

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Resolution 2025-02

Concerning the Protection of National Public Lands In Colorado

WHEREAS, Coloradans have a deep love and affection for our shared, national public lands and the innumerable benefits they provide; and

WHEREAS, Colorado contains a variety of national public lands, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, monuments, wilderness areas, and other public lands; and

WHEREAS, Our public lands reflect many of our most noble democratic ideals because public lands offer valuable recreational, economic, cultural, and spiritual opportunities to everyone, regardless of one's socioeconomic status, race, or gender or whether one lives in an urban or rural area; and

WHEREAS, Our public lands provide defining features of Colorado and the foundation for our quality of life by supporting the vitality of our communities, as well as representing Colorado's common heritage: Fossils marking where dinosaurs roamed, ancient ruins and petroglyphs dotting the canyons, and historic mining towns nestled in steep-sided valleys; and

WHEREAS, Our public lands feature an amazingly diverse range of landscapes, from the snowcapped peaks of the Rocky Mountains down to rushing rivers, from red rock canyons to sagebrush seas, and tree-lined mountain valleys that are treasured by Coloradans and the nation for outdoor recreation, such as hunting and angling; and

WHEREAS, Our public lands provide important wildlife habitats, clean water, clean air, and natural amenities that contribute to Coloradans' quality of life and Colorado's climate resiliency; and

WHEREAS, According to the 2024 Colorado College State of the Rockies poll, 88% of Westerners visited national public lands in the previous year, with one-fourth visiting more than 10 times, and 84% of Coloradans support the creation of new national parks, monuments, and wildlife refuges; and

WHEREAS, Our shared public lands have a substantial impact on economic development and jobs through mineral extraction, timber sales, ranching, tourism, and the outdoor recreation industry, which alone contributed over \$17 billion to Colorado's economy in 2023, supporting 132,500 jobs and placing Colorado in the top 10 nationally for economic activity around outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, through Senate Bill 16-021, Colorado created a state holiday to recognize and pay tribute to our public lands in Public Lands Day on the third Saturday of each May; and

WHEREAS, In 2024, through House Joint Resolution 24-1012, the Colorado legislature unanimously memorialized the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division that trained in the valleys and rugged mountains of Eagle and Summit Counties during World War II and

expressed its appreciation for the recently designated Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument; and

WHEREAS, Misguided attempts to seize control of vast acreage of national public lands from the American public and to force their disposal through litigation and legislation are inconsistent with the values and interests of Coloradans.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission:

(1) Declares our support for keeping our national public lands in public hands through the stewardship of the United States government and the federal land management agencies of the National Park Service, the United States Forest Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Land Management;

(2) Opposes efforts to sell, transfer, or dispose of our national public lands; and

(3) Encourages Colorado's governor and attorney general and the members of Colorado's Congressional Delegation to take such actions as may be necessary to oppose future attempts to sell, transfer, or dispose of our national public lands; and

(4) Notwithstanding the above, requests that, prior to the disposal of any national public lands within Colorado, the federal government consult with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources on the intended disposition of such lands, and consider offering such lands, without cost, to the State of Colorado to be added to the public lands managed by the Colorado Department of Natural Resources for the use and benefit of current and future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be sent to Governor Jared Polis; United States Senators John Hickenlooper and Michael Bennet; United States Representatives Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, Jeff Hurd, Lauren Boebert, Jeff Crank, Jason Crow, Brittany Pettersen, and Gabe Evans; Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum; and President Donald Trump.

Approved, November XX, 2025

Richard Reading

Chair, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission