



## Colorado Parks and Wildlife Wetlands Program

*Made possible by Great Outdoors Colorado*



**Background** – Wetlands and riparian areas represent only about 2% of the land area of Colorado, but the majority of wildlife species use these habitats. Colorado has lost 50% of its wetlands, and 95% of riparian areas in the West have been degraded by human activity. Therefore, protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas is vital to conserve wildlife diversity in the state.

**History** – The Program was established 1997 when Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) received a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) legacy grant of more than \$4 million to conserve wetland and riparian habitats.

**Vision** – Through coordinated landscape-scale conservation actions, CPW and its partners will ensure that Colorado’s wetland and riparian habitat is sufficient to support self-sustaining populations of desired wildlife species and to provide wildlife-associated recreation for future generations.

**Goals** – (1) Improve the distribution and abundance of ducks, and opportunities for public waterfowl hunting; (2) Improve the status of declining or “at-risk” species associated with wetlands and riparian areas.

### **CPW and GOCO Priorities Addressed:**



- **Waterfowl Habitat Conservation.** In 2013, the Program funded 12 wetland habitat improvement projects for 8 priority waterfowl species on public and private lands.
- **Public Hunting Opportunity.** The Program funds projects to improve habitat on existing waterfowl hunting sites and to create new hunting sites. In 2013, the Program funded projects on State Wildlife Areas, State Parks, State Trust Lands, and National Wildlife Refuges open to public hunting.

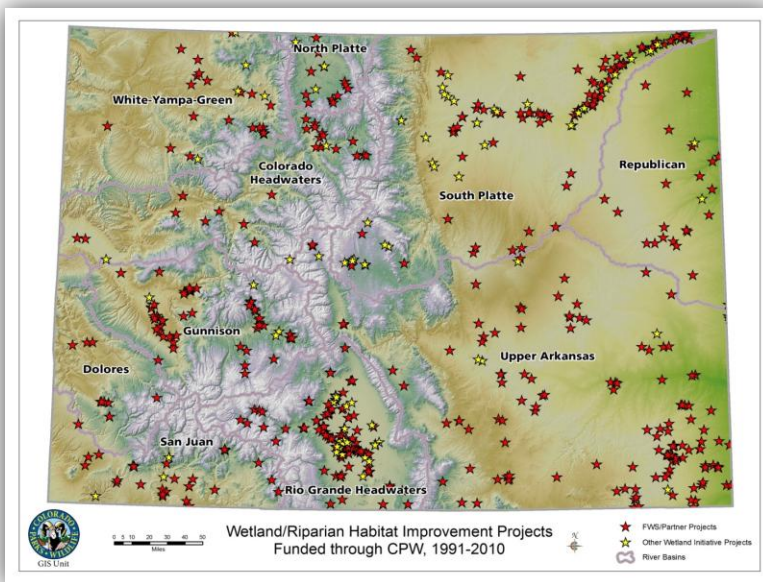
- **Hunter Recruitment and Retention.** Program funding has been an incentive for some private landowners to open their lands for limited youth waterfowl hunting.
- **State Wildlife Area and State Park Management.** In 2013, the Program funded habitat improvement projects on 11 State Wildlife Areas and 2 State Parks.





- **At-risk Species Conservation.** In 2013, the Program funded Projects to benefit 15 at-risk wildlife species, including amphibians (e.g., Northern Leopard Frog), native fishes (e.g., Northern Redbelly Dace and Brassy Minnow), mammals (e.g., Preble's and New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse), and birds (e.g., Least Tern and Piping Plover).
- **Riparian Corridor Conservation.** In 2013, the Program funded projects to restore degraded riparian habitat on several major river corridors, including the Colorado, Green, South Platte, and Yampa.

- **Identifying Priority Landscapes for Conservation.** Ongoing wetland mapping and assessment initiatives help identify priority wetland complexes and riparian corridors for targeted habitat improvement projects.
- **Partnerships.** The Program supports numerous partnerships, including 7 active Wetland Focus Area Committees. Non-federal funds available through the Program facilitate partnerships and leveraging of major federal funding (e.g., North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Farm Bill). Each dollar invested through the Program represents several additional dollars for conservation.



**Accomplishments** – Since 1997, the Program and its partners have protected, restored, or enhanced nearly 300,000 acres of wetland, riparian, and associated upland habitat in hundreds of projects throughout Colorado. Since 2008, wetlands have been mapped and assessed in the field in 4 major river basins.

**Awards** – Due to its successful on-the-ground conservation and partnerships, the Program received the *Great Blue Heron Award* from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2006, and the *Habitat Management and Partnership Award* from the U. S. Forest Service in 2009.

**Funding and Grants** – The Program is funded primarily by Great Outdoors Colorado. In recent years, CPW has annually allocated about \$700,000 of GOCO funds to the Wetlands Program. The Program is also supported by Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Funds at about \$150,000 annually. General hunting and fishing license revenue does not currently support the Program. Overall program funding has declined from \$1.2 – 1.5 million in 2005-2010 to about \$850,000 - \$900,000 in 2012-2014. The majority of Program funds are awarded to partners and staff through competitive grants for habitat improvement projects.

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