

# State Wildlife Area FAQs



## MESSAGING ON LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE WILDLIFE AREAS & STATE TRUST

Colorado's State Wildlife Areas (SWA) are acquired using hunter and angler dollars for the express purpose of conserving wildlife habitat and providing wildlife-related recreation. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) manages more than 350 SWAs and nearly 240 State Trust Lands (STL) for this purpose. As both Colorado's human population and tourism/visitation have boomed in recent years, CPW has noticed a significant trend of people engaging in activities for which these properties were not intended. These issues run the gamut from illegal camping to engaging in recreational activities that disturb and displace wildlife.

To begin to address this trend and ensure SWAs and STLs continue to exist for the benefit of wildlife, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission voted to require everyone who enters an SWA to possess a proper and valid license to hunt or fish in Colorado. CPW will continue to evaluate and consider additional actions to ensure these properties are fulfilling their purpose.

The change is a recognition of the increasing pressure on SWAs and STLs by people who are displacing wildlife and disrupting the original intent of these properties.

While hiking, for example, has been allowed on SWAs, it was never an intended use of the properties. And many SWAs are closed periodically during the year when wildlife are reproducing and nurturing their young or on critical winter range.

The change also is a recognition by the CPW Commission that wildlife management is not a tax-funded endeavor. CPW relies on the sale of hunting and fishing licenses to preserve these important areas.

Just as visitors to a Colorado State Park are required to possess a state parks pass, visitors to SWAs and STLs are now required to possess a proper and valid hunting or fishing license.

We encourage those who use our state's outdoor spaces to consider how they are funded. Once again, CPW is not a tax-funded agency. We are supported by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and by the fees collected from park passes and camping reservations. Requiring a hunting or fishing license to access SWAs reinforces the primary intent of these properties, and ensures users are contributing to their maintenance.

Requiring a hunting or fishing license to access SWAs is consistent with the requirements of many other states. This new regulation allows CPW to continue protecting key wildlife habitat in Colorado. Protecting our natural resources is not free. This regulatory decision is CPW's best solution to funding the protection of key habitat for wildlife in our state.

Anyone who buys a Colorado hunting or fishing license is contributing directly to wildlife conservation. CPW's income from hunting and fishing licenses supports all wildlife programs in Colorado, including: programs for nongame, threatened, and endangered species, as well as hatcheries, habitat protection, education, law enforcement, wildlife research, big-game and small-game management, fisheries and aquatic management, and more. If you use SWAs, please support Colorado's wildlife.

Here are the current 2020 prices of resident licenses that are most cost-effective: Adult fishing, \$35.17; small game, \$30.11; combo small-game and fishing, \$50.37. Senior fishing is \$9.85. A person 18 years of age and older and under 65 years of age will also need a Habitat Stamp when applying for or purchasing a hunting or fishing license. No Habitat Stamp is required for applying for or purchasing a person's first two one-day hunting or fishing licenses. The 2020 charge for a Habitat stamp is \$10.13. That is a one-time charge in a 12-month period, so that is not charged on the purchase of another license(s).

## **FAQs**

### **When will this change be implemented?**

July 1, 2020

### **What is the regulation to reference and cost of the fine for violating being on an SWA without a hunting or fishing license?**

The statute they will reference is: "Did unlawfully enter a State Wildlife Area without a proper and valid hunting or fishing license" (**2 CCR 406-9-#900.C.1 pursuant to 33-6-104(1), C.R.S.**) or "Did unlawfully enter a State Trust Land leased by Colorado Parks and Wildlife without a proper and valid hunting or fishing license" (**2 CCR 406-9-#902-B.5 pursuant to 33-6-104(1), C.R.S.**). The penalty would be a \$100 fine plus \$39.50 surcharges for a total of \$139.50 and five (5) license suspension points. Our first priority with our officers and other staff will be seeking to educate first, especially over the course of the next year. However, if officers are continually contacting the same individuals who are not following the rules, they may choose to issue a citation. We're also looking into updating signage, especially in areas where the rules may be confusing.

### **What licenses will be acceptable to access SWAs & STLs? (annuals, daily, big game, turkey, mountain lion)**

All proper and valid hunting and/or fishing licenses will be acceptable for the license year from April 1 through March 31 of the following year. A 1-day and/or 5-day fishing license would ONLY be valid the day(s) specified on the license.

### **If I have a one-day fishing license, does it only give me access to SWAs & STLs for that one day?**

Yes, for that one day.

### **If I bring my whole family, does everyone need to purchase a hunting or fishing license?**

Any person 18 years and older will need to purchase a proper and valid hunting or fishing license to access a SWA or STL property. Any person under 18 years of age and engaged in any activity that requires a proper and valid hunting or fishing license still must be properly licensed. For example, a 16-year-old wanting to fish on a SWA will need a fishing license.

**If I access a SWA for recreational target shooting, will I still need to purchase a hunting or fishing license to use the range?**

Yes, like all other users of a SWA.

**Does this impact all wildlife properties? (SWAs and STLs)?**

Yes, for consistency and because all wildlife properties were purchased or leased primarily for wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing.

**How do I identify if a public property will require a hunting or fishing license?**

Any SWA or STL that is managed by CPW that is open to the public requires a hunting or fishing license. SWAs and STLs are all signed with property identification. A complete list of lands administered by CPW can be found in the [Colorado State Recreational Lands Brochure](#) found on the CPW website.

**Will the SWA Access Permit no longer be an option for non-hunters and anglers?**

That is correct, a SWA Access Permit will no longer be an option for non-hunters and anglers for those four SWAs that currently have the requirement for an access permit. However, current 2020 SWA Access Permits will be honored for the remainder of its time period, until March 31, 2021. Persons who have already purchased a SWA Access Permit for this year will be allowed to use that permit for this year only.

**How will we handle those who have purchased an access permit at one of the four participating SWAs that had access permit requirements?**

Current 2020 SWA Access Permits will be honored for the remainder of its time period, until March 31, 2021. Access permits will no longer be available for sale after June 30, 2020. The new license requirement regulation goes into effect on July 1, 2020.

**Why didn't my SWA Access Permit contribute to CPW?**

The SWA Access Permit was not recognized under the Federal Aid Program as a valid hunting or fishing license. The current SWA Access Permit system, used on only four SWAs, negatively impacted the CPW wildlife finances. The monies generated from this access permit fund lessens the following year's Federal Aid monies used by CPW by the amount the SWA Access Permit fund accumulated.

**Why did the Commission not consider creating a wildlife watcher license that can be used to access wildlife properties?**

Any wildlife watcher license would have issues similar to those created by the State Wildlife Area Permit (see above).

**Does this action go against supporting access programs on public and private lands (Goal #4) - Future Generations Act (e.g. limiting access)?**

No it does not. The funding allows CPW to keep these lands available for public access.

The Future Generations Act (SB18-143) grants the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission authority to enact modest increases to state park entrance fees and Colorado hunting and fishing licenses to

address projected funding shortfalls of \$30 million annually for wildlife and \$11 million annually for parks by 2025. One of the 10 goals of CPW with this increased revenue is to expand public and private land access. A person can access a SWA open to the public by purchasing a proper and valid license just as a person has to purchase the proper parks pass to access a state park or outdoor recreation area. Examples of supporting access on public and private lands are: 1) purchase and opening the new state park at Fishers Peak; 2) the 210,000-acre increase of state trust lands leased by CPW that provides limited seasonal hunting and fishing opportunities; or 3) increasing the number of acres of private land leased under the Walk-In Access program for small game hunting opportunities.

**How are we going to communicate these changes with constituents?**

Press releases, web page, all media options, signing and personal contacts. All SWAs and STLs will be signed informing users of the new requirement of possessing a valid hunting or fishing license. CPW will provide this updated information to CRSs, Call Center and all other field personnel to educate the public over the next year.

**Does this license requirement apply to national forest or BLM lands? Does this apply to state parks?**

No, this only applies to SWAs opened to the public and to STLs that are leased by CPW. It does not apply to other public lands such as State Parks, National Forests, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), county properties, or municipal properties.

**If I have a hunting license does it allow me to engage in any activity I wish on an SWA?**

No. All other regulations still apply. It allows you to engage in the outdoor activities authorized for that specific property.

**What about special use permit and commercial use permit holders?**

These users were specifically exempted in the regulation. A special use permit or commercial use permit is valid for access in lieu of a hunting or fishing license.

**Do users of trail systems connecting to SWAs need to purchase a license?**

Yes. The intended use of SWAs is wildlife habitat and wildlife-related recreation. While recreational use of trails on these properties is not a primary intended use, a license purchase for recreational trail use, where allowed, can be used to help maintain connected trails.