

# Five-Year Strategic Plan

October 2021



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# Situation Overview

# Purpose of the Five-year Plan

Kicking off our second contract with the Colorado Wildlife Council (CWC) after the recent RFP process, R&R Partners has been tasked with developing a five-year strategic plan for the CWC campaign efforts. This plan will be viewed as a strategic road map, making sure our efforts stay on strategy and provide us a way to routinely evaluate campaign methods, targets and goals to ensure campaign success and growth.

## Objectives of the five-year plan include:

- Ensure an integrated, multiyear campaign strategy
- Appropriately manage timeline and budget
- Outline campaign tactics, goals and target audiences

R&R has crafted this strategy with the understanding that campaign priorities and goals may shift year to year. R&R is prepared to adjust this strategic plan as needed to fit the needs of the CWC campaign.

# Campaign Objectives

**Business objective:** Colorado Wildlife Council's objective is to support favorability toward hunting and fishing in Colorado through an increased awareness among Colorado voters of the benefits that hunting and fishing license fees bring to Colorado.

**Marketing objective:** Build support for hunting and fishing in Colorado by increasing the number of those who would be against ballot initiatives and laws restricting hunting annually.

R&R Partners will continue educating Colorado voters about the benefits of hunting and fishing fees via a multichannel advertising campaign.

## Marketing Strategies

- Focus advertising dollars to reach those who do not have strong opinions toward hunting and fishing; focus on the "moveable middle."
- Use specific messaging and content themes that resonate with those who do not hunt or fish.



# Campaign Target Audience(s)

**In The Wind, Colorado Voters:** Speak directly to young, urban Colorado voters who have a strong appreciation for the outdoors through shared values to move perceptions of hunters and anglers to be more positive. They are on the fence as to their opinion toward hunting and fishing can be easily swayed either direction with proper messaging.

## **Other considerations**

- New residents to Colorado
- Contextual targeting; sports fans, outdoor recreationists
- Adults 18–34 years old



**Stakeholders:** R&R understands that the objective of the CWC is to educate audiences that may not understand or acknowledge the vast benefits of hunting and fishing to the state. However, by building years-long relationships with the Council, visiting the state capitol, conversing with our constituents, and meeting our stakeholders at council meetings, we understand the importance of not alienating our advocates. Our goal is to drive pride within our sportspeople, council members and constituents.



In making our stakeholders proud of CWC's work, we have encouraged sharing opportunities and made our stakeholders our advocates in garnering earned media.

**Partners and Advocates: Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Outdoors Support Organizations, Hunters and Anglers**

- Strategy: Find and build meaningful partnerships that will help amplify Colorado Wildlife Council's message through creating awareness of the Council and clearly articulate an understanding of the value CWC also provides them.

**Legislative: Legislators, Lobbyists, Government Interest Groups**

- Strategy: Position the Council as an adviser and expert for legislation on hunting and fishing issues through building personal relationships with members of government and special interest groups.

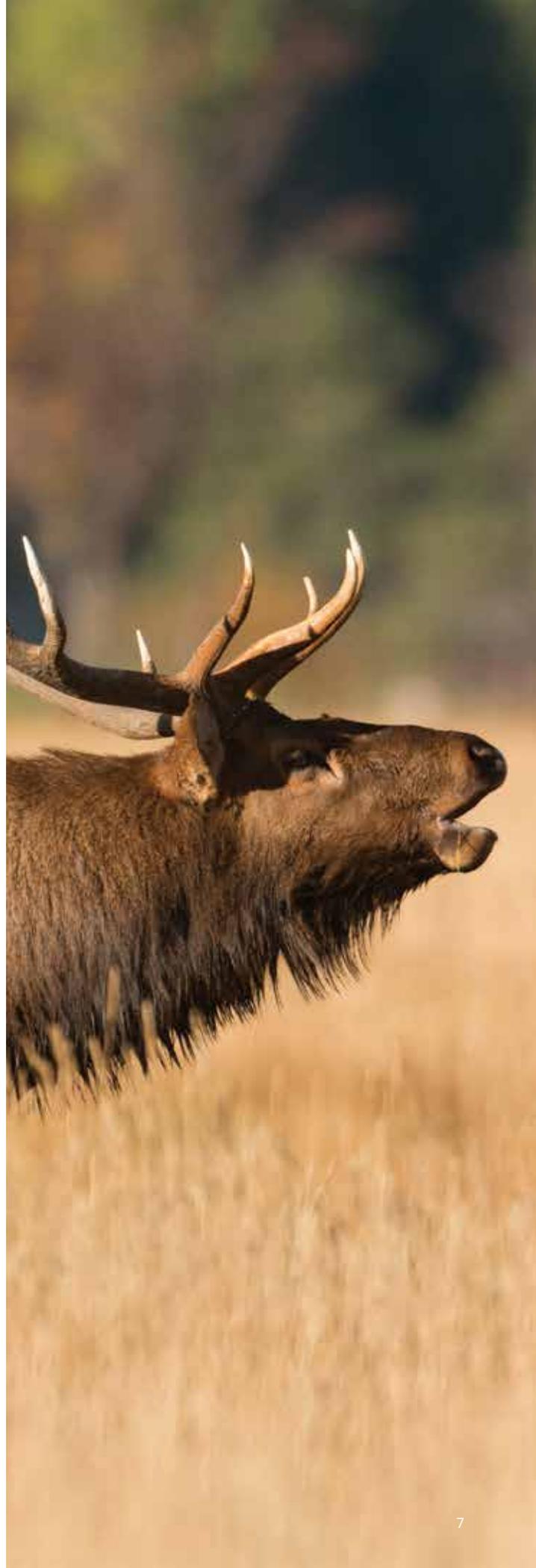


# History of the CWC

In the early 1990s, the misinformed Colorado public voted to outlaw spring bear hunting, and then a few years later, trapping on public lands. Colorado Parks & Wildlife (then known as the Colorado Division of Wildlife) was powerless to act. To protect sportspeople's rights against special interest groups, local sportspeople decided to act accordingly to protect Colorado's hunting and fishing heritage. The goal of this group was to create a comprehensive, media-based program to educate the public (especially the non-hunting, non-fishing public) **regarding the importance of wildlife and wildlife management, and why hunting and fishing are critical to Colorado's legacy.**

Ultimately, in 1999, hunters and anglers proved their support by agreeing to a voluntary check-off donation program (\$4.75) to fund the Wildlife Management Education Fund, allowing the sportspeople to conduct a pilot program to show that a public education campaign had value. This pilot was a success, and as a result, in 2005, HB 1266 (Public Education License Surcharge) was approved by the state legislature, allowing permanent funding to be secured from a surcharge on hunting and fishing license fees for an annual public education campaign.

Because of this, CWC is to retain an outside agency to develop an annual marketing plan and to facilitate and execute the public education campaign. Agencies that have worked with the Council include Extra Strength (2006–2010) and CCT Advertising/Pilgrim (2011–2015). R&R Partners was selected as the new agency in 2016 and then retained the contract in 2021.



# Current Situation

During the last five years of working with the Colorado Wildlife Council, we have faced, and adapted to, myriad challenges: a growing population; an influx of new residents from out of the state; and an evolving political ideology statewide that makes educating Coloradans on the benefits of legal hunting and fishing more important than ever before.

No doubt these next five years will be faced with challenges as well, as new data from the 2020 Census shows that as Colorado grew, the state grew increasingly more diverse and urban, which means the Council's mission will require an ability to adapt and pivot in order to appeal to these new residents.

From 2010 to 2020, Colorado added almost a million new residents, with much of the growth center around the areas in and around Denver. Suburban Denver areas like Broomfield and Weld counties exploded, while Denver itself was one of only 14 cities nationwide to add more than 100,000 new residents. The state's white population continued to shrink, while the Hispanic population continued to boom. And even Colorado's African American population is slowly growing.

But this should come as no surprise: people from all over, including a fair number of young Gen Zers and millennials, are leaving the congested, big city and small floor-plan life of states like California, Texas and Florida, for promises of more space, better jobs, a better quality of life, and the ability to live near the beauty and majesty that is Colorado's outdoors.

## **And the ongoing pandemic has accelerated all of it.**

These demographic and population changes have also contributed to a continued evolution of Colorado's political climate. One analysis of the 2020 election in Colorado noted that it "continued the decades-long shift toward Democrats in Colorado, led by voters in

suburban counties and punctuated by huge turnout in the party's strongholds of Denver and Boulder."

Regardless of where any of us land on the political spectrum, this is a trend we must continue to acknowledge, and prepare around, to be successful.

In spite of all these challenges, the good news is, we have learned over the last five years that when the right voter research is conducted, it creates the right campaign message in "This is the Wild Life." And when we compellingly **educate on the benefits of legal hunting and fishing (even if it's something many will never do themselves)**, when we tap into a shared appreciation for the state, our audience begins to realize: How could they ever deny someone else these rights?

Looking at the next five years of working with the Colorado Wildlife Council, a similar, thoughtful, strategic approach, grounded in the most up-to-date understanding of Colorado voters, will again allow us to account for all the many changes impacting Colorado's landscape and ensure that if there is at least one constant in the state, it's that everyone understands the benefits of legal hunting and fishing.



# Campaign Metrics

*At the end of the day, all efforts are for naught if they don't result in support for hunting and fishing in Colorado.*

## Campaign objectives:

- Increased knowledge of the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing.
- Keep key constituents informed of our marketing efforts and programs.

Our holistic approach to measurement helps make certain that mass awareness efforts drive additional research and consideration, which in turn drive support. And beyond individual attitudes, we continue to nurture that relationship to create ambassadors that then amplify our message and drive further awareness. This approach ensures that all partners are aligned to the goal and their efforts contribute to the appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs). Optimization of tactical efforts are then measured against those shared goals for continual improvement in real time.

### Awareness of the Issue

- Message: Hunting and fishing license fees contribute to your way of life in Colorado.
- Touchpoints: traditional media (TV, OOH, audio), video (pre-roll, CTV), earned media (wide net)
- KPIs: impressions, reach, frequency, earned

### Education

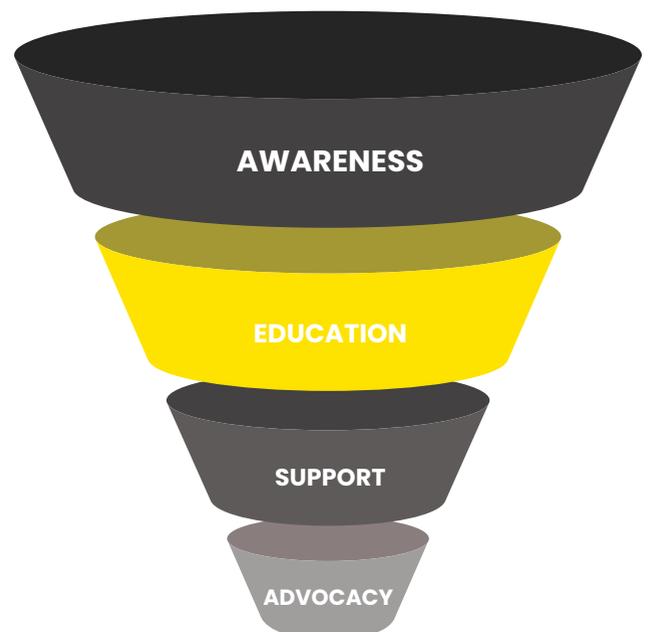
- Message: Here's how hunting and fishing license fees benefit you and your way of life.
- Touchpoints: website, paid social, paid search, digital, native, influencers/earned media (narrow target), outreach teams
- KPIs: web metrics, search volume, engagement

### Support

- Message: I would not support further restricting hunting and fishing in Colorado.
- Touchpoints: legislative outreach
- KPIs: annual survey report

### Advocacy/Badge

- Message: I know that hunting and fishing benefit all Coloradans. Do you?
- Touchpoints: email, merch, UGC social
- KPIs: email metrics, social shares/reposts, merch sales





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# Strategic Approach & Campaign Toolbox



## Research

Faced with Colorado's growing influx of new urbanites and millennials who are often not as familiar with the benefits of hunting and fishing, we recognized the need to uncover the political and attitudinal landscape surrounding wildlife issues. In partnering with CWC, R&R implemented a four-phased research approach in 2018 including online ethno-journaling, courtroom-style focus groups, tracking and messaging polling, and creative concept testing.

Learnings from this research provided us with direction to develop a comprehensive message architecture – identifying key campaign messages and a Coloradan spokesperson who tested as both likeable and trustworthy. Ultimately, the culmination of these efforts helped to inform the development of a new campaign and tagline, **"This is the Wild Life."**

With the launch of this new campaign came a unique opportunity for the annual tracker, a chance to field a “new” benchmark survey. Working with CWC, we took advantage of this campaign reset to reevaluate the annual tracking survey, both in terms of the language and questions used and the research methodology.

Using our combined knowledge of the hunting and fishing landscape, our experience with previous CWC research, and industry best practices, we revised the survey to better measure key performance indicators (KPIs) and meet the needs of CWC. Additionally, our research and media teams developed revised audience definitions to further improve accuracy in measurement.

We also worked with CWC to adjust the research methodology, implementing an approach that is not only more efficient in reaching CWC’s younger, urban target audience, but also is more representative of voter populations compared to other recruitment methods.

Armed with this new and revised research approach, it will be important to continue to monitor changes in KPIs and consistently field the tracking survey each year. But, just as important is our ability to optimize our messaging strategy. Therefore, we updated the message in the recent tracking survey to help uncover the most salient messages among the non-hunting and non-fishing residents in Colorado.

In fact, finding a message that truly resonates, opening hearts to the cause, and educating on the benefits has been the focus of our efforts to date. Yet, the need to uncover the most salient messages is now more important than ever. In the past year we’ve seen a dramatic shift in the political landscape and political involvement levels, especially among young voters. The events of the past year — the pandemic, social movements, political unrest, and tragedies close to home — have made even our politically passive audience pay a little more attention to the national conversation, and how local politics have a direct impact on their own lives.

While they may be more politically engaged, they’re not necessarily more educated on the benefits of hunting and fishing, the funding source of conservation efforts, and the shared values that align them. Outdoor activities have been a much needed relief from stay-at-home orders and have served to reintroduce or perhaps deepen a relationship many had to the outdoors. They have a newfound appreciation for conservation efforts in Colorado and are more open to learning about the **positive impacts of hunting and fishing** on the local economy, wildlife, wildlife management, and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado.

With this in mind, we believe it will be important to conduct further exploratory research (similar to that conducted in 2018) to provide an updated understanding of Colorado’s mindset and political landscape surrounding environmental issues, particularly hunting and fishing, as well as a cohesive messaging architecture to guide and inform CWC communications moving forward.

Finally, to continue to keep an eye on the big picture, and adjust and evolve as our audience and state does, additional research (e.g., intercepts, focus groups, etc.) may be conducted on an as-needed basis.

# Creative

In 2018, it was decided that the Hug a Hunter campaign had reached the end of its lifespan. It was no longer addressing the needs of our changing audience and the Council decided it hit reset. R&R then spent the next six months conducting additional research. The learnings from this research provided us with a message architecture and helped identify additional key messages. These efforts helped inform the new campaign tagline This is the Wild Life and a Colorado spokesperson, who tested as both likeable and trustworthy.



With the success of This is the Wild Life, we have been able to build a much deeper relationship with our audience, as well as a deeper well of creative assets. When R&R won the Wildlife Council account, there were only two television commercials and a few outdoor boards. Today, after four seasons of filming, we will have over 100 different pieces of creative to pull from with the ability to adjust our messaging to our audiences' needs.

In addition to creating our campaign messaging, we also created the Colorado Wildlife Council brand, complete with a new logo and style guide. This brought **additional credibility** to our messaging and established the Council as an expert on wildlife issues and education.



### **Test, create, evaluate.**

Now that we have filmed four seasons of *This is the Wild Life*, we will be reevaluating it. While we are always monitoring our creative, we believe it's time to reevaluate our messaging and creative. Throughout the next year, we will be conducting additional qualitative research, and will use this research to create, or update our messages. Oftentimes, marketers will tire of their messaging long before their audience does. Marketers live and breathe their message, and pay close attention to their ads, while their audience might only see it a few times, and in different places. Consumers, and especially our *In the Wind* audience, are tone deaf to government messaging. We have had great success with our spokesperson. He has brought recognition, credibility and likability to the campaign. But we will determine if he is still relevant, should be retired, or continue and evolve.

### **The Future Is Science.**

The science of wildlife management has been the most fertile ground and best at helping create an emotional connection with our audience. In conjunction with the additional research, we plan on continuing this direction with our creative messaging. It's the science and careful wildlife management that helps all of Colorado's species. **Hunters and anglers pay for the majority of it, and it's vital that our audience understands this.**



## It's All About the Experience.

We've had great success creating new experiences and working with, and building, partnerships. We were able to place our origami fish in front of Dick's Sporting Goods for months – for free. We laid the groundwork for a partnership with JAX Sporting Goods by filming there. And working with local Colorado artist AJ Davis, we created a giant mural and Instagram augmented reality (AR) effect. We will continue leveraging partnerships that are relevant to our audience, such as the Colorado Rockies, who we are negotiating with currently.

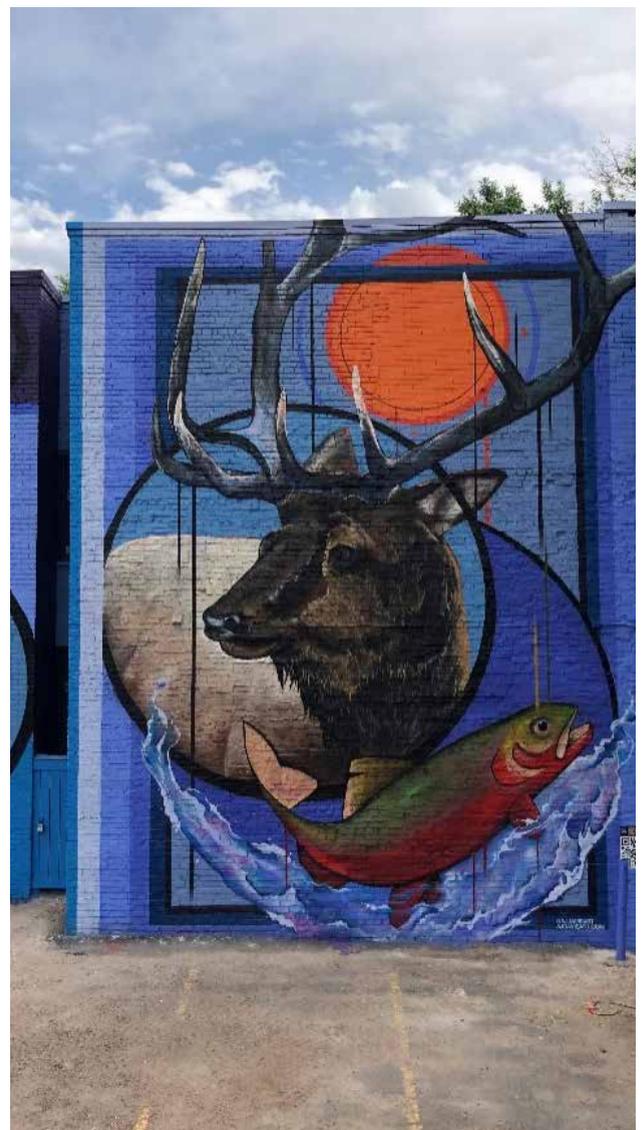
When it comes to immersive experiences, we plan on wrapping men's rooms to experience nature, when "nature calls." Where our audience can learn how moose were reintroduced while "watering" a tree.

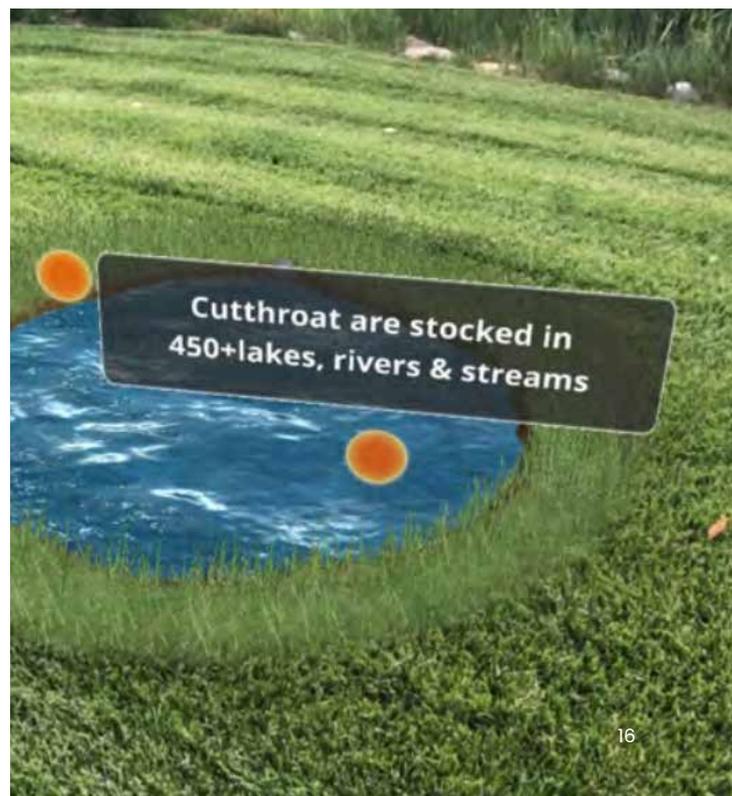
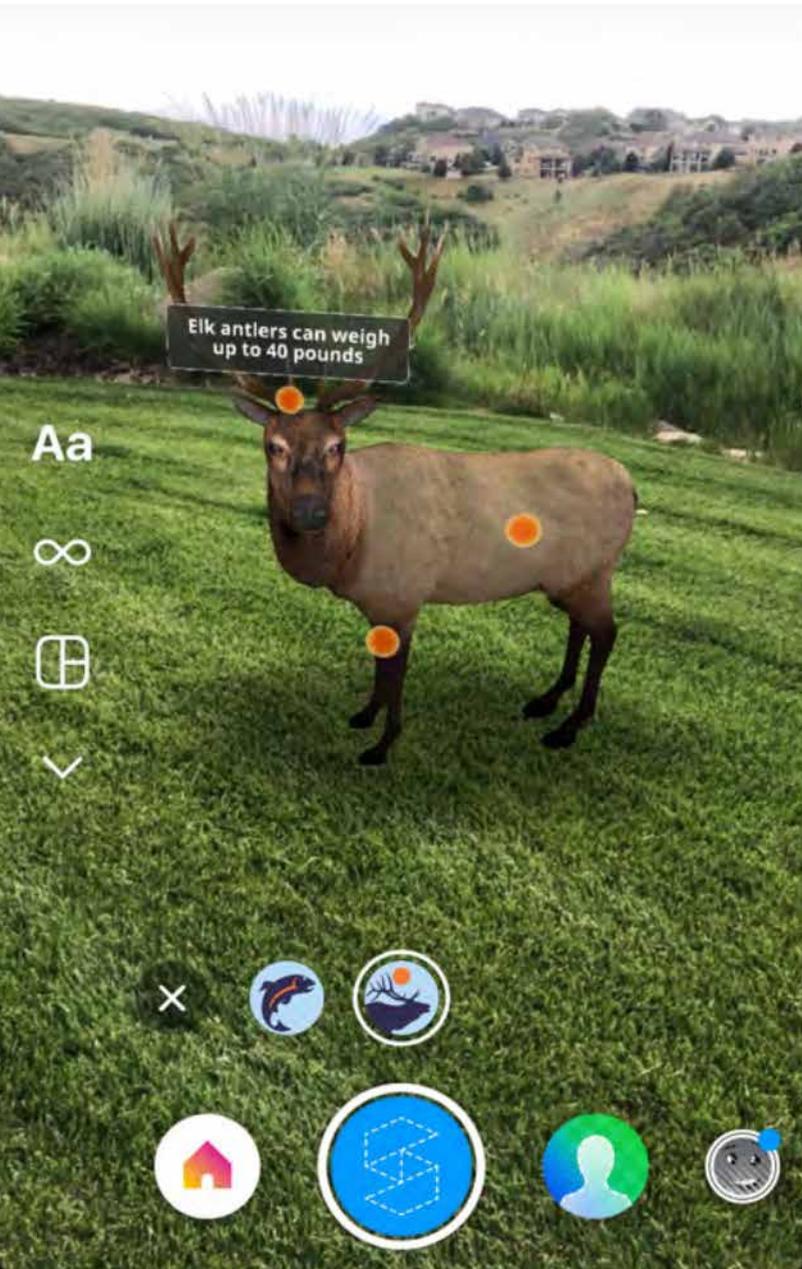
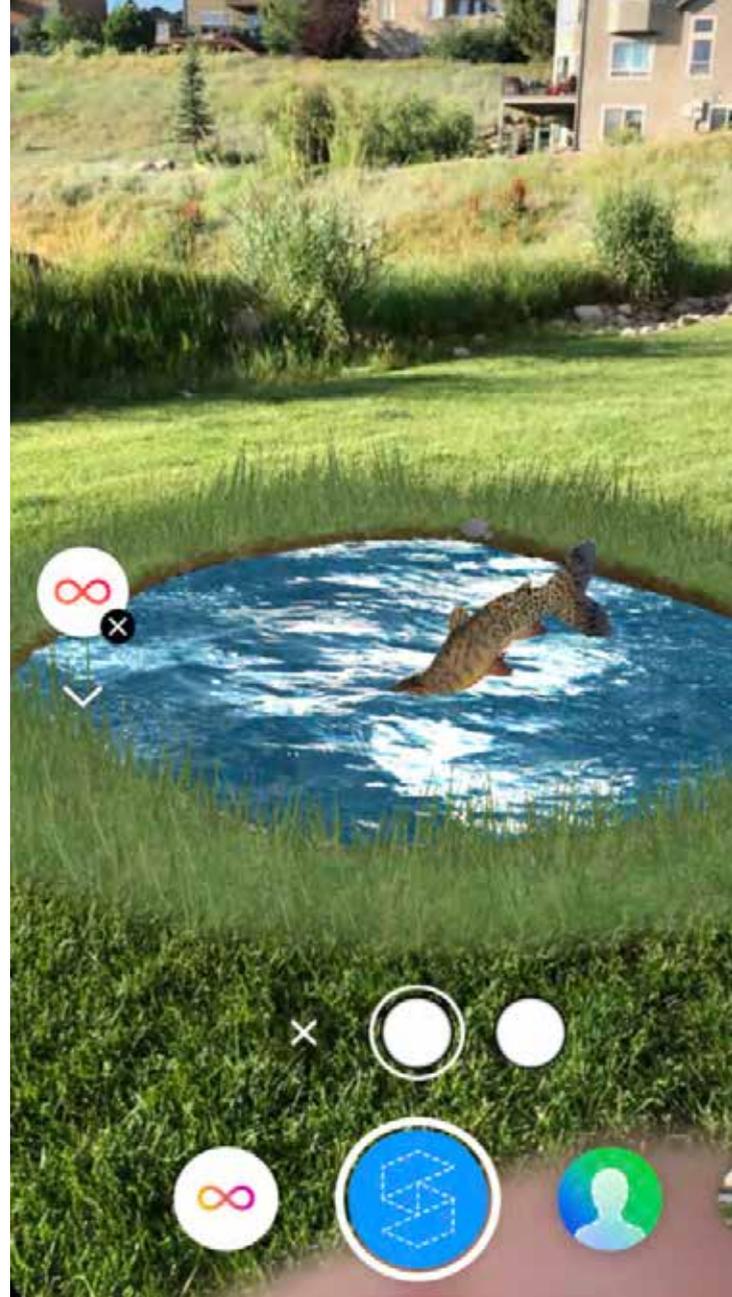
Our AR effect has been a great experience. Taking the immersion experience even further, we can create a virtual reality (VR) effect, where our audience can wear a headset that puts them into the heart of the outdoors. When they hear an elk bugle off to their side, they turn and see it standing in the trees next to them. They hear a gobble and see a wild turkey run past them, or a sage grouse strutting in their mating dance. Total immersion into the Colorado outdoors while standing at the booth with the outreach team.

## The Shared Experience.

Our audience lives for experiences. And user-generated content sites like TikTok have exploded. We'll start creating content that delivers our message, but also content that others can share and mimic, generating their own content, therefore spreading our message for us.

No great brand is without merch. Merchandise enhances brand awareness for little or no money for years. You can't walk through downtown Denver and not see someone wearing The North Face or Patagonia. Our plan is to create and distribute more of our swag. We would like to work with the Wildlife Council and create a funding mechanism where proceeds from the sale of merchandise go back to the wildlife, much like the habitat stamp. Wearing This is the Wild Life, would help the wildlife, and gives our target a way to get involved outside of purchasing a license. If our creative is good enough, people will pay to wear it and help spread our message.





# Paid Media

*At the beginning of the partnership, R&R inherited a media plan that focused on reaching a largely undefined audience with minimal messaging channels. Throughout our partnership, we've continued to evolve the paid media plan to become omnichannel (traditional and digital). Moving into the next five years, the strategic approach to paid media will continue to evolve and adapt to the changing advertising landscape and audience media preferences.*

## Future Outlook

### Adapting to changing audience habits

- Media habits are continually changing with new emerging channels coming into market frequently. Moving into the next five years, we will continue to utilize an audience first approach to identify where our audience is consuming media. We will continue to adapt our media plans based on research, past campaign learnings and industry knowledge to ensure that the Colorado Wildlife Council is strategic in reaching the target audience.

### Emerging Platforms

R&R Partners will continue to identify and evaluate emerging platforms. Emerging platforms currently on our radar for Colorado Wildlife Council include:

- **TikTok:** TikTok has exploded in popularity among millennials and Gen Z populations. During the FY21/22 campaign, we plan to test TikTok with the hope it will yield positive results for CWC. If the platform is successful with in-feed units, we will plan to expand to other video units.
- **Experiential:** CWC has made fantastic headway in leaning into outdoor events and experiences (via the outreach team, statues, and the AR project). In the upcoming years, we will seek to bolster these events wherever possible, including dedicating media funds to promoting the opportunities. These funds could be used for paid social promotion, out-of-home media at events, and digital extensions of these experiences.
- **Outdoor Recreation:** Given the massive increase in outdoor recreation users across Colorado during 2020, we will continue to evaluate OOH advertising opportunities and new partnerships in the outdoor space; including but not limited to: skiing, hiking, biking, rafting, endurance racing, etc.
- **Search:** Search is a great lower funnel tactic to gain conversions. At this moment in time, we do not recommend deploying search as we do not have any lower funnel actions to take as primary objectives, e.g., purchases. Currently, our organic ranking suffices for Google searches, but we will still be monitoring the search space for opportunities.



### **Testing**

- Testing is at the core of all media campaigns. Through testing channels, tactics, placements and messages over the last few years, we've learned about the ways our audience likes to interact with CWC as a brand (social) and the messages they're more prone to engage with (influencers). Media testing allows us real-time feedback on our creative approach, audiences and overall brand favorability. We will continue to adapt our testing framework moving forward to gain all of the learnings we can for CWC.

### **Sports Partnerships**

- Sports partnerships is in the discovery phase during the FY21/22 campaign. R&R will continue to identify the most strategic and efficient partnerships within the sport space, leaning into opportunities that offer experiential and outreach team opportunities.

### **Influencers**

- Influencer partnerships have become key tactics for Colorado Wildlife Council. Not only do influencers produce strong organic results, including great positive commentary, they also produce strong awareness metrics with the help of our paid efforts. Over the length of the partnership, we have strived to include influencers from all backgrounds including hunters, anglers, and non-hunting and non-angling backgrounds. Moving into the future, R&R will continue to identify diverse influencer options to better represent the In the Wind audience.

### **Organic Social**

- R&R will continue to develop engaging organic content for the Facebook account. Content will be developed on a quarterly basis. R&R will continue to look for opportunities to promote recent, relevant news articles and announcements.
- Since Instagram is all about lifestyle and imagery, we are planning to keep the current publication style. Currently, we post to Instagram Stories on an as needed basis. We supplement our presence on IG by posting to our stories, but keep the in-feed posts curated to important CWC information. In the future, we will revise the strategy as needed.

# Web

*Our campaign website is a 24/7 resource center, available to Coloradans for additional information that cannot be fully communicated within a 30-second TV spot. In addition, a campaign website is a living and breathing vessel that must be actively nurtured and maintained throughout the duration of the campaign effort, while ensuring that all visitors have a positive user experience. A thorough overhaul was conducted on the CWC website with an updated version launching in December 2020. With it, we launched a new, streamlined site for visitors to explore.*

## **Specific enhancements included:**

- Streamlined navigation and condensing of sections and pages
- Driving users through a journey with a content-first approach
- Refreshed imagery and video content throughout
- Simple, relevant calls to action
- Responsive theme to ensure quality on both desktop and mobile experiences
- Built on a WordPress template for easy updates
- Ability to capture emails for those who opt in

## **In the first campaign window of the new site being in use, we saw a 10% drop in the website bounce rate. A key goal of the new site.**

Going forward, we plan to maintain this newly created site to ensure that it's always functioning at the optimal level. We will continue to implement all WordPress maintenance functions, check links and track analytics. We also plan to revisit the content twice a year to determine that everything is still relevant and to determine if any new content can be added to the site.

We will also be implementing an email campaign early in FY21/22 to further engage our advocates. This will be a quarterly newsletter where we will share any vacant council roles, wildlife conservation stories, council member spotlights, upcoming events, and other important content such as new campaign creative.



## Welcome to the Wild Life

In Colorado, everybody benefits from hunting and fishing.

Have you ever been curious about wildlife conservation in Colorado? Do you wonder how wildlife is managed? Well, you've come to the right place. Colorado's wildlife and landscapes are held in balance by conservation work, which is funded primarily with hunting and fishing license fees. That includes research to study how wildlife populations are changing, the management of overpopulated and endangered species, restoration of vital wildlife habitat, and specific operations like fish hatcheries. These and other conservation programs help keep Colorado wild and beautiful. Explore our site to learn more about the amazing 960 wildlife species across Colorado and the role hunting and fishing plays in wildlife conservation.

# Public Relations

*The Colorado Wildlife Council is in a unique position to bring awareness to and educate those looking to explore Colorado's beauty. With the increase of the public's interest in outdoor recreation and activities, the PR team will explore several avenues to garner earned media for the Council and highlight its priorities. The team will continue to pitch the Council when applicable; will monitor for potential newsjacking opportunities; will develop and maintain relationships with key media and audiences; as well as draft and distribute press materials. We will also continue to work closely with the outreach team to pitch local events and opportunities to garner earned media.*

## Earned Media

**To create a favorable image of the Colorado Wildlife Council with the general public, constituents and other relevant stakeholders, the following tactics will be implemented:**

- Development and execution of the annual PR strategy
- Media Relations:
  - Desksides when appropriate
  - Media drops as necessary
- Creation of Press Materials:
  - Press releases, media alerts, fact sheets and other items as needed
- Ongoing Pitching:
  - Potential story angles: Outdoor Recreation, Wildlife Management, Hunting, Fishing, Opportunistic/Timely
  - Secure TV in-studios, live shots and other interview opportunities





03

# Roadmap Overview

# Ongoing Efforts that Will Remain in Place Every Year:

- Quantitative research – online tracker study – conducted in September of every year
- Brand management and strategic guidance
- Paid media planning and buying
- Social media community management
- Website management

## Highlights by Fiscal Year:

### **FY21/22**

- Introduction of public relations efforts
- Introduction of email marketing
- Exploration of launching merchandise for sale

### **FY22/23**

- Exploratory research: July – September 2022
- New creative campaign concepting: October – December 2022
- Qualitative focus groups – concept testing: January 2023
- New creative campaign production: February – April 2023
- New campaign launch: May 2023

### **FY23/24**

- Qualitative research – if warranted
- Creative experiential activation

### **FY24/25**

- Qualitative research – if warranted
- Creative production

### **FY25/26**

- Qualitative research – if warranted
- Creative experiential activation

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