



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado's Recreational Trails Committee

Established January 1, 1985

6060 Broadway Denver, CO 80216 trails@state.co.us

Meeting Minutes

January 30th, 2026 - Hybrid

CPW Headquarters Big Horn Room, 6060 Broadway, Denver, CO and via Zoom*

Members Present: Bevin Carithers, Mick Daniel, Pam Denahy*, Heather Hormell, Whitney Johnson, Jason Meyer, Meara McQuain, Jack Placchi, Brad Schwartz, Zachary Shacter

CPW Staff: Fletcher Jacobs, Lauren Zubick, Chrystal Read, Tappan Brown*, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt*, Tristan Jilson, Luke Svare, Joe O'Brien, Laura Schmieg, Jody Kennedy, Perry Boydstun, Morgan Anderson, Hailey Tresch

Others (Ex-Officio): Jeff Christenson (BLM), Chad Schneckenberger (USFS)

Others (Guests): Scott Jones, Dan Zimmerer (GOCO), Katie Smith (GOCO), Ernest Seager, Steve Bonowski, Sallie Thoreson, Hilary Dees, David Deitemeyer, Conner Borkowski, Brian Bergeler

Call to Order: Heather Hormell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 12.05.25 minutes

Motion for approval - Heather Hormell

Motion seconded - Mick Daniel

Motion passes unanimously

Public Comment: No Public Comment

Info Item: CPW Updates - Fletcher Jacobs

Fletcher provided CPW updates including that the Parks and Wildlife Commission interviewed top candidates for the Director role and decided to reopen the job application through the weekend.

- Legislation Updates
 - House Bill 261008 - Outdoor Opportunities Act. The bill is looking to grow capacity. Will share more when it's out.
 - Ballot initiative 197 - Designate Sporting Goods Tax Revenue for Conservation. Timeline and budget breakdown were shown, estimated at 175 M. Not able to comment on the initiative.
- Wolf update
 - There was no release this year. The deadline to file a claim is 12/31. There have been 15 claims so far, and CPW is working on a recommendation to give to the Commission who will decide the final amount.
- State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)
 - There are many layers of review. Partners met last fall to discuss implementation.
- Colorado Wolverine Restoration Plan



- CPW released the restoration plan that supports the passed State led bill to the public.
- Discussed a question on what the restoration plan means from a recreation perspective and how trails intersect with the habitat.
- Beaver Conservation Strategy
 - More updates will be released regarding the comprehensive plan.
 - One goal of the strategy is to increase the beaver population and discussed the impact of an increased beaver population and management strategies.

Action Item: 2026 Non-Motorized Trails Grant Funding Recommendations - Fletcher Jacobs

- Fletcher provided information on this year's applications, including funding sources, availability, project categories, and wildlife concerns. A number of applications and recommended projects were shown and discussed. The Regional Trail Coordinators discussed wildlife comments and highlighted specific projects.
- LWCF is taking a strategic pause from this year's application cycle.
- Each subcommittee chair shared an overview of each category. The subcommittee discussed how to elevate involvement with the Regional Partnership Initiative Program. It was noted that grants are contingent upon federal funding being available. Nothing is official until passed through commission. If additional funding becomes available the funds will be managed accordingly.
- Maintenance category: Columbine Forest Service project is recommended for less funding than requested.

In accordance with section 33-11-106 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, I move that the State Recreational Trails Committee approve the scores and associated rankings from the Committee's Non-motorized Recreational Trails Grant Review and Ranking Subcommittees that were assigned to the 2026 Non-Motorized Trails grant applications. We recommend that the available Non-Motorized recreational trail grant funding be awarded based on the scores and to fund additional projects in order of rank that scored a 70 or higher if additional funding becomes available. Minor adjustments of project funding levels shall be permitted at the discretion of the Parks and Wildlife Division Director.

Motion to approve recommended funding - Jack Placchi

Motion seconded - Pam Denahy

Motion passes unanimously

Headwaters Trails Alliance Grand County Trail Crew 2026 and Berthoud Pass Gateway Master Plan

Motion passes unanimously with one member recused (Meara McQuain recused)

San Luis Valley Great Outdoors GOATs are Good Stewards

Motion passes unanimously with one member recused (Mick Daniel recused)

Info Item: 2025-2026 OHV Trail Grants Update - Fletcher Jacobs

- Fletcher discussed the review process and noted that applications are due December 5, 2026. There were many discussions leading up to the date which pushed back the

review slightly. Fletcher highlighted the number of applications received, CYCA (Colorado Youth Corps Association) funds, and the future of Good Management in regards to federal partner capacity.

Info Item: BLM Update - Jeff Christensen

- Jeff shared that generically things look better at the BLM. The budget passed as of January 24, 2026 and the interior budget is expected to be pushed to the state level in about a month. The Historic Byways received full funding. The hiring freeze is loosening, with the allowance of temporary and priority hires. Current BLM employees are being asked to fill in at different offices that need more staff. Seasonal hires were capped at 52 statewide. Interns are suspected to be excluded from seasonal hiring limits unlike last year. Grants and other funds were discussed. Travel management planning is currently uncertain.

Info Item: USFS Update - Chad Schneckenberger

- Chad shared that the Forest Service is included in the interior package. Trails and Region 2 budgets are expected to be flat. There is a planned reorganization of USDA which would include the Forest Service. They have lost 5 Trails Program Managers in the last year and current staff are covering for other regions. Top staffing priorities remain to be field and partnerships focused. They are able to hire seasonal hires, but no movement of permanent hiring. 250 active management and 750 recreation and trail seasonal positions will be hired, but unsure how many will be allocated to each region. The announcements are expected to come out in the next few weeks. Chad discussed various agreements and the success of master agreements, including a new agreement with CPW and COTRE to clean up data.

Info Item: Backcountry Search and Rescue Program Update - Perry Boydston

- Perry shared the Search and Rescue program update. In November the search and rescue fee increase was approved to \$1.25. The Program is composed of two separate fundings, Keep CO Wild and License and Registration - traditional funds. Budget, staffing and revenue were discussed, as well as opportunities to standardize the program.

[I] Regional Partnership Program Update - Jody Kennedy

- Jody provided a Regional Partnership Program update. The Regional Partnerships are guided by Colorado's Outdoor Strategy. Several initiatives and North Star goals to build coalitions around the state were shared, and discussed the new 50M/5 year investment. There were 18 RPI awards. Jody highlighted a few projects from the Regional Partnership Initiative, including NOCO Places, which mapped unauthorized trails throughout their region, Outside 285, and Pike's Peak Outdoor Initiative. Discussed the collaborative work between Regional Partnership and Trails Program. Discussed RPI's getting requests for letters of support for Trails grants.

[I] COTREX Update - Joe O'Brien

- Joe shared progress from the year including the launch of a public transit project and seasonal wildlife closures. The public transit feature has 400 approved stops and is

trying to obtain more. Joe discussed the 2025 numbers and that 6,500 miles of roads and trails have been updated. More detail has been added to the accessible trails, including photos and narrative descriptions. USFS has awarded a service grant to COTREX for seasonals to work forest by forest. There is a new Data Collection pilot project which would solve the longer term problem of data collection. Joe discussed improvements that will be made to the route design, accessibility feature, weather forecast, and advisory system.

[I] Regional Trail Coordinator Updates - Luke Svare, Randy Engle, Josh Stoudt

The Regional Trail coordinators shared updates from this quarter including inspections and events.

Round Table:

Meara McQuain: Excited to hear BLM and Forest Service are going to have seasonals. Shared that Regional Partnership Initiative strategic action plan is very much overdue. There is a lot of value in conservation and recreation in our community, but that there are gaps in capacity. Thanked CPW, GOCO and looking forward to the Trails grants that will be coming to her community soon.

Jason Meyer: No updates to share. Discussed State park expansion and the city's master plan update.

Mick Daniel: Discussed San Luis Valley drought and lack of snowfall. The project site has remained dry. There are currently 1.6 miles of accessible trail and then another 3-4 miles of single track, Vista Grande project should be open by May. The fall project site was flooded and extended the project. Thanked all who are working on the stewardship project and keeping trail crew employed through 2026.

Brad Schwartz: Thanks to CPW staff.

Heather Hormell: Upcoming OHV grant review in the second week of February, and presentations in March. Discussed the fire in Story Mesa and great to see some photos that Josh shared.

Whitney Johnson: Discussed the Gates Family Foundation and ballot initiative. Gates has been asked by several partners to create a group to pull together the conservation and recreation community. Requested to include a wildlife task force. The meeting is on Monday.

Bevin Carithers: Appreciation for staff and those reviewing grants. First time reviewing the Non-Motorized Maintenance grants. Learned a lot and appreciated the switch.

Jack Placchi: Discussed BLM and Forest Service updates. The Congressional Review Act could have major impacts. Keep an eye on travel management. Thanks to all, pleasure to be at meetings.

Fletcher Jacobs: Thanks to all staff for keeping things moving and jumping in where needed. Staffing updates included that Gabby Smiley has announced her retirement and the Trails positions are approved. Currently filling other positions in the branch and will launch the motorized position shortly after that. Discussion covered desired funding from Trails and RPI, the committee's vision for stewardship, and how the committee interacts with RPIs, including a potential follow-up meeting on the topic.. It was brought up that if the committee wants to have another meeting specifically to talk about this and discussion on applications being a good fit for programs and what emphasis should be placed on future grant rounds. Also discussed the need to prioritize state's SCORP for LWCF, and provide clarity to applicants.

The group discussed a separate meeting for April to continue Non-Motorized topics from the round table. They decided there is time to finalize potential OHV changes by Fall, incorporating application updates into the April and June meetings. Due to the LWCF not being ready for full discussion, it may be split into another meeting. They agreed to extend the April and June meetings until 4 pm and add placeholders for future meetings, with less reporting and more focus on NM and OHV discussions in the next two.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:33 p.m.

Motion to adjourn - Mick Daniel

Motion seconded - Jason Meyer