ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:	January 2, 2026

ISSUE:	Should property-specific regulations be modified for Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area?

DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

In April 2023, CPW acquired a 1,173.46-acre parcel known as the Mt. Tom parcel that is next to the Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area. This parcel will expand the Ralson Creek SWA to a total of over 3,500 acres. The Ralston Creek SWA provides valuable hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing access. Additionally, the Ralston Creek SWA abuts Golden Gate Canyon State Park on the North and Jefferson County Open Space to the south. This contiguous area provides critical habitat for deer, elk, moose, bear, mountain lion, turkey, dusky grouse, and other game and non-game species.

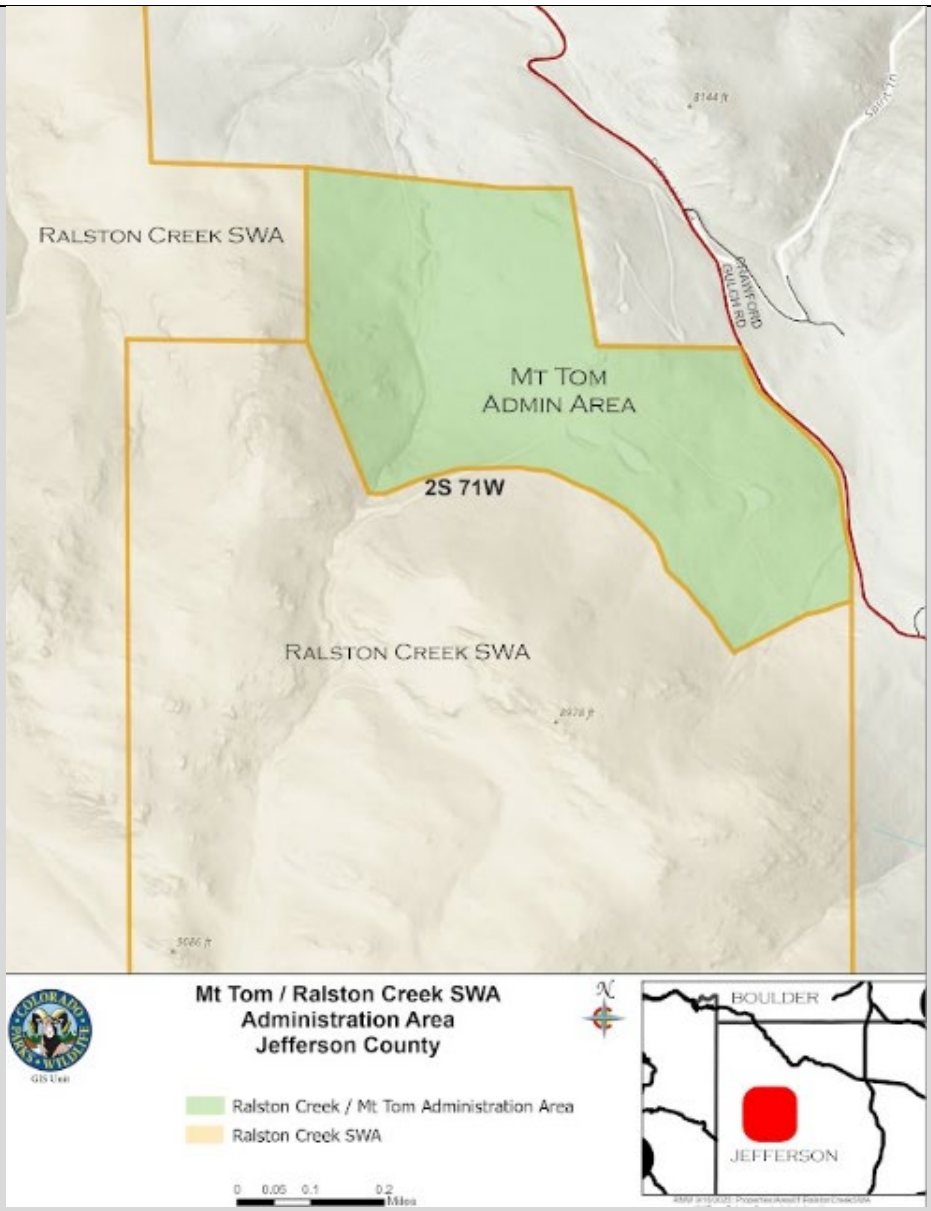
Currently, the Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area has property-specific regulations restricting target shooting.

CPW recommends additional restrictions on the property to help protect the wildlife resource on the property. The state wildlife area is an important wintering area for elk, moose, and deer. Additionally, deer fawning, elk and moose calving are consistently documented on the Ralston Creek SWA. It is for those reasons that it is recommended that a winter/spring closure occur to protect vulnerable wildlife.

CPW recommends a closure to public access from Feb 1 through June 14 to protect wintering wildlife and for spring calving/fawning. Additionally, that public access is restricted to hunting activities from the day after Labor Day through the end of the late deer/elk season. This recommendation is consistent with other state wildlife areas in the area that experience high non-wildlife related recreation, which at times conflicts with hunting-related recreation. Public access will be available for others from June 15th through Labor Day.

CPW also recommends restricting dogs on this state wildlife area, to prevent negative impacts to wildlife.

There is an administrative area (house and shop) on the Mt. Tom parcel that is within an administrative closure. There will be no public access to this location (see included map).



STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:

***IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.**

Hunters in GMU 38

No public surveys were conducted regarding the issue.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. ***Preferred Alternative*:** Update regulation #901.B. as follows:

Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area - Jefferson County

a. Public access is prohibited from February 1 through June 14.
b. Public access is restricted to hunting activities from the day after Labor Day through the end of the late deer/elk season.
c. No public access to the Mt. Tom Administrative Area.
d. Discharge of firearms or bows is prohibited, except while hunting.
e. Dogs are prohibited.

2. **Status Quo:** Maintain the current property-specific regulations:
Ralston Creek State Wildlife Area - Jefferson County
a. Discharge of firearms or bows is prohibited except while hunting.

Issue Raised by:	Area 1 Staff
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	Tim Woodward, Wildlife Technician, Ralson Creek, Area 1
CC:	Scott Murdoch, Kristin Cannon & Mark Leslie
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Mark Leslie
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	**YES**
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	**YES**
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Northeast Region
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	**NO**
COMPLIES WITH THE BIG GAME SEASON STRUCTURE	**YES**