

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

	Date:	August 21, 2026
ISSUE:	Should the property-specific regulations at Boyd Lake be updated to modify bag and possession limits for Walleye and Saugeye and remove the restriction limiting angler harvest to a single Walleye or Saugeye exceeding 21 inches?	
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):		
Located in Loveland, Boyd Lake covers 1,700 surface acres, has 11 miles of shoreline, and reaches a maximum depth of 50 feet. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) manages recreation at Boyd Lake, including the fishery. Angler visitation during 2025 averaged 3,488 anglers per month, a 73% increase in only a single decade. Boyd Lake is managed primarily for Walleye and Saugeye. Natural reproduction by these species is minimal, and the fishery is supported through stocking. CPW recommends reducing the bag and possession limit for Walleye/Saugeye from 5 to 3 fish over 15 inches. Also, limiting the harvest of a single Walleye/Saugeye over 21 inches to 1 per day has proven ineffective and should be eliminated. These measures will maintain the quality of Walleye/Saugeye fishing and better meet angler expectations. <u>Bag/Possession Limit Reduction.</u> During 2025, an estimated 44,706 fish were caught by anglers, including 17,020 Walleye/Saugeye, making them the most caught species. The harvest rate for legal-sized Walleye/Saugeye was 68%, the highest among other NE reservoirs surveyed in 2025 (Cherry Creek 33%, Chatfield Reservoir 17%). Most anglers indicated they would like to see the Walleye/Saugeye bag limit at Boyd Lake reduced. Anglers were asked, "In your opinion, what is an acceptable bag limit at this reservoir?" The majority (18%) favored reducing the Walleye limit to three fish, followed by two Walleye (17%), keeping the current regulations (15%) of five, four Walleye (7%), and one Walleye (2%). An additional 38% of respondents had no opinion. Anglers were also asked, "What is the most important aspect of a successful walleye trip?" The most frequent answers were "Catching keeper walleye" and "Catching as many Walleye as possible". Anglers at Boyd Lake had the lowest response and support among NE Reservoirs in terms of "Catching Trophy Walleye". Given that most Walleye exceeding 15 inches are harvested, reducing the bag and possession limit to 3 should increase the number of fish available to also accommodate anglers seeking to "catch as many Walleye as possible" while still allowing an appreciable number to be harvested. In addition to creel survey results, the goal for Walleye and Saugeye management at Boyd is to maintain an abundance of fish, with a target of at least 20 Walleye/Saugeye per net during annual Fall netting surveys. While this goal has been met 6 of the past 14 years (an average of 18.9 per net), CPW would like to see more fish per net. Reducing the bag and possession limit from five to three will help achieve the goal of 20 per net on a more consistent basis. <u>Eliminating one Walleye/Saugeye over 21 inches.</u> Over the last ten years of fish surveying at Boyd Lake, only 7% of Walleye/Saugeye exceeded 21 inches. This included a total of 1,350 Walleye and Saugeye, individually measured. For Walleye classified as trophy size (>21 inches), anglers caught only 12 fish total and harvested seven of those, over 7 months during 2025. This was not the desired outcome of the regulation installed more than 20 years ago. Trophy fishing for Walleye/Saugeye was not a primary component of a successful trip, as only 3% of respondents chose trophy Walleye as their top priority. CPW recommends eliminating the regulation that limits the harvest of Walleye over 21 inches to better align with management and angler goals that prioritize opportunity and quantity of fish.		

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*.**

Internal: Area 2 DWM, Area 2 AWM, Area 2 Assistant AWM, Boyd Lake Park Manager, NE Aquatic Biologists, Aquatic Research, Senior Aquatic Biologist.

External:

- Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026. There was very little opposition to this regulation change at the angler roundtable meeting, with 1 angler not supporting the elimination of the 21-inch rule but supporting the reduction of the bag and possession limits.
- In the 2025 angler creel survey, which interviewed 862 Boyd Lake anglers, only 3% indicated they preferred Walleye management for trophy fish over 21 inches.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. *Preferred Alternative*

Boyd Lake — Larimer

1. Min. size for largemouth and smallmouth bass is 15 inches.
2. Min. size for white bass is 10 inches.
3. Min. size for walleye and saugeye is 15 inches.
4. Bag and possession limit for walleye and saugeye is ~~5 3 fish in aggregate-~~
- ~~5. Only 1 walleye or saugeye in the aggregate longer than 21 inches may be taken per day.~~

2. Status Quo

Boyd Lake — Larimer

1. Min. size for largemouth and smallmouth bass is 15 inches.
2. Min. size for white bass is 10 inches.
3. Min. size for walleye and saugeye is 15 inches.
4. Bag and possession limit for walleye and saugeye is 5 fish.
5. Only 1 walleye or saugeye in the aggregate longer than 21 inches may be taken per day.

Issue Raised by:	Benjamin Swigle
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	Cassandra Penn, Clayton Brossart, Jason Duetsch, Lauren Turpin, Kyle Battige, Josh Nerhing.
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Aquatic Branch
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:	Should the property specific fishing regulations at Buttonrock Reservoir be updated to appropriately reflect existing current angler behavior and remove regulations that are not directed by CPW?
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):	
Fishing pressure is extremely low at Buttonrock Reservoir, suggesting that the two-trout bag limit is unwarranted and statewide bag and possession limits should apply. Buttonrock Reservoir is accessible via a two-mile hike into the Button Rock Preserve, which is seven miles Northeast of Lyons, CO (Figure 1). Current Angling Regulations: Button Rock (Ralph Price) Reservoir — Boulder 1. Artificial flies and lures only. 2. Bag and possession limit for trout is 2. 3. Fishing prohibited Nov. 1–April 30. A Colorado Parks & Wildlife fishing license is required to fish at the reservoir, but an additional special permit from the City of Longmont is also required, per City of Longmont ordinance. The ordinance limits angling to 600 individuals and a handful of day passes. This agreement was negotiated more than 30 years ago. Total special permits sold during 2025 were 364 annual (\$20 resident, \$30 non-resident) and 85 day-use permits (\$10 each). Next, angler creel surveys completed by CPW have found that angler harvest of trout has substantially declined over the past 2-3 decades. The reduced bag and possession limit at Buttonrock Reservoir will have little impact on the trout population and should be eliminated. Statewide general regulations should apply. Finally, the prohibition of fishing between November 1 and April 30 should be eliminated. This CPW regulation appears to be based on a City of Longmont ordinance that prohibits fishing from November 1 to April 30 each year, according to the City's website. It should be noted that a closure may exist between December 1 and March 30 to protect the winter range for elk, but the boundary does not include the shoreline of the reservoir visited by anglers. Fishing closures on the property do not fall under CPW jurisdiction and should be removed from the fishing regulations.	
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.	
Internal: Area 2 DWM (Joe Padia), Aquatic Biologist (Ben Swigle)	
External:	
• City of Longmont - no objections or comments. • Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026 - no objections or comments.	
ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):	
1. *Preferred Alternative*: Button Rock (Ralph Price) Reservoir — Boulder	
1. Artificial flies and lures only.	
2. Bag and possession limit for trout is 2.	
3. Fishing prohibited Nov. 1–April 30	
2. Status Quo	

Button Rock (Ralph Price) Reservoir — Boulder 1. Artificial flies and lures only. 2. Bag and possession limit for trout is 2. 3. Fishing prohibited Nov. 1–April 30	
Issue Raised by:	Benjamin Swigle (Area 2 Aquatic Biologist) Joe Padia (Area 2 DWM – Longmont North)
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	Joe Padilla, Peyton Fellfoelter, Jason Duetsch, Kyle Battige, Josh Nerhing
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Aquatic Branch
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES

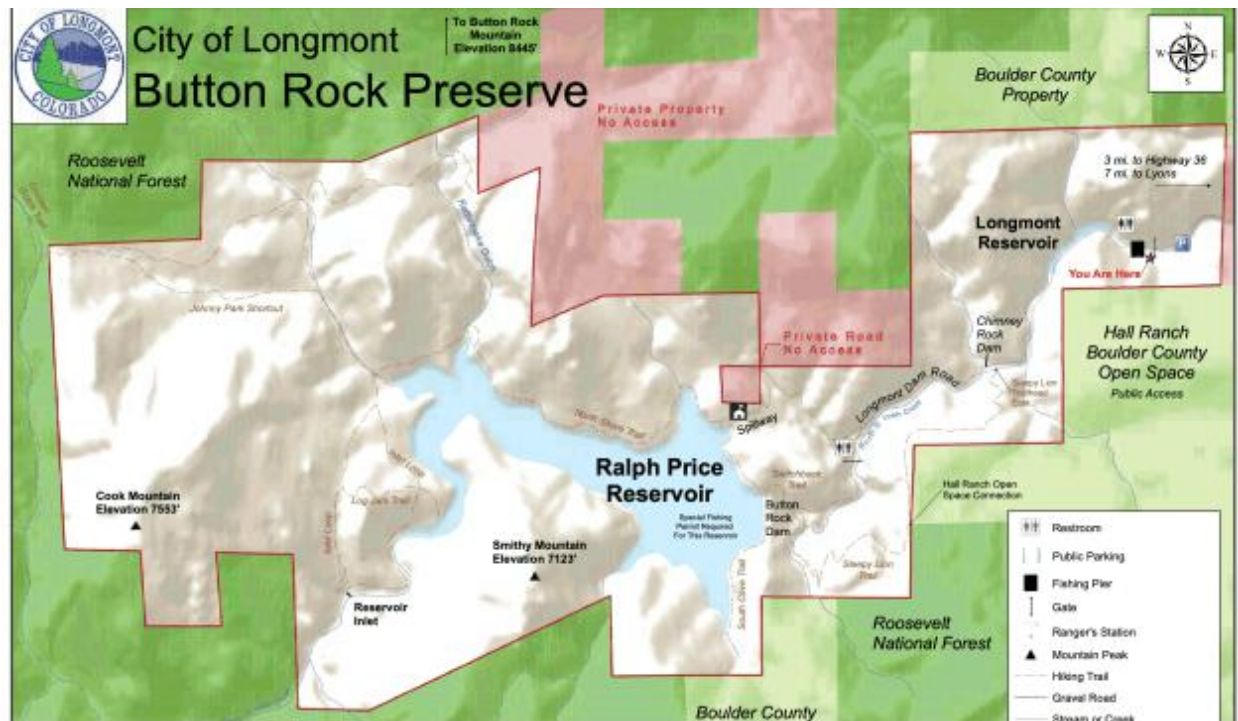


Figure 1. Map of Button Rock preserve and reservoir.

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:	Should property-specific regulations at Golden Park Ponds (Boulder County) be modified for largemouth and smallmouth bass and the use of artificial flies and lures?
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):	
Golden Ponds in Longmont is a group of 3 waters that offer angling for largemouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, bluegill, and hybrid striped bass, as well as seasonal rainbow trout (Figure 1). Currently, different fishing regulations apply to each pond. To reduce confusion, improve enforcement, and continue to offer quality bass angling while allowing anglers to use bait, CPW recommends applying a catch-and-release regulation for all largemouth and smallmouth bass across all ponds.	
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.	
Internal: Area 2 DWM (Joe Padia), Aquatic Biologist (Ben Swigle) External: • City of Longmont - 2 separate engagements, email notice, and in-person meeting; Longmont staff has no objections. • Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026. A single angler commented online about the quality of bass fishing, asking that the restrictive harvest be kept in place.	
ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):	
1. *Preferred Alternative*: Golden Park Ponds — Boulder County All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch. On Golden Park Ponds No. 1 and No. 2: 1. Artificial flies and lures only. 2. Scented flies or lures must be 1.5 inches or longer. 3. All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to water immediately upon catch. 4. Possession of largemouth or smallmouth bass while fishing Golden Park Ponds No. 1 or 2 is prohibited. On Golden Park Pond No. 3: 1. Bag, possession and min. size for largemouth and smallmouth bass is 1 in the aggregate, 15 inches long. 2. *Status Quo* Golden Park Ponds — Boulder On Golden Park Ponds No. 1 and No. 2: 1. Artificial flies and lures only. 2. Scented flies or lures must be 1.5 inches or longer. 3. All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch. 4. Possession of largemouth or smallmouth bass while fishing Golden Park Ponds No. 1 or 2 is prohibited. On Golden Park Pond No. 3: 1. Bag, possession and min. size for largemouth and smallmouth bass is 1 in the aggregate, 15 inches long.	
Issue Raised by:	Benjamin Swigle (Area 2 Aquatic Biologist) and

	Joe Padia (Area 2, DWM)
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	Joe Padilla, Jason Duetsch, Kyle Battige, Josh Nerhing
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	NE Aquatic Section
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES

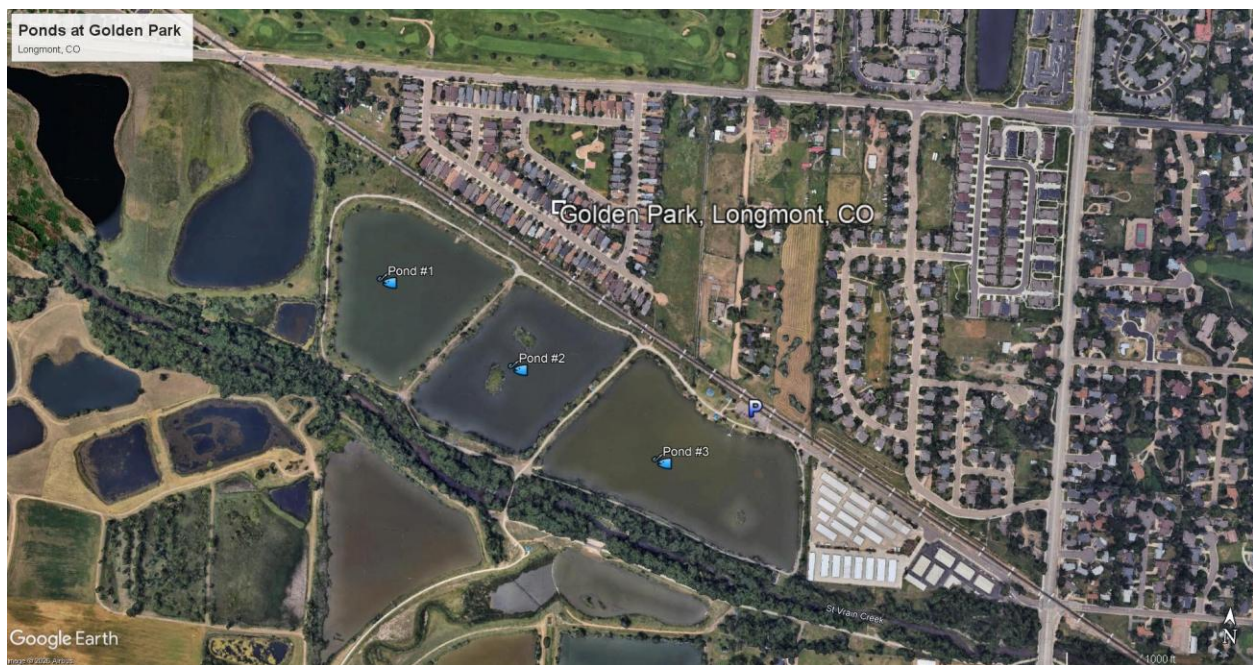


Figure 1. The ponds at Golden Park in Longmont.

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:

Should the property-specific regulations be updated at Lutz Reservoir to establish a 10" minimum size limit on crappie, establish catch and release fishing regulations for largemouth and smallmouth bass, and establish an artificial fly and lure only regulation?

DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

Lutz Reservoir is a 13-acre lake in Adams County, which was recently acquired, drained, and refilled by the City of Brighton. Historically, Lutz was a private waterbody which supported a robust warmwater fishery including crappie and largemouth bass. The City of Brighton is planning to open Lutz to public access, including fishing, and thus CPW has been participating in efforts to rebuild the fishery. During the period in which Lutz was drained for pumphouse development, the City of Brighton spearheaded habitat improvements to increase large woody structures available for fish in the reservoir. The City is also pursuing other opportunities to improve public angling access via a fishing pier. Lutz is expected to have high angling pressure due to its proximity to local housing developments and the relative scarcity of other angling opportunities nearby. It is slated to open to the public in 2026, and as such was stocked with bluegill in 2025, and is on the stocking schedule to receive black crappie and largemouth bass in 2026 and beyond.

The following regulations are proposed to help ensure optimal growth and long term angler satisfaction:

Lutz Reservoir – Adams

1. Artificial flies and lures only.
2. All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch.
3. Minimum size for crappie is 10 inches long.

Crappie typically reproduce at age 3 in Northeast Colorado. In other Northeast Colorado reservoirs, age 3 crappie average between 8 and 9 inches. To allow crappie to naturally reproduce at least one season prior to being potentially harvested, CPW recommends implementing a 10 inch minimum harvest restriction on crappie in Lutz Reservoir. Supplemental stocking of crappie may continue annually; however, natural reproduction is an exceptional management tool to continue to promote a positive angling experience.

To ensure growth rates of panfish remain optimal, predatory largemouth bass will begin being stocked in 2026. Continued predation by this species will allow the 10-inch minimum harvest restriction for crappie to function properly, as well as provide a quality fishing opportunity in its own right.

In other Front Range angling locations, sampling has shown that even with 15-inch largemouth bass minimums, low numbers of larger bass are present. Even a small number of anglers harvesting bass can have a large impact on size structure in the population, thus reducing the number of large fish very quickly. In order to establish and maintain a quality fishery in a location expected to receive high angling pressure, we recommend a catch and release regulation on largemouth and smallmouth bass to prevent overexploitation of the bass fishery.

Finally, an artificial fly and lure only regulation will reduce the potential for injuries to fish due to swallowed hooks. In a catch and release fishery with high angling pressure, reducing hooking mortalities will help to maintain the management goal of a quality fishery.

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

Internal: Area 5 DWM (Rebecca Parsons), Area 5 Aquatic Biologist (Aubrey Pelletier)

External:

- City of Brighton Open Space
- Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026 - there were no angler questions or comments raised with regards to this issue paper.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. *Preferred Alternative*:

Lutz Reservoir – Adams County

1. Artificial flies and lures only.
2. All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch.
3. The minimum size for crappie is 10 inches in length.

2. Status Quo - no change

Statewide regulations apply.

Issue Raised by:

Aquatic Biologist Aubrey Pelletier

**Author of the issue paper
(if different than person raising the
issue):**

CC:

**AWM Matt Martinez, Assistant AWM Casey Westbrook,
DWM Rebecca Parsons**

APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:

Matt Nicholl

REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?

YES

**ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES
AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?**

YES

REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION

NE Aquatic Section

RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?

YES

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:

Should restrictive harvest and tackle regulations be placed on Mill Creek to protect a core conservation population of cutthroat trout from overharvest?

DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

Mill Creek, a tributary to the Animas River, was fishless upstream of a natural waterfall barrier until San Juan lineage Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (CRCT) were stocked in 2022-2024 from the headwaters downstream to natural waterfall barriers adjacent to a private property boundary. This CRCT population is now self-sustaining and in need of regulatory protection. CPW recommends that fish in Mill Creek (San Juan County) be immediately returned to the water upon catch and to restrict fishing with artificial flies and lures only from the headwaters to the northern edge of the private property boundary (Mill Creek Subdivision).

Background

Cutthroat trout are highly susceptible to catch and harvest by angling compared to other trout species. Their higher catchability, slower growth, and later maturity make them extremely sensitive to overexploitation (Paul et al. 2003). Most conservation cutthroat trout streams in Colorado are protected by catch-and-release regulations because of the threat of overharvest of these highly vulnerable populations. Cutthroat trout streams are often simultaneously managed with terminal tackle restrictions (i.e., flies and lures only) aimed to reduce hooking mortality and increase post-release survival (Schisler and Bergersen 2011). Special regulations requiring catch-and-release and terminal tackle restrictions have demonstrated effectiveness in conserving trout populations throughout a wide range of fishing pressure situations and have been applied to native cutthroat trout populations throughout Colorado.

CRCT are comprised of three lineages. The San Juan lineage of CRCT is native to the San Juan Basin and was thought to be extinct until rediscovered in 2018 in six small streams. Conservation efforts are focused on replicating these small and vulnerable populations and protecting naturalized or aboriginal populations.

Andrew J. Paul, John R. Post, and Jim D. Stelfox (2003). Can anglers influence the abundance of native and nonnative salmonids in a stream from the Canadian Rocky Mountains? North American Journal of Fisheries Management, 23(1), 109-119.

George J. Schisler and Eric P. Bergersen (1996). Post-release hooking mortality of Rainbow Trout caught on scented artificial baits. North American Journal of Fisheries Management, 16(3), 570-578.

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*.**

Area Wildlife Manager, Assistant Area Wildlife Manager, District Wildlife Managers, and other Area 15 personnel have been informed and are supportive.

Feedback from the Five Rivers Chapter of Trout Unlimited meeting was positive and supportive of a catch-and-release regulation on Mill Creek. Approximately 50 anglers were in attendance.

San Juan Board of County Commissioners and some land owners along Mill Creek have expressed their support of instream flow rights for San Juan Lineage Cutthroat Trout.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. ***Preferred Alternative:**
MILL CREEK – LA PLATA COUNTY
 1. Artificial flies and lures only.
 2. All trout must be returned to water immediately.
- ~~4.2.~~ **Alternative 2:** Status Quo, No Change

Issue Raised by:	Kade Jackson, Area 15 Aquatic Biologist Jim White, SW Region Sr. Aquatic Biologist	
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):		
CC:	Adrian Archuleta, Josh Nehring, Matt Nicholl	
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl	
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	YES	
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES	
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	SW Aquatic Section	
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES	

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:

Should the property-specific regulations at Willow Bend Natural Area Ponds (Willow Bend, Kingfisher, and Turtle) be updated to implement special regulations for largemouth and smallmouth bass?

DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

The City of Loveland recently opened the Willow Bend Natural Area property, which includes three ponds open to recreational fishing (Figure 1). Fishery surveys on these ponds indicate the need to implement special regulations to protect fish resources as the ponds become more popular and additional angler-access amenities are constructed. To provide consistent, understandable, and enforceable regulations for this complex, it is critical to have identical regulations for all three ponds. To protect and enhance the existing largemouth bass populations, CPW recommends implementing the following regulations:

Willow Bend Natural Area Ponds – Larimer County

- a. All largemouth and smallmouth bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION.

The Property: Willow Bend Natural Area, Willow Bend Park, and the Universal Access Playground are the culmination of a 10-year visioning, engagement, and planning effort to provide a first-of-its-kind project in Loveland that combines a park and natural area facility with a 1.1-mile segment of the East Big Thompson Trail. The property opened to public access in September 2025. City regulations currently prohibit fishing in Blackbird Pond. Later, this property will connect with CPW's Simpson Ponds SWA.

The Ponds: Willow Bend, Kingfisher Pond, and Turtle Pond:

The site includes three ponds open to public fishing: Willow Bend (3.9 acres), Kingfisher (6.8 acres), and Turtle Pond (2.1 acres). A large fishing pier is located on Willow Bend Pond and was largely funded by CPW with a Fishing is Fun Grant (Figure 2). Currently, Kingfisher and Turtle Ponds have limited shoreline access, which will be improved during phase II of construction. The goal of this regulation is to limit bass harvest before increased fishing pressure occurs once final access upgrades are completed.

Electrofishing and net surveys completed in 2025 identified significant populations of largemouth bass in two of three ponds on the property. Kingfisher and Turtle Pond likely contain only three fish species: largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. To protect the existing fishery resources and ensure a perpetual fishing opportunity for bass, CPW recommends implementing catch-and-release regulations for largemouth and smallmouth bass. Although no smallmouth bass currently reside in the ponds, anglers often confuse these species.

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

Internal: Benjamin Swigle (Area 2 Aquatic Biologist); Clayton Brossart (Area 2 AAWM)

External:

- City of Loveland - approved
- Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026 - Attendees at the angler meeting had no comments on this proposed regulation.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):	
1. *Preferred Alternative*: Willow Bend Natural Area – Larimer County a. All Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass must be returned to the water immediately upon catch. 2. *Status Quo* Willow Bend Natural Area – Larimer County Statewide general regulations (Bass limit of 5).	
Issue Raised by:	Benjamin Swigle (Area 2 Aquatic Biologist) Clayton Brossart (Area 2 AAWM)
Author of the issue paper (if different from the person raising the issue):	
CC:	Jason Duetsch, Kyle Battige, Cassandra Penn, Josh Nehring
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	YES
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Aquatics Branch
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES



Figure 1. Map of Willow Bend Ponds Natural Area



Figure 2. Angler amenities currently available at Willow Bend Natural Area include a large fishing pier partially funded by CPW's Fishing Is Fun program.

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

August 21, 2026

ISSUE:

Should catch-and-release regulations be established for largemouth and smallmouth bass at the following Front Range locations: Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Riverbend Ponds, Dixon Reservoir, Prospect Ponds, and Kyger Reservoir?

DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

To maximize the recreational value of these Front Range fisheries and to create a unique fishing experience within a small subset of the public waters on the front range, CPW recommends instating catch-and-release regulations for largemouth and smallmouth bass at Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Riverbend Ponds, Dixon Reservoir, Prospect Ponds, and Kyger Reservoir. Transitioning from restrictive harvest to a catch and release, "zero-harvest" model will preserve population size structures, provide an opportunity for natural reproduction, provide quality opportunities for urban anglers, and prevent overexploitation in these relatively small, but high-traffic environments.

Despite these ponds having 15-inch largemouth and smallmouth bass size minimums, recent sampling has shown low numbers of larger bass. In these cases, nearby high-density residential areas and the sheer volume of angling pressure outweighs the biological reproductive rate of these small ecosystems. The current regulations fail to account for the 'suburban exploitation factor,' where even a small percentage of legal harvest quickly depletes the preferred-sized and trophy-sized largemouth and smallmouth bass. Consequently, these ponds often fall into a cycle of stunted populations or 'fished-out' conditions, leaving local anglers with high-access waters that do not provide quality largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing opportunities.

Neighborhood ponds are the frontline of modern angling. These small warmwater ponds provide immense recreational value, serving as essential, high-traffic, and close to home fishing opportunities for anglers.

Current regulations for Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Riverbend Ponds, Dixon Reservoir, and Prospect Ponds are a 15-inch minimum for largemouth and smallmouth bass. However, the newly opened Kyger Reservoir (2025) currently has no special regulations and operates under general statewide fishing regulations.

On the Front Range, the vast majority of small fisheries operate under general statewide fishing regulations with no special regulations. Data from recent passive creel surveys indicates that Front Range ponds, smaller than 15 acres are subject to significant angling pressure. While some high-density areas currently employ a 15-inch minimum size limit for largemouth and smallmouth bass, data indicates that these populations are still subject to exploitation that may hinder their biological potential. There is a clear management opportunity to differentiate these waters based on this intensity of use. By transitioning a subset of these ponds to catch-and-release for largemouth and smallmouth bass, CPW can attempt to provide anglers with rare "trophy" opportunities, leveraging regulatory oversight to protect the recreational value and longevity of these high-usage systems.

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

Internal: Area 4 staff, NE Aquatic Biologists

External:

- Fort Collins Natural Areas (supportive of proposed changes)
- Town of Windsor (supportive of proposed changes)

- Angler engagement meeting on May 4, 2026 - there were no angler questions or comments raised with regards to this issue paper.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. *Preferred Alternative*:

Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Riverbend Ponds, Dixon Reservoir, Prospect Ponds (#2 and #3), and Kyger Reservoir - Larimer County, Colorado

a. ~~Minimum size for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass is 15 inches long~~

a.b. All Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass must be returned to the water immediately.

2. Status Quo - No Change

Arapahoe Bend Natural Area, Riverbend Ponds, Dixon Reservoir, Prospect Ponds (#2 and #3), and Kyger Reservoir - Larimer County, Colorado

a. Minimum size for Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass is 15 inches long

Issue Raised by:	Aquatic Biologist Mark Sandersen
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	
CC:	AWM Jason Surface, Assistant AWM Brandon Muller, Assistant AWM Justin Foster, DWM Jackson Davis, DWM Patrick Prah, DWM Paisley Mather
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Matt Nicholl
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	YES
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	NE Aquatics
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	YES