

Wolf Program Update

January 2025

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Agenda

- Status of Wolves in Colorado - One Year into Restoration
- 2025 Capture & Release Preparation
- CPW Conflict Minimization Program Expansion
 - Chronic Depredation
 - Site Assessments
 - Range Riding
 - Carcass Management
 - Conflict Minimization Effectiveness
 - Depredation Response
 - Communications
- Questions



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Status of Wolves in Colorado

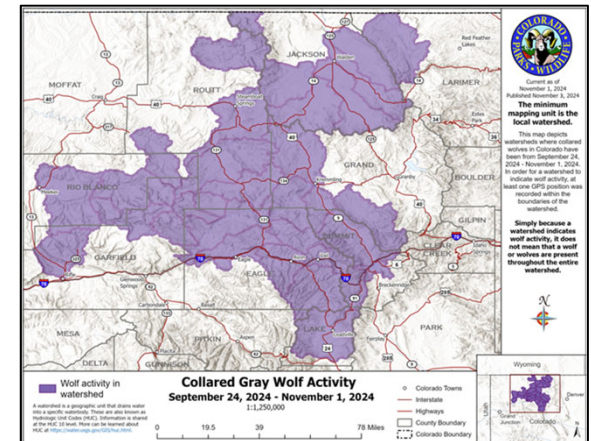
One Year into Restoration



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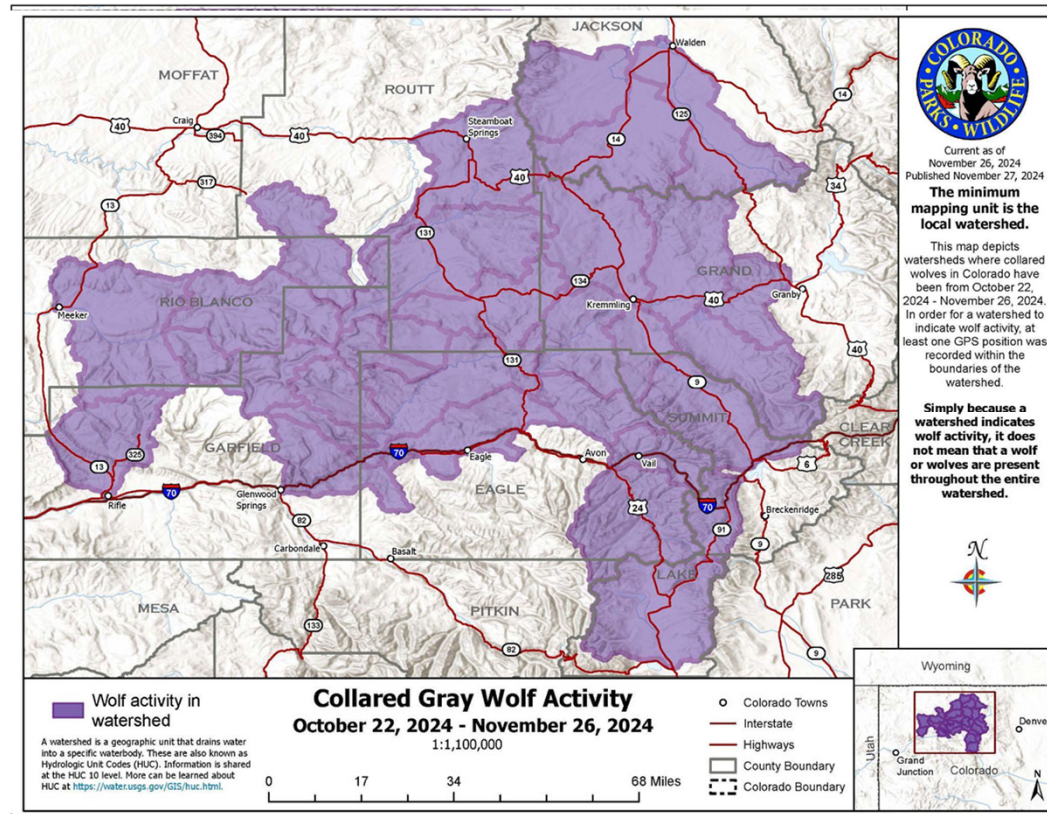
Population and Monitoring

- Nine wolves are currently being monitored by CPW biologists (8 adults, 1 pup)
- Five wolves currently held at a non-disclosed location (1 adult, 4 pups)
- Wolves are monitored through sightings, visual confirmations and both VHF and GPS collar capabilities.
- CPW publishes a monthly Gray Wolf Activity Map to our website on the fourth Wednesday of every month to inform the public of wolf movements by watershed and notable updates.
- CPW field staff inform local area producers when wolves are spending time in an area and work to establish site assessments to identify and deploy deterrence measures.



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Wolf Activity



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2025 Capture & Release Preparation



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2025 Release Season

- Up to 15 Wolves will be translocated from British Columbia to Colorado January 2025.
- CPW will be responsible for all costs associated with capture and transport.
- Animals will be examined and provided treatments and prevention for possible diseases and infections at the source sites.
- Collars will be secured to inform CPW staff on the behaviors and survival of reintroduced animals.
- Animals will be transported in aluminum crates to Colorado by airplane.



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2025 Release Season

- CPW will not translocate wolves from B.C. that are from packs currently involved in situations of repeated livestock depredations.
- Animals will be released at select sites as soon as possible once they arrive in the state.
- Additional wolves will create the environment for more efficient management of wolf-livestock conflict:
 - Leading to pack formation, creating wolf territories
 - Establishing predictable travel patterns and behaviors
 - Allowing CPW and partners to more effectively minimize conflict through site assessments and deployment of appropriate deterrence methods



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2025 Release Season

- CPW has implemented a communications plan to inform stakeholders as we prepare for this year's release season. Community meetings have been held throughout November and December in counties where releases are possible.
- CPW and our partners have been working throughout the year to increase staff, funding, tools and communication for minimizing wolf-livestock conflict.
- A greatly expanded Conflict Minimization Program is the result of these efforts. We'll go into the details of this program now.



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Conflict Minimization Program Expansion



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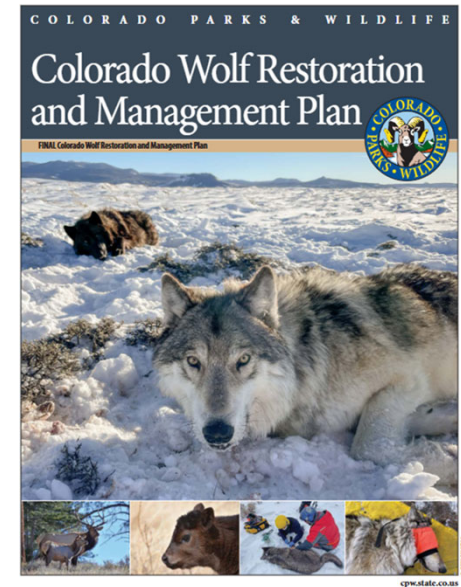
Chronic Depredation



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Chronic Depredation - Background

- Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan does not provide a specific definition of Chronic Depredation, giving discretion to CPW Program Managers to make a case-by-case determination.
- CPW received social, legislative and political pressure to develop a quantitative definition of Chronic Depredation.
- Engagement with the Ad Hoc Working group was structured to consider how to define Chronic Depredation, and then to determine what actions are appropriate once that definition is met.



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Chronic Depredation - ESA Status

Lethal take of a federally listed species is prohibited under the ESA

Development of the 10(j) Rule that establishes the population of wolves in Colorado as “Nonessential, experimental” relaxes these take prohibitions



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Chronic Depredation - Definitions

“Chronic Depredation” means three or more depredation events caused by the same wolf or wolves within a 30-day period, provided there is clear and convincing evidence that at least one of the depredation events was caused by wolves.

“Depredation event” means a 24-hour period in which the Division determines by a preponderance of the evidence that a wolf or wolves caused physical trauma resulting in injury or death to a producer’s livestock or working dogs. The Division will find the preponderance of the evidence standard is met when the evidence shows a wolf or wolves more likely than not caused physical trauma resulting in injury or death to the producer’s livestock or working dogs.

Clear and convincing is a higher standard than the preponderance of evidence standard that is typically used for other game damage.

Clear and convincing evidence leaves no room for serious doubt that a wolf or wolves caused physical trauma resulting in injury or death to livestock or working dogs.

The other two events could meet either “clear and convincing” or “preponderance of evidence” standards.



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Chronic Depredation - 10(j) Rule

The Service or Designated Agent may carry out harassment, non-lethal control measures, relocation, placement in captivity, or lethal control of depredating wolves.

The Service or Designated Agent will consider:

1. Evidence of wounded livestock or working dogs or remains of livestock or working dogs that show that the injury or death was caused by wolves, or evidence that wolves were in the act of attacking livestock or working dogs;
1. The likelihood that additional wolf-caused losses or attacks may occur if no control action is taken;
1. Evidence of unusual attractants or artificial or intentional feeding of wolves; and
1. Evidence that animal husbandry practices recommended in approved allotment plans and annual operating plans were followed.



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Chronic Depredation - PWC Regs

PWC Regulations require Division to consider 4 factors

- A. documented repeated depredation and harassment of a producer's livestock or working dogs caused by the wolf, wolves, or pack targeted;
- B. use of a variety of nonlethal conflict minimization materials and techniques;
- C. likelihood that additional wolf-related depredation will continue if lethal control is or is not implemented; and
- D. unintentional or intentional use of attractants that may be luring or baiting wolves to the location.

If, after considering these factors, the Division concludes lethal removal “is appropriate under the circumstances,” the Division or federal agents will lethally remove the depredating wolf or wolves. If state and federal agencies do not have the capacity to lethally remove the depredating wolf or wolves, the Division may issue a chronic depredation permit if additional criteria are satisfied.



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Site Assessments



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Site Assessments- State Program (available since May 2023)

- Agencies are offering free and voluntary Wolf Site Assessments to livestock owners for viable conflict minimization tools/ techniques.
- Requested any time by a livestock owner and may be either proactive or reactive.
- Enhances communications and relationships, identifies viable conflict minimization options for single operations, provides details on the use and maintenance of each recommendation.
- Implementation of practices will be reviewed as agency management makes decisions in cases of chronic depredation.



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Site Assessments - Process

- Livestock owner contacts trained staff or fills out Pre-site Assessment form.
- Trained staff prioritize requests based on greatest need (ongoing).
- Staff contact interested livestock owner to set a date and time to conduct assessment.
- Assessment is completed, producer receives a copy of of form.
- Only acts as a “pre-game, game plan” in case risk increases and lays out viable proactive options, and permitted high effort options.
- Permits agency to implement “high effort” options in appropriate scenarios. **“Depredation Response”**



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Site Assessments - Pre-Assessment Questionnaire

- May be filled out at anytime to initiate the process.
- A Wolf Site Assessment document is completed in collaboration with the producer which outlines viable options for that location and captures existing efforts.
- If appropriate, resources and materials are deployed through CPW, CDA, WS, or NRCS.
- **PROACTIVE**



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Site Assessments- Hard Copy/Digital Options

 **Wolf Conflict Site Assessment**
Proactive- ☐ Reactive- ☐

MATERIALS WAIVER -required if livestock owner waives recommended tools and techniques
☐ I waive delivery of conflict minimization tools- (Initial)
☐ I will implement conflict minimization tools/techniques- (Initial)

Conflict Minimization Materials/Techniques
 Viable option Recommended by (CFW- ☐ KDA- ☐ WS- ☐) Layout-Required
 Fladry ☐ Scare devices ☐ Calving- ☐ Corral- ☐ Summer Range- ☐
 Electric netting ☐ Carcass management ☐ # of linear foot- perimeter
 Livestock Guardian dogs ☐ # of gates needed
 Range Riding ☐ High-risk Landscape management ☐ Note: Water crossings, public use trails, wildlife issues, public access, terrain features already implemented.
 Management Intensive Grazing ☐ Herd Composition ☐
 Injurious NL Hazing (permit) ☐

Core Area to Secure (calving/lambing): Sketch out or attach map of perimeter of project area. Note the placement of gates, corners, water crossings, existing fences, and terrain

CONTACT PERSON- NAME PHONE
 SIGNATURE EMAIL
 AGENCY CONTACT PHONE
 SIGNATURE EMAIL

- Have you had past wolf depredations, and if so when (how long ago, what time of year what was depredated)?
 a. No depredation ever /Localized wolf presence/past depredations/past depredation within year and localized wolf activity
- Are you currently implementing conflict minimization tools or techniques listed in the resource guide (which ones)?
 a. Attractant present/No/Yes/low effort tools/high effort tools
- Have you implemented any tools/techniques not listed in the resource guide?
 a. Yes or no, and what; Low effort tools/ High effort tools/
- Have you had wolf depredations (dep.) while implementing tools or techniques in the past?
 a. Depredation but no efforts/Dep with low effort/ Dep with high effort/Dep with high effort and wolf localization
- What do you do with your wolf loss?
 a. Open pit in pasture/pit separate from livestock/bury/secure/remove/
- What time/s of year are you most concerned about?
 a. Year round/range/pair out/calving
- To the nearest 50 animals, roughly how many livestock are you trying to protect?
 a. Predicted direct loss <25%(1000+)/(25%-25%(500+))/(25%-75%(100+))/(75%(<100))
- What degree of involvement are you comfortable with:
 a. Does not secure attractants/adds attractants/willing to implement low effort tools/allows staff to conduct appropriate effort in timely fashion/willing to collaborate with staff to implement appropriate effort/willing to collaborate with anyone to implement appropriate effort
- Is there confirmed wolf activity?
 a. No/low/regular/high
- Has the producer been properly trained on loaned equipment/techniques?
 a. Yes/No
- Are environmental factors conducive to successful deployment of requested tools/techniques?
 a. Ground conditions; grass, sandy, gravel, dry, etc...seek consultation
 b. Unfavorable conditions/low/medium/medium high/high
- If loaned to this producer before, what condition have we received equipment back in?
 a. Not loaned/Excellent/good/fair/poor/damaged
- Fladry: is someone going to be able to correctly maintain it at minimum 1 time each week?
 a. Yes/No (producer or agency)
- How likely is damage to recur?
 a. Not Likely= No Known Presence; Low=Infrequent presence, Infrequent Travel Route, Recommended Deterrents deployed; Medium= Known Travel Route, Pack Territory; High=Den/Rendezvous site, Unsecured Dead Pit



Site Assessments- Rollout

- 60 - classified as completed or pending completion
- Interagency Training
 - Producer assisted Field training (3 locations).
- Interagency development over a two month process
- Internal Training
 - Local training at Area meetings
- Livestock owner expectations
 - Collaborative process with trained staff
- Contingent on producer permission



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Range Riding



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Range Riding in the Old West

- Range Riding has been used to improve livestock husbandry and reduce conflict for hundreds of years.
- Benefits:
 - Monitor livestock health
 - Locate and return lost livestock
 - Early detection and deterrence of predators
 - Locate carcasses quickly
 - Real time understanding of the range



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Range Riding Today

- Range Riding is currently being used in nearly every western state with wolves, in some capacity.
 - Most riding programs are community based
- Colorado will be one of three states with its own state sponsored program.
 - Washington & Arizona are the others
- Range Riding has been shown to reduce the potential for predator conflict, and foster better communication between wildlife agencies and working ranches.



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State of Colorado Range Riding Program



- CPW and CDA plan to contract up to 12 Range Riders to support livestock producers and reduce the potential for predator conflicts.
- CPW and CDA plan to contract up to 2 riders for each of the following counties for the 2025 season:
 - Jackson, Grand, Routt, Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin, Summit, Rio Blanco, and Moffat
- 5 month season: April - October
 - 2-4 riders will be brought on early to help during calving and lambing
- Compensation is \$30/hour, not to exceed \$300/DAY, and \$6,600/month.
- Contracted Range Riders must provide their own equipment.
 - Truck, trailer, horses, ATV/UTV, etc.
- Recommendations from local stockgrower or cattlemen groups are highly encouraged.



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State of Colorado Range Riding Program



- CPW & CDA will host a one day early season Range Rider training at the end of January and a full 4 day training the last week of April.
 - While spaces are limited we hope to include anyone who may act as a range rider within the state in an official capacity.
- Range riders will be expected to provide human presence and will serve as a first line of detection for conflict while on range.
- At the conclusion of the season we expect to meet with producers the range riding program served to discuss the successes and challenges of the program.



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Range Riding - Additional Resources

- Interested parties are encouraged to fill out our Range Rider Interest form.
 - Over 90 people have already submitted this form.
- In addition to the CPW and CDA Range Riding Program:
 - The USDA NRCS program reimburses eligible ranches for their own range rider.
 - NGO groups are actively working with producers to establish range riding programs in conjunction with CPW.



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Depredation Response



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CPW Wolf Depredation Response Operations

Current Capacity

- Local District Wildlife Managers (DWM)
- Regional Wildlife Damage Specialists (WDS)
- Statewide Wolf Conflict Coordinator
- CDA Non-lethal Specialists
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)



Future Capacity

- Additional Wildlife Damage Specialists
- Statewide Wolf Damage and Range Rider Program Coordinator
- Collaborative Agreements/MOU's Partner Agencies



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Level 1 Response - Information Gathering

- Wolves in the area
- Livestock producer engagement to assess depredation risk and vulnerabilities
- Site assessment conducted in collaboration with landowner and producer
- Understand current wolf activity
- Outline minimization tools/efforts to prevent, reduce or stop conflict



Wolf Track



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Level 2 Response - Actions

- Tools and deterrents deployed based on site assessment:
 - Fladry/scare devices
 - Range Rider
 - Camera monitoring
 - Injurious non-lethal hazing permit
 - Carcass/attractant management



Deploying Fladry Jackson County, CO



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Level 3 Response - Escalated Action

- Increased onsite presence by CPW, partner agencies and/or NGOs
- All tools and techniques identified in the site assessment and considered viable, reasonable, and effective will be deployed with permission
- Increased wolf activity monitoring



Telemetry Monitoring Grand County, CO



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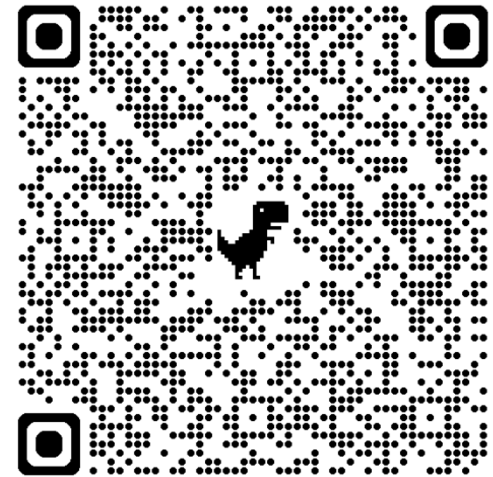
Carcass Management



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Carcass Management

- CDA is talking with other states and staff have visited Montana and Arizona to learn about their programs.
- Staff created a one-page Best Management Practices (BMP) document outlining good, better and best practices.
- Carcass Management does not always mean carcass removal.



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Carcass Management

- CPW, CDA, Wildlife Services, and CSU Extension staff have held 9 public outreach events with approximately 250 attendees.
 - Walden, Craig, Steamboat Springs, Meeker, Kremmling, Glenwood Springs, Gunnison, Gypsum, Aspen
 - More outreach events will be held in early 2025.



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Carcass Management

- Through the state's grant program, six carcass management projects have been approved for funding.
 - Projects include incentives to bury carcass pits, payments for hauling dead livestock to local landfill, and hiring a contractor to collect and remove livestock carcasses.
 - CDA will closely monitor these projects and may scale up one or more of these programs.



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Conflict Minimization Effectiveness



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Fladry and Turbo Fladry

Foundational Research

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Guard Animals

Foundational Research

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Scare Devices (Light and Sound)

Foundational Research

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Drones

Foundational Research

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Drones

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More Research Occurring in Oregon



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Human Presence and Range Riding

Foundational Research

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More Research Occurring in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Washington, Montana, and Oregon.



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Conflict Minimization Effectiveness

- Site Assessments
 - Turbo Fladry
 - Range Riding efforts
 - Night Watch
 - Joint Outreach
 - Guard Dogs
 - Carcass Management
 - Monitoring
-
- **4 Agencies both state and federal establishing conflict minimization resources for producers relating to:**
 - Carcass management (CDA,CPW,NRCS)
 - Range Riding (CDA,CPW, NRCS)
 - Exclusion resources- Fladry (CPW,NRCS)
 - Exclusion resources- Permanent electric fencing (NRCS)
 - Guard Dog Placement (WS)
 - Monitoring Equipment- Cameras (WS, NRCS)



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Communications

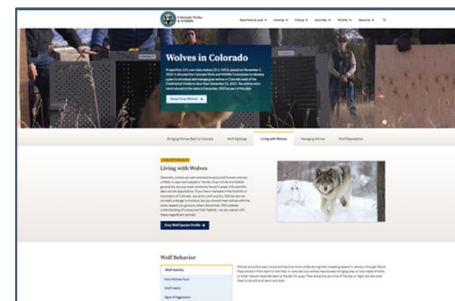
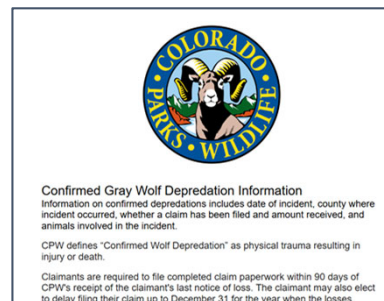
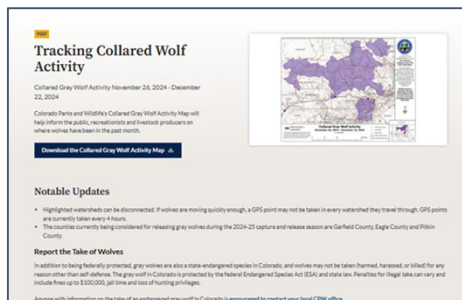
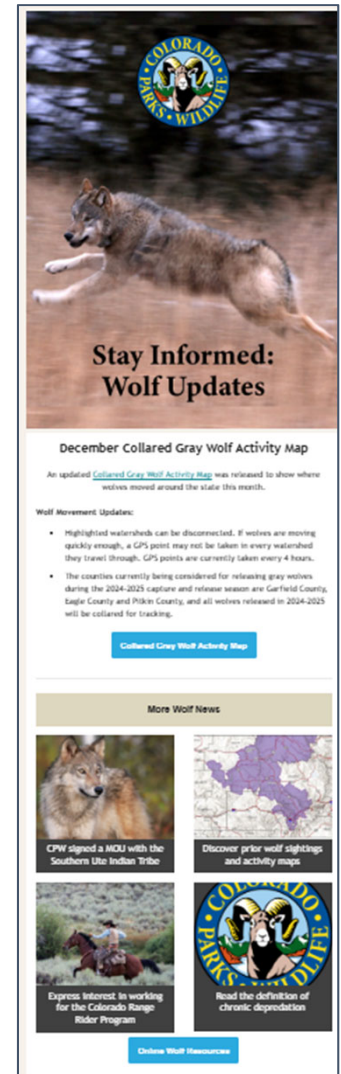


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Communications - Statewide

CPW's statewide communications team has been focused on expanding wolf information channels throughout the first year of wolf restoration:

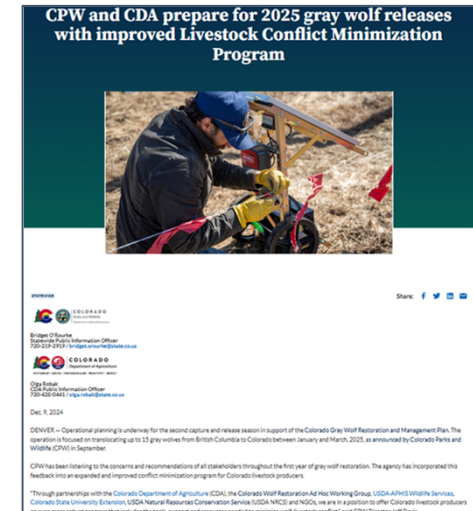
- Monthly wolf activity maps launched in January
- Wolf depredation page published in April
- New CPW website launched in August with improved wolf site
- Monthly gray wolf newsletter, now nearly 7,000 subscribers



Communications - Statewide

Our statewide Public Information Officers and Social Media teams are also focused on providing a wide range of information related to the Wolf Restoration Program and status, including wolf biology.

- The team is focused on continuous expansion of information via regular updates and predictable information through familiar external and internal channels.
- We work closely with our biologists and local area staff to ensure the information provided is timely and accurate.



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Communications - Local

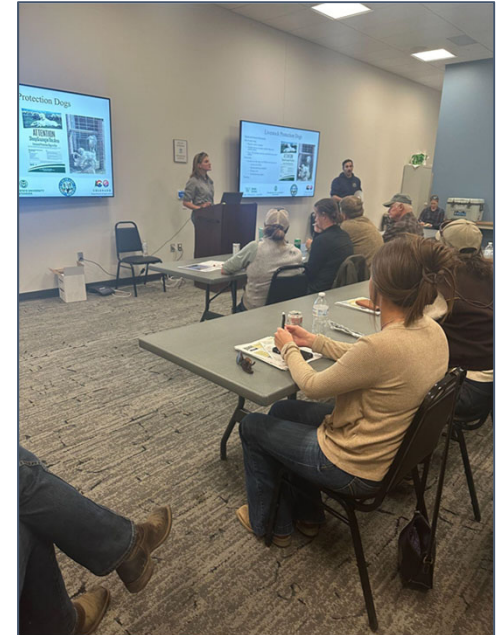
- CPW's NW Region staff have been meeting with local elected officials and the public throughout the first year of wolf restoration.
- Most recently, the team has been meeting with county commissioners and the public in counties under consideration for releases, providing information on the following:
 - Current status of wolves in Colorado
 - Capture & release information and logistics
 - Potential release sites and selection criteria
- The meetings include Q&A and opportunities for public comment
- Hundreds of community members have joined meetings in Rio Blanco, Garfield, Pitkin and Eagle counties



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Communications - Local

- The meetings have been held while multiple educational workshops have also been held across the Western Slope
- The workshops are hosted by CDA, CPW, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services and CSU Extension
- A full list of workshops can be found on [CDA's website](#) where producers can also find the link to [register](#).
- CPW continues to meet with local communities and elected officials for open discussions about how to prepare to live with wolves.
- Thank you to all of our communications team members and to the members of the public for attending these meetings and workshops throughout the year.



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Summary

CPW has been listening to the concerns and recommendations of all stakeholders throughout the first year of gray wolf restoration.

Along with our partners, we have incorporated this feedback into an expanded and improved conflict minimization program for Colorado livestock producers.



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Questions



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