradans should feel compelled to care for and conserve landscapes, waterways and wildlife to sustain them and eliminate conflicts for generations to come by adopting the following principles.

1. Outdoor recreation and conservation require that a diversity of lands and waters be publicly owned, available for public access, and cared for properly.

The uniquely American public-land heritage is a privilege and a birthright, and the availability of open space and outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado is a major part of what has made this one of the most desirable states in which to live. We should seek to increase the quality of these public lands and waterways, and do so under the guidance of these seven principles.

2. Within Colorado's diversity of land and waters, private land plays a critical role in preserving the ecological integrity of a functional landscape that is necessary for robust and meaningful outdoor recreational experiences.

Private lands in Colorado are vital for conservation of the natural resources and western heritage that has long defined the state. Private landowners increase the viability of our lands, waters and natural assets by keeping habitat connected and in a natural state. Private landowners and vested parties should be involved in collaborative dialogues whenever possible, and turned to for solutions and deeper partnerships.

3. Both recreation and conservation are needed to sustain Colorado's quality of life. Both are beneficial to local economic well-being, for personal health, and for sustaining Colorado's natural resources.

This mutual need exists because outdoor recreation helps people understand the importance of maintaining healthy, intact ecosystems. In turn, that understanding builds support for natural resource protection and stewardship, and conservation protects the land, water and wild places upon which outdoor recreation depends.

4. All recreation has impact. Coloradans have an obligation to minimize these impacts across the places they recreate and the larger landscape through ethical outdoor behavior.

Ethical outdoor behavior demonstrates respect for land, water, and wildlife. This outdoor ethic is critical and must be developed in all users and taught to future generations.

5. Proactive management solutions, combined with public education, are necessary to care for land, water and wildlife, and to provide the protections needed to maintain quality recreation opportunities.

Active public engagement in crafting solutions is necessary to ensure land management decisions reflect a consensus and can be effectively implemented. A broad, landscape approach is necessary in order to meet both conservation and recreation needs. Collaborative decision-making is needed to decide which activities are best suited for various landscapes.

6. Physical, biological and social science must inform the management of outdoor recreation.

Management decisions should be grounded in the best available scientific information to ensure the protection of natural areas and the sustainability of resources. That information is also necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of outdoor recreation experiences.

7. Stable, long-term, and diverse funding sources are essential to protect the environment and support outdoor recreation.

Land management agencies need adequate funding from federal, state, and local government sources, supplemented by new and non-traditional funding from private and nonprofit sources.

More information on the SHIFT Principles can be found at: <http://shiftjh.org/colorado-adopts-shift-principles/>

