

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

# Strategic Plan Progress Report

FY 2018-19 & FY 2019-20



# Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

Last year, I wrote my first Director’s introductory letter for our *Strategic Plan Progress Report*. In that letter, I noted that Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff should use this plan to guide our work and ensure we as an agency were ready to meet any future challenges head-on. Little did any of us realize exactly how much that would be needed in 2020.

With health, social and weather-related events all impacting our business, our workplaces and our home lives simultaneously, we saw time and time again how much our state’s natural resources, our recreational opportunities, and this agency matter to the people of Colorado. And I could not be prouder of how this dedicated staff rose up to the challenges and worked tirelessly to achieve our mission, providing a strong level of stability when it was in short supply.

The boom in outdoor visitation and recreation seen in the spring and summer months widely exposed to the world what those of us in the conservation field have long known; the delicate balancing act between our desire for outdoor recreation and the necessary conservation of our resources is precarious, exposing real concerns and requiring strong action. We know that it is up to all of us today to ensure that our precious lands, waters and wildlife are cared for to ensure they remain for generations of Coloradans to be able to enjoy them.

We’ve all played a role in implementing the Operational Goals of this Strategic Plan, and I am pleased to share the progress we’ve made toward our six goals. We’ve secured access and improved habitat for wildlife. We’ve expanded our available technologies and are preparing to open Fishers Peak State Park. We’re working to develop additional funding sources while reimagining our workforce and workspaces. We’ve attracted well-qualified and diverse applicants to our open jobs while seeing low turnover. We’ve communicated extensively with the public through engagement opportunities and a variety of public information and marketing campaigns. And, of course, we continued to work through season after season of connecting people to the Colorado outdoors.

Our Strategic Plan Progress Report shows us the data and details about the work we’ve accomplished toward that balance over the past two years. However, the real work happens on the ground, and I want to thank our entire CPW family for the effort, the hours, the problem solving and the flexibility that tells the true story behind these metrics. The work we do is not easy, but it matters. Your determination in advancing these strategic goals is recognized, especially as we worked to serve our mission in the face of great stress - on our neighbors, our families, our customers, our coworkers and ourselves. Take pride in your work, and look forward to meeting the challenges and turn them into opportunities to exceed!



**COVER:** Yellow-bellied marmot family, © Dustin Duskocil, CPW

## VISION

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is a national leader in wildlife management, conservation and sustainable outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

## MISSION

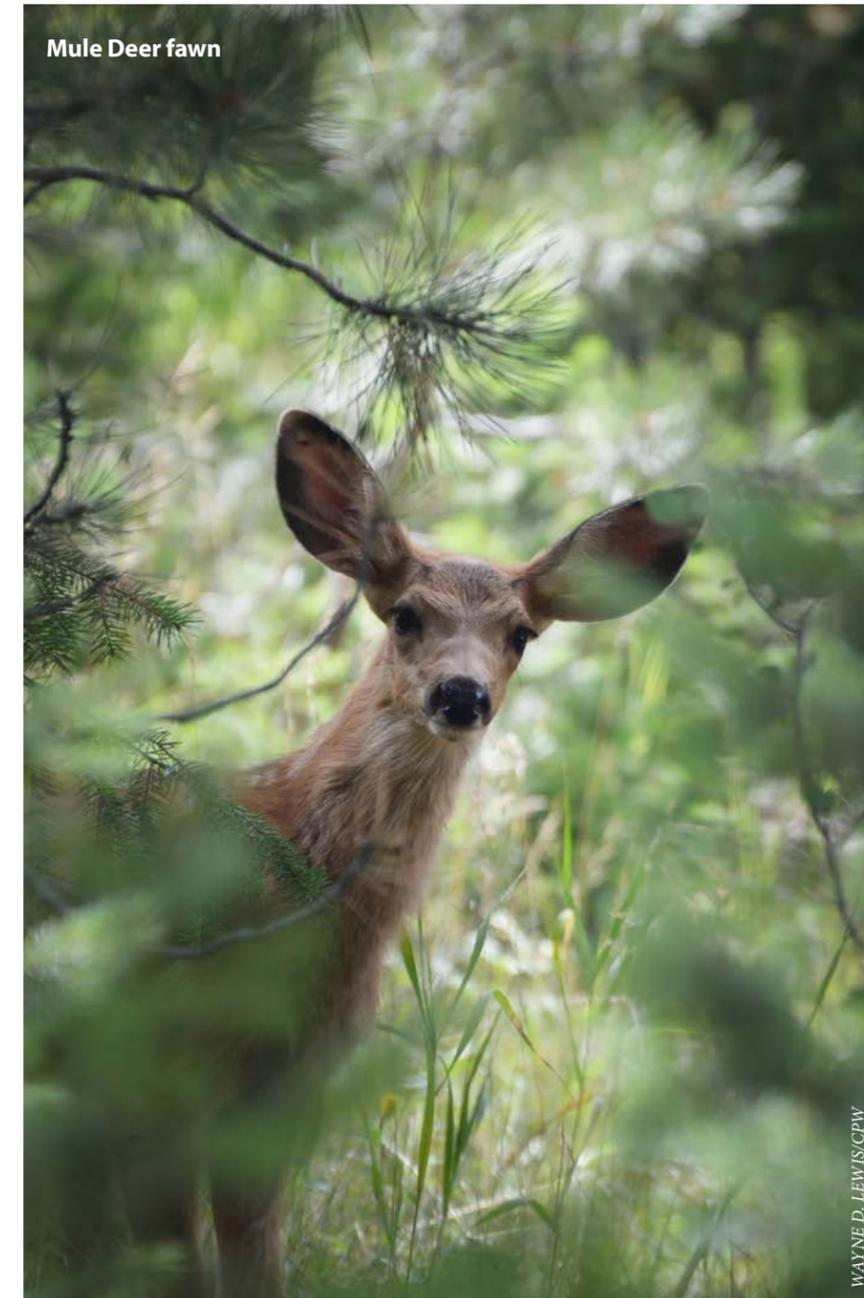
To perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state park system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado’s natural resources. (C.R.S. 33-9-101)

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the dedicated Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff members who helped develop the Strategic Plan and are leading the implementation of the Operational Plans. We are grateful for their ongoing efforts to track and report the outcomes and impacts of our work.

We would also like to thank CPW’s Public Information Unit for their writing and editing assistance, as well as CPW’s Marketing Unit for their help designing the format of this report.

Finally, we would like to thank CPW’s Leadership Team and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission for their important feedback and support throughout the process of creating and implementing the Strategic Plan.



## CPW Commission

- Marvin McDaniel, *Chair*
- Carrie Besnette Hauser, *Vice-Chair*
- Marie Haskett, *Secretary*
- Taishya Adams
- Betsy Blecha
- Charles Garcia
- Dallas May
- Duke Phillips IV
- Luke B. Schafer
- James Jay Tutchton
- Eden Vardy

## CPW Leadership Team

- Dan Prenzlow, *Director*
- Brett Ackerman, *Southeast Region Manager*
- Cory Chick, *Southwest Region Manager*
- Reid DeWalt, *Assistant Director for Aquatic, Terrestrial and Natural Resources*
- Heather Dugan, *Assistant Director for Field Services*
- Mark Leslie, *Northeast Region Manager*
- JT Romatzke, *Northwest Region Manager*
- Justin Rutter, *Chief Financial Officer – Financial and Capital Services*
- Lauren Truitt, *Assistant Director for Information and Education*
- Jeff Ver Steeg, *Assistant Director for Research, Policy & Planning*

## Introduction

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Strategic Plan (Plan), finalized in November 2015, provides a roadmap for achieving the agency's vision and mission through concrete goals and objectives. The public, stakeholders, partners, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission, and CPW staff participated in shaping the vision of CPW and the development of the Plan.

The Plan's goals, objectives, and strategies are intended to be updated as needed. To implement the Plan, CPW developed a two-year Operational Plan for FY 2016-2017 and FY 2017-2018 and subsequent two-year operational plan for FY 2018-2019 and FY 2019-2020, with actionable sub-objectives and measurable metrics. This report provides a snapshot of CPW's work by highlighting our accomplishments on 58 sub-objectives during the two-year FY 18/19 – FY 19/20 Operational Plan period.

The Plan identifies six goals that the agency will work towards in order to achieve CPW's mission and vision. The six Plan goals are:

1. Conserve wildlife habitat to ensure healthy sustainable populations and ecosystems
2. Manage state parks for world-class outdoor recreation
3. Achieve and maintain financial sustainability
4. Maintain dedicated personnel and volunteers
5. Increase awareness and trust for CPW
6. Connect people to Colorado's outdoors



## Goal Achievements

The following pages highlight progress made through the implementation of CPW's Strategic Plan. These accomplishments occurred between July 2018 and June 2020, unless otherwise specified. Almost 90% of CPW's sub-objectives were fully completed during the Operational Plan reporting period. Of the seven sub-objectives not fully completed, significant progress was made and, in most instances, the work will continue in the next Operational Plan period (FY 20/21 – FY 21/22). Some sub-objectives also represent CPW's ongoing operations and therefore will carry over into the next Operational Plan period. Factors impacting those sub-objectives not being fully completed include COVID-19, key employee turnover, and competing priorities for resources and funding.

### Goal 1: Conserve wildlife and habitat

#### Manage sustainable populations of game and nongame species to support fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife-viewing opportunities

Perpetuating the wildlife resources of the state is at the core of CPW's mission. Herd management plans (HMPs) are a tool used to manage and achieve certain population and sex ratio objectives among big game species, and a means by which agency personnel balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public's demand for wildlife recreational opportunities. HMPs integrate CPW's objectives with the concerns and ideas of land management agencies and interested members of the public. These plans, which are updated every 10 years, directly support the number of hunting licenses offered to the public and season structures. During the last two years, CPW biologists have completed a total of 25 HMPs. With a schedule for ongoing completion of HMPs and a streamlined process in place, work on this important goal will continue into the next Operational Plan, which runs from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022.

Also essential to increasing and sustaining healthy herd populations is work to reduce and limit the prevalence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease found in deer, elk and moose in Colorado. Published in 2019, the CWD Response Plan requires CWD testing across many areas of the state to generate reliable estimates of CWD prevalence in herd populations and implement management actions should the prevalence of CWD in adult male deer exceed 5% of the herd population. As of March 2020, CPW wildlife managers are taking actions to reduce disease prevalence in more than 18 herds that have high disease prevalence. It is likely that the earliest a change in prevalence will be detected in some herds is 2022. Reducing CWD in ungulate herds ensures that wildlife populations persist through use of science, habitat preservation, harvest, and other management tools. CWD management also informs HMPs and annual license quota setting, further supporting the reduction of CWD prevalence among big game populations over the next 10 years. CPW's efforts to reduce CWD will help to safeguard Colorado's deer, elk and moose herds for future generations.

Similarly, CPW's aquatic biologists regularly evaluate and update the state's fishery management strategies. CPW conducts hundreds of surveys on lakes and streams each year. The collected data is used to track fish population trends, evaluate the effectiveness of management actions such as stocking and regulations, and establish realistic management goals for a given lake or stream. High priority and brood waters such as Chatfield, Pueblo, Horsetooth, and the Gunnison River are surveyed annually while smaller, more remote, or lightly used lakes or streams may only be surveyed once every 5 to 10 years. Through the use of fishery management survey summaries, CPW communicates with anglers about the status of the fishery and management goals for specific waters. Statewide, in FY 19 and FY 20, CPW's biologists completed a total of 111 out of 127 fishery management summaries, far surpassing the target of 50% completion.

#### Preserve and enhance diverse habitat

Healthy and functioning habitats sustain the wildlife and aquatic resources of the state. Ensuring resilient wildlife populations and ecosystems requires conservation and enhancement of priority habitat. One of the tools that CPW uses to conserve habitat is the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP); a grant program that helps landowners voluntarily conserve private land containing vital habitats through conservation ease-

ments. The CWHP was reinstated in FY 19, and in FY 20, the CPW Real Estate Section secured conservation easements on over 22,100 acres of land. The program is open to any Colorado landowner who would like to conserve their land, or allow public access, in line with priorities approved by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission.

CPW Terrestrial Section staff work to restore and improve priority habitat conditions across the state to meet CPW wildlife population objectives. In order to track progress, staff uses a statewide habitat database to monitor habitat improvement and treatment efforts. During FY 19 and FY 20, CPW's habitat work included restoring or enhancing over 13,000 acres of habitat within big game winter range that jointly targeted 9,110 acres of sage-grouse and 680 acres of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitats and over 20,000 acres of big game habitat as a part of the Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy. In addition, nearly 6,200 acres of wetland habitat were improved, far exceeding the goal of improving 1,000 acres each year. Nearly reaching the goal of improving 800 acres of small game habitat per year through the Corners for Conservation Program, over 1,500 acres were improved through the enrollment of 185 corners during this operational plan period, bringing the program's four-year total to over 3,300 acres of cultivated land that has been converted to high-quality wildlife habitat.

Enhancing aquatic habitat in streams, lakes and reservoirs and improving fish passage promotes healthier, self-sustaining fish populations as well as expanded opportunities for anglers to enjoy the state's fisheries. During FY 19 and FY 20, in cooperation with partner groups and agencies, CPW's Aquatics staff completed a total of eight stream habitat improvement projects, five lake/reservoir habitat improvement projects, and four large fish passage projects. This work exceeds the goal of completing a total of four stream habitat projects and four fish passage projects by June 2020.



### **Manage and monitor species of greatest conservation need while working with partners to maintain viable populations**

Providing for non-game species to thrive includes careful land use, focused research, and cooperative partnerships. By balancing species-specific needs with policy requirements and broad, habitat-based projects, CPW effectively manages all of Colorado's wildlife, whether at-risk or thriving.

During the last two years, CPW worked along with partners to conserve non-game species and habitat through efforts including research, population status monitoring and reintroduction, and habitat protection and restoration benefitting threatened and endangered species. These actions enable CPW to proactively gather information and implement conservation activities to prevent the need to list species in the future. Ongoing investigation of population status of several priority species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) are underway including the Canada lynx, black rail, pinyon jay, brown-capped rosy-finch, and lesser prairie-chicken, as well as ongoing implementation of sylvatic plague management to benefit black-footed ferrets, black-tailed prairie dogs, Gunnison prairie dogs, white-tailed prairie dogs and species which depend on prairie dog-influenced ecosystems. While not quite meeting the operational plan metric to complete population monitoring and/or status assessments for 60 terrestrial SGCN per year, CPW completed 65 of these population monitoring/status assessments during the two year period. Additionally, CPW implemented disease monitoring and management programs for 12 SGCN and implemented translocation projects for three SGCN, exceeding the goals for both of these metrics.

Collaboration with partners including federal and state agencies, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations, is critical for conservation planning and implementation for species of greatest conservation need. Over the last two years, CPW participated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners to develop Species Status Assessments and Recovery Plans for several priority species including Gunnison sage-grouse, lesser prairie-chicken, white-tailed ptarmigan, and black rail. Additionally, CPW actively works in coordination with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and



private landowners to enhance wildlife habitat enrolled in CRP. The CRP establishes restored grassland habitat on privately owned, previously farmed, lands to address soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat. Private lands enrolled in CRP are critical to many species in Colorado, including lesser prairie-chickens, greater prairie-chickens, and sharp-tailed grouse. CPW's goal was to participate in collaborative planning and partnership processes for 10 terrestrial SGCN over the two year operational plan period; staff exceeded this expectation by participating in collaborative processes for 14 terrestrial SGCN.

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 management efficiency of existing managed wetlands, remove non-native invasive vegetation and replace with native vegetation, manage invasive cattail growth in wetlands, restore riparian habitat impacted by mining, and reconnect incised creeks with their floodplains. These projects impact state wildlife areas and state parks and benefit species of greatest conservation need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan including greater sand-hill crane, northern leopard frogs, boreal toads, western yellow-billed cuckoo, bluehead sucker, brassy minnow, and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Over the last two years, CPW Aquatics staff has been working to create and expand native cutthroat trout populations. Expanding native cutthroat trout populations, or establishing new ones, is critical to the conservation work of these species. During this timeframe, CPW biologists and partners were able to create or expand 13 cutthroat populations, exceeding the goal of creating or expanding 10 populations. Additionally, efforts were taken to prevent non-native fish populations from returning to cutthroat trout streams, three streams were stocked with cutthroat trout for the first time, and two new populations were discovered and protected. These projects take considerable time to plan, involving many different parts of the agency, as well as a large group of volunteers and partners.

#### **Protect and enhance water resources for fish and wildlife populations**

Maintaining and securing water rights is important for perpetuating fish and wildlife, sustaining habitat, and providing water-based recreation across Colorado. Providing a reliable and adequate water supply helps ensure that high-quality hunting, angling and recreational opportunities continue in Colorado. In FY 19 and FY 20, CPW Water Section staff filed water court applications to secure water rights decrees on three CPW hatcheries/state fish units (Mt. Shavano, Wray, and Chatfield), four state wildlife areas (Basalt, Yampa Ponds, Van Tuyl, and Radium), and five state parks (Mueller, Staunton, St. Vrain, Yampa River, and Rifle Gap). Water right filings are typically multi-year efforts, and virtually all of CPW's water rights applications are ultimately awarded a decree.



**Colorado River Cutthroat Trout  
(San Juan lineage)**

KEVIN ROGERS/CPW

CPW also works to protect and restore water quality for wildlife habitat, fisheries, and water-based recreation through participation in Colorado Clean Water Act processes including rulemaking and administrative action hearings where decisions regarding water quality are being made. The efforts of Water Section staff ensure that CPW's interests and views are considered when the Water Quality Control Commission makes important policy decisions that affect the agency's mission. Over the last two years, staff generally secured CPW's preferred outcomes through these hearings. The Water Section also plays a key role in coordinating CPW's response to spills of pollutants, related fish kills, and toxic algal blooms.

A key part of maintaining healthy fisheries for current and future generations is keeping water in Colorado's rivers. This is known as instream flow protection. The establishment of minimum instream flow water right protections within Colorado's water law system is paramount to this work. Although instream flow water rights can sometimes be controversial, the Water Section coordinates CPW's efforts to find mutually beneficial solutions with stakeholders and consistently works to sharpen their focus on better communication and coordination regarding instream flow proposals with regional CPW staff and stakeholders. During FY 19 and FY 20, Water Section staff collected and analyzed data on a total of 74 different stream cross sections for recommendation to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) for instream flow protection; of these, nine were recommended to the CWCB for protection during the operational plan period. Due to changes in FY 20 to the data collection methodology which makes the process more rigorous, a number of analyzed stream sections pending recommendation to the CWCB will resurface in the coming years. As a result of that work, CPW secured permanent instream flow protection for a stream containing one of the only known populations of San Juan lineage Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. Also during FY 20, the Water Section conducted an outreach process with regional CPW staff, county commissioners, private landowners and water user interests to ensure that CPW is doing its due diligence to build consensus on instream flows, wherever possible.

Finally, without a reliable source of water, Colorado's state parks stand to lose the exceptional amenities and access to water-based recreation that so many visitors enjoy. Because Colorado's water demands typically exceed available supplies, securing and maintaining water rights for aquatic habitat and water-based recreation opportunities in Colorado presents significant technical, legal, and policy challenges. Yet, in spite of these challenges, CPW Water



Sylvan Lake State Park

DUSTIN DOSKOCIL/CPW

Section staff worked hard during FY 19 and FY 20 to ensure that all existing water agreements for state parks were renewed and remained intact, helping to ensure that high quality angling and aquatic recreation opportunities continue at Colorado's state parks, and in turn, promoting park visitation, license sales, and increasing public engagement in CPW's mission and stewardship.

### Conduct research and monitoring to inform management decisions

To assist with conserving wildlife and habitat in a scientifically sound and effective way, CPW's research scientists conduct rigorous applied research on priority management issues. Between FY 19 and FY 20, CPW's research scientists produced a total of 86 peer-reviewed publications, 52 annual reports, and 23 Federal Aid reports on a variety of topics including investigations on avian, aquatic, and mammal species, as well as wildlife health management issues and human dimensions topics. In addition, CPW researchers work closely with managers to interpret, communicate, and implement research findings. A CPW technical report describing the historic contributions of research in informing management actions was also completed and distributed. Through this resource, managers and policy makers can better understand and document how CPW research has contributed to management decisions. During the next operational plan period, researchers will produce an annual fact sheet highlighting recent use and implementation of research results in management practices and policies.

### Goal 2: Manage state parks for world-class outdoor recreation

#### Manage facilities and outdoor recreation amenities within state parks to provide positive experiences for Coloradans and visitors

CPW invests substantial resources each year in the maintenance of state parks, wildlife areas, and its many outdoor amenities from campsites to beaches to picnic areas, wildlife viewing stations, and fish hatcheries. In order to better prepare for future maintenance needs, during FY 19 and FY 20, CPW's Capital Development Section created a buildings and facilities inventory to determine existing asset conditions that will allow the agency to prioritize maintenance needs and funding levels into the future. Over the last year, all buildings and components owned by CPW were entered into the controlled maintenance asset tracking system and Parks and Wildlife Technicians across the state were trained on the use of the system, including what should



be reported and how the scoring criteria impacts project prioritization for maintenance. This system enables CPW staff to report on the level of maintenance each facility needs statewide and communicate the costs associated with upkeep and replacement of assets. Also in FY 20, CPW finished documenting the underground utilities at 40 state parks, helping to address the maintenance backlog and informing the long term strategic plan. CPW continues to commit resources to address obvious or long-term maintenance issues.

Safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation at Colorado's state parks depends on healthy, well-maintained landscapes and proactive natural and cultural resource management. The ecological health of state parks becomes especially important as visitors increasingly focus on wildlife watching and nature-based recreation. The CPW Resource Stewardship Section is responsible for the collection of resource information on all Colorado state parks through surveys and data collection and the management of this information in a meaningful and accessible way. During the last two years, the Resource Stewardship Section performed 51 resource inventories at several state parks to catalogue bird species, reptiles and amphibians, and identify noxious weeds. The Section also performed habitat mapping and habitat condition assessments. Citizen science projects such as iNaturalist and the Raptor Monitoring Program, which engage and leverage volunteer resources to assist with species and natural resource monitoring, are also crucial and contribute to inventory efforts. iNaturalist, an app through which state park visitors submit observations of different species of plants and animals, has now received over 28,059 submissions for more than 3,000 observed species from nearly 2,000 citizen scientists. The Raptor Monitoring Program has expanded to 32 state parks and has more than 230 registered participants logging over 7,889 data points in the last year alone. Data gathered from these projects and surveys inform state park management and development decisions that incorporate conservation actions for species of conservation interest and their habitats, as well as the development of a Resource Stewardship Plan for each state park. These citizen scientist programs have adapted to COVID-19 restrictions by creating online training and tutorials to help train and support volunteers.

During FY 20, the Resource Stewardship Section was also highly involved in the Fishers Peak State Park planning processes. Efforts included participation in planning processes with the project partners including the The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land, as well as participating in the CPW master



planning process. The Section has worked with partners to create a robust foundation of natural resource information to support habitat and species conservation at the park. Additionally, the Section has begun cultural resource inventory work and is beginning to frame paleontological surveys, geological surveys, and a geologic hazards assessment including fault lines, landslide areas, and rock fall areas for the property.

#### Explore fiscally sound real estate opportunities for new or expanded state parks

In FY 20, the Fishers Peak State Park property was purchased through a collaboration between the City of Trinidad, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and CPW. The objective of the collaboration between the project partners is to conserve, evaluate and plan the sustainable use of the property for the enjoyment of the public while perpetuating the natural resources on the property.

Demand for state parks continues to grow and in FY 19, CPW developed criteria to use when considering properties for new state parks or expanding existing state parks. Input from CPW partners, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission and the comments of around 1,000 members of the public informed the criteria. Broadly, the Future State Parks Criteria consider opportunities for outstanding nature-based recreation, conservation of Colorado's special places, contribution to a financially sustainable parks system, and meeting the evolving interests of Colorado's growing population.

In FY 20, CPW developed a process and tools to help identify potential new properties for expanding the state parks system. To assist in this process, CPW created an online map that provides a visual tool for learning how potential new park properties meet the Future State Parks Criteria. CPW expects to issue a call for nominations of new state park properties in the coming year, with the criteria applied to evaluate the nominations.



#### Market the special qualities of Colorado's state parks

Colorado state parks represent one of the most successful park system models in the western United States. Hosting events such as the 2019 Rocky Mountain State Parks Executive Conference (RMSPEC) allows CPW to demonstrate Colorado's success stories to other states, while also helping the agency grow by learning from the experiences of other park systems. The 2019 RMSPEC included field trips and panel discussions tailored to orient key state park system leaders from across the western United States to many aspects of Colorado's state park system. A post-conference survey revealed that 81% of participants ranked their conference experience as "excellent," serving as an important tool for promoting Colorado parks' unique qualities and effective management.

#### Enhance technology to provide accessible information and parks products

CPW invests significant resources in providing outstanding customer service and excellent facilities throughout its state parks. In line with this commitment, CPW is taking steps to maintain and manage recreational opportunities at state parks, including increasing accessibility of information and parks products. At the outset of this operational plan period, CPW intended to improve the way visitation is counted at state parks. Unfortunately, this metric was not fully completed during the operational plan period and work on improving visitation data will continue during the next plan period.

During the last two years, CPW equipped all 42 state parks to be available for live reservations for camping, allowing visitors to reserve a site from six months in advance up until the day of their arrival by logging onto cpwshop.com or calling CPW. CPW further expanded the functionality of cpwshop.com to allow customers to renew vehicle and vessel registrations online. Additionally, 52 self-service kiosk stations were installed across 26 state parks, allowing customers to purchase passes at any time of day and even to make donations to CPW when using the kiosks for purchases. Finally, CPW implemented a reservation system at select state parks and wildlife areas for big and small game hunting. CPW continues to identify ways to increase customer service and provide streamlined access to parks products. For deployment in FY 21, CPW is exploring the addition of electronic products such as e-licenses and e-passes to cpwshop.com.



### Goal 3: Achieve and maintain financial sustainability

#### Identify potential new and broader sources of funding

CPW has been exploring ways to achieve and maintain financial sustainability by expanding the agency's relevance to a broader audience and identifying new sources of revenue. The work completed over the last two years helps lay the foundation for achieving these objectives.

In October 2018, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and CPW completed the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Future Funding Study. This study identified and evaluated potential new funding mechanisms for CPW, and also brought to light the need to expand CPW's relevance with a larger group of non-consumptive users in gaining support for the new funding mechanisms. During FY 20, CPW hired the marketing firm Cactus to conduct a relevancy study. The relevancy study established public attitudes towards CPW and identified messaging that is most likely to encourage people to take actions that support the agency's work and mission. Cactus also provided an engagement plan that CPW will use to build support for new sources of funding by targeting key audiences and stakeholders. This work also helps achieve CPW Strategic Plan Goal 5 by increasing awareness and trust for CPW, as well as contributing to the implementation of Governor Polis' Wildly Important Goal around sustainable funding for parks and wildlife.

#### Maintain existing sources of funding

CPW's Financial Services staff continually monitor expenditures and revenue to ensure the division is operating within its means. Maintaining current sources of revenue and understanding expenditure needs are critical to managing budgetary pressures. CPW does not receive tax funds and is dependent upon revenue from the sale of licenses and permits, fees, and grant funding. Many of CPW's revenue sources are impacted by external factors, most notably weather, that cannot be changed through CPW intervention. As a result, it is important that CPW is able to recognize pending issues quickly and be responsive with operations. Strong budget and financial management practices support CPW's ability to maintain and effectively manage its current sources of funding.

Reliable financial modeling is fundamental to determining CPW's fiscal position and capacity for funding strategic plan goals, as well as equipping staff to understand the financial implications of decisions and establish reasonable priorities. Over the last two years, CPW Financial Services staff has worked with the vendor of the Integrated Parks and Wildlife System (IPAWS), which is used to sell CPW products, to facilitate consistent reporting that allows staff to reconcile cash flows and product volumes with the state's financial system, Colorado Operations Resource Engine (CORE). These financial data are now readily available from IPAWS to populate reports presented to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission and for other internal and external uses of CPW's financial data. Originally, this goal had encompassed tracking progress towards improving CPW's budget projections, including identifying and modeling the top five factors impacting CPW's budget. However, because the data to conduct these types of analyses were not available through IPAWS for the majority of the operational plan period, staff had the opportunity to reconfigure the objective in ways that are more relevant to the needs of the agency and the Commission and better suited for diagnostic purposes.

#### Deploy financial and workforce resources responsibly

The efficient use of financial and other resources in achieving CPW's priorities contributes to the agency's ability to achieve and maintain financial sustainability over time.

During FY 19 and FY 20, Financial Services staff worked with the CPW Leadership Team to gauge spending authority and cash available to fund budget requests and inform the annual funding plan. As a result, the agency was able to refinance several activities to maximize federal funding while reducing the number of grants, simplifying grant writing and reporting processes while making better use of Great Outdoors Colorado funding. Given the complexities of CPW's various funding sources, staff works strategically to ensure that the agency's most restrictive sources of funding are maximized, freeing up less restrictive resources to support agency priorities.

Additionally, CPW's Budget Unit continues to reinforce the importance of multi-year budgeting to staff, highlighting the usefulness of this approach in Leadership Team decision making when determining resource distribution throughout the agency. As of FY 20, all annual and multi-year agency budgets have been documented, communicated and approved through the Advantage360 tool, facilitating a more transparent and consistent process. The addition of multi-year budget information in Advantage360 also enables Financial Services to more accurately estimate cash fund balances and spending authority availability. Continuing to refine this process will lead to better allocation decisions, resulting in more efficient and effective use of resources. Finally, Financial Services will develop materials during the next operational plan period to better inform staff about financial structures and costs associated with parks and wildlife operations, further contributing to informed and timely budgeting decisions.

### Goal 4: Maintain dedicated personnel and volunteers

#### Capitalize on the knowledge and experience of all personnel

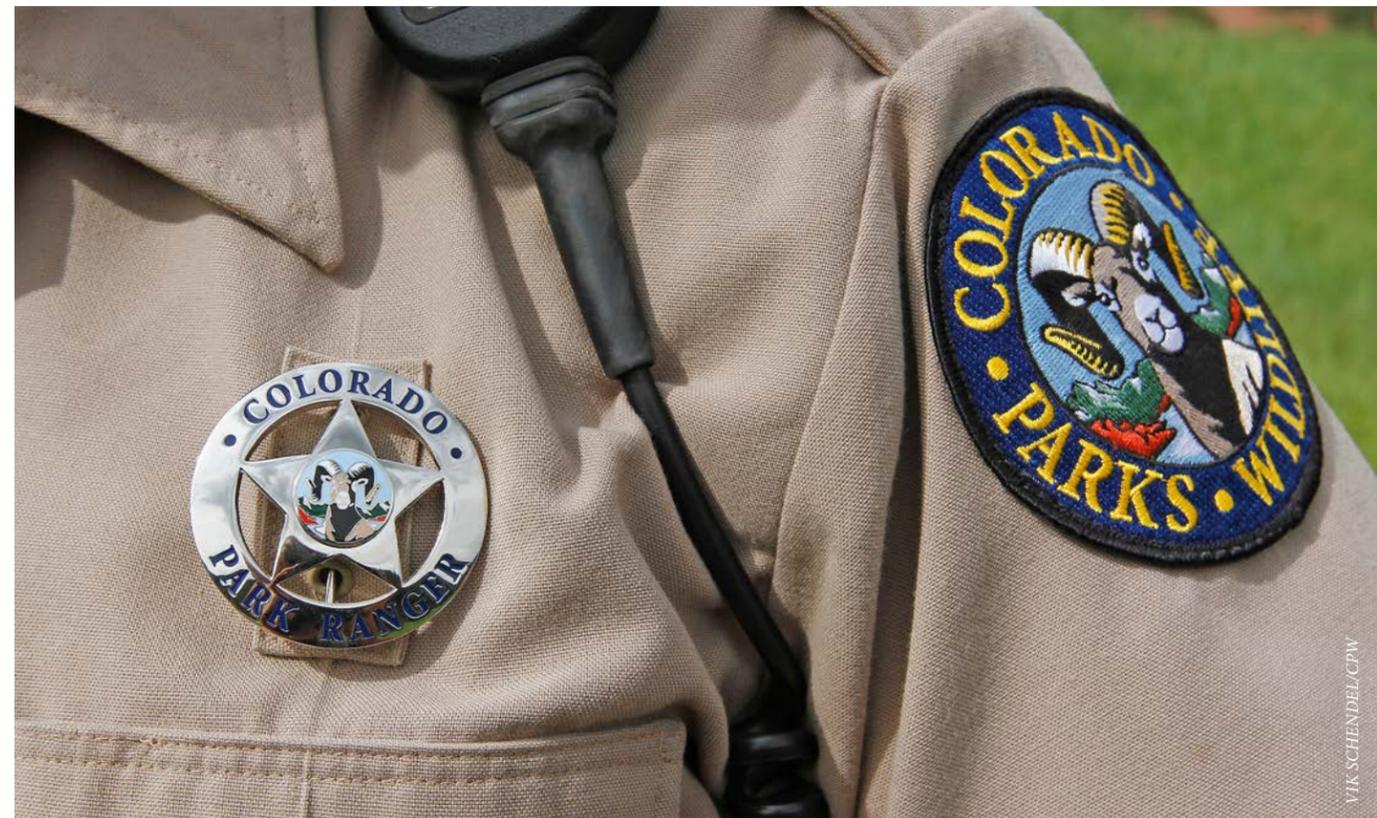
Employees need to feel a sense of belonging and engagement to perform their best and reach their full potential in the workplace. A means of creating an environment that aligns with these values is through effective and consistent internal communication. An informed staff helps build connections and trust with CPW's mission and direction. Ongoing communication also helps staff understand what decisions are being made, the path the agency is taking and the goals and objectives of the Leadership Team. CPW continues to improve communication from the Leadership Team, as well as collaborate with every Section, Branch, and Region to distribute information through the internal newsletter. To facilitate better information sharing, all customer service representatives receive CPW press releases so they are not surprised by customer questions regarding agency operations. The agency also works proactively on internal communication prior to media coverage, Commission rule making or other major agency events and efforts. CPW has also developed and is implementing internal communication guidelines so that all staff are effective in communicating about CPW's mission and objectives in a personal but coordinated way. These efforts appear to be working, as the most recent Employee Development survey indicated a 16% improvement in overall satisfaction with internal communications at CPW, exceeding the goal of 5% improvement over the 2016 survey results. Further, in the 2019 Department of Personnel (DPA) Employee Engagement Survey, for those questions related to the engagement index, 77% of DNR employees



indicated positive responses, an improvement of 4% from survey responses in 2017 and a 9% improvement from survey responses in 2015, far exceeding the operational plan target of 3% improvement in survey responses related to employee engagement.

### Recruit and develop a highly qualified and diverse workforce

CPW regularly looks for ways to improve its efforts around the recruitment of quality employees. The CPW Organizational Development Section has been working closely with DNR's Human Resources team to discuss ways to open more opportunities for recruitment of talented employees by broadening the minimum qualifications, degree requirements, and acknowledging additional experiences and abilities candidates bring to the job. Over the last year, CPW revised the minimum qualifications for certain entry-level positions to allow for a greater variety of applicants. Staff in the Organizational Development Section are also looking at other classifications to ensure effective recruiting for all job levels. Although a candidate may not have specific degrees historically requested, their experience in the workforce could bring more rich experiences needed for CPW's success. Organizational Development Section staff will be working with hiring managers on training for more well-rounded hiring practices while continuing to expand outreach on job opportunities and locations where jobs are marketed. Specific to the Park Manager role, CPW expanded the types of degrees that will be accepted for the position. Over the last two years, CPW has seen a significant increase in the number of qualified applicants for the Park Manager position, much of which is likely attributed to the new qualification standards. In FY 20, the number of qualified applicants for this position increased 30% over FY 19. Unfortunately, the Park Ranger Prep Academy, which began in FY 19, was cancelled as a result of COVID-19 restrictions; however, prior to its cancellation, CPW received 30 applications and accepted 16 applicants to the FY 20 program. CPW also saw an impressive increase in the number of qualified applicants for the District Wildlife Manager (DWM) position and the Hatchery Technician (HT) position, other challenging positions to fill, with the number of qualified applicants for the DWM position growing 34% from FY 19 to FY 20 and the number of qualified applicants for the HT position growing by 12% during the same



VIK SCHEIDEL/CPW

timeframe.

In addition, CPW continues to identify ways to broaden and diversify its paid internship programs as a means to recruit future employees. Modifications to the Youth Internship Program are underway that will provide more pathways to employment within natural resource careers for young adults. CPW is also working to approve a Career and Technology Education certificate that will provide high school students with a better understanding of possible career options in natural resources and offer participants a head start on developing the knowledge and skills needed for these careers. This certificate program is authorized through the Colorado Department of Education and it is CPW's goal to help build more robust programs with the Junior College system and college systems to further the agency's future recruitment goals.

CPW continues to work with DNR and DNR Human Resources in aligning efforts to ensure that the agency's personnel reflects the demographics of Colorado. Recruiting and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds within CPW's workforce is imperative to remaining relevant to all Coloradans and a specific area of focus under DNR's Wildly Important Goal on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and within CPW's Operational Plans. During FY 21, CPW will be working with DNR to roll out mandatory EDI training to all staff as well as the development of a mentorship program to support new employees while helping current staff understand the importance of inclusive leadership principles throughout the agency. CPW is also working with DNR to help tell the full story of Colorado's rich cultural background in its work with the public through interpretive programs and signage and through training of staff and volunteers.

CPW takes seriously the importance of investing in professional development and training for its employees as a way to retain and strengthen the workforce. The Organizational Development Section works hard to make training and professional development available to all CPW staff members. From investments in the Daniel's Leadership Program in partnership with the University of Denver to staff in-service opportuni-



CRYSTAL EGLI/CPW

ties, this team dedicates their time to ensuring CPW staff have the skillsets they need and want to succeed in their jobs. Throughout the entire agency it is critical to provide staff the support and time to take part in professional growth opportunities. Managers and Leadership Team members regularly send staff to conferences, workshops, and trainings to expand understanding and the use of best practices throughout the industry. CPW also works with experts in many fields to ensure that agency staff have access to job related and industry focused opportunities, including working alongside their counterparts in other states. Through this collaborative approach, CPW stays on top of evolving trends in natural resource and recreation management. Training programs are reviewed every year to make sure they are meeting the needs of staff and helping CPW obtain its goals and objectives. As indicated in the most recent Employee Development survey, 80% of employees reported receiving training and CPW has seen a 37% increase in supervisor support for providing training opportunities. In post-training evaluations completed by staff, over 85% of employees responded that the course was applicable to their position and needs, which meets the goal for this operational plan sub-objective.

#### **Attract inspired volunteers committed to CPW's mission**

The substantial contributions of CPW's volunteers cannot be overstated, as they help to expand the agency's services and capacity across the state. A dedicated and diverse pool of both paid staff and unpaid volunteers is essential to achieving CPW's mission, and the talent, passion, and budget savings the agency receives from volunteer contributions is invaluable. In FY 20, CPW engaged over 4,476 volunteers who contributed more than 304,715 hours of time. That is an equivalent of 146 full-time employees or nearly \$9.0 million. Due to COVID-19, CPW saw a 27% average decrease in volunteer engagement in FY 2020 compared to FY 2019. While this is significant, CPW fared well compared to some organizations that ceased most or all of their volunteer engagement. Despite the limitations of the pandemic, program staff worked quickly to communicate and pivot the Volunteer Program by sending bi-weekly newsletters to volunteers to share updates, hosted virtual trivia and town hall events to keep in touch with volunteers, and hired a diversity, equity and inclusion consultant who provided two virtual sessions on Creating a Welcoming Environment in Outdoor Spaces. CPW also found ways to safely involve community members through modified safety protocols for traditional roles and emphasizing individual or solitary projects.

During FY 19 and FY 20, the Volunteer Program also took steps towards better incorporating volunteers into CPW activities including updating the volunteer handbook and staff manual. There are about 200 CPW staff who work with volunteers across the state. Offering skill building and professional development for those staff to effectively engage volunteers is critical to volunteers' experiences. As such, two trainings were offered to CPW staff who work with volunteers, as well as "office hours" to provide an avenue for discussion and troubleshooting, and to provide informal training on topics such as common volunteer trends, strategies for recruiting camp hosts, and how the Fair Labor Standards Act applies to volunteers.

Program staff conducted the annual survey of volunteers' experiences and is developing ways to refine not only operations and strategies, but increase the diversity represented by CPW's volunteers to more closely reflect Colorado's demographics. Overall, 89% of respondents said they are satisfied with their volunteer experience with CPW and 92% said they feel that their efforts make a difference. Further, of the people who responded, 95% would recommend volunteering with CPW to a friend or family member. In the coming operational plan period, Volunteer Program staff will continue to focus on the quality of the volunteer experience for both participants and CPW staff by, in addition to the annual volunteer survey, conducting a staff survey to understand both perspectives on what is working well and areas the program can improve upon.

Finally, in FY 20, the Volunteer Program awarded a contract for a new volunteer management system vendor. Once launched, the new system will help to better manage volunteer interactions with CPW and provide a more navigable interface for volunteers.

## **Goal 5: Increase awareness and trust for CPW**

### **Communicate information about CPW's mission, funding and key programs**

One of the most important opportunities for increasing the public's awareness of CPW, as well as highlighting the agency's relevance in the lives of Coloradans and visitors, is through implementation of salient, targeted communication strategies. Strategic communications create brand consistency and recognition and reinforce connection with CPW's mission and work. During FY 19 and FY 20 CPW worked to distribute the agency's message to a broader audience. This included the development of media kits on five different topics that contained press releases, talking points, brochures, photos and b-roll videos on re-occurring issues about which the agency regularly communicates. The media kits garnered much greater coverage and awareness compared to the use of press releases alone. To increase continuity of staff communications about CPW and its mission, staff received guidance on Talking and Writing about CPW. Looking forward, CPW will continue to engage with its partner network to help in communicating about the work CPW does and how the public plays an important role in conserving Colorado's natural resources and responsibly recreating in the outdoors. By leveraging CPW's relationships with others who work in the natural resource and recreation space the agency can meet a larger group of people through trusted sources and channels.

### **Provide opportunities for stakeholder and public involvement**

Every Coloradan benefits from CPW's work, but not everyone knows CPW exists or how they can engage with the agency. It can be challenging to get information to and from everyone in Colorado; however, CPW continues to build communication channels that deliver information to the public as well as promote opportunities for the public to engage with the agency. The agency uses several tools including public comment forms, newsletters, educational outreach, town halls, virtual sessions/meetings as well as partner networks and social media, to enable two-way conversations with thousands of Coloradans and visitors alike. CPW's Public Information Unit is always working to build relationships with conservation and outdoor recreation groups and awareness of CPW policies,



TONY GURZICK/CPW

programs, rulemaking, public meetings, and educational opportunities.

Finding better ways to communicate with broader audiences is crucial to CPW's mission and strategic goals, yet it also requires managing outreach and interactions with customers to prevent contact fatigue. During FY 20, CPW established a new process to monitor customer contacts and better manage customer outreach. CPW will continue working to expand offerings, engagement and ways to elevate the voices of partner networks to promote their work, ideas and passion for Colorado's outdoors.

During FY 19 and FY 20, considerable progress was made assessing state park visitor satisfaction through a pilot survey at eight state parks. Although surveying was halted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, CPW surveyed nearly 2,000 state park visitors, gathering feedback about the types of outdoor recreation experiences they prefer, what they enjoy doing at parks, the frequency with which they visit certain parks, and how CPW can continue managing state parks for the types of experiences they enjoy. This effort helped create awareness about CPW and build trust with the public as well as provided valuable information to the agency about park visitors' experiences and perspectives. CPW plans to resume visitor satisfaction surveys when conditions allow.

#### **Increase public awareness about the importance of wildlife management**

The Colorado Wildlife Council (CWC) exists to educate the general public about the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management, and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing, and in turn generates increased support for CPW's mission. By statute, the CWC is charged with overseeing the design of a comprehensive media-based public information program to accomplish these objectives. Funding for CWC's work, generated through a \$1.50 surcharge on Colorado hunting and fishing licenses, doubled in FY 19 after the passage of the Hunting, Fishing and Parks for Future Generations Act. In FY 20, the CWC launched a new educational campaign called "This is the Wild Life." The campaign makes use of billboards, broadcast TV, social media, and Spotify to reach its target audience.

CPW's efforts to develop a strategy that engages anglers in non-native fishery management issues, especially in western Colorado, continues. Completion of this goal will assist CPW in gaining a better understanding of anglers' interest and concerns, primarily in relation to balancing native fish conservation and recovery efforts with sportfish management. Work during the last two years included identifying an engagement strategy and selection of anglers to participate in focus groups. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus groups have not yet been held; however, progress on this goal will continue into the next operational plan period, ultimately culminating in a mechanism that successfully facilitates two-way information sharing between anglers and CPW.



## **Goal 6: Connect people to Colorado's outdoors**

### **Broaden the access and variety of recreation opportunities available to Coloradans and visitors**

Obtaining public access for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities is a fundamental way CPW helps to connect Coloradans and visitors to the state's natural and cultural resources. Colorado's ongoing growth continues to place increasing demand on CPW's current resources. Securing additional lands that are appropriate for public access and suitable to deliver world class outdoor recreation while also inspiring healthy living and active stewardship is essential. Over the last two years, CPW made significant strides in achieving DNR's Wildly Important Goal to Increase Public Access, bringing the total amount of public access through access easements, leases and other agreements to 1.88 million acres. CPW expects to increase acres of public access to 2.08 million total acres by June 30, 2021.

Hunters and anglers have access to Colorado's lands through the Public Access Program (PAP). The PAP provides limited, seasonal hunting and fishing opportunities on Colorado trust land across the state. State trust land enrolled in the PAP is open to a variety of wildlife-related uses, primarily hunting and fishing, and most are also working ranches leased for agriculture. As announced in July 2019, CPW is currently undertaking a multi-year effort to double the size of the land enrolled in the program from 480,000 to 1,000,000 acres. Since the approval of the expansion by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in 2019, CPW has added about 297,000 acres to the program for a total of over 777,000 acres statewide, marking the largest expansion of the program since its inception in 1993.

CPW also partners with landowners to expand access to Colorado's outdoors by acquiring public access easements for fishing and hunting on private land. Through the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP), an annual incentive-based grant program, private landowners have the opportunity to voluntarily protect important wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-related recreational access to the public. The program accomplishes strategic wildlife conservation goals and public access goals using conservation easements, access easements, and in some circumstances, fee title purchases. Over the past two years, CPW closed on several large projects, in partnership with the Colorado land trust community, including the Hale River Ranch access easement (402 acres), the Hale South River Ranch access easement (320 acres), the Ranch Estates access easement (2,597 acres), the Crazy French Ranch acquisition (19,200 acres), the Pothook Ranch access easement (2,357 acres), and the Flanders Ranch access easement (1,659 acres).

Trails connect residents and visitors to nature and provide safe access to recreational opportunities while protecting Colorado's resources. Trail management, maintenance and improvement is increasingly important in light of Colorado's expanding population. The goal of the State Trails Program is to connect people to nature through their experience on trails in such a way to inspire them to protect and steward Colorado's wildlife and critical habitats. CPW supports trail recreation through a number of grant programs. Grant funds awarded during FY 19 and FY 20 totaled over \$6.8 million across 23 grants awards supporting large trail construction and regional trail planning projects.

CPW is taking steps to improve trail users' experiences, as well as providing resources for land managers, through the development of the COTREX Trails App. COTREX helps people connect to Colorado's outdoors by ensuring they have the most accurate and up-to date information regarding the state's 45,078 miles of trails. Over the past two years, COTREX partnered with local, state and federal land managers to develop the Land Manager Dashboard, a free set of tools designed for use by land managers to facilitate public communication and awareness of trail-related issues such as closures and advisories. This functionality is proving to be very popular and useful; over 550 closure and advisory notices have been posted in COTREX during the first half 2020, in every county of the state. These notices have been viewed tens of thousands of times. In June 2020, COTREX averaged 85,000 active users, an increase of 70,000 users compared to the same month in 2019. COTREX is also an effective outlet for spreading awareness about stewardship and sustainable recreation practices, such as the Leave No Trace Principles and CPW's Ethical Wildlife Viewing Tips, helping to better educate the recreating public. CPW staff, along with partners statewide, are also working to update the Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind handbook to continue improving trail recreation opportunities while protecting wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources. The handbook's

completion was delayed by one year due to staffing changes and is slated for completion in June 2021.

Integral to maintaining the character and condition of Colorado's natural resources is communicating to the public the ways that outdoor recreation activities and infrastructure impact habitat, wildlife and landscapes. The ecological health of state parks, wildlife areas, aquatic resources and other public spaces has a direct impact on the quality of nature-based outdoor recreation available to visitors. To support a sustainable balance between outdoor recreation and conservation, the CPW Resource Stewardship Section performs biological inventories at each state park to monitor the health of park resources. Data collected from these inventories are used to create best management practices and guide management decisions. Beyond just informing the public about the impacts of outdoor recreation, CPW gives Coloradans the chance to participate in conservation activities firsthand through citizen scientist projects such as raptor monitoring, habitat monitoring, invasive plant monitoring, and species inventories, further extending awareness of CPW's conservation efforts on a daily basis.

Additionally, in order to encourage Coloradans and visitors to get outside and be active stewards, CPW continues to offer educational and interpretive programs and hands-on training for new or basic outdoor recreation skills. An activities database is currently being developed that will allow CPW field staff to consistently report data on program attendance to better gauge program quality and interest. CPW is also developing surveys to determine if CPW's offerings are meeting the needs of participants.

#### **Provide facilities, infrastructure and access to support opportunities for premier outdoor recreation experiences**

CPW manages more than 1,400 facilities across Colorado, including 42 state parks, 350 state wildlife areas, 19 fish hatcheries, 700 miles of trails, 117 dams, and over 4,000 campsites. Buildings, shooting ranges, dams, roads, trails and other constructed facilities provide opportunities for recreation, education and research. CPW continues to make significant investments in capital construction and facility maintenance and improvements. During FY 19 and FY 20, CPW staff documented the underground utilities at 40 state parks, helping to address the maintenance backlog and informing long term facilities planning. CPW also developed a buildings and facilities inventory to determine existing asset conditions that will allow the agency to prioritize maintenance needs and funding levels into the future. During FY 20, all buildings and components owned by CPW were entered into the controlled maintenance asset tracking system and Parks and Wildlife Technicians across the state were trained on the use of the system. This system enables CPW staff to report on the level of maintenance each facility needs statewide and communicate the costs associated with upkeep and replacement of assets, leading to improved facilities for safe and enjoyable recreation.

Similarly, Cameo Shooting Range staff is leading the charge to develop a comprehensive catalogue of CPW's shooting range properties and assets. The database will include range information such as location, size, features,

management, access to emergency resources and several other metrics. Once completed, the database will be used to create a fire threat assessment matrix as well as aid in future recreational planning and resource management decisions. There is not currently a single resource for the state's shooting range information and this database will be an invaluable tool in helping to establish and measure shooting range management goals and objectives.

Fishing is one of the most popular and accessible recreational activities that allows the public to connect with the outdoors. Improving the production capabilities and efficiency of CPW's hatchery system will improve anglers' experiences even as the state's population and visitation increases. Further, modernization and repair to CPW's aging hatchery system, dating back over 100 years, is essential to its continued operation for the next 100+ years. In 2019, CPW began a multi-phase process to modernize the hatchery system. During FY 20, CPW completed Phase 1 of the hatchery modernization plan in which a consultant provided an analysis of the fish stocking program. Phase 2 of the modernization plan began in the spring of 2020 by hiring a consultant to analyze the effectiveness of the current hatchery system. During Phase 3 of the plan, slated to begin in July 2021, a consultant will design a modernization plans for CPW hatcheries and make recommendations about which hatcheries to modernize. In line with needed improvements, construction of a new hatchery building at Chalk Cliffs State Fish Unit (SFU) near Nathrop took place in FY 20 to replace two salvaged mobile home shells that were set up over 15 years ago as a temporary hatchery building. The new building will allow the hatchery to import up to 600,000 more eggs annually, nearly doubling the facility's production of catchable rainbow trout each year. In addition, a new building at the Las Animas Hatchery, one of two CPW warm water hatcheries, is currently in the design phase. Once completed, this building will replace the current 80-year-old undersized and outdated hatchery building. As a result of this project, anglers will directly benefit through increased fish production and subsequent increases in the number of largemouth bass and channel catfish stocked in Colorado's lakes and streams.

Another important aspect of supporting access to outdoor recreation opportunities is providing the technological infrastructure to make getting outside as convenient as possible. During FY 19 and FY 20, CPW achieved several customer-focused initiatives including:

- Equipping all Colorado state parks to be available for live reservations for camping
- Expanding the functionality of cpwshop.com to allow customers to renew vehicle and vessel registrations online
- Increasing the number of self-service park pass kiosks to 26 state parks, and
- Implementing a reservation system for big and small game hunting at select high use state parks and wildlife areas.

CPW continues to explore other offerings for deployment in FY 21 such as the addition of electronic products including e-licenses and e-passes. ParkHub (a handheld mobile payment device for use at park entry gates when there are long lines) and day-use entry passes that will be good for certain time slots for high-use parks or those with limited parking, are among the electronic product improvements currently in the works.



### Foster partnerships to enhance recreation opportunities

CPW's Partners Program is an outward-facing effort that brings together diverse interests from across the state, representing the entire spectrum of the outdoors in support of the agency's mission to manage wildlife, provide a quality state parks system, and inspire people to be engaged stewards of Colorado's natural resources. The Partners Program helps to foster alignment, awareness and trust among CPW and many partners through three key initiatives: the Partners in the Outdoors Conference, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) and the Colorado Outdoor Principles, as well as through extensive resource sharing and network building.

Through the annual Partners in the Outdoors Conference, CPW facilitates a signature platform for organizations to collaborate around the shared vision of advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. Although the 2020 Partners in the Outdoors Conference was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, program staff, partners and sponsors were able to quickly transition to a virtual platform hosting 21 interactive sessions over an eight week period, the majority of which were partner-led. The use of a virtual platform significantly expanded the conference reach by drawing over 740 participants, a nearly 30% increase in participation from the 2019 conference, representing 375 different organizations. Further, as a result of CPW's partnership with the podcast Mountain & Prairie, the three conference keynote podcasts have reached several thousand individuals to date.

The CO-OP is a collaboration of organizations representing the intersection of conservation and outdoor recreation and interests related to land, water, and wildlife in Colorado. Building on the development of the Colorado Pathways document in FY 19, the CO-OP continued its work in FY 20 to ensure that Colorado's private and public lands and waters remain healthy to support our diverse wildlife, outdoor recreation, agricultural heritage, and economic well-being for future generations. The group met quarterly throughout FY 20 to plan a new statewide initiative alongside CPW and DNR to facilitate and encourage locally driven, collaborative solutions to support its mission. In response to increasing interest in the outdoors, local and regional collaboratives are forming across the state to seek solutions for conserving Colorado's natural resources while meeting the growing demand for outdoor recreation. CPW, DNR and the CO-OP are working to support existing coalitions and to convene new ones in a coordinated statewide approach while emphasizing the unique values of Colorado's diverse communities. CPW's work on this initiative, which is the first state-led initiative of its kind, will continue into FY 21 and focus on bringing to fruition the ideas and projects Colorado communities want and need while balancing conservation, land and water use, stewardship, economic and outdoor recreation interests.



CPW continues to promote the Colorado Outdoor Principles, adopted by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission in 2016, as a code of ethics supporting both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's special places. Through CPW's website, organizations may sign on as advocates of these principles, demonstrating their commitment to advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in the state. The list of partner organizations continues to grow, with 45 organizations currently committed to operating in ways that uphold these shared values.

Finally, work is underway to roll out a new statewide database that will allow staff to better document partner relationships and initiatives into the future, enhancing the growth and effectiveness of CPW's outreach and partnership efforts.

### Promote the value of CPW's mission and services to expand awareness, grow CPW's volunteer network and inspire stewardship

Active stewardship begins when people experience the outdoors. In order to encourage Coloradans and visitors to spend time outdoors, CPW fine tunes its communications to resonate with many different audiences, including those who are new to outdoor recreation. During FY 19, CPW implemented a statewide marketing plan to guide agency communications. Through the development and launch of the "Live Life Outside" and the "Conservation Starts Small" campaigns in FY 19 and FY 20, CPW connected millions of people to the agency's mission and established CPW as a leader in conservation and the outdoor space.

### Become familiar with the needs, interests and expectations of residents and visitors who are new to outdoor recreation

The interests of outdoor recreationists are constantly evolving and this is especially true as new residents move to Colorado seeking to explore the outdoors in ways they never have before. As such, it is critical that CPW understands the current demand for outdoor recreation in Colorado. The 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), released in December 2018, sets a framework to support collaboration between outdoor recreation providers to promote both recreational enjoyment and thoughtful conservation of Colorado's outdoors. The SCORP also guides strategic investment of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars to trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure.





COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE  
1313 Sherman St. #618, Denver, CO 80203  
(303) 297-1192 • [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)