



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

State Trails Program
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Littleton, CO 80125
P 303.791.1957 | F 303.470.0784

Subject: 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Trail Grant funding awards as recommended by the State Recreational Trails Committee

This memo is a summary and explanation of the enclosed Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) 2019/20 Colorado the Beautiful Trail Grant funding recommendations for Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) approval during the January 2020 meeting. The Committee is recommending funding 13 grants for a total award amount of \$2,988,006.81.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Division's (CPW) Trails Program, a statewide program within CPW, administers grants for trail-related projects on an annual basis. Local, county, and state governments, federal agencies, special recreation districts, and non-profit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands may apply for and are eligible to receive non-motorized and motorized trail grants.

Colorado's Non-Motorized Recreational Trails Program

CPW's Trails Program was created with the adoption of Colorado's "Recreational Trails Act of 1971" codified in sections 33-11-101 through 33-11-112, Colorado Revised Statutes. The Grant Program provides funding for trail planning projects as well as small and large trail construction and maintenance projects. The Grant Program is a multi-agency partnership that includes CPW, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado Lottery, Federal Recreation Trails Funds (RTP) and the Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF).

Colorado the Beautiful Grant Program

The Colorado the Beautiful Grant Program funds construction or planning projects to increase access to public lands for Coloradans and visitors alike. The program is a unique opportunity that has goals, objectives, and criteria independent of the normal motorized and non-motorized CPW grants that run each fall. Construction grant applications prioritized connections to existing outdoor recreation opportunities, proximity and benefit to local communities, wildlife/resource mitigation, and improved links to other trail systems. Planning grants applications prioritized large scale trail and resource planning efforts, collaborative multi-agency and organization approach, and a holistic balance and evaluation of trail system improvements and wildlife/resource conservation and mitigation. The Colorado the Beautiful Grant program is a partnership between CPW and GOCO. This is the final grant cycle of the program.



The Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grant Application Process

Trail Grant instructions and timeline were posted on the State Trails website on July 4, 2019. Grant applicants were required to call the State Trails Program Manager to discuss their projects and make sure they were a good fit for the Colorado the Beautiful Trail Grant cycle. The grant opportunity was publicized through the CPW website, the State Trails website and e-mail information networks. Technical assistance for grant preparation was provided by CPW Trails Program staff to potential applicants. The submission deadline for the Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grant applications was August 1, 2019.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission (the Commission) has authorized a subcommittee structure to assist the Committee in formulating its grant recommendations. Subcommittees for each grant category and their members are appointed for the purpose of reviewing and ranking grants and compiling funding recommendations for the Committee. Subcommittee members include Committee members, representatives from GOCO, CPW Trails Program staff, and volunteer peer reviewers. Appendix A lists the individual members who served on the Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grant Subcommittee.

After receiving recommendations from the Committee and approval from the Commission, grants are awarded for the 2019 Colorado the Beautiful grants.

The Recreational Trails Grant Review and Ranking Process

The Commission, through its Policy A-104, has authorized a subcommittee structure to assist the Committee in formulating its grant recommendations. Subcommittee members are appointed to review and rank grant applications and to assist in compiling funding recommendations for the Committee's consideration. To solicit public comment, all grant applications are posted on the CPW Trails Program website and every public comment is evaluated as part of a subcommittee's grant review and ranking process.

All trail grant applications are evaluated and ranked against each other. CPW's trail grant application review and ranking process follows a four-tiered review and approval protocol. All grant applications are first reviewed by CPW wildlife field biologists and regional CPW staff. This process allows CPW to flag potential wildlife issues prior to the review by the subcommittees. While concerns may be flagged during this review, CPW's field staff attempt to resolve these concerns prior to the subcommittee's review. These Regional Wildlife Impact summaries are shared with the subcommittee (Appendix D).

Next, applications are evaluated by the designated grant review and ranking subcommittee. Grant scores are the average of subcommittee member scores (5 volunteer reviewers per grant application) plus the average score of the CPW and GOCO staff reviewers, for a combined average score. A minimum grant funding score of 70 was set for the 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grant application cycle. The volunteer reviewers represent a spectrum of trail recreation interests including enthusiasts, conservation groups, and recreation professionals. The funding recommendations provided by the Subcommittees and staff are based on a grant's rank and public input. The ranked applications are then passed to the Committee to evaluate the applications in ranked order and recommend funding strategies to the Commission. The Commission provides the final approval to the funded projects.

This process invites public review and comment at four separate stages upon grant application submission, before the subcommittee, before the State Trails Committee, and then before the Commission.

To solicit public comment, proposed project descriptions are posted on the CPW Trails Program’s website and all public comment is evaluated as part of the grant selection process. Appendix B lists the scores for each grant application as determined by each grant reviewer within each grant category.

2019 Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grants

The breakdown of grant applications and amounts requested by the two grant categories are as follows:

Grant Categories	Total Applications	Total \$ Requested
Received & Scored Grants		
Construction	7	\$2,509,107.55
Planning	7	\$682,882.50
Total Recreational Trail Grants	14	\$3,191,990.05

FUNDING

For the 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grant cycle \$2,988,006.81 is available from the following funding source:

Source of Funding	Dollars Awarded
GOCO	\$2,988,006.81
Total	\$2,988,006.81

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The applications were scored by volunteer reviewers, GOCO, and CPW Trails Program staff. Using direction from The Colorado the Beautiful Initiative, the Trails Program’s Strategic Plan, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the Committee’s grant funding policies, the recommended funding allocations for each grant category are as follows:

Grant Category	Number of Grants	Proposed Funding
Construction	7	\$2,365,816
Planning	6	\$622,190.81
Total	13	\$2,988,006.81

DIVISION RECOMMENDATION

The State Recreational Trails Committee and CPW Staff have provided the recommended funding spreadsheets for the 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Trails Grants (Appendix C) and Project and Regional Wildlife Impact Summaries (Appendix D) for Commission’s review and approval. It is suggested that minor adjustments of project funding levels be permitted at the discretion of the Division Director.

If you have any questions on this information, or anything else related to the trails program, please feel free to give me a call prior to the Commission meeting. Thank you.

Appendix A

State Recreation Trails Committee Members

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE	DISTRICT/REPRESENTATION
Jill Ozarski Email: jill.ozarski@gmail.com	District 1 1 st Term Expiration 06/30/2021 Non-Motorized Representative
Christian Meyer Email: cmeyer@digitalglobe.com	District 2 OHV Subcommittee Non-Motorized 2 nd Term Expiration 06/30/2021 Non-Motorized Representative
Dustin Wilkinson Email: wilk13@hotmail.com	District 3 OHV Sub-Committee Chair 2 nd Term Expiration 06/30/2020 Motorized/Diversified Representative
Scott Jones Email: Scott.jones46@yahoo.com	District 4 Non-Motorized Sub-Committee Chair 1 st Term Expiration: 06/30/2020 Motorized/Diversified Representative
Bill Koerner E-mail: buffalobill001@gmail.com	District 5 STC Committee Vice Chair 2 nd Term Expiration: 06/30/2021 Non-motorized
Jerry Abboud E-mail: g.abboud@comcast.net	District 6 1st Term Expiration 06/30/2022 Motorized/Diversified
Wally Piccone E-mail: walpic@lakewood.org	District 7 Non-Motorized Sub-Committee Chair 1 st Term Expiration: 06/30/2021 Non-Motorized Representative
Janelle Kukuk E-mail: kukuk@fone.net	At Large STC Committee Chair Snowmobile Representative Snowmobile Subcommittee Chair 1 st Term Expiration 06/30/2020 Motorized/Diversified Representative
Linda Jean Strand Email: ljeanstrand@comcast.net	GOCO Representative Non-Motorized Sub-Committee Chair 1 st Term Expiration: N/A

Appendix A

Colorado State Trails Program
Colorado the Beautiful Grant Subcommittee Members

Scott Jones - Chair <i>State Trails Committee, District 4</i>
Wally Piccone <i>State Trails Committee, District 7</i>
Jill Ozarski <i>State Trails Committee, District 1</i>
Sandra Bottoms <i>Arapahoe County Open Spaces and Trails</i>
Steve Bonowski <i>Colorado Mountain Club</i>
Chris Yuan-Farrell <i>GOCO Representative</i>
Alex Alma <i>DNR Staff</i>
Ben Plankis <i>CPW Regional Staff</i>
Josh Stoudt <i>CPW Regional Staff</i>
Randy Engle <i>CPW Regional Staff</i>
Fletcher Jacobs <i>CPW State Trails Program</i>

2019 Colorado the Beautiful
Construction

Grant #	Project Name/Sponsor	Volunteer Reviewer Scores					Outsider Score Averages	Outsider Averages with Outliers Removed	Staff Reviewer Scores					Staff Score Averages	Staff Averages with Outliers Removed	Final Score	AVG	STDEV	MIN	MAX
		Scott Jones	Wally Piccone	Steve Bonowski	Jill Ozarski	Sandra Bottoms			Randy Engle	Ben Plankis	Josh Stoudt	Alex Alma	Chris Yuan-Farrell							
1	Bennett Open Space Trail Town of Bennett	78	78	76	77	67	75.20	75.20	83	85	76	84	70	79.60	79.60	77.40	77.4	5.77735	65.8453	88.9547
2	Sand Creek Regional Trail Denver Parks and Recreation	82	73	80	88	86	81.80	81.80	89	71	74	86	82	80.40	80.40	81.10	81.1	6.488451	68.1231	94.0769
3	Devil's Playground Trail Phase II National Forest Foundation	84	84	90	98	92	89.60	89.60	88	80	90	89	84	86.20	86.20	87.90	87.9	5.130519	77.63896	98.16104
4	Fall River Trail Town of Estes Park	84	82	79	98	92	87.00	87.00	60	79	76	85	80	76.00	80.00	83.50	81.5	10.04711	61.40578	101.5942
5	Frisco Nordic Center Trails Town of Frisco	75	83	85	94	84	84.20	84.20	95	77	91	87	89	87.80	87.80	86.00	86	6.63325	72.7335	99.2665
6	Evergreen Lake Trail Evergreen Park and Recreation District	80	86	68	92	90	83.20	87.00	93	86	83	91	89	88.40	88.40	87.70	85.8	7.480345	70.83931	100.7607
7	Tolland Ranch Trail Boulder County Open Space	70	76	88	91	84	81.80	84.75	85	88	79	87	91	86.00	86.00	85.38	83.9	6.871034	70.15793	97.64207

2019 Colorado the Beautiful
 Planning

Grant #	Project Name/Sponsor	Volunteer Reviewer Scores					Outsider Score Averages	Outsider Averages with Outliers Removed	STAFF REVIEWER SCORES					Staff Score Averages	Staff Averages with Outliers Removed	Final Score	AVG	STDEV	MIN	MAX
		Scott Jones	Wally Piccone	Steve Bonowski	Jill Ozarski	Sandra Bottoms			Randy Engle	Ben Plankis	Josh Stoudt	Alex Alma	Chris Yuan-Farrell							
	Subcommittee-Planning																			
9	Paths to Mesa Verde Plan Montezuma County	87	85	88	81	91	86.40	86.40	81	84	89	89	83	85.20	85.20	85.80	85.8	3.521363	78.75727	92.84273
10	Cache la Poudre Interpretive Plan Poudre Heritage Alliance	71	83	80	79	86	79.80	79.80	49	71	72	91	74	71.40	77.00	78.40	75.6	11.52967	52.54066	98.65934
11	Divide RD Sustainable Recreation Plan Rio Grande National Forest/Divide RD	93	94	87	96	90	92.00	92.00	87	78	91	94	79	85.80	85.80	88.90	88.9	6.226288	76.44742	101.3526
12	West Steamboat Trail Connection Plan City of Steamboat Springs	71	74	81	88	91	81.00	81.00	93	87	89	85	85	87.80	87.80	84.40	84.4	7.136759	70.12648	98.67352
13	Fountain Creek Greenway Plan Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District	84	97	80	95	84	88.00	88.00	87	85	82	90	89	86.60	86.60	87.30	87.3	5.498485	76.30303	98.29697
14	Outside 285 (in partnership with CPW) Colorado Mountain Bike Association	91	74	85	47	76	74.60	81.50	91	86	83	86	86	86.40	86.40	83.95	80.5	13.00641	54.48718	106.5128

2019 CtB PLANNING								
Grant App Number	Volunteer Reviewer Score	Staff Reviewer Score	Final Score	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Total Cost	Amount Requested	Recommended Funding
9	86.40	85.20	85.80	Paths to Mesa Verde Plan	Montezuma County	\$ 276,500.00	\$ 193,350.00	\$ 193,350.00
10	79.80	71.40	78.40	Cache la Poudre Interpretive Plan	Poudre Heritage Alliance	\$ 127,244.00	\$ 96,832.00	\$ 96,832.00
11	92.00	85.80	88.90	Divide RD Sustainable Recreation Plan	Rio Grande NF, Divide Ranger District	\$ 130,250.00	\$ 68,900.00	\$ 68,900.00
12	81.00	87.80	84.40	West Steamboat Trail Connection Plan	City of Steamboat Springs	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00
13	88.00	86.60	87.30	Fountain Creek Greenway Plan	Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District	\$ 206,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
14	81.50	86.40	83.95	Outside 285 (in partnership with CPW)	Colorado Mountain Bike Association	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 88,108.81
					TOTAL RECOMMENDED FUNDING			\$ 622,190.81
					TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED		\$ 634,082.00	
NOTES	A minimum grant funding score of 70 was set for the CtB grant cycle.							



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Appendix D: 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Non-Motorized Trail Grant Summaries

Project Number/Region	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Grant Type	Amount Requested	Total Cost
#1 – NE	Bennett Open Space Trail	Town of Bennett	Const.	\$192,000.00	\$256,000.00
Description	Construct trails that achieve the community's vision for a multi-modal transportation network. Connect residential neighborhoods to schools, businesses and recreational opportunities through a system of parks, recreation facilities, open space and trails.				
#2 – NE	Sand Creek Regional Trail	Denver Parks and Recreation	Const.	\$500,000.00	\$650,000.00
Description	Construct trail improvements that will better serve all trail users and improve access to the Sand Creek Regional Greenway open space within the Denver metro area.				
#3 – SE	Devil's Playground Trail Phase II	National Forest Foundation	Const.	\$280,720.00	\$365,944.66
Description	Coordinate construction and realignment of the Devil's Playground Trail on the west flank of Pikes Peak. Improve badly incised and over-widened trail which affects the fragile ecosystem and poses a serious safety hazard to hikers. Re-route a compromised trail in an alignment designed to protect the tundra and enhance recreational access.				
#4 – NE	Fall River Trail	Town of Estes Park	Const.	\$363,706.00	\$471,999.00
Description	Construct a 375-foot segment of a planned 2.5-mile multimodal trail that will start at Rocky Mountain National Park's boundary at Aspenglen Campground and extend out along Fish Hatchery Road.				
#5 – NW	Frisco Nordic Center	Town of Frisco	Const.	\$168,390.00	\$241,901.00
Description	Project comprises 15.5 miles of trail construction and improvements within the Frisco Nordic Center. This will include 3.75 miles of new Nordic trails, 8 miles of single track and multi-use single track (groomed for winter fat bike and snowshoes) trails, and 3.75 miles of existing trail improvements.				
#6 – NE	Evergreen Lake Trail	Evergreen Park and Recreation District	Const.	\$550,000.00	\$3,763,903.00
Description	Deliver a multi-modal, accessible trail on the north side of Evergreen Lake that will replace an existing 5-foot-wide, soft surface, multi-use trail built in 1988. This will improve access to abundant outdoor recreational opportunities at Evergreen Lake, create an accessible off-street bike/pedestrian connection to downtown Evergreen and local recreation destinations, improve safety for trail users and a close gap in regional trail networks.				
#7 –NE	Tolland Ranch Trail	Boulder County Parks and Open Space	Const.	\$311,000.00	\$591,215.00
Description	Construct a 6-mile natural surface trail in the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest and Gilpin Counties that provides limited and managed trail access to backcountry recreation users. Trail will connect US Forest Service Trail Systems: Jenny Creek/Rollins Pass area and the Magnolia Trails System.				
#9 – SW	Paths to Mesa Verde Plan	Montezuma County	Planning	\$193,350.00	\$276,500.00
Description	Planning and engineering for 7.5 miles of barrier free concrete pathway connecting the Mancos community with the entrance to Mesa Verde National Park.				



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2019 Colorado the Beautiful Non-Motorized Trail Grant Summaries

Project Number/Region	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Grant Type	Amount Requested	Total Cost
#10 – NE	Cache la Poudre Interpretive Plan	Poudre Heritage Alliance	Planning	\$96,832.00	\$127,244.00
Description	Update the original 1990 Feasibility Study and Resource Inventory, develop a Strategic Interpretive Plan to help Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area become more accessible to the public as a whole and provide visitors with a seamlessly integrated experience.				
#11 – SE	Divide RD Sustainable Recreation Plan	Rio Grande National Forest, Divide Ranger District	Planning	\$68,900.00	\$130,250.00
Description	Identify lessons learned from other areas that have seen similar recreation growth, characterize the baseline recreation use and infrastructure (trails, trailheads, and dispersed campsites), identify locations vulnerable to increased recreation use and identify actions to mitigate resource impacts.				
#12 – NW	West Steamboat Trail Connection Plan	City of Steamboat Springs	Planning	\$75,000.00	\$150,000.00
Description	Complete a preliminary design for a trail link between the Yampa River Core Trail in Steamboat Springs and the rapidly developing area west of town. This is an important step toward clearing a path forward for construction of the trail.				
#13 – SE	Fountain Creek Greenway Plan	Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District	Planning	\$100,000.00	\$206,000.00
Description	Plan will establish a detailed alignment for the Fountain Creek Corridor Greenway between the southern Colorado Springs City limit line and the confluence with the Arkansas River in Pueblo.				
#14 – NE	Outside 285 (in partnership with CPW)	Colorado Mountain Bike Association	Planning	\$100,000.00	\$130,000.00
Description	Complete a regional planning effort to connect areas of interest along the US-285 Corridor in a sustainable and environmentally conscious manner. Connections include areas near Staunton State Park, Buffalo Creek and the North Elk Recreation Areas.				



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Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Northeast Region
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P 303.291.7227

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 18, 2019

TO: Fletcher Jacobs, State Trails Program Manager

FROM: Mark Leslie, Northeast Regional Manager

SUBJECT: Wildlife Impacts Review, Colorado the Beautiful 2019 Grant Cycle

The Northeast Region received eight applications for wildlife impacts review. These applications were sent to CPW Area field staff (Area Wildlife Managers and District Wildlife Managers) for review and comment. The comments were then reviewed and discussed using the Wildlife Impacts Assessment Guidelines for the CPW Trails Program. Reviewers included Northeast Region Trails Coordinator Ben Plankis, Deputy Regional Manager Windi Padia, and Regional Manager Mark Leslie. In addition, Regional leadership emphasized the importance for CPW Area field staff to engage early in trail planning processes and grant application discussions to evaluate and address any possible wildlife concerns.

According to the 2019 SCORP, most of Colorado's population growth between 2000 and 2016 has occurred in the Denver Metro and North Central Regions. This region is expected to have the fastest population growth among regions in Colorado in the next 30 years. The number of trail users in the region is growing, as is the demand for new trails. This increase in trail use and new trail development has a cumulative negative impact on wildlife habitat. Increased trail use requires land managers to provide resources to maintain existing trails, actively enforce regulations and closures intended to protect wildlife, and conduct new trail planning and development in a broad landscape context.

Below is a synopsis of applications and their associated wildlife impacts:

Construction Grants:

#1 Bennett Open Space: Area 5, DWM Travis Harris

This project will include minimal habitat loss because the trail is being developed within a closed system currently designated as open space. Within existing prairie dog towns, CPW recommends a burrowing owl survey prior to any construction activities. Guidelines are available on CPW's website. CPW encourages a weed management program in accordance with Arapahoe County guidelines. Additionally, a former golf course pond is currently being considered for restoration in the open space area. Restoration of this pond would provide local wildlife with enhanced wetland habitat and improved nesting opportunities for migratory waterfowl and shorebird species. CPW recommends that dogs remain on leash and on designated trails to minimize impacts to nesting waterfowl and wetland species.



#2 Sand Creek Regional Trail: Area 5, DWM Megan Lacey

No wildlife concerns.

#4 Fall River Trail: Area 2, DWM Chase Rylands

No wildlife concerns.

#6 Evergreen Lake Trail: Area 1, DWM Joe Nicholson

This project has minimal negative impacts to wildlife in the area and will increase access for anglers on Evergreen Lake. Increased visitation to Evergreen Lake will add to increasing conflicts with elk and bears in this area. Cow elk with calves frequent Evergreen Lake during elk calving season, primarily May through June. Bull elk with herds of cow and calf elk frequent Evergreen Lake during the breeding season, primarily from late August through mid-October. CPW recommends posting education signs during this period of time to educate visitors on safe wildlife viewing distances and advising visitors that elk can become aggressive and pose a danger to people. CPW recommends bear resistant trash receptacles around the lake to reduce bear conflicts with visitors.

#7 Tolland Trail: Area 2, DWM position vacant, AWM Kristin Cannon

CPW is aware that the Tolland Ranch Trail is planned within the conservation easement for the property. There is substantial need for trail-based recreational opportunities in the area; however, the trail has the potential to impact elk during migration, winter, and calving. In addition, CPW is concerned about habitat loss and trail recreation impacts to the local elk population in the broader local landscape. CPW staff recognizes that several factors will help mitigate wildlife impacts for this project:

- The county sought the advice of multiple qualified biologists both internally and private who provided comments on how best to route the trail and execute its construction. For example, the final trail alignment avoids the south side of Buckeye Mountain which should benefit elk and is an example of how trail alignment, when properly informed by available data, can better mitigate potential impacts.
- On the private Toll property and throughout the broader local landscape, there are numerous existing social trails. The construction of this trail could help limit social trail construction if paired with effective patrol and enforcement. Boulder County has a track record of well-managed and patrolled open space properties.

CPW recommends that Boulder County consider the following actions:

- Because the property is remote and not owned by the county, it will be necessary to ensure adequate personnel resources to patrol and maintain the trail, and to prevent proliferation of social trails. CPW recommends closure and rehabilitation of social trails where Boulder County has management authority.

- Consider adaptive management actions, such as future seasonal closures, as additional elk population and movement data become available. CPW has secured funding to fit elk in the area with GPS collars to better understand migration patterns, populations, and use of critical habitat. The project is scheduled to begin in the winter of 2019-2020. As data becomes available, CPW will share it with Boulder County as it may inform future management of the trail.

Planning Grants:

#8 Central City Master Plan, Area 1, DWM Tim Woodward

No wildlife concerns.

#10 Cache la Poudre: Area 4, Multiple DWMs

No wildlife concerns.

#14 Outside 285 Master Plan: Multiple DWMs, Area 1 AWM Mark Lamb, Area 5 AWM Matt Martinez

CPW understands that the Outside 285 Master Plan project seeks to plan for trail development across a broad landscape comprised of USDA Forest Service land in the South Platte Ranger District, Denver Water property, and multiple other landowners. The project seeks to balance the desire for additional trail development and impacts to wildlife while consulting with a variety of land managers/owners, recreation groups and trail planners.

COMBA has met with CPW wildlife field staff in February 2019 and May 2019 (in addition to other consultations) about the specific proposed alignments listed on the application. In addition, because the plan crosses multiple CPW Areas and Districts, multiple DWMs and 2 AWMs have reviewed the proposal and the attached maps.

General comments on the proposal:

- CPW agrees with District Ranger Brian Banks' statement in his letter of support that the effort could be collectively utilized as a guide for recreation management within the study area, and that the plan would include "realignment of existing routes, current and future maintenance needs, and potential new trail segments." As new trail development occurs, it would benefit the plan overall to acknowledge and inventory maintenance needs for existing trails along with future maintenance needs of new trails. CPW recommends that COMBA, in consultation with land managers, clearly identify and plan for maintenance costs for new trails.
- CPW recommends that COMBA reach out to and consult with conservation and wildlife-focused organizations in addition to the trail organizations listed in the application.
- CPW recommends a focus on new trail development in areas of existing human impact, such as areas that are already heavily developed with trails. In addition, COMBA and the stakeholder process should consider the following recommended measures:

- Trail route selection to avoid sensitive habitat areas
- Consolidating routes and limiting trail density where such actions can protect large undisturbed areas of wildlife habitat
- As COMBA states in the proposal, mapping wildlife habitat areas with information provided by CPW, and considering a broad landscape level approach to trail development
- Incorporating physical buffers around sensitive wildlife features (e.g. active nests) and seasonal closures or avoidance for wildlife activities (e.g. lambing/calving)
- Restoration of social trails to improve wildlife habitat
- Consider whether suggested seasonal closures, or closures of non-designated trails, are feasible from an enforcement or personnel standpoint by the land management agency

Waterton Canyon, Indian Creek and South Platte CT:

CPW recommends that COMBA remove the Waterton Canyon and Indian Creek areas from the proposal. CPW wildlife field staff and COMBA have discussed these segments and CPW has expressed concerns to COMBA prior to reviewing this grant application. In addition, both Denver Water and USFS South Platte Ranger District do not support these segments (see attached letters).

The Waterton Canyon bighorn sheep herd consists of a small, isolated, and indigenous bighorn herd that resides in Waterton Canyon year round. This area includes summer, winter, severe-winter, and production (or lambing) range. If completed, the Waterton Colorado Trail (CT) Bypass will fragment the eastern portion of the bighorns' overall range contributing to the already high level of human pressure as well as the urban boundary to the east. Radio collar data and field staff observations indicate that bighorns utilize the relatively remote, eastern side of the canyon throughout the year. Any new trails in this area will reduce or eliminate bighorn habitat for the Waterton herd. Furthermore, if the Waterton CT Bypass were constructed, domestic dogs would present an additional threat to the bighorns. In general, Forest Service properties are multi-use and allow dogs off leash. Uncontrolled and untrained dogs are known to chase, attack, and sometimes kill wildlife. Denver Water does not allow dogs in Waterton Canyon, in part, to protect the bighorn sheep herd. The proposed trail would allow visitors with dogs to enter into bighorn sheep habitat creating another serious threat to the bighorn herd as well as to other species.

The South Platte CT transects the Waterton bighorn range on the west side of the canyon. Lambing is documented to occur in the areas near the eastern and southern section of the proposed South Platte CT.

In addition to the above impacts, the proposed trail would result in further fragmentation of land near a wildlife migration corridor preserved by Douglas County Open Space. In 1997, Douglas County worked with several public and private partners including CPW, to preserve a

corridor for the seasonal migration of wildlife through Douglas County. This corridor consists of large, contiguous portions of land including Pike National Forest, Roxborough State Park, and Woodhouse State Wildlife Area that allows wildlife to move around the county. Any additional trail development would contribute to further fragmentation of lands providing a buffer to this corridor.

Areas west of Buffalo Creek:

CPW is concerned about potential wildlife impacts including habitat loss and fragmentation to the following areas that contain large, relatively undisturbed landscapes. These areas are used heavily by deer and elk during calving/fawning periods and for winter range.

- North Fork CT
- Nice Kitty CT
- Raleigh Peak CT

Green Mountain trail listed on the map:

CPW is concerned about potential wildlife impacts in this area. This area is heavily used by elk year round. Green Mountain is an important migration corridor for elk and deer moving from the Lost Creek wilderness to the undeveloped lands east of CR 126. Furthermore, the meadows and bogs located in this area are a key habitat feature. Historical human use along these meadows and wetland areas resulted in significant resource damage. As a result, the USFS has recently taken steps to minimize human access and disturbance here to allow for it to be restored naturally and utilized by local ungulates and other wildlife species.

North Elk area - West Meadow Connector:

CPW is concerned about potential wildlife impacts in this area due to its use by deer and elk and the large, intact habitats that will be fragmented with trail development.

North Elk Creek Trail to Deer Creek and Guanella Connector (listed on map):

The Mt. Evans Wilderness area is a significant critical winter habitat for deer, elk and bighorn sheep, and is used year-round for bighorn sheep. The described trail bisects an important wintering sheep population and an area of recent habitat improvements in Deer Creek.



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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MEMORANDUM

To: State Trails Committee

From: J.T. Romatzke, Northwest Region Manager

Subject: 2019 Colorado the Beautiful trail grant applications review and comments

Date 10/4/19

District and Area Wildlife Managers and staff have reviewed and provided comments on the Non-Motorized trail grants for applications proposing work in the Northwest Region. Below is a list by application number with a summary of our comments and concerns. Should more information be desired on any of our comments please do not hesitate to contact Randy Engle (randy.engle@state.co.us or 970-260-2379) as he has all the source data from the Area Managers. We hope that the reviewers and staff find the enclosed information useful in evaluating and scoring the grant applications.

#5 Frisco Nordic Center

The Northwest Region supports this application. The Frisco Peninsula is a highly recreated area, and keeping new trails within this footprint will minimize impacts to wildlife in the surrounding area. Moose and coyotes use the peninsula frequently, and there is concern that more trails and higher use may lead to an increase in human-wildlife conflicts. CPW recommends that the Town of Frisco incorporate public education into the project (post signage) to inform trail users of moose and coyotes in the area and how to reduce conflicts.

#12 West Steamboat Trail Connection Plan

The Northwest Region strongly supports this application. The Northwest Region commends the applicant on working closely with Area staff to minimize the effects of the trail on wildlife habitat and encourages the applicant to continue consultations with local CPW staff through all stages of the planning process. CPW hopes the applicant will consider utilizing the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Endowment Fund to offset any new disturbance with habitat improvement work in areas where wildlife is most constrained during critical periods of the year and in areas where improving habitat can help increase the probability of over winter survival.





COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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MEMORANDUM

To: Fletcher Jacobs
From: Brett Ackerman
Subject: 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Grant Application
Southeast Region Review and Comment
Date: October 18, 2019

Review of the two 2019 Colorado the Beautiful Grant Application applications affecting the Southeast Region has been completed.

Devil's Playground Trail Improvement Project:

CPW supports this construction application. There are no significant impacts to wildlife since CPW staff have been involved in planning of the project. Applicant should take actions to be "bear aware" in those areas where overnight camping in bear country is required for maintenance or construction activities to avoid creating any human/bear conflicts. Also, do not feed any wildlife. Be sure to leave young wildlife alone, even if they seem to be unattended.

Fountain Creek Corridor Greenway Master Plan Project:

CPW supports this regional trails planning application. Overall, CPW supports the concept of utilizing the Fountain Creek Corridor to connect Colorado Springs and Pueblo along with the effort described within the concept plan to turn Fountain Creek into a recreational amenity.

CPW realizes this is a planning effort and looks forward to working with the project proponents during development of the master plan. It is important the project proponents and CPW work together closely during the planning process to maintain the integrity of the Fountain Creek aquatic and riparian ecosystem while maintaining and hopefully increasing hunting opportunity as a viable recreational activity given the wildlife value of Fountain Creek and the close proximity to both Pueblo and Colorado Springs.





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TO: State Trails Committee

FROM: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Southwest Region Staff

SUBJ: Colorado the Beautiful Southwest Region Grant Application Review

DATE: October 17, 2019

There are two (2) Colorado the Beautiful grant applications within the Southwest Region requesting funding from the State Trails Program for the 2019 process. These applications were sent to the CPW Area Field Staff (Area Wildlife Manager and District Wildlife Manager) for review and comment. In addition, the comments were reviewed and discussed by SW Region Staff including Regional Manager, Cory Chick, Deputy Regional Manager, Heath Kehm, Regional Trails Coordinator, Josh Stoudt, and Regional Land Use Coordinator, Brian Magee.

The background information provided below is not intended to be comprehensive discussion on the best available science regarding trail development, trail use, and the subsequent impacts to wildlife. It is, rather, a brief overview of the wildlife management issues CPW Staff considers when evaluating the individual trail grant proposals with the intent to inform and educate the Statewide Trail Committee members. In addition, the individual grant comments and CPW Staff recommendations are detailed below.

Background information on trail related impacts to wildlife

Overall, the public and trail users are poorly informed on the potential impacts of non-motorized trails on wildlife, and how those impacts can manifest themselves into complex management issues for CPW. A recent study found that approximately 50% of recreationists felt that recreation was not having a negative effect on wildlife. Furthermore, recreationists tend to blame other recreation groups for adverse impacts to wildlife rather than themselves (Taylor and Knight 2005).

Big Game winter habitats and migratory corridors are known to be limiting factor on big game populations in western Colorado and other high mountain areas of the western United States (Sawyer et al. 2009, Bishop et al. 2009, Bartman et al. 1992). Southwest Region mule deer populations are down approximately 5-15% from population objectives. In some populations, such as the Uncompaghre, the population objective is down nearly 45%. The protection of mule deer winter ranger habitat is one of the foremost management objectives in the recently developed *Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy* (2014). These habitats are important for a variety of reasons, including:

1. Deer and elk tend to concentrate at lower elevations during winter months as snow accumulates at higher elevations.
2. Mule deer and elk typically display strong site fidelity to winter range, preferring to use the same areas year-after-year. CPW maps these areas as winter ranger, severe winter range and winter concentration areas for elk and deer.
3. Winter habitats for big game provide essential forage and thermal cover to help mule deer and elk minimize energy expenditure. Mule deer and elk are in a nutritional negative energy balance during the winter months, making energy conservation critical for calf and fawn survival and adult female reproductive fitness.



Trail Use Impacts

Outdoor recreation associated with trail influence a variety of wildlife species in multiple ways. Impacts to wildlife from trail use are often negative and are associated with increased direct disturbance and displacement from optimal habitats due to avoidance of human activities. Elk and deer increase their daily activity levels and movements in the presence of mountain biking and hiking which reduces the time spent feeding and resting (Naylor et al 2009, Wisdom et al. 2004). This increased energy demand occurs simultaneously with decreased forage intake and displacement to areas with poorer quality forage. The net result is a decrease in body condition, which affects individual health, survival and reproduction (Bender et al 2008). Higher energy demand effectively decreases the carrying capacity of an area (Taylor and Knight 2003) and increases stress on individual animals. Many wildlife species also avoid areas of human disturbance completely, which decreases the amount of available habitat (Taylor and Knight 2003). Elk and deer generally do not become habituated to hiking or mountain biking (Wisdom et al. 2004, Taylor and Knight 2003). Cumulatively, this leads to both immediate and long-term effects on individual animals and populations by decreasing the available energy for winter survival, growth, and reproduction, reducing the fitness of wildlife, and by displacing wildlife into marginal habitats (Miller et al 2001, Anderson 1995).

The presence of a dog with a recreationist is likely to result in a greater area of negative influence from trail use, including amplified avoidance distances by wildlife (Miller et al 2001).

Grant Comment

#9-SW-Paths to Mesa Verde Plan- This is a planning grant looking to create planning and engineering for 7.5 miles of barrier free concrete pathway layout to extend from the Town of Mancos to the entrance to Mesa Verde National Park. This grant request is looking at phase one of a two phase project and is being led by Montezuma County. The overall build out of this two phase project is to create 16 miles of non-motorized trail to link Mancos and Cortez with Mesa Verde National Park in the mid-point and offering public land access along the way.

CPW was involved early in this project and the discussions during the process. CPW staff brought up concerns on the project requiring installation of more fencing that would limit wildlife movement along the Highway 160 corridor. The other topic of concern was wetland areas and how the trail was going to cross over them.

The grantee stated in their application that the final route is "located 100% within existing CDOT ROW." The applicant followed up by stating "this alignment will reduce loss of habitat, require no new fencing, and utilize an existing stream crossing, thereby lessening the overall impacts to wildlife."

CPW staff greatly appreciates the inclusion of these comments into the grant application and is thankful these concerns were addressed.

#11-SW-Divide RD Sustainable Recreation Plan (United States Forest Service)- This planning grant is looking to identify lessons learned from other areas that have seen similar recreational growth and apply it to the Divide Ranger District in the Rio Grande National Forest. The District, per their grant scope, is going to "characterize the baseline recreation use and infrastructure (including trails, trailheads, and dispersed campsites); identify and prioritize locations vulnerable to increased recreation use based on current and foreseeable resource impacts and user conflicts; identify actions to mitigate resource impacts, chart the National Environmental Policy Act compliance pathway, and identify funding opportunities; and identify and develop public education and outreach messages, identify outlets and specific mechanisms to share these messages."

Local CPW staff recognizes the information this grant will produce value for planning recreation activities for the future in the area. From the aspect of motorized use, CPW staff perceives a substantial benefit of this project happening by having it completed prior to the Forest Service undergoing their planning cycle for motor vehicle use.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is a popular recreational activity in the Divide Ranger District. While completing this project, CPW staff also suggests looking at identifying and inventorying areas of historic prohibited OHV use and solutions to prevent and mitigate these incidents from happening.

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