Meeting Minutes: Colorado Wildlife Council - October 16, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. ~ In-Person

Members Present:

Weyand, Kitching, Gray-Bertuglia, Anderson, Williams, Ehrhart-Gemmill, Stribling

Members Absent:

Gwinn, Twinem

Also in Attendance:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)/State: Megan Schulz, Rebecca Ferrell, Chris Stork, Kelly Kramer, Tim Mauck, Jeff Davis

R&R Partners: Patrick Buller, Angela Suganuma, Sophie Haws, Paul Smith

Public: Camille Ziccardi

Call to Order / Introductions – Kitching

- Called the meeting to order.

Key Decisions and Actions:

Approve 2026 Meeting Dates

Motion:

A motion was made by Williams, seconded, to hold the November and December 2025 meetings virtually and to approve the 2026 meeting schedule. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Minutes - September

Motion:

A motion for approval of the September minutes was offered by Williams, seconded, and carried unanimously.

CPW Director Davis Discussion

Discussion:

- There was discussion over support efforts to tell the story of rural communities and their land stewardship, specifically regarding the challenges posed by wolf restoration.
- Discussion focused on the need to balance public recreation access with the needs of private landowners and the fiscal limits of rural counties.
- It was suggested to create short films to address the disconnect between urban and rural communities by showcasing the realities of farming and ranching.
- The group emphasized maintaining and strengthening wildlife management partnerships with rural landowners through existing programs (HPP/Ranching for Wildlife).
- Continued focus on using storytelling and marketing to engage the public and highlight successful wildlife conservation work.

National Hunting and Fishing Day Future Planning

Discussion:

- National Hunting and Fishing Day: CPW discussed promoting the day (fourth Saturday of September) and its connection to conservation. Opportunities for Council involvement (proclamation sponsorship, newsletters, social media) were suggested.
- Private Landowner Partnerships: CPW is increasing efforts to share stories about private landowner conservation, including the Ranching for Wildlife program and "Corners for Conservation."
- Upcoming Commission Meeting: A major meeting is scheduled for November 13th-14th in Sterling for approval of hunting regulations and GMUs.
- Summer Statistics: High-level overview of state park visitors, camping reservations, fishing clinics, and hunting outreach events was provided.
- Strategic Plan Development: CPW is developing a 10-year strategic plan with Persona, with eight key themes identified, aiming for publication next spring.

R&R Presentation

Creative Review:

- Presented still images and fine cuts of 30-second and 15-second videos for the Hunter and Angler campaign.
- Noted pending color correction, sound mixing, and subcommittee edits.
- Highlighted unique production elements, like custom otter feet for filming.
- Council members encouraged to view videos via a provided link for better quality.

Qualitative Research Presentation and Q/A:

- Approval of legal hunting and fishing is at its highest since 2021 (80%).
- Target Audience (Adventurous Environmentalists): Approval for legal hunting increased 12 points to 81%. Significant increases in knowledge of hunting regulations and belief that wildlife management is funded by license fees.
- Recent events (assassination of Charlie Kirk and a Colorado school shooting) temporarily influenced hunter and angler responses, causing a perceived (likely anomalous) drop in support, attributed to heightened focus on enforcement.
- Highest ad recall since 2021, with clear retention of campaign messaging (science, conservation, wildlife management).

- Decreasing economic concerns in Colorado lead to increased voter interest in hunting and fishing policy, creating more opportunity for the Council's educational messaging.
- Increased understanding that license fees primarily fund wildlife management.
- Increased familiarity with the Wildlife Council among hunters and anglers.
- The number of strong disapprovers for legal hunting decreased.

Q2 Newsletter:

Motion:

Ehrhart-Gemmill moved to approve the Q2 newsletter content. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Q2 Social Media:

Motion:

Williams moved to approve the Q2 Social Media with edits; the motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

H/A CPW Ad:

Motion:

Ehrhart-Gemmill moved to approve the CPW print Ad. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Brand Communication & Style Guide Discussion

- Communication Goal Revised: The language will shift from "Colorado way of life" to a clearer focus on "how they help us conserve Colorado" (or "preservation of the state") to avoid political implications.
- Firearms Policy Clarified: The guide will allow showing firearms in certain contexts, particularly on law enforcement officers/game wardens, but with caution and sensitivity regarding audience perceptions.
- Brand Essence and Voice: The definition of the brand essence (Stewardship) will be revised, clarifying the Council's role as communicators, not physical caretakers.
- Data Verification and Inclusion: Financial data (e.g., the $3.25 billion economic impact) must be verified for accuracy (checking against SCORP data). All approved facts and figures will be compiled and regularly updated.

- Language and Acronyms: For external content, the Council will avoid using acronyms (CWC, CPW) and will use inclusive language (e.g., "sportspeople" instead of "sportsman").
- Partner Alignment: Messaging must emphasize working "in lock step with CPW" and reference CPW biologists as the source of scientific data.
- R&R will present the final version of the communications and style guide at the next council meeting.

CPW Deputy Director of Operations Tim Mauck Introduction

- Tim Mauck, the new Deputy Director for Operations at CPW, discussed the agency's key challenges and ongoing priorities:
    - Key Challenges: Focus areas include successfully establishing new state parks, increasing agency revenues, and managing State Wildlife Areas (SWAs).
    - SWA Management: Need better regulation and public understanding of SWAs, while ensuring a balance between economic use and environmental conservation.
    - Cooperative Projects: Highlighted active collaborations, specifically the Pikes Peak project and the Southern Shooting Partnership, emphasizing that trust and cooperation are essential for success.

Treasurer's Report

Revenue to date totals $609,670, which is slightly below last year's figure for the same period. The Treasurer reported that the council is currently on track with its overall budget projections.

Council & Subcommittee Reports

None.

Hunter/Angler Outreach Update

- The team reviewed several successful outreach events, including a leaf peeping trail talk at Kenosha Pass, which reached 242 people.
- Multiple sponsorships were reviewed and discussed, including the La Junta Tarantula Fest, a Rockies game giveaway, and the Colorado Wildlife Summit, where the council served as the title sponsor and distributed 180 bags.

- The team approved postcard designs for future distribution.
- Upcoming events and programs discussed included ice fishing events and a conservation educator award program.

Motion:

A motion to approve the postcard designs was made by Ehrhart-Gemmill, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Meeting Adjourned

Motion:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.