Meeting Minutes: Colorado Wildlife Council -May 21, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. ~ In-person

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Twinem

Also in Attendance:

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)/State: Megan Schulz-Collins, Rebecca Ferrell, Chris Stork

R&R Partners: Patrick Buller, Angela Suganuma, Sophie Haws, Jennifer Harlan

Public: Peyton Mason

Call to Order / Introductions – Kitching

- Called the meeting to order.

Key Decisions and Actions:

Approve Minutes - April CWC/H&A

Motion:

Williams moved to approve the April meeting minutes, seconded by Anderson, and the motion was approved unanimously.

R&R Presentation

Q3 Media Report:

- The primary campaign objective remains broad public awareness. Q3 metrics (January to March) revealed a significant increase in impressions quarter-over-quarter, driven by budget scaling and out-of-home advertising campaigns. Out-of-home media (Lamar and Outfront digital/static boards) generated close to 78 million impressions combined, significantly lowering the overall campaign Cost Per Thousand (CPM).
- Traditional media (TV and Out-of-Home) accounted for roughly half of the Q3 budget execution, while digital platforms accounted for the remaining half. Broad-reach TV buys secured over 1.3 million impressions across targeted programming, including the Winter Olympics and live Denver Nuggets broadcasts. Digital highlights featured strong performances in rich media, Snapchat video completion rates (VCR), and a high-converting 40% click-through rate (CTR) on branded Google Paid Search terms.

Motion:

Gwinn moved to optimize Q4 budget pacing by authorizing the fluid reallocation of $5,700 in unspent hard travel funds directly into immediate digital social media (Meta), search engine mechanics, and Connected TV (CTV) pipelines over the final 10 days of the seasonal media flight. Seconded by Williams, the motion was approved unanimously.

Rockies:

- The promotional canvas tote bag design has officially cleared review and is moving to manufacturing. CWC will distribute 15,000 branded totes directly at Coors Field on September 15th, the official promotional day. An additional 2,000 unbranded canvas bags are allocated for local CWC grassroots outreach events.

- The council approved an interactive "Take a Wild Guess" player video concept. Players will guess whether specific speed and endurance stats reference native Colorado wildlife or baseball analytics.

Motion:

Anderson moves to formally approve the structural execution of the 2-part Rockies player interactive video concept. Seconded by Williams, the motion was approved unanimously.

Social Media:

- The council reviewed and voted to alternate layout templates on public social channels month-by-month, presenting an Option 1 "Take a Wild Guess" template followed by an Option 2 "Three Facts About An Animal" configuration to optimize audience interaction.

Motion:

Anderson moved to approve an alternating sequence protocol tracking Option 1 and Option 2 content frameworks for consecutive monthly social posts. Seconded by Weyand, motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Anderson

- For the May 21, 2026, Colorado Wildlife Council Treasurer Report for FY26, the beginning fund balance for FY26 is $2.051 million. Revenue and expenses span from July 1, 2025, to May 4, 2025. Total revenue is $1,976,638 from the Wildlife Education Fund Surcharge and interest income. Total expenditures are $2,312,849 from travel, advertising, printing, purchased services, supplies, fees, dues and memberships, & official functions. The revenue and expenditures impact on the fund balance is $588,889. The current ending fund balance is $1.715 million.

Approval of Upcoming Event Travel - Kitching

- There was no discussion of the upcoming travel approval to note.

Karsh Onboarding Questions - Schulz-Collins

- Staff outlined CWC's primary audience profile (Adventurous Environmentalist, Adults 18–44) and secondary focus (Hunter Adjacent, Adults 18–29) derived from long-term survey research. Council discussed setting baseline success metrics based on positive shifts in public perception and holding a steady 9-out-of-10 approval trajectory regarding regulated hunting and fishing tools.
- Priorities given to the incoming agency include addressing public confusion between tax funding and license sales revenue, communicating the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and clearly differentiating the CWC's educational platform from Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) formal regulatory body. Council members expressed interest in humanizing campaign layouts by introducing historical facts about wildlife recovery, showcasing social science elements, and leveraging partner NGO networks.

Draft Operations Plan Review

- The primary update to the 2026–2027 priorities section was the inclusion of the marketing agency transition. Getting the new agency onboarded and operational starting July 1st is marked as a major council priority.
- The rest of the operations plan structure remains largely consistent with previous cycles. It continues to focus on refining targeted messaging, empowering hunter/angler advocacy, strengthening partner networks, and boosting scientific literacy regarding wild resource management.
- Because it is a transition year, the council is opting for a more flexible, high-level operational overview rather than a fully detailed line-item budget breakdown. Ferrell will clarify with Director Laura's office on Tuesday to ensure they are on board with this high-level approach.
- Schulz-Collins will execute a final grammar check and wrap up the remaining text notes to distribute a clean copy in June. The council aims to officially approve the finalized Operations Plan at the July meeting so it can be forwarded to Director Laura ahead of schedule.

Hunter/Angler Outreach Update - Ehrhart- Gemmill

- CWC verified member presence for the early summer field season, including Staunton State Park's Flyathlon (May 30), the Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention in Loveland, and June's local Trout Fest.
- Formally accepted a complimentary contract extension from host Scott Watley. CWC will receive full broadcast media alignment, local interview packages, and on-site event

representation for July through December 2026, all at no cost, with tabling renewal reviews continuing through December.
- Finalized and adopted a structural sponsorship disclaimer strategy for the primary public website, indicating that technical CWC funding configurations do not represent political or regulatory endorsements.
- The subcommittee asked for approval in the FY26 budget for a $1,000 program sponsorship for the Pikes Peak Library event, alongside the purchase of one replacement field-ready outreach presentation tent and two custom graphic pop-up structural banners.
- The subcommittee asked for approval to authorize the execution of the primary sub-committee sponsorship ledger, hitting the upcoming FY27 operational allocation on July 1:
    1. Denver Sportsman Show Presenting Title Spot: $10,000
    2. Colorado Conservation Film Festival Title Spot: $5,000
    3. Outdoorsman's Day Event: $1,500
    4. Roaring Fork Conservancy Annual Calendar Series: $6,000

Motion:

Williams moved to clear out leftover balances within the current $13,000 FY26 Hunter & Angler operational budget by executing a $1,000 program sponsorship for the Pikes Peak Library event, alongside the purchase of one replacement outreach tent and two custom graphic pop-up structural banners. Seconded by Weyand, and moved unanimously.

Motion:

Anderson moved to approve the sponsorships, hitting the upcoming FY27 Hunter & Angler budget on July 1: Denver Sportsman Show Presenting Title Spot: $10,000, Colorado Conservation Film Festival Title Spot: $5,000, Outdoorsman's Day Event: $1,500, and Roaring Fork Conservancy Annual Calendar Series: $6,000. Seconded by Williams and approved unanimously.

Analytics Vendor Review - Ehrhart- Gemmill

- A formal advisory proposal of up to $10,000 was evaluated to retain a dedicated data analyst consultant. The contractor will build a customized screening and data extraction framework to standardize post-event return on investment (ROI) metric reporting. Discussion balanced initial subcommittee hesitations regarding volunteer burnout and unquantifiable "intangible benefits" against the fiscal need for strict, data-validated spending accountability.

Motion:

Williams moved to approve the formal retention of a dedicated data analyst consultant up to an hourly billing cap of $10,000 to construct a long-term operational framework evaluating future CWC grassroots sponsorship performance profiles. Seconded by Anderson, approved unanimously.

Proof of Performance Discussion: Sponsorship Agreements

- Chair Kitching introduced this topic to establish clear expectations with industry networks before executing future sponsorship contracts. Because CWC sponsorships are business transactions rather than charitable donations, the council requires clear justification for its expenditures.
- Moving forward, the council will have upfront discussions with new, volunteer-led, or non-profit organizations to clarify data expectations early on without causing friction later.

General Updates - Schulz-Collins

Calendar Invite Check In

- The Program Coordinator checks with the general council that the new process of sending calendar invites when tasks are due works for the members.

Schulz-Collins Title Change

- Megan Schulz-Collins formal state title is moving from Program Assistant to Program Coordinator to enhance communication parity with outside vendors.

CPW Marketing Restructuring

- CPW marketing department expansion is adding a dedicated Marketing Supervisor, meaning the CWC Program Coordinator will shift reporting lines under this position, and Rebecca Farrell will scale back direct CWC council attendance over the coming months.

East Slope Angler Applications

- Confirmed receipt of 5 complete candidate applications. Initial round interviews are finalized for June 15–26, with top selections advancing to CPW Director Clellan.

Conservationist of the Year Award Update

- The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) has officially accepted the council's invitation to receive the Conservationist of the Year Award. Representatives from RMEF will travel to receive the award in person during the September council session.
- CWC has successfully executed a targeted social media and digital newsletter campaign to announce the award. The internal CPW team is currently drafting a formal press release, which is expected to be finalized within the next week or two.
- Schulz-Collins distributed a survey to all organizations that submitted applications for the award this year. The overall sentiment regarding the process was highly positive. Two major recommendations were noted for next year's cycle:
    - Creating separate, distinct categories for "Individual" and "Organization" submissions.
    - Providing downloadable question sheets so applicants can draft their submissions offline.
- The award presentation is officially scheduled to take place during the CPW Commission meeting on September 2nd and 3rd. The council will set aside a dedicated 15-minute window to ground new commissioners on the purpose of the Wildlife Council, showcase recent commercials, and give RMEF ample time to highlight its extensive conservation work.

Open Discussion & Questions

- Ehrhart-Gemmill is attending “Elevate Conservation, outdoors for all” and representing the council onsite during the event.

Public Comment

None.

Meeting Adjourned

Motion:

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