

## APPENDIX C: COLORADO'S OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

This appendix outlines Colorado's major outdoor recreation providers. While some agencies and organizations in Colorado directly provide outdoor recreation opportunities, others do so indirectly. Such agencies and organizations contribute significantly to Colorado's unique outdoor recreation opportunities by preserving wildlife habitat, improving air and water quality, and providing important buffers for development. While this list is not exhaustive, it does provide insight into the major outdoor recreation providers statewide.

### Federal Land Managers

#### **U.S. Forest Service (USFS)**

The USFS operates as an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Its mission is to "sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." Nationwide, the USFS fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities via National Forests and National Grasslands.<sup>1</sup> Eleven National Forests and two National Grasslands in Colorado are accessible for outdoor recreation.<sup>2</sup> Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, shooting, off-highway vehicle touring and wildlife viewing.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

The BLM operates as a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Its mission is to "sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."<sup>4</sup> Nationwide, the BLM fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities via rustic and diverse recreation sites including, but not limited to, non-motorized and motorized trails, waterways, cultural heritage sites, climbing walls and wilderness areas.<sup>5</sup> 187 recreation sites in Colorado are accessible for outdoor recreation.<sup>6</sup> However, few of these sites are developed and focus on the "visitors' freedom to choose where to go and what to do."<sup>7</sup>

#### **National Park Service (NPS)**

The NPS operates as an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Its mission is to preserve "unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations."<sup>8</sup> Nationwide, the NPS fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities via National Parks, Monuments, Battlefields, Military Parks, Historical Parks, Lakeshores, Seashores, Recreation Areas and Scenic Rivers and Trails.<sup>9</sup> Four National Parks, two National Historic Sites, five National Monuments, one National Recreation Area, four National Trails, and one Wild and Scenic River in Colorado are accessible for outdoor recreation.<sup>10</sup> Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, hiking, camping, historical sight seeing and wildlife viewing.<sup>11</sup>

#### **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

The USFWS operates as a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Its mission is to work "with others to conserve,

protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people." Nationwide, the USFWS fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation activities via National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries.<sup>12</sup> Eight National Wildlife Refuges<sup>13</sup> and four National Fish Hatcheries<sup>14</sup> in Colorado are accessible for outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

Reclamation operates as a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Its mission is to "manage, develop and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner and in the interest of the American public."<sup>16</sup> Nationwide, Reclamation fulfills its mission by addressing contemporary water issues between residential, industrial, agricultural, hydropower generation, environmental and recreation needs.<sup>17</sup> Reclamation provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado via 15 reservoirs and lakes. Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, fishing, boating and camping.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Army Corps of Engineers**

The Army Corps of Engineers operates as a branch of the U.S. Army guided by environmental sustainability and engineering expertise. Its mission is to "deliver vital public and military engineering services; partnering in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy and reduce risk from disasters."<sup>19</sup> The Corps fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado via 10 reservoirs and lakes. Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, swimming, boating and picnicking.<sup>20</sup>

### State Land Managers

#### **Colorado State Land Board (SLB)<sup>21</sup>**

The Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners (the State Land Board) is a constitutionally created agency that manages a \$4 billion endowment of assets for the intergenerational benefit of Colorado's K-12 schoolchildren and public institutions, including the 'Park Trusts.'

The agency is the second-largest landowner in Colorado and generates revenue on behalf of beneficiaries by leasing nearly three million surface acres and four million subsurface acres for agriculture, grazing, recreation, commercial real estate, rights-of-way, renewable energy, oil, gas and solid minerals.

The Colorado Constitution spells out a dual obligation for the State Land Board: a) generate reasonable and consistent income over time; and b) protect and enhance the natural values of state trust lands. Unlike public lands, trust lands are not open to the public unless a property has been leased for public access.

The agency is entirely self-funded and receives no tax dollars. The Board manages eight public trusts; 98% of the board's portfolio is the State School Trust to support K-12 public schools. Remaining assets benefit other public institutions, including the 'Park Trusts.'

The State Legislature designates Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) as a beneficiary of the Internal Improvements Trust and the Salt Springs (Saline) Trust, collectively known as the 'Park Trusts,' which together amount to 56,923.93 acres. Of this acreage, CPW utilizes 8,817.58 as part of various State Parks through the 'Interagency Property Agreement for Park Trust Lands.' While not all Park Trust lands are open to outdoor recreation, they indirectly contribute to outdoor recreation in Colorado by supporting CPW.

Because the State Land Board is constitutionally mandated to manage the land in ways that generate income for beneficiaries, trust lands are not open to the public unless a property has been leased for public access. Interested parties may apply for recreation leases on state trust lands not currently open to the public. Common uses of state trust lands leased for outdoor recreation include hunting, fishing, shooting ranges, horseback riding and hiking. The agency accepts these five-year leases based on compatibility with existing and/or potential uses, and the rates are determined based on the intensity and duration of the proposed use. They are typically a 'layered' use, most commonly with a separate agriculture lease existing on the same property.

For example, the agency has a lease agreement with CPW; the lease is commonly referred to as the [Public Access Program \(PAP\)](#). The PAP provides limited sportsmen/sportswomen's access to 500,000 acres of trust land across the state, primarily for big game hunting and fishing. As the lessee, CPW is responsible for managing public hunting and fishing activities per property-specific rules and regulations.

### **Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)**<sup>22</sup>

CPW operates as a division of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Its mission is to "perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks 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." CPW fulfills its mission and provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities via [41 State Parks](#) and more than [300 State Wildlife Areas](#). Outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, climbing and off-highway vehicle touring.

### **Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)**<sup>23</sup>

The CSFS is an agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University. The agency provides staffing for the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Its mission is to "achieve stewardship of Colorado's diverse forest environments for the benefit of present and future generations." The CSFS additionally manages the Colorado State Forest in Jackson County. Colorado Parks & Wildlife leases the Colorado State Forest for public recreation from the Colorado State Land Board.

### **Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)**

The CWCB provides policy direction on statewide water issues. The agency provides technical assistance to further the utilization of Colorado's waters. Its mission is to "Conserve, Develop, Protect and Manage Colorado's Water for Present and Future Generations." The CWCB also supports implementation of the Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act.<sup>24</sup> The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act concerns "the negotiation of interbasin compacts regarding the equitable division of the state's waters, and make[s] an appropriation in connection therewith."<sup>25</sup>

### **Colorado Division of Water Resources (DWR)**<sup>26</sup>

The DWR operates as a division of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The DWR addresses water challenges including, but not limited to, water origin issues, water rights, wetlands protection and management, endangered species recovery, and interstate water issues. The mission of the DWR is:

- "To provide competent and dependable distribution of water in accordance with statutes, decrees and interstate compacts.
- To ensure public safety through safe dams and properly permitted and constructed water wells.
- To maintain and provide accurate and timely information concerning water.
- To promote stewardship of all human, fiscal and natural resources.
- To serve the public through the generation of creative solutions to problems.
- To help the public understand complex water issues.
- To promote stability in the use of the state's limited water resources.
- To apply modern technology to its greatest advantage."

### **Local Land Managers**

#### **Open Space Programs**<sup>27</sup>

Publicly funded open space programs at the local and regional levels are most prominent along the Northern Front Range and metro regions. Towns, cities, counties, special districts and non-profit organizations in Colorado manage over 30 open space programs statewide. Open space programs promote land conservation through public and private partnerships and provide the public with outdoor recreation opportunities primarily through trail-based recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities.

#### **Special Recreation Districts**<sup>28</sup>

Colorado law limits the types of services that county governments can provide to their residents. As such, Title 32-1 Special Districts, including park and recreation districts, fill gaps in the services that Colorado residents might desire or need. The majority of special districts draw their boundaries in unincorporated county land, but residents of a municipality may be included in one or more districts. Special recreation districts offer residents similar services as those provided by local parks and recreation departments.

## APPENDIX C: COLORADO'S OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

---

### Local Parks and Recreation Departments

Towns, cities and counties provide outdoor recreation opportunities to Colorado residents locally, directly within communities. Such outdoor recreation opportunities include, but are not limited to, free play at playgrounds, swimming at public pools, jogging on community trails, and athletics. Towns, cities and counties may also provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public via greenways, stream corridors and mountain parks.

### Private-Protected Land Managers

Individuals and private entities may choose to open private land to recreation, or manage private land for conservation purposes, by obtaining fee titles, covenants or conservation easements. Conservation easements limit activity and prevent development from taking place on private land in perpetuity, as long as the land remains in private hands.<sup>29</sup>

### Land Trusts

Land trusts are non-profit organizations that collaborate with private landowners to conserve land without government regulation. Landowners independently elect to conserve their land in partnership with a land trust.<sup>30</sup> Over 30 land trusts operate in Colorado,<sup>31</sup> driven to increase open space and preserve agricultural land, waterways, wildlife habitat, trails, and scenic vistas.<sup>32</sup>

### Tribal Land Managers\*

#### Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe in Montezuma County manages 575,000 contiguous acres that extend into Utah and New Mexico, held in trust by the federal government.<sup>33</sup> The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe provides the public with outdoor recreation opportunities via the Ute Mountain Tribal Park, a 125,000-acre scenic and archaeologically dense protected area in the Mesa Verde/Mancos Canyon.<sup>34</sup> Visitors must take guided tours of the park where Ute guides interpret Ute Indian history, Ute pictographs, geological land formations, and Ancestral Puebloan petroglyphs, artifacts and cliff dwellings.<sup>35</sup> The Tribe also operates a fee-based primitive campground on the reservation.<sup>36</sup>

#### Southern Ute Indian Tribe

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe in La Plata County resides on a “checkerboard reservation,” comprised of both tribal member allotments as well as tribally owned land. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe manages 307,838 acres of tribally owned land. There are many outdoor recreation [opportunities](#) on or near the Southern Ute Indian Reservation Land such as tent and RV camping, hunting, fishing and archery.<sup>37</sup>

\*While there are over forty Tribes historic to Colorado, for purposes of the SCORP and the land management survey, CPW solely surveyed those Tribes that directly manage land within the state.

References

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Forest Service. About the Agency. <https://www.fs.fed.us/about-agency> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Forest Service. Colorado Recreation Information Map. [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5389835.html](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5389835.html) (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Forest Service. Know Before You Go. <https://www.fs.fed.us/visit/know-before-you-go> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>4</sup>Bureau of Land Management. About Us. <https://www.blm.gov/about> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>5</sup>Bureau of Land Management. Recreation on Your Public Lands. <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>6</sup>Bureau of Land Management. Visit Us Search Results. <https://www.blm.gov/visit/search/0/CO/0/1> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>7</sup>Bureau of Land Management. Colorado Recreation Activities. <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-activities/colorado> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>8</sup>National Park Service. About Us. <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>9</sup>National Park Service. Frequently Asked Questions. <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/faqs.htm> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>10</sup>National Park Service. Colorado. <https://www.nps.gov/state/co/index.htm> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>11</sup>National Park Service. Trip Ideas. <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/trip-ideas.htm> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mission. March 24, 2016. [https://www.fws.gov/help/about\\_us.html](https://www.fws.gov/help/about_us.html) (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Visit a Refuge or District. December 8, 2016. <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/visit-a-refuge.php> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Colorado Fisheries Map. April 8, 2015. <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/fisheries/colorado.php> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>15</sup>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Visit a Refuge or District. December 8, 2016. <https://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/visit-a-refuge.php> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>16</sup>Bureau of Reclamation. About Us – Mission/Vision. March 29, 2017. <https://www.usbr.gov/main/about/mission.html> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>17</sup>Bureau of Reclamation. Upper Colorado Region. November 8, 2016. <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/aboutus/index.html> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>18</sup>Bureau of Reclamation. Colorado Recreation. May 28, 2015. [https://www.usbr.gov/gp/recreation/colorado\\_recreation.html](https://www.usbr.gov/gp/recreation/colorado_recreation.html) (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mission & Vision. <http://www.usace.army.mil/About/Mission-and-Vision/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>20</sup>Recreation.gov. US Army Corps of Engineers. <https://www.recreation.gov/campgroundDirectoryListByAgencyID.do?contractCode=NRSO&agencyID=70902&&startIdx=75> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>21</sup>Personal communication with Kristen Kemp, State Land Board Outreach and Communications Officer

<sup>22</sup>Colorado Parks & Wildlife. About Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW). <http://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>23</sup>Colorado State Forest Service. Agency Profile. <https://csfs.colostate.edu/agency-profile/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>24</sup>Colorado Water Conservation Board. The Colorado Water Conservation Board. <http://cwcb.state.co.us/about-us/about-the-cwcb/Pages/main.aspx> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>25</sup>Colorado (State). Legislature. House. Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act (House Bill 05-1177). 2005. <http://cwcbweblink.state.co.us/weblink/0/doc/105662/Electronic.aspx?searchid=8e74cfe0-f62c-48bb-9fd7-8b193489faf0> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>26</sup>Colorado Division of Water Resources. Mission. <http://water.state.co.us/Home/AboutDWR/Pages/Mission.aspx> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>27</sup>Colorado Open Space Alliance. About. <https://coloradoopenspace.org/about/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>28</sup>Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Special Districts. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/special-districts-0> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>29</sup>The Nature Conservancy. Conservation Easements. <https://www.nature.org/about-us/private-lands-conservation/conservation-easements/what-are-conservation-easements.xml> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>30</sup>Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts. About Land Conservation. <http://cclt.org/about-conservation/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>31</sup>Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts. Land Trust Members. <http://cclt.org/land-trusts> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>32</sup>Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts. Conserve Colorado. <http://cclt.org/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>33</sup>Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/ccia/ute-mountain-ute-tribe> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>34</sup>Mesa Verde Country. Ute Mountain Tribal Park: THE REAL DEAL! <https://www.mesaverdecountry.com/see-do/archaeology/ute-mountain-tribal-park/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>35</sup>Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Ute Mountain Tribal Park. <http://utemountaintribalpark.info/> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>36</sup>Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Camping. <http://utemountaintribalpark.info/camping.html> (accessed March 29, 2018).

<sup>37</sup>Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. Southern Ute Indian Tribe. (accessed March 29, 2018).