



2024-2025

**Operational Plan and
Budget**

As Approved by Jeff Davis
Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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Wildlife Council Information

The Colorado Wildlife Council (CWC) was conceived and developed by a coalition of hunters, anglers and conservationists working together with livestock and agriculture organizations and created by the Colorado Legislature in 1998. By statute, its mission is to oversee the design of a comprehensive, media-based public information program to educate the public about the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing. The program is funded by a \$1.50 surcharge (Wildlife Management Public Education Fund) on each hunting and fishing license sold.

The Wildlife Council is accountable to the director of Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), who appoints council members and approves the annual operational plan. The nine members of the council represent various interests throughout Colorado.

Wildlife Council Members

Dan Gates, East Slope Hunter Representative (Chair)
Lani Kitching, Municipalities Representative (Vice Chair)
Dan Williams, Counties Representative
Eeland Stribling, East Slope Angler Representative
Shyanne Orvis, West Slope Angler Representative
Kelly Weyand, West Slope Hunter Representative
Don Anderson, Agricultural Representative
Tim Twinem, Media and Marketing Representative
Brittini Ehrhart-Gemmill, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Representative

The Objective of this Plan Document

Statute 33-4-120 requires that an operational plan and budget for the CWC be submitted to the CPW director annually. The staff liaison prepares the plan with input from council members and the advertising agency. Once the council approves the plan, it is sent to the director for review and approval.

This document will serve as a guide for the council's activities and decisions for the upcoming fiscal year (FY). It will include a clear mission statement; identify council members; state accomplishments of the previous year; present goals for the upcoming year; and summarize strategies to accomplish the goals.

Council Activities Summary

Accountability to the CPW Director

All activities and products produced by the CWC are subject to review and approval by the director.

Meetings

The CWC meets in-person bimonthly. Meeting dates are posted on the CWC website (cowildlifecouncil.org). All meetings have a Zoom component for those who prefer to join virtually. A Zoom call is scheduled for the alternate months that an in-person meeting is not held. The calendar of meeting and call dates is set in December for the upcoming calendar year. Meeting minutes are kept by the council secretary, approved by the council, and posted on the website for public view. Subcommittees may meet separately to provide advice on decisions consistent with CWC direction and to help move business forward between regular council meetings. The subcommittee details can be found starting on page 11.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife/Wildlife Council Webpage

The Wildlife Council has a webpage on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website: [CWC Webpage](#). The webpage is managed by the council secretary and the staff liaison. Meetings are announced to the public on this webpage. The public and council members can view all meeting materials, which include agendas, presentations and minutes, from this site.

Wildlife Council Website: cowildlifecouncil.org

The [Wildlife Council website](#) is managed by R&R Partners.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife/Wildlife Council Email Address

A Wildlife Council email address was created in 2016/2017: wildlife.council@state.co.us. The email address is listed on the above council website as a point of contact for the public and is monitored by the council secretary and the staff liaison.

Bylaws

The bylaws were updated during FY16/17. No updates were made this fiscal year.

Council Member Commitment

Council members are expected to:

- Contribute their professional expertise and represent their constituents
- Participate in 6-8 in-person/zoom meetings (4-6 hours each) per year
- Participate in 4-6 zoom calls (1-2 hours each) in the alternate months
- Reviewing meeting materials (1 hour) ahead of each meeting
- Provide input between meetings on the campaign
- Represent the Council and its mission to partners

Annual Budget

The council conducted its annual planning retreat March 20-21, 2024, via an in-person meeting. In the meeting, the contractor (R&R Partners) presented a recap of the previous fiscal year (FY23/24), and reviewed research findings, paid media channel strategy and recap, creative campaign recommendation, public relations highlights, web analytics, organic social media strategy and details on the Colorado Rockies partnership, and the proposed budget for the new fiscal year. The council discussed the budget in this meeting and approved the proposed budget. See more details in the budget section of this report on page 14.

Council Member Term Updates

Council members may serve two, consecutive, four-year terms.

New Council Member Appointments: November 2023

- Dan Williams, County Representative

Second Term: October 2024

- Eeland Stribling, East Slope Angler Representative

Term Limit: February 2025

- Dan Gates, East Slope Hunter Representative

Wildlife Council Media-based Public Information Campaign

This is the Wild Life / A Day in the Life

Executive Summary

In FY2023/2024, CWC produced the first year of a new campaign, “A Day in the Life” that centers around highlighting Colorado Parks and Wildlife biologists, wildlife officers and staff in uplifting stories of wildlife science. The campaign aims to raise awareness amongst Coloradans about the impact hunting and fishing license fees have on supporting science in the wild.

Section I: Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Wildlife Council Report of Accomplishments

2023/2024 Campaign Summary

This fiscal year, the council continued with an always-on paid media approach, including both traditional and digital media channels, to increase awareness and further educate our new primary *Adventurous Environmentalist (AE)* target audience about the benefits of hunting and angling and by highlighting wildlife conservation stories. The exploratory qualitative and quantitative research conducted in FY22/23 resulted in this new audience, the AE audience are non-hunter/angler Colorado residents who are indifferent towards hunting, have certain moral issues with hunting specifically around hunting as a sport, they also struggle with understanding how hunting contributes to maintaining a healthy ecosystem in Colorado and finally they do not believe restrictions on hunting would impact them personally.

The secondary target audience, *Hunter Adjacent (HA)*, are neutral-minded individuals. Although not active hunters themselves, they are indifferent to or supportive of the activity. They understand that while they might not understand all aspects of the activity, it is every Coloradan's right to be able to hunt. The gun culture that surrounds hunting does not bother them, as they are confident that hunters are responsible. While they are not hunters themselves, they do have a basic understanding of the larger impact it has on Colorado, which contributes to their support towards a ballot measure.

CWC's paid media campaign's goal is to drive mass awareness and communicate how Colorado's wildlife and landscapes are kept in balance by conservation work which is primarily funded with hunting and fishing license fees. The paid media campaign ran from September 25, 2023 to March 31, 2024 (with April and May still under way and yet to be reported on) with a more refined measurement approach to the marketing funnel that leveraged traditional media (TV, out-of-home), video (connected TV, pre-roll, YouTube), social (Meta, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok), and streaming audio (Spotify) as awareness tactics. Education tactics included website, paid social, digital, native, influencers/earned media with advocacy leveraging paid email.

The campaign delivered just shy of 111.5 million total impressions, proving significant increases in overall awareness, familiarity and memorability of Colorado Wildlife Council's ad campaign. Additionally, in 2023, Colorado voters, through annual research, reported strong opinions that we have the right amount of regulation on hunting in Colorado.

The following summary describes the media performance by tactic: ***Fiscal Year Media Campaign: September 2023 – June 2024***

Media Budget: \$1,645,030

Television

Of the total budget, 13% was allocated to broadcast television and cable. Eight total TV spot versions ran in the Denver designated market area (DMA) targeting adults 18-49 with more than 1,894,341 impressions. The spots were targeted to run during sports and primetime programming, in line with our AE target audience viewing habits.

Out-of-Home (OOH)

With multiple OOH partnerships this fiscal year, we focused on outdoor billboards throughout metro Denver and along I-70 (at the base of the Front Range) to reach snow enthusiasts as they traveled during the winter season. In addition, we ran a full light rail wrap to reach users throughout Denver throughout the winter and spring months. The 5 outdoor billboards ran 12/23-3/24 with 17,425,368 estimated impressions, the light rail wrap ran 11/23-5/24 and it has generated 8,678,820 estimated impressions through March 2024.

Digital Media

The Trade Desk is the preferred demand-side platform (DSP) and was implemented in recent years because of its strength in inventory access across multiple tactics including connected TV, pre-roll video, display, and native. The platform not only supports targeting both the Adventurous Environmentalist (70% of budget) and Hunter Adjacent (30% of budget) audience demographics, but also layers behavioral, contextual and geographic parameters to ensure messages are focused on quality impressions. Further, the platform serves to retarget website visitors and continues nurturing brand awareness and affinity. Connected TV placements produced high completion rates of 99.0% compared to the 96.4% benchmark ([source](#)). Overall, The Trade Desk delivered 16,742,323 impressions and 18,778 clicks to the website. Pre-Roll generated the most clicks at 8,107.

YouTube

YouTube was leveraged to deliver Colorado Wildlife Council's messaging to audiences actively consuming video content. Six- and 15-second videos targeted

outdoor enthusiasts, sports fans, and those looking for content on topics like hiking and camping, local news, college sports and sports. YouTube delivered 11.9 million impressions and 3,566 clicks to the website.

Facebook/Instagram

Throughout the year, the evergreen social media campaign serves to engage and inform our brand advocates on Facebook and Instagram by utilizing the platforms' robust first-party targeting capability to reach the target audiences based on interests and demographic data. The CWC filter provided additional reach to those in Colorado state, expanding from the downtown area only in years prior. Look-alike and retargeting audiences continued to be key to media performance (as learned over prior fiscal years).

The campaign has generated over 2.3 million post engagements (likes, comments and shares) and 21.9 million impressions, with 15.7 million video plays, a 12.4% completion rate, and 49.2k clicks to the website. The campaign performance has exceeded benchmark expectations.

Spotify

Sponsored sessions on Spotify drove brand awareness and ad recall among the target audiences with video creative that provided the user with a reward for watching the video to completion. The campaign delivered 366,320 impressions in total, with 2,659 clicks.

Influencers

The influencer program amplified messaging and organically connected with our target. CWC partnered with five influencers delivering 5.5 million impressions in total.

Page Grabber

The eye-catching page-grabber video ads were layered over 3-party website content to grab people's attention. The ads delivered 2.9 million impressions in total.

Reddit

Reddit was introduced as a new channel during the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The platform has seen strong engagement and cost-efficient reach. Reddit produced 1.7 million impressions and 5.1k clicks to the website.

Snapchat

Snapchat was introduced as a new channel during the 2023/2024 fiscal year. The platform has seen strong engagement and cost-efficient reach. Snapchat produced 1.9 million impressions and 8.5k clicks to the website.

TikTok

TikTok is now in its third year and continues to produce strong performance. TikTok produced 15.9 million impressions and 29.9k clicks to the website.

Email

There were 3 newsletters deployed, producing an average open rate of 43% and 4.2% click through rate (CTR); total subscribers increased to 372, a 1,000%+ increase since last FY! While open rate proves engagement, as we've added subscribers, the CTR has decreased.

Creative Production

The creative team focused their efforts on various projects throughout FY23/24. A large portion of the year was spent developing new concepts for *A Day in the Life* campaign. Preproduction took place during FY23/24, with production taking place mid-June 2024. A majority of post production will take place in July-August. Postproduction efforts include video editing, copywriting, image retouching and the development of campaign assets (social, digital banners, outdoor billboards etc.). The new campaign will launch in September 2024.

In addition to preparation for the new campaign, the creative production team continued to develop assets for council sponsorships and the outreach team, such as banners, stickers, postcards, signs and QR codes. We worked with the Rockies' in-house team to produce social videos, along with working with a local muralist to produce the mural located within Coors Field and provide direction and edits to the AR effect. We designed giveaway totes that will be distributed this fall on the CWC promotional day.

We continued to assist various teams to ensure content was available, such as images for social media, creative for paid media ads, the quarterly newsletter, and additional needs for the council.

Organic Social Media

In FY 23/24, we managed the CWC Facebook page with weekly posts and the CWC Instagram page with two posts per week. Each quarter, we submitted social calendars to the subcommittee for approval, developed content, scheduled posts and led community management efforts on our organic platforms. Additionally, we also developed ad hoc posts as requested.

At the March planning retreat, we presented a plan for FY 24/25 that included proposed optimizations and new content strategy.

Web Maintenance

The CWC website has been maintained throughout the year by providing

various services.

Technical maintenance includes updating software or plugins, checking for security updates, performing user testing, making test use cases, and fixing any broken links.

Content maintenance includes updating the public meeting notices; reviewing website content based on SEO; updating header, footer and legal policies; renaming videos online; moving content to additional pages; and updating video settings.

Design maintenance includes updating the council spotlights, updating other pages on the site based on various needs such as adding the social feeds to the site.

Public Relations

The R&R PR team has continued to explore new and exciting ways to educate Coloradans on the council's mission and the benefits of wildlife management and wildlife-related recreational opportunities across the state. This year, the PR team focused on continuing the pitch efforts on the wildlife mural, the Colorado Rockies partnership, wildlife initiatives, small business Saturday and an op-ed opportunity. Through our pitching efforts, the team garnered over 1M earned media impressions.

Media Monitoring

The PR team continued monitoring through our database program Cision to keep updated with news regarding CWC/CPW and to draft timely pitch topics to get CWC in the news. The PR team also continued maintaining relationships with local journalists and outlets to keep CWC top of mind for future earned media opportunities.

Rockies Partnership

In FY 23/24, CWC partnered with the Colorado Rockies for the 3rd consecutive year. CWC could be seen all throughout Coors Field. For both seasons, CWC secured a pregame feature of a 60- second segment that played on the main video board (jumbotron) during the pregame of all club regular home games. On the outfield wall, a static, single position provided permanent in-stadium presence and broadcast exposure. CWC branding and messaging could be seen on concourse TVs throughout the ballpark. The graphic appeared on rotation for 15 seconds at a time and provided approximately 30 minutes of exposure per game. CWC received one email blast to the Rockies.com database of over 250,000 registered users and two dedicated social posts on club-controlled channels. During the 2023 season, the moose mural could be found in the stadium near Gate B with scannable QR codes linking to the AR experience so people could bring the moose to life. And lastly, on National Hunting and Fishing Day, the first pitch was thrown by Don Anderson. Joining Don on the field

were several members of the council. During the game, fans received a branded reusable tote bag as they entered the gates. Additionally, the sponsored game garnered over 2.9M impressions from local TV and radio stations. During the 2024 season, CWC will continue to have the mural near Gate B that will include the AR feature. The council will have a promotional day on September 14, 2024, and will have the first pitch along with distributing a new redesigned reusable totes highlighting CWC to the first 15,000 attendees. As part of the 2024 season, we have also added a :30 second radio spot that will run during 81 games on KOA.

Experiential Pieces

The moose mural in Coors Field has been a huge success and has turned into a gathering place for Rockies fans to meet and interact with the AR experience and learn more about the Colorado Wildlife Council. The elk and fish statues continue to be great assets for the council in educating Coloradans; they continue to be at the Foothills Mall in Fort Collins.

Research

Annual Tracking Survey: The annual tracker study was conducted online with registered Colorado voters Sept. 6-26, 2023. The survey was fielded statewide with 1,701 participants. All participants were screened to ensure that they were 18 years or older and registered to vote in Colorado. Data were weighted for a census representation on key demographics and congressional districts. The sample size yields a +/-2.33% margin of error at a 95% confidence level.

Key findings from the 2023 survey included:

- About 8 in 10 Colorado voters approve of legal, regulated hunting and about 1 in 10 disapprove.
- About 8 in 10 Colorado voters approve of legal, regulated fishing and fewer than 1 in 10 disapprove.
- Nine in 10 Colorado voters agree that it is OK for others to hunt if they do so legally and in accordance with Colorado's hunting laws and regulations.
- Almost 9 in 10 Colorado voters know license fees from hunting and fishing are used to support wildlife management.

Competitive Report: This is a document of compiled secondary research on other state and national public education efforts for comparison and learning purposes. The report included a review of Michigan, Arizona, and national/federal updates.

Operations

CWC Subcommittees

Subcommittees are made up of council members*. They provide recommendations on decisions consistent with CWC direction to help move the business forward between regular council meetings.

- Public Relations, Earned Media, and Community Outreach (Don Anderson and Eeland Stribling)
 - Review and provide feedback on future releases throughout the year.
- Social Media (Eeland Stribling)
 - Review and provide feedback on quarterly calendars and ad hoc post opportunities throughout the year. (Reviews are in September, December, March and June.)
- Campaign Influencers (Shyanne Orvis and Kelly Weyand)
 - Assist with selecting influencers from the provided options.
 - Review/approve influencers' posts and any rounds of revisions.
- Creative Production (Dan Gates and Tim Twinem)
 - Review/approve production of final video/radio scripts, casting, creative assets, and other campaign elements and non-campaign elements.
- Quarterly Newsletter (Lani Kitching and Kelly Weyand)
 - Review/approve copy and images for the quarterly email newsletter.
- Hunter and Angler Advocacy (Dan Gates, Lani Kitching, Tim Twinem, & Kelly Weyand)
 - Review/approve creative assets

*Brittini Ehrhart-Gemmill oversees/participates on all subcommittees.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

- R&R and CWC's eighth year working together
- Executed robust exploratory researching, including quantitative and qualitative.
- Refined our target audience to the Adventurous Environmentalist
- Final year of This is the Wild Life campaign and debuted A Day in the Life campaign highlighting CPW officers and biologists as trusted messengers of our campaign message.
- Tested and finalized concepts for our new campaign, A Day in the Life.
- Had a successful third-year partnership with the Colorado Rockies MLB team and secured a fourth-year partnership together.
- Successful earned media activations
- Introduced new paid media channels such as Reddit.
- Influencers
- Members of the CPW Colorado Wildlife Council Participated in the 2024 Sportsman's Day at the Capitol
 - Sportsman's Day in conjunction with multiple other organizations is designed to increase awareness of hunting and angling opportunities among key decision makers in the Colorado Assembly and the Governors Office and their staffs, several hundred people attended.
 - In addition to Wildlife Council literature, we were able to speak with many interested individuals and key decision makers (CPW Director attended the event as well)
 - Wild game and fish were served and enjoyed by attendees, many of whom had never tried natural food before.
- Completed the third year of outreach teams (2020,2021,2023) [2023 Outreach Team Final Report](#). The Council evaluated the effectiveness of the outreach team's efforts over three years and decided not to move forward with a new outreach team.

2024-2025 Priorities

- Maintain strict budget oversight and prioritize expenditures
- Ensure maximum value from all spending.
- Develop initiatives to increase the number of informed voters.
- Revitalize CWC's original mission
- Renew focus on the foundational goals and objectives of the CWC
- Leverage existing messaging
- Utilize and enhance existing communication efforts.
- Website Enhancements by implementing updates and additions to improve the website.
- Hunter/Angler Outreach and Engagement Strategies
 - Increase CWC visibility within the hunter/angler community.
 - Utilize hunters and anglers as ambassadors for CWC messaging.
 - Foster engagement with constituent groups through community relationships.

2024-2025 Contract Management

The Wildlife Council will retain R&R Partners on a contract for FY2024/25. The contractor will be responsible for the following work:

- Attend all council meetings and conference calls.
- Develop on-strategy message/content for the media campaign.
- Provide on-strategy creative concepts for selection by the Wildlife Council and CPW director.
- Recommend appropriate media plans and associated vehicles/channels to meet the communication objectives.
- Upon approval, purchase media placements and other communication resources, within budget, as necessary.
- Pre-approve all marketing initiatives with the council.
- Design and execute research with the public sector to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the program.
- Manage all production efforts via third-party vendors to secure necessary assets to be used with the media campaign.
- Review the effectiveness of message content and all media copy with council.
- Work with CPW video production staff to use pre-existing footage and imagery when possible.
- Seek input and feedback from the council prior to final messaging and/or media purchases.
- Provide monthly activity reports for distribution to the council. Reports will include completed projects since the last report, status of ongoing activities, and anticipated timelines for upcoming projects.
- Before the operational plan year ends, make recommendations regarding the future year's educational program strategies and budget.

Annual Budget Review

- Staff liaison, council treasurer and secretary will account for and manage the spending of up to the spending authority maximum of \$3,000,000 to execute the program in conjunction with the Colorado Wildlife Council.
- Council secretary and treasurer will provide bimonthly budget reports to the council showing projected revenue and expenditures.
- Throughout the fiscal year, any changes to the proposed budget will be reviewed and approved by the council and submitted to the director for review.

2024-2025 Budget

The budget is based on projected fund revenue and the projected fund balance. The spending authority is \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

● Projected Revenue (average of FY22 and FY23 revenue)	\$	2,577,424
● Projected Fund Balance	\$	2,471,470
● Total Projected Available to Spend	\$	5,048,894

**Note: in FY2024, the Council removed the reserve terminology. In the past, a reserve of \$400,000 was kept, where the Council spent \$400,000 less than the spending authority. The current goal is to spend more closely to the spending authority, therefore maintaining a reserve was inconsistent with actual spending.*

● Operating	\$	30,000
● Hunter Angler Advocacy	\$	120,000
● Additional Projects	\$	50,000
● R&R Partners Advertising Contract* (detailed budget below)	\$	<u>2,800,000</u>
● Total Estimated Expenditures	\$	3,000,000
	Not to Exceed	\$ 3,000,000

2023-2024 Budget – R&R Partners

CWC BUDGET: 2024/2025 - (\$2,800,000)

BASIC COMPENSATION		HOURS*	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
1	Brand & Project Management	1,362	\$177,060	\$0	\$177,060
2	Travel Expenses	0	n/a	\$25,000	\$25,000
SUBTOTAL:		1,362	\$177,060	\$25,000	\$202,060
Basic Compensation Rate (Monthly Fee)					\$16,838.33
CREATIVE PRODUCTION		HOURS	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
3	Creative Concepting & Creative Asset Production	1,462	\$190,060	\$69,268	\$259,328
4	Social Media Strategy, Community Management & Creative Graphics	288	\$37,440	\$0	\$37,440
5	Website Maintenance	208	\$27,040	\$4,000	\$31,040
SUBTOTAL:		1,958	\$254,540	\$73,268	\$327,808
RESEARCH & PLANNING		HOURS	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
6	Public Relations/Earned Media	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
7	Analytics, Brand Strategy & Secondary	230	\$29,900	\$0	\$29,900
8	Quantitative Online Survey	75	\$9,750	\$47,000	\$56,750
9	Competitive Analysis & Report	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUBTOTAL:		305	\$39,650	\$47,000	\$86,650
MEDIA PLACEMENTS		HOURS	FEES	EXPENSES	TOTAL
10	Campaign Planning, Buying, Reporting & Optimizing	798	\$103,740	\$1,689,742	\$1,793,482
11	Colorado Rockies Sponsorship and Promotional Item	0	\$0	\$390,000	\$390,000
SUBTOTAL:		798	\$103,740	\$2,079,742	\$2,183,482
GRAND TOTAL**:		4,423	\$574,990	\$2,225,010	\$2,800,000

ASSUMPTIONS

*All hours have been calculated at an hourly blended rate of \$130.

**This is a projected budget and is subject to change but will not exceed the approved budget total.

- Ongoing brand and project management for account oversight for entire fiscal year.
- Travel expenses.
- Production of creative assets; newsletter, website and misc. requests
- Social media strategy & ongoing community management for up to two channels.
- Routine website maintenance and standard Google Analytics reporting. One year website hosting fee.
- Public relations efforts for the entire fiscal year removed and funds have been reallocated to paid media.
- Analytics. Brand and target audience strategic direction and oversight. Secondary research as needed.
- Annual quantitative education and awareness tracking survey (one wave). Statewide sample of 1,000 CO voters.
- Competitive Analysis removed, funds reallocated to paid media.
- NET media expenses. Time for strategy, planning and buying campaign, reporting and partner invoice reconciliation. The Opportunity Fund has been added to the paid media allocations. Includes \$375k for Rockies Sponsorship.
- Colorado Rockies sponsorship and promotional item