Wildlife Impacts Assessment Guidelines
State Recreational Trails Grant Program

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) emphasizes the importance for grant applicants, land managers, and trail constituents to include CPW wildlife staff early in the planning process as it is the ideal time to evaluate and address any possible wildlife concerns.

CPW recommends applicants review Colorado's Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind document prior to grant application submission. This guide focuses extensively on collaborative approaches to problem solving to meet both conservation and recreation goals and includes the current best practices and science for Colorado's land managers, trail advocates, and conservationists engaged in trail planning.

Applicants may also consider utilizing the Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX) as part of this process. CODEX provides conservation information on biological diversity, protected lands, hydrology and other natural resources for planning purposes and also allows users to screen a project area for potential impacts to threatened, endangered, and special concern species and their habitats. Applicants can run a 'Project Report' on this tool and share these results as part of the Pre-Application notification to help with the initial review.

All submitted grant applications are reviewed and evaluated by CPW wildlife staff for potential wildlife impacts. Specific wildlife and natural resource questions are incorporated into all grant categories scoring criteria. Below you will find the wildlife review criteria that CPW Staff will use to evaluate trail grant applications to help you know what to expect during the full application review.

Please reach out trails@state.co.us with any questions about the wildlife impact assessment guidelines or process.

Wildlife Review Criteria

- **Special Status Species**: Known (or likely) special status species present on the proposed project site.
  - Federally or State listed threatened, and/or endangered species
  - Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan
- **Habitats and their Values:** Known important, productive or pristine wildlife habitat in the project area.
  - Impacts to crucial or limiting wildlife habitat(s) for a particular species (e.g. winter ranges, migration routes, or areas with high value for nesting, feeding, or birthing).
  - Existing developments and development trends that place the proposed trail project in a landscape context. This may include existing human impacts, existing land uses that may already have degraded habitat values, or proximity to existing roads or transmission lines.

- **Wildlife Impacts:** Short-term (during project activity) and/or long-term impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.
  - Extent to which potential spatial and temporal impacts to wildlife exist;
  - Population trends for impacted species and habitats in the project area and CPW population objectives for those species; and
  - Appropriate avoidance, minimization, mitigation measures to address impacts and population objectives to ensure consistency with CPW's Mission.

- **Environmental Compliance:** Required regulatory compliance, applicable permits and/or agency concurrent procedures.
  - Migratory Bird Treaty Act/Eagle Act
  - Compliance with CPW Raptor Buffer Guidelines
  - Concurrence from USFWS for effect determinations
  - US Army Corps of Engineers 404 permits

- **Education/Interpretation:** Identify project potential for education and/or interpretation.
  - Opportunity or need to educate recreationists through environmental education interpretation or programs
  - Opportunity for watchable wildlife

- **Recommended Design Features and Mitigation:** Summary of design features and other recommended measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to known wildlife species and habitats from proposed trail development, such as:
  - Alternative design or trail route selection to avoid specific habitats or sensitive areas
  - Consolidation of routes or limits on trail density
  - Screening of users from sensitive areas or channeling use through less sensitive areas
  - Incorporation of buffers around sensitive wildlife features (e.g. active nests, leks, den sites)
  - Timing of construction/maintenance activities during sensitive periods
  - Seasonal closures during sensitive periods
  - Improvement (i.e., restoration) of impacted habitat areas
  - Habitat replacement for unavoidable impacts