

Colorado Wildlife Council Outreach Team Final Report
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Introduction

The faces of the Colorado Outreach Team consists of Eeland Stribling, wildlife biologist and world touring angler, public speaker and one of the best up-and-coming comedians in the country. The better half is Kaiya Tamlyn, the brightest of minds from New York, who specializes in psychology in regards to environmental studies. Without Ginny Sednek giving us the tools, and Jen Anderson providing us with the knowledge, patience, and encouragement to represent the council, share the mission and make this outreach team successful.

Overview

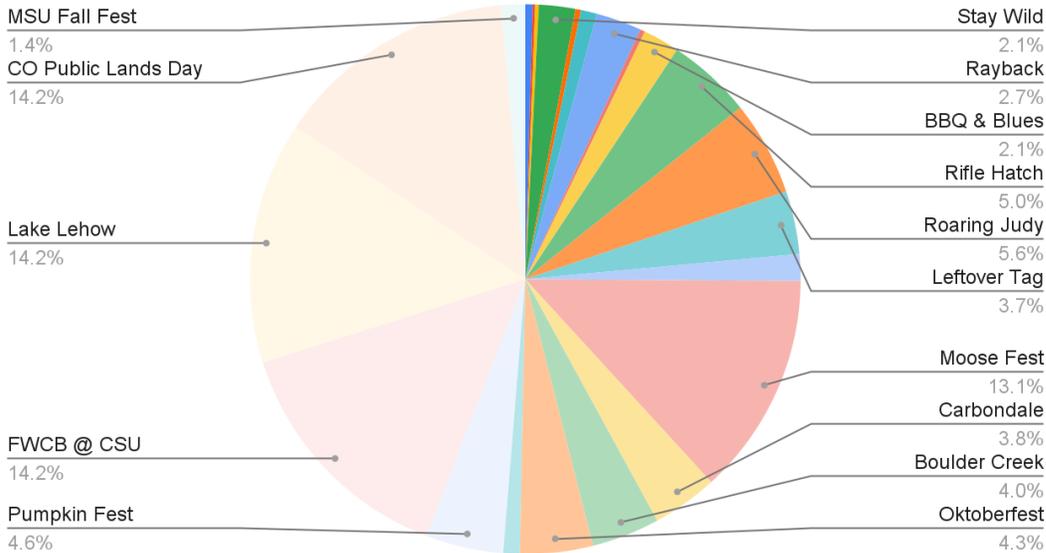
Over the course of summer 2021, the Colorado Wildlife Council (CWC) Outreach Team (OT) traveled to twelve cities around the state of Colorado working events and interacting with the public. Our goal was to disseminate CWC's messaging in-person to Colorado citizens while building support for CWC with Coloradan citizens. The Outreach Team was in its second season and, due to the eased restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic that were in place the first year, there was an emphasis on trying out a wide variety of events and locations to better understand what types of places provide the best opportunities for communicating CWC's messages. Overall, the Outreach Team had significant levels of engagement throughout the state with quality and productive conversations with individuals at many different events. This report will outline the Outreach Team's experiences, findings, and suggestions for future outreach teams.

Numbers at a Glance

Number of Events	24
Days Spent at Events	31
Number of Cities Visited	12
Number of Booth Impressions	47,686
Number of One-on-One Interactions	3,500+

The below chart breaks down what percentage of our overall interactions occurred at each event. It is important to keep in mind that the size of the event does impact the percentage.

Interactions Per Event



Terminology

Impression: In the manner that we define it, we tracked an impression as anybody who walked by or was within short, visual range of the CWC booth. We made sure not to include those who continually walked back and forth in front of the booth.

Interaction: An interaction occurred when an individual or small group exchanged verbal communication with an outreach team member, or another CWC affiliate. Sometimes this was a simple exchange that consisted of sharing a short CWC fact while other times it could be an in-depth, twenty minute conversation about a CWC related topic.

Budget

Our budget consisted of travel expenses, event fees, and giveaway items. This budget does not include internal purchases, such as printing, the truck rental, or outreach team member pay. Travel expenses totalled \$1,366.84 and included gas and hotel accommodations. Event fees totalled \$4,455.00 with \$2,500 of that being the

sponsorship of the Douglas County Fair and Rodeo. Merchandise/giveaways totalled \$9,276.55. Our calculated total is \$15,098.39.

Event Planning

We planned events in different ways. The most common was googling events and simply reaching out to the event contact and/or filling out a vendor application. We would take into consideration the potential attendance numbers, event cost, and if we believed our target audience would be present. We reached out to many events and received no response. Most events that responded were excited about the potential of having us there. We did receive some “no, thank you” responses, but these were generally due to COVID-19 restrictions, the event already at vendor capacity, or trying to register too close to the event. Sometimes people saw us at events and asked us to come to be a vendor at their event or an event they were interested in.

Truck and Trailer Assessment

Although the trailer is massive and can be tricky to drive and navigate, we believe it is a great asset to the council and messaging just by driving it to and from events. We both drove it well and without difficulty. We did have to deal with a flat on the trailer from a nail in CPW’s parking lot before heading to Steamboat for the Balloon Rodeo.

We drove a 2019 Dodge Ram 2500 that was rented from Enterprise because a Colorado Parks and Wildlife truck with the capability to tow the trailer with the statues and event gear inside was unavailable. While it seemed to handle the trailer better than the truck the 2020 Outreach Team used, it did have terrible gas mileage. We also had a flat tire on the truck after the Douglas County Fair and Rodeo. While at times it seemed excessive, loud, and bumpy, overall it seemed to work better than the 2020 outreach team truck, especially in towing capacity.



Image: Eeland retrieving the spare tire with the assistance of a Douglas County cowboy.

Events

The 2021 Outreach Team participated in a diverse array of events throughout the state of Colorado. The style, size, attendee demographics, and goal of the events varied, allowing for testing of what types of events provide the best opportunities and fit for CWC messaging. A total of twenty-four events were attended over the course of thirty-six days throughout the summer and fall. The events can be organized into categories including festivals and fairs, state parks, marketplaces, breweries, fish hatcheries, and some miscellaneous, with the largest group being festivals/fairs. The events took place in a wide variety of locations from city blocks in downtown Denver to fish hatcheries in remote mountain regions. Demographics of attendees varied between events, some having more of the target audience and in-the-wind voters than others. Some events were adult centric while others were family centric, leading us to the important discovery of the benefit of appealing to kids in order to talk to the adults in their party (as will be discussed more below). This section will outline benefits and drawbacks of varying events and event styles, highlighting some factors that we feel are important to event selection of future Outreach Teams.

On top of the categories listed above, our experiences at different events taught us to understand that they could be classified into three types based on attendee goals: 1) go to learn/shop/see something new, 2) go for a specific activity, 3) passerby/stumble upon. Using these distinctions, you can place different types of events in those categories. For instance events like Moose fest, FWCB, or the hatcheries are events that the target audience has the intention of going to to learn, shop or take something away from those events. Whether tangible or knowledgable.

Other events like the Steamboat balloon, Douglas county fair, boulder creek were going for a specific activity - to watch balloons, listen to music, or be with family. They still had the intention of taking something from the event but maybe intrinsic rather than knowledge or tangible.

Then other events were passerby events. Where the intention was about relaxing without the intention to gain or take away anything. Events in this category included state parks, Glamp AF, or brewery hangs. If we did an event at a brewery that was promoted with a purpose and had other vendors in attendance, we think we would have had a higher interaction rate.

Festivals & Fairs

This category made up the largest segment of events attended by the Outreach Team and holds a large assortment of event topics and styles within it. Events include the Colorado Music & Arts Festival, the American Field Glamp Market, the Stay Wild Market, the Steamboat Hot Air Balloon Rodeo, the Blues & BBQ Festival for Better Housing, the Colorado Moose Festival, the Carbondale Block Party, the Boulder Creek Hometown Festival, the Denver Jazz Festival, Denver Oktoberfest, and Four-Mile Historic Park Pumpkin Festival. Most of these events took place in city parks, along city streets, or in other populated areas with steady foot traffic.

For many of these style events, the CWC tent was set up in line with or nearby other vendor tents such as those that sell food, crafts, or other products and services. We found that being set up in line with other booths really assisted in the number of interactions we had. Many people “table surfed” or walked from booth to booth collecting free giveaways. This allowed interactions with those who may not have stopped by our booth based on the topic of wildlife, but who were interested in what items we had to offer. More often than not, these people were willing to engage with us in conversation.

State Parks

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the events/locations that the 2020 Outreach Team attended were State Parks. While this seems like it was the best option for the circumstances during that time, we found that State Parks were not the most effective use of Outreach Team time or resources. The exception to this would be if a State Park was hosting a specific event, such as the Colorado Moose Festival at State Forest State Park. Without a specific event at the State Park, we found that visitors typically came for a specific activity (such as boating or having a family cookout), to relax, or to be with friends and family. This seemed to impact their motivation for interacting with the CWC booth. If we were near a beach, they would walk by with their hands full of beach gear, often while also trying to keep their children moving. If we were near hiking trails, most people would be in the middle of their walk, workout, or bike and seemed disinclined to stop. These demonstrate a few of the many reasons why we found a very low rate of interactions at State Parks, even on weekends when there were often many visitors around.

However, when there was an event at a state park, interaction rates were much higher. At these events, such as the Colorado Moose Festival mentioned above, there were often a variety of booths and activities set up. This allowed visitors to act similarly to how they would at festivals or fairs, often visiting every booth. This definitely drew many people to our setup, allowing for a large number of interactions. In addition, many of the individuals visiting parks for these events had an intrinsic interest in the outdoors or wildlife, creating above average levels of engagement and conversation. With these

factors in mind, we would recommend participating in future events at State Parks, but not attending state parks without a predetermined and advertised event.

Marketplaces

We attended the Glamp AF Market and Stay Wild Market in downtown Denver, which sold crafts, food, outdoor gear, and other goods. We had moderate success at each of these events, suggesting that they could be quality options in future years as well. They were similar in style to some of the fairs that we went to and make a good case for belonging in that category.

Other marketplaces, such as farmer's markets, could fall into the category of festivals and fairs as well, but they could be seen as their own category due to their unique planning style. We reached out to many different farmer's markets, Saturday morning markets, weekend markets, etc. Some markets were not accepting vendors that did not sell food due to limited participation for COVID-19 precautions. Other markets required a weekly, biweekly, or monthly commitment in order to participate. Some even had monetary penalties for missing your commitment. Due to our schedule already being fairly full, we did not have the consistent availability required by these events. It would be interesting for future Outreach Teams to test their levels of success at a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly market, but they would need to get those events on the schedule early in the year to ensure good schedule fit.

Breweries

While we believe that there is a large overlap between the CWC target audience and people that visit breweries, we unfortunately did not have a large amount of success with the breweries we attended. There could be multiple reasons for this. The first is that both of the breweries, Rayback Collective and Avery Brewing Company, were both in the Boulder area, meaning it may have been something about the area itself. Another reason could have been the time we were at each brewery. Due to our busy weekend events, we tried to fill in our weekdays with smaller events, leading us to be at the breweries on weekday evenings. However, our strongest hypothesis rests with a similar theory to what we experienced at State Parks. It seems that people came to breweries to relax, participate in a particular activity (drinking beer), and spend time with specific people. They did not seem to be there to learn or experience something new, making their desire to interact with us fairly low. While our experience at breweries was not successful, we feel that this is an area to keep exploring. An especially effective opportunity could be an organized event at a brewery, distillery, or other similar location.

Fish Hatcheries

We attended two Colorado State fish hatcheries over the summer, Roaring Judy Fish Hatchery and Rifle Falls Fish Hatchery. It seemed that hatchery visitors fell into two different categories: locals that often make trips to the hatchery or tourists that were driving by and decided to stop. While the number of visitors at each hatchery may not have been as high as we would have experienced at a more populated event, the individual interactions that we had were very high quality. Also, we were able to interact with almost every visitor. Similar to our thoughts about breweries, we feel that an event held at a fish hatchery would be a very good combination for future Outreach Teams.

Our trips to the hatcheries were also excellent learning opportunities for us. The staff members at each hatchery were extremely kind, taking time to teach us, answer our questions, and give us behind the scenes tours. This provided valuable information for us as we spoke to Colorado residents about projects that hunting and fishing license fees support. After our hatcheries trips, we were able to provide a greater depth of knowledge for those who were interested in fishing, which was many.

Miscellaneous Events

There are a wide variety of events that fall into this category, some more successful for CWC messaging than others. One such event was Leftover License Day. For this event we set up a booth outside the Denver CPW office, hoping to interact with the people waiting to get leftover tags. However, since many people now go through this process online, the turnout was very small. We do not recommend this event for future Outreach Teams. Another miscellaneous event was the Carbondale Block Party. One Friday of every month, downtown Carbondale shuts down for a neighborhood party. Sometimes they have specific themes, for example the one we attended was a Pride celebration with a parade. These block parties seem to be very well attended and are marketed for the whole family. Many children came to our booth to color a coloring page that we provided, giving us the perfect opportunity to speak with their parents. We recommend any future events in Carbondale, or similarly styled events.

Speaking Events

While this is a category of events that we participated in to a certain extent, we feel that it is an avenue for future exploration that will lead to high levels of success. Eeland began the season as a guest on Terry Wickstrom Outdoors, a radio show on 104.3 The Fan. While we are unable to find the number of listeners, we feel that it is an excellent investment based on the relatively easy level of effort and time required (as opposed to driving across the state) in relation to the number of individuals that could be reached. Terry Wickstrom provided questions beforehand, helping Eeland to prepare well thought out answers that appropriately highlighted CWC messaging. In addition, the show is always looking for guests.

Another important speaking event that Eeland participated in was a speaker on a panel for Colorado Public Lands Day. It was held online, allowing for people from all across the state to listen in. This event was particularly important as it discussed issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor and natural spaces in the state of Colorado. These are extremely important and highly necessary conversations and we are proud to take part. This is an area we hope future Outreach Teams will continue to work on.

There were also two lecture style events. The first was for 200 of Colorado State University's Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology students. Kaiya spoke to these students for almost an hour, covering a wide variety of CWC related topics. The students were very engaged and afterward had many thoughtful questions. The second speaking event was at the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee in Gunnison County. This was arranged through Brandon Diamond, a CPW Area Manager and presented by councilmember Robin Brown as it did not align with the Outreach Team's schedule. Overall, we feel that these speaking engagements were able to connect CWC to a wide audience and serve as an excellent addition to the traditional, booth style events. We would recommend that future Outreach Teams continue to explore this avenue of outreach and education.

Event Locations

We traveled to many places around the state, twelve cities total. We chose locations and events based on the question "Is this where our target audience is?" Many of our events were in the Denver and Front Range areas, but other locations included Rifle Falls State Park and Hatchery, Colorado Springs, Steamboat Springs, Roaring Judy State Hatchery and many other places in the mountains and around Denver. We also did virtual events like Terry Wickstrom Radio and CO Public Lands Day via zoom.

While we did our best to get to as many places around the state as possible, attendable events were only held in so many places. We also had to balance whether to use days to travel to further parts of the state versus having more days at events closer to our office. We also did our best to think about which cities or areas of the state would potentially have the highest concentration of CWC's target audience. Keeping these factors in mind, the highest concentration of events took place in Denver. This is especially true if the area is extended to the greater Denver area, stretching south to Castle Rock and north to Boulder.

Event Interactions

Our booth interactions varied considerably by location, event, and individual. While sometimes you might have a sense of the type of interactions to expect based on the demographics of individuals expected at an event, the truth was that you never knew what you were going to get. It can be definitively said that the vast majority of encounters and conversations that we had with people were very pleasant. While our most common topics are listed below, generally individuals expressed curiosity or wanted to share experiences with us. Overall, people were kind and welcoming, even if they did not agree with CWC's mission.

There were some occurrences of unpleasantness, but these were typically few and far between. More often than not, these individuals would express their distaste in a short sentence or two and then continue to walk by. They did not often stick around to engage in conversation with us. Sometimes the dislike was aimed at the activities of hunting and fishing themselves while other times it was aimed specifically at meat consumption or animal welfare. Quite often, the frustration that individuals were expressing was actually aimed at CPW, which they had mistaken us for. Although most interactions were pleasant, there were some instances where people got quite heated. This was usually people just expressing their feelings, without much need for a response. We remained calm and diffused these situations as best as we could.

Another interesting phenomenon was that individuals assigned their own ideas of our purpose and function. Some people thought that we rescued wildlife, others thought we raised money to pay for wildlife rescue, and various other ideas. It did not matter how many times or different ways we explained our purpose and mission, these folks were simply stuck in their own line of reasoning.

Interacting with children was a highlight for both of us. They expressed such enthusiasm for wild animals and were excited to share what they knew. We often talked with them about what they could do to help protect wildlife or wildlife habitat, either in their backyard or in a different outdoor area that they liked to explore. While the most common answer (from both kids and adults) was to pick up trash, there were also some very creative answers! We found that due to the animal aspect of our booth, many parents would bring their whole families to us. This provided an opportunity to speak with the kids, but also engage the adults with more traditional CWC messaging. Overall, we feel that participating in events aimed at children and families is an excellent way to engage with adults.

Most common questions and comments

- Thank you
 - “Thank you for the work you’re doing.”
 - Thank you for protecting wildlife
 - Thank you for spreading messages about the importance of hunting and fishing
- Wolves
 - “Did wolves get passed?”
 - Sad wolves will be hunted/killed like in other states
 - Fear of being hunted by wolves
 - Wolves will kill the hunting industry in Colorado because they’ll kill all the elk and deer
 - “There’s wolves in my backyard” he lived in a place where there has never been a report of wolves
 - “Will I be able to hunt wolves”
 - “Who will pay for wolves?”
- Bears
 - “Will they pass Grizzly bears in Colorado yet?”
 - “I saw a bear in (insert location)”
- Volunteer
 - How do I get involved and/or volunteer?
 - What Volunteer events do you do?
 - What programs do you all have?
 - Do you have anything or information for people who just moved here?
- Search and Rescue
 - “I buy a hunting or fishing license for the search and rescue”
 - “You should buy a license for the SAR”
 - Hiking and climbers use as main motivation
- What do I do if I encounter wildlife
 - If I see a bear what do I do?
 - What (shows picture of animal) animal is this?
 - Share their wildlife stories with us
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 - Told us where and what they hunt
 - Ask about license and/or tag fees
 - “Can I buy a license from you?” or “Where can I buy a license?”

Survey

People were often willing to take the survey to win a prize. Some events the prize was a t-shirt, while at others it was a koozie or bandana. We realized pretty quickly that the survey was too long, even after we trimmed it down from the 2020 survey. It took around 5 minutes. So we encouraged people to start the survey and said they could complete it later on. Otherwise they would just be standing there quietly for 5 minutes. We are in the process of choosing the survey winners now.

A total of 225 people participated and completed the survey. Attached is the survey results with graphs, numbers and the response that people wrote in. When the survey asked “What was one thing you learned from the Colorado Wildlife Council?”, one of the main responses was; Conservation funding from hunting and fishing license sales AND licenses bring 3 billion dollars to the Colorado economy.

Games and Activities

Eeland came up with a game of Conservation Cornhole (pictured below) to have as a part of our booth set up. The boards were beautifully designed and definitely attracted the attention of those walking by. Each board has 5 rings of varying sizes outlining different levels of conservation, such as “statewide” and “backyard.” We asked players to toss a beanbag or two and asked questions about conservation in those corresponding areas. For example, a child that landed on “local park” would be asked “what is your favorite wild animal?” That question could be followed up with an inquiry into what they could do to help protect that species in their local park. For adults, who landed on “statewide” we would ask what they could do to help protect wildlife throughout the state. We would then often ask a CWC messaging question, such as “in dollars, how large is the hunting and fishing industry in Colorado?” While most of their answers were wild guesses, it provided the perfect opportunity to teach them about the importance of hunting and fishing in Colorado’s economy.

Coloring was an activity that we added to the booth part way through the season. It was inspired by the organizers of the Carbondale Block Party and the coloring sheet itself was designed by R&R Partners. Having the opportunity for people to color drew both children and adults to the booth and we recommend continuing that in the future. We do have two recommendations. The first is to have a simplified version of the coloring sheet or another, more simple option to choose from. The second idea is to highlight completed coloring sheets on social media with something along the lines of “Fan Art Friday.”



Images: (left) Conservation Cornhole was popular with humans and chipmunks alike.
(right) Coloring sheets decorated by booth visitors

Giveaways (Formerly ‘SWAG’)

Our giveaways this year followed a similar style to the 2020s Outreach Team. Items included branded:

- T-shirts
- Bandanas
- Can Koozies
- Water Bottles
- Sunscreen on a carabiner
- Hand Sanitizer
- Chapstick
- Stickers
- Postcards

All of these options were of interest to many people, but popularity depended on the event. T-shirts were very popular, however bandanas were a good replacement for children as we only had adult sizes. Koozies were especially popular at events where drinks were being sold. Stickers were always very popular. We certainly found that handing out items, especially T-shirts, helped with in-event marketing. Many people came to talk to us because somebody they saw or somebody they were there with had previously gotten one of our giveaway items.

One of our strongest overall recommendations is for the next Outreach Team to evaluate these items and find more environmentally friendly alternatives. While it is important to have giveaway items at the table to entice people to chat, many of the current items go against CWC’s overall goal of promoting conservation. Some potential ideas include a bookmark with a list of 10 things you can do to support wildlife conservation (thanks for the idea Ginny!), bamboo sunglasses, wearable paper antlers, reusable grocery bags, paper fans, etc. The other option could be more sustainable versions of similar products. In addition, can koozies, sunscreen, sanitizer, and chapstick

are items that almost every booth hands out. More unique items would help CWC to stand out from the crowd.



Image: Mona the dog modeling a CWC bandana

Social Media

While R&R Partners is in charge of the social media accounts, we were able to contribute stories to Instagram and Facebook. We did our best to post a story two days before every event, then at least one story from the event itself. Sometimes the stories would be promoting the event we were attending while other times we would share conservation, wildlife, or other CWC related messaging. All of these stories should be able to be found under the “Outreach Team” tab on Instagram. An idea for future outreach teams is to provide weekly conservation ideas (thanks for the idea Jen!). This would provide a weekly scheduled post, to balance out some of the inconsistency of event posts. We also think a focus could be made on getting social media users at events to tag us in photos, then sharing those to our stories. Some examples could include using the VR elk and trout, wearing our gear, pets wearing our gear, etc.

What Could Have Gone Better

The involvement of the council members could have helped with messaging and engagement with the target audience. Council members at events not only benefit the people we talked to but it can help with future campaigns and ideas.

Suggestions For The Future

- More environmentally friendly booth
 - Less waste or ZERO waste - ie not so much single use plastic being handed out
 - We hand out so many of the same things that other booths hand out, what can we do to stand out while also being conservation conscious?
- Jen's idea of a social media post of a "conservation tip of the week"
- Handout for "How to interact with wildlife/what to do if you encounter wildlife" - quite a few people had questions about this
- Get involved with land trust groups (Such as Aspen Valley Land Trust, who we met in Carbondale)
- Choose some ideas and stick with them - we had a lot of ideas and became unfocused, making us unable to complete them all
- Campaign on search and rescue?
- Volunteer opportunities
- Campaign/handout for new Coloradoans/voters
- More college events and speaking engagements
- Call to Action
- Dog Photo Contest
- Making Coloring pages more simple (less lines) for kids and speed

In Conclusion

The Colorado Wildlife Council outreach team used their knowledge and understanding about wildlife, conservation, and education to not only inform Colorado's inhabitants, but to inspire. The Colorado Wildlife Council's mission is to *oversee the design of a public education program to inform the general public about the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management, and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing.* The outreach team were and are pivotal tools in that message to Colorado voters.