

# COLORADO WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY

Title: **USE OF STATE WILDLIFE AREAS**  
Effective Date: October 11, 2007  
Revised Date:

## POLICY STATEMENT

It is the intent of the Wildlife Commission that, in accordance with state law, State Wildlife Areas (SWA) be acquired and managed for the preservation and conservation of wildlife and their habitat; and to also provide wildlife-related recreational opportunities to the public, so long as such uses are compatible with wildlife and habitat management goals.

### Wildlife Habitat Protection, Conservation and Management

Protection, enhancement, restoration and management of aquatic and terrestrial habitat are critical to the survival of Colorado's wildlife and will be a priority on State Wildlife Areas.

### Wildlife Oriented Recreation

State Wildlife Areas are intended to provide for recreation in the form of hunting, fishing and trapping of appropriate game species as well as watchable wildlife use and enjoyment of all wildlife species.

However, State Wildlife Areas, or portions thereof, may be closed and posted against recreational uses when such uses conflict with critical habitats or wildlife activities, including but not limited to, nesting, breeding, wintering, spawning, rearing or resting.

### Non-wildlife Oriented Recreation

State Wildlife Areas are not acquired, designed or normally managed to provide for non-wildlife oriented recreation. However, some uses are permitted when they are supportive of, incidental to and compatible with wildlife recreation. Examples of these include: camping, picnicking and hiking.

Recreational uses not normally considered supportive of, incidental to, or compatible with wildlife recreation are not necessarily prohibited on State Wildlife Areas, but may only be permitted under circumstances where they do not conflict with the primary purpose of the area. Non-wildlife related activities may be allowed when they will not interfere with or prevent the property from being managed for the purpose for which it was acquired, when such use does not raise the cost of property maintenance/management or create a need for facilities or manpower, unless the cost can be fully recovered, does not cause habitat damage or prevent protection of wildlife species during critical portions of their life cycle, and does not prevent achievement of wildlife management goals such

as harvest, habitat improvements, habitat preservation and providing for a quality hunting/fishing experience. Such uses may include, but are not limited to: swimming, sail-boarding, water skiing, off-road vehicle use or motorized trail biking, competitive events, and shoots (except at established ranges).

#### Commercial uses

No commercial ventures of any type shall be allowed access to, or use of, any State Wildlife Area unless a special use permit has been approved by the Division of Wildlife. Wildlife-related commercial recreational uses may be permitted only when compatible with wildlife resources, habitat and non-commercial recreational wildlife uses and are subject to appropriate fees, conditions, and special permits issued under guidelines provided by the Director. In addition, limitations on commercial use shall be included in such agreements as necessary to ensure that general public wildlife-oriented users have adequate opportunity to use the property for the same purpose desired by the commercial activity.

These uses, either short-term or long-term, may include but are not limited to, hunting or fishing trips conducted by a registered outfitter or guide, non-consumptive uses such as wildlife related educational trips, organized camping activities by non-profit organizations (e.g. Boy Scouts of America), special functions lasting less than one day such as wedding or retirements, photography, wildlife watching conducted by individuals or organizations, access across SWAs for livestock trailing, grazing or other agricultural use or any activity other than that for which the property was acquired or is managed for.

#### Long-Term Use

Permission for long-term use (exceeding 12 months in duration) can be granted only by the Wildlife Commission. In cases where an activity or use will be undertaken and completed in less than 12 months, the regional manager responsible for the State Wildlife Area in question can grant permission for a particular use.