

# Future Generations Act Report 2021

OCTOBER 31, 2021





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# Letter from the Director

The staff at Colorado Parks and Wildlife are devoted to maintaining the agency’s important mission, and exploring innovative ways to accomplish our strategic goals so our programs can evolve with the growing needs of our customers. For nearly 125 years staff have dedicated their careers to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of our natural resources.

As our programs grow, our staff plays an integral role in sharing their passion and expertise to secure an outdoor heritage and wildlife legacy in Colorado for years to come. Our forward-thinking Parks and Wildlife Commission also serves as an inspirational force that guides our agency on how we can elevate our programs, funding and community relationships to reduce barriers and increase the quality of outdoor experiences for all.

In close collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources, our staff explored new funding streams and methods to increase the agency’s relevance in the lives of all Coloradans. Several funding approaches have been deployed, and are awaiting implementation. The report explains the bills in more detail and how they will protect our natural resources in a significant way:

- Senate Bill 21-249, directs Colorado Parks and Wildlife to create an optional, lower-cost Keep Colorado Wild Annual Pass that will be added when Coloradans register their vehicles starting in 2023.
- House Bill 21-1326, transfers \$25 million from the general fund, for backcountry avalanche safety programs, a statewide wildlife action plan, wildlife and park conservation projects and creates an outdoor equity grant program.

Other successful implemented funding programs included revenue generated from our “round-up” donations feature in our IPAWS system, the Wildlife Sporting License Plate, donations submitted through Colorado’s state income tax return and the new Colorado State Wildlife Area Pass.

As you’ll read in the report that follows, we had several great successes this year to expand our programs. We saw increased participation in hunter education courses and outreach programs, increased access to hunting and fishing through trails and private landowner partnerships and incentive programs, increased fish production and the restoration of wetlands and riparian areas. CPW also continues to cultivate new partnerships, strengthen existing partnerships, expand our reach and implement sustainable funding mechanisms, which includes building partnerships for the protection of wildlife at crossings and migration corridors.

Our newest state park, Fishers Peak, currently offers hiker access to three trails and a scenic drive-in picnic area easily accessed from the parking lot. The park master planning process is in full swing, which includes striking the appropriate design and management balance that supports conservation and outdoor recreation. Colorado’s state parks continue to draw more visitors each year – in 2021, more than 19.3 million people visited our state parks. With many state parks experiencing record high attendance, it is important to maintain exceptional customer service to ensure a positive and memorable visitor experience. Unfortunately, unprecedented visitation has resulted in damage to natural resources, highlighting the need to educate crowds on the importance of recreating responsibly, continued investment from CPW in operations and maintenance, and where possible, expansion of the state park system to accommodate increasing public demand.

Our staff works tirelessly to ensure that the Colorado we all enjoy today will remain available and enjoyable for future generations to come. We thank you for your trust in Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and for allowing us to serve you and our state’s land, waters and wildlife. We are proud to present the 2021 Future Generations Act Report.



Dan Prenzl  
Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife



# Executive Summary

With the passage of the Hunting, Fishing, and Parks for Future Generations Act (Act) by the Colorado General Assembly in 2018 (Senate Bill 18-143), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) committed to fulfilling 10 goals by 2025:

1. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state;
2. Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;
3. Recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources;
4. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists;
5. Increasing and improving the state's big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists;
6. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue;
7. Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all of the division's 110 dams;
8. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state's 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old;
9. Reducing the division's known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks; and
10. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal "Endangered Species Act of 1973" (16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq.) by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts (Section 2 (1)).

Purposeful and ongoing work by CPW's dedicated staff, leadership, volunteers and partners to achieve these goals ensures that future generations have access to the quality hunting, fishing, and outdoor resources and recreational opportunities that Coloradans and visitors enjoy today. Most of the fee increases enabled by the legislation were initiated on January 1, 2019, with the majority of the financial benefits of the Act being realized starting in the fall of 2019. Significant progress has been made towards fulfilling the Act's ten goals and CPW is pleased to share our progress in this third annual report, covering the 2020-2021 Colorado state fiscal year.



Among the highlights, CPW is proud to draw attention to:

- Increased participation in hunter education courses and hunter outreach programs, despite restrictions put in place due to COVID-19.
- Significant changes to how state parks are funded through the passage of the Keep Colorado Wild Act.
- Expanded efforts to elevate the public's awareness of CPW and increasing stakeholder partnerships with CPW through financial support, volunteering, and stewarding Colorado's natural resources.
- Increased access to hunting and fishing through trails and private landowner partnerships and incentive programs.
- Important work to balance the demands of recreationists with the needs of wildlife habitat.
- Expansion of Cameo Shooting and Education Complex offerings and ability to host world-renowned events.
- Enhancing partnerships for the protection of wildlife at crossings and migration corridors.
- Opening of a new state park, Fishers Peak, and planning for Colorado's next state park.
- Reducing the maintenance and repair backlog for CPW's high risk dams.
- Continued work to modernize the fish hatchery system and increase fish production.
- Increased funding for state park infrastructure projects through the passage of Senate Bill 21-112.
- Meaningful work to protect and restore wetlands and riparian areas.

**Goal progress baselining and tracking.** Following the narrative description of the activities undertaken during FY 2021 for each of the ten goals, a Metric Summary Table provides a snapshot of specific data CPW tracks year-over-year to ground our work in measurable and reportable ways. The metric table includes baseline data which, in most cases, is the average of three fiscal years: FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2018. In certain cases, a new metric was added since the writing of the first Future Generations Act Report in FY 2019, or includes a data point not previously tracked; in these cases, the alternative baseline data year is stated. The summary tables contains data, when available, for FY 2019, FY 2020, and FY 2021 and presents increases or decreases from the baseline data for those reporting years to easily understand changes over time.



## Goal 1: Increasing the Number of Hunters and Anglers

Hunters and anglers are major contributors to wildlife and habitat conservation in Colorado. Each year, sportsmen and women fund about 75% of CPW's wildlife budget through the fees they pay for hunting and fishing licenses and excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment and boat fuel. Hunting and angling are also important aspects of Colorado's economy, heritage, and necessary tools used to manage and propagate fish and wildlife populations across the state. Each year, more than 1.1 million hunters and anglers contribute around \$3.2 billion of combined economic benefit to the state. Over the last decade, the number of fishing license holders has followed a generally increasing trend; meanwhile, hunting participation maintains a downward trend overall with an increasingly upward turn over the last several years. As of 2019 (the last year for which data on individual license holders has been reported<sup>1</sup>) there were 885,749 fishing license holders and 354,410 hunting license holders in Colorado. CPW continues its work to increase hunting and fishing participation through investments in outreach programs, education, and grants.

### Expanding hunter and angler education and outreach

CPW provides high-quality hunter education programming that acquaints new hunters to CPW, instills responsible hunting skills and ethics, and fulfills the statutory requirements for future hunters to successfully complete a mandated educational program. In FY 2021, CPW offered hunter education classes across the state in two formats: online with an in-person component and traditional classroom instruction.

In FY 2021, CPW held 194 in-person hunter education courses (94 internet conclusion courses, 86 standard courses, and 14 bowhunter courses), teaching over 1,887 students, while another 28,660 students were certified in the Hunter Education program through the online-only class offerings. In total, 30,547 students were certified in the Hunter Education Program in FY 2021. Over 100 Hunter Education volunteers assisted with in-person courses in FY 2021. As of July 1, 2021, CPW has transitioned back to in-person only hunter education courses. Based on demographic data collected via a voluntary survey of hunter education participants, it appears that more young adults took hunter education than in previous years, possibly as a result of the availability and convenience of the online course offerings. Hunter education staff is developing strategies to retain and engage these new hunters.

CPW's Hunter Outreach Program seeks to recruit, retain, and reactivate new, non-traditional, and lapsed

<sup>1</sup>This corresponds to USFWS Reporting Year 2021



Target practice during a CPW Hunter Education class



Event called "Fishing with the Cops," a partnership between the Denver Police Department, Denver Parks and Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and CPW. Held at Lake Mary at Rocky Mountain Arsenal.

hunters through clinics, seminars, advice, mentored hunts and online educational content. Hunter outreach programming is designed specifically to appeal to diverse interests and levels of ability. In FY 2021, CPW's Hunter Outreach Program reached over 14,400 participants across the state through more than 111 in person and virtual hunter outreach events. Although health guidelines limited the number of in-person events in FY 2021, the use of virtual events made it possible for more than three times the number of participants to engage in hunter outreach activities than in FY 2020. In addition, the program facilitated 51 mentored hunts, providing a unique hunting experience to 314 hunters.

Another hunter outreach effort is the Take a Friend Hunting Program, which provides incentives for current hunters to accompany a new or lapsed hunter in the field by documenting their experience through pictures and a brief essay. During FY 2021, there were 27 submittals, 17 of which received a prize. Opportunities to promote the program during in-person events were limited during FY 2021, but staff is gearing up for FY 2022 with a robust marketing plan that will include promoting the program through CPW's Instagram account, CPW's Insider email list, and during the Terry Wickstrom Outdoors radio broadcasts. Prizes are awarded through the program, including gift cards to outdoor retailers and hunting equipment and accessories.

CPW also offers a Novice Adult Outreach License (NAOL) that provides adults who are new to hunting an opportunity to participate in select mentored hunts. Participation in the NAOL program grew by over 230% from FY 2020, with 93 adult hunters taking advantage of the Outreach License offering in FY 2021. Similar opportunities are also provided to youth through the Youth Outreach License (YOL). In FY 2021, 100 youth hunters participated through the YOL. FY 2022 is also shaping up to be a successful year for the Outreach Licenses, as the program has already received more applicants than available hunts. As such, staff anticipates offering additional virtual programs to help bridge the gap and keep hunters engaged.

Interest in angling continues to grow in Colorado, as do tourist and resident populations looking to experience the state's exceptional angling opportunities. Anglers can choose to catch any of Colorado's 35 species of warm-water or cold-water fish from the 6,000 miles of streams and more than 1,300 lakes and reservoirs in the state. Among these, 11 streams and three lakes across the state are recognized as "Gold Medal" waters, a CPW designation recognizing fisheries that consistently produce a specific number of 14+ inch trout per acre. CPW's Angler Education Program promotes the state's aquatic resources and encourages people to responsibly enjoy the outdoors through fishing. Oftentimes angler outreach events are focused on first time anglers, families, or a new technique of fishing. New anglers learn not only how to fish, but how biologists and hatcheries work together to produce the fish we all love to catch. In FY 2021, COVID-19 restrictions drastically limited angler outreach programming; yet, despite health restrictions, CPW staff and 31 angler out-



reach volunteers held 57 fishing clinics or events around the state, reaching approximately 1,870 anglers. The Program also experienced a vacancy in the Statewide Angler Education Coordinator position for most of FY 2021, further limiting outreach efforts.

To wrap up FY 2021, Angler Education sponsored the angling programs of several partners including Outdoor Buddies, Latino Outdoors, Calwood Education Center, and Lincoln Hills Cares. Through the Program, CPW provided over \$15,000 in funding to these partners in their efforts to spread angling across the state. Planning for FY 2022 is underway and Angler Education is stepping up its promotion of the third-annual Take-A-Friend Fishing contest on social media and other outlets. In FY 2022 the contest will award more than \$18,000 worth of prizes to winners who submit a photograph and brief story about their time on the water; submissions are selected for a prize based on their ability to inspire.

To better align CPW's efforts with the actual experiences and preferences of resident and non-resident anglers in Colorado, a statewide [angler satisfaction survey](#) was conducted by CPW's Aquatic Section researchers during FY 2021. Overall, the study found that angler participation in Colorado continues to be high, with a dedicated customer base consisting of both resident and non-resident anglers. Angler satisfaction also remains high and fishery management goals in Colorado align well with angler responses to questions on preferences. The results of the study will ultimately be used to inform and contribute to future fisheries management plans for Colorado.

### Increasing grants for Fishing is Fun

The Fishing is Fun Program provides grants annually to local and county governments, park and recreation departments, water districts, and angling organizations for projects to improve angling in Colorado. Over the last 30 years, the Fishing is Fun Program has supported more than 380 angling improvement projects across the state, from small towns on the Eastern Plains and the West Slope to the major metropolitan areas along the Front Range. Fishing is Fun grant awards are matched by local funds, along with in-kind services, materials and volunteer time, often covering 40-50% of project costs.

In FY 2021, CPW awarded \$650,000 to eight Fishing is Fun projects that aim to revitalize aquatic ecosystems and improve angling opportunities across the state (Figure 1). CPW's funding for these projects was met with more than \$2.5 million in local matching funds for the eight projects. The program typically provides up to \$400,000 annually from the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program (SFR), funded with excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. This year the program awarded an additional \$250,000 from revenue generated through Colorado's wildlife sporting license plate. This year's projects will effectively create angler access to six new stream and lake fishing opportunities and make investments in maintaining angling quality at existing waters. Among the projects awarded funds in FY 2021 are:

- Ordway Reservoir: This project will make improvements to an existing fishery to address angler access challenges. Improvements include an ADA fishing pier, angler access points (to mitigate the

current steep banks) and deepening a portion of the reservoir to increase overwinter fish survival. The project is part of a larger dam repair project to fix safety issues that threaten the reservoir's future.

- Lake San Cristobal Peninsula: The project will develop angling facilities at a newly-acquired portion of a peninsula on the west side of Lake San Cristobal near Lake City. The lake currently has limited public access. The project will help fund new motorboat docks, a fishing pier, and canoe, kayak and belly boat access. Major partners include GOCO and Hinsdale County.
- Kyger Open Space Lake: A 90-acre lake on the northwest side of Windsor recently opened to the public. A survey conducted in association with development of a master plan for the site found non-motorized boat access and angling to be the top two priorities. Improvements include an ADA fishing pier, non-motorized boat access, five angling points, and habitat improvement.

### Developing the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex

The Cameo Shooting and Education Complex (CSEC) is a world-class educational and training facility and a top destination for people to participate in organized shooting competitions, sharpen their skills, or learn about the safe use of firearms. During FY 2021, CSEC hosted 264 competitions or events, 11,644 paid members of the public, and 4,900 event attendees. CSEC has experienced significant growth since its opening in August 2018, posting more than a 300% increase in FY 2021 in the number of events hosted and the number of paid public visitors. Furthermore, over 85% of attendees at major CSEC events are from outside of the region, bringing tremendous financial support to the state at large and the local community. The facility is years ahead of its projected milestones and a remarkable contributor to CPW's mission.

CSEC already provides some of Colorado's finest shooting and archery ranges, and work on the facility continues to progress. Phase 1-B of CSEC was completed and in full operation in the summer of 2020, with two sporting clays courses, a 5-stand facility, and a multi-purpose building. Phase 1-B is responsible in large part for the increase in both attendance and revenue to CSEC in FY 2021. Additional updates completed in FY 2021 include: construction of access roads to the long range rifle area, major improvements to the main facility access road, installation of drainage and stormwater management features, acquisition of a fleet of UTVs to support event and maintenance roles, construction of an additional eight competition and training shooting bays, expansion of the long range precision rifle facility with targets out to 2,000 yards and a large shelter facility, construction of several overflow parking areas, and the procurement and installation of shelter enclosures to allow year round weather protection in six of the event and training bays.

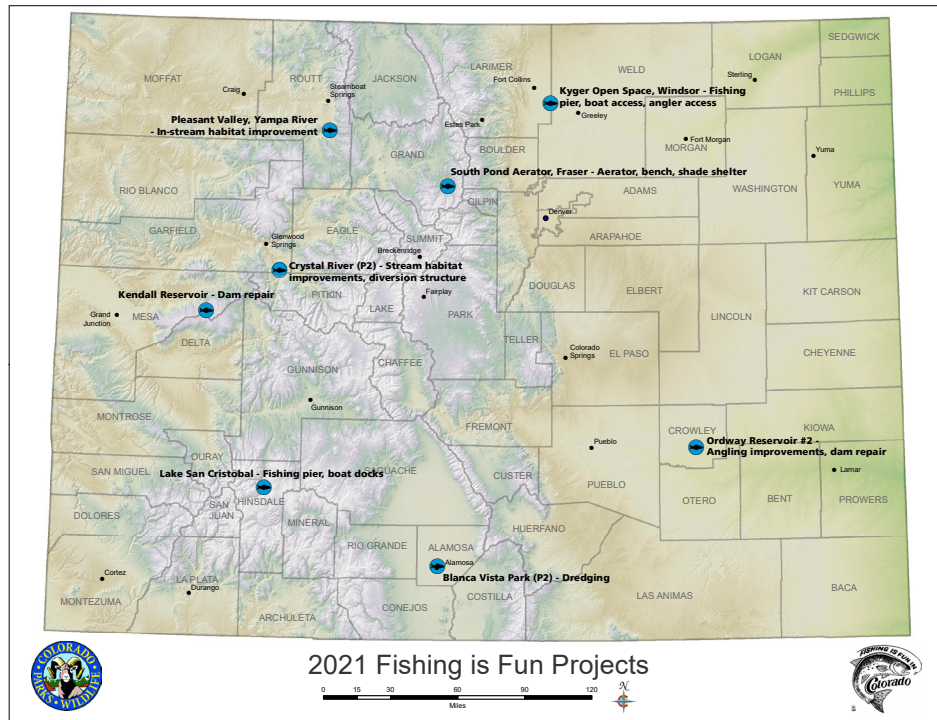


Figure 1



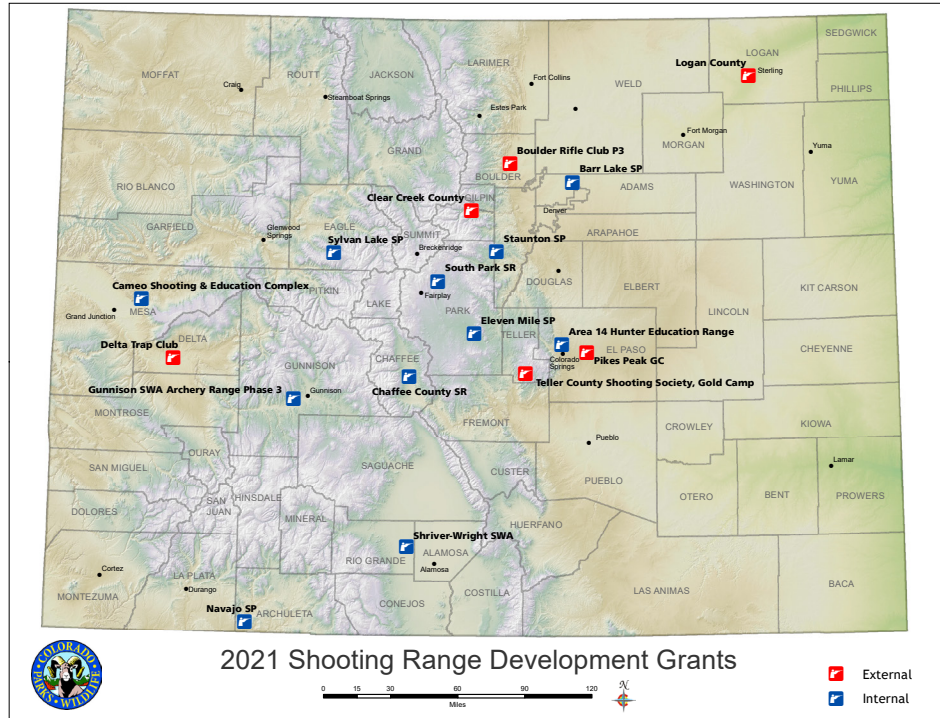
Rifle and ammunition at Cameo Shooting and Education Complex



Phase 2, which includes building a visitor and education center and indoor ranges, represents the largest major construction to take place at the facility and will provide hundreds of education related experiences at CSEC. This phase is currently in the design stage of development with a major design company handling all facets of the project. Construction on this phase is expected to begin as early as 2023. Several projects are slated for FY 2022 and include: completion of long range precision shooter shelter, installation of power and WI-FI systems in eight new bays, completion of design and planning for the phase-2 project, development of a law enforcement training area on the property, construction of an Olympic Field Archery facility, and construction of additional parking areas for overflow at major events at the facility. CSEC will also receive funds from the passage of Senate Bill 21-112, which added \$20 million of General Fund dollars to support parks infrastructure projects that will be implemented beginning in FY 2022. Funding committed to this project will add eight additional shooting bays and associated shade shelters, to the existing twelve bays. By increasing the number of bays available for hosting competitions, Cameo Shooting and Education Center will be able to host additional national events.

### Expanding grants for shooting ranges

CPW's Shooting Range Development Grant (SRDG) Program focuses on establishing new shooting ranges and expanding or improving existing ranges across Colorado by providing matching grants to towns, counties, outdoor recreation organizations, shooting clubs, and others. The SRDG program is one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation. Since 2010, the SRDG has awarded more than \$6.3 million in funding toward 75 shooting and archery projects across Colorado. In FY 2021, CPW awarded more than \$1,538,700 to six shooting ranges across the state and CPW's contributions were met with over \$750,000 in local matching funds.



**Figure 2: shows the location of the FY 2021 funded Shooting Range Development Grant projects and CPW range projects.**

Colorado's growing population increases the demand for safe, accessible ranges and the SRDG program is a critical component of meeting that demand. A couple of noteworthy SRDG projects funded in FY 2021 include:

- Clear Creek County Shooting Range: The project will convert a private shooting club range west of Idaho Springs into a public range. This marks a major step toward allowing shooting closures on the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest to address public safety conflicts. Once completed, the range will host a 12-lane 100 yard range, a 24-lane 50 yard range, and a 9-lane 25 yard range.
- Boulder Rifle Club: Located four miles north of Boulder, the proposed range will be a public range adjacent to the existing private club range. As with the Clear Creek range, the project will allow shooting closures on Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest lands in the county, addressing growing user conflicts. Phase 1 of the range construction funded through the SRDG grant includes ten lanes for each of the 100 yard, 50 yard, and 25 yard ranges. Future phases will include 200 and 300 yard ranges and a 50 yard indoor range.

CPW also administers the Small Shooting Range Grant (SSRG) Program, which offers grants of up to \$5,000 per project for improvements at Colorado shooting ranges that allow hunter education courses, public sight-in days, and youth and family involvement in the shooting sports. The program enhances safety and increases public access to shooting ranges through smaller capital improvements, upgrades, replacement, and repair of existing shooting range features. CPW annually selects seven to twelve projects to be funded. In FY 2021, CPW awarded seven grants totaling \$49,880 to ranges across the state. SSRG program projects funded in FY 2021 include:

- Construction of a shelter for shooters at Jackson County Shooting Range (Walden)
- Replacement and maintenance of backstop blocks at Gunnison Sportsman's Don Smillion Indoor Range (Gunnison)
- Replacement of archery targets and backstops at Dennis Hansen Range at Lon Hagler (Loveland)
- Replacement of 3D archery targets at Grand County Archers Association – Mary Jane (Winter Park)
- Installation of picnic tables at Logan County Shooting Sports Complex (Sterling)
- Purchase of 3D target for Red Feather Bowmen Archery Range (Paonia)
- Repair, replacement, and maintenance of bag target stands and 3D targets at Summit County Archery Range (Dillon)

CPW operates ranges on some state wildlife area (SWA) and state park properties. In FY 2021, CPW allocated over \$939,000 toward 16 archery and shooting range projects on CPW properties across the state. Among the improvements funded in FY 2021 are:

- Plateau Creek SWA: Construction of a vault toilet to accommodate increased use from the public and 4-H clubs.
- Cherry Creek State Park: Funding to hire a consultant to complete the first step in evaluating Cherry Creek State Park's future shooting recreation plan.
- West Rifle Creek SWA: Range improvements will include enhancement of the entrance road, parking lot and shooting lanes to allow for a better shooting experience. The property also requires repair to the ditch and construction of a fence along the ditch to prevent people from crossing the ditch into the range.
- Byers Canyon Shooting Range: This project will extend 16 berms at the shooting range and level the shooting lanes.
- Barr Lake State Park: Construction of an elevated archery platform with bench, bow hangers, entrance trail, and additional seating. The experience will include two new 3-D targets, strategically placed to simulate real-life hunting situations.
- Northwest Region: Construction of a new portable shooting range trailer. The trailer will be a professionally manufactured shooting trap and funnel, installed in a weather tight, fully-enclosed trailer that is safe for the shooter and bystanders, and that can be transported on the road.
- Hunter Education Building Range: This range is located at 6060 Broadway near Denver. The project will replace the roofs on the building which have multiple leaks.



**Table 1. Goal 1 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 1	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
I. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state	Number of fishing license holders reported to USFWS	3-year average of FWS Reporting Year 2017/18/19	871,000	945,000	8%	838,966	-4%	885,749	2%
	Number of hunting license holders reported to USFWS	3-year average of FWS Reporting Year 2017/18/19	294,000	295,000	0%	296,609	1%	354,410	21%
	Participants in Hunter Outreach activities	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	4,500	3,900	-13%	3,397	-25%	14,472	222%
	Participants in Angler Outreach activities	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	7,500	10,000	33%	9,000	20%	1,870	-75%
	Number of Angler Outreach clinics	FY19	150	150	N/A	120	-20%	57	-62%
	Number of Hunter Outreach events	FY19	240	240	N/A	81	-66%	111	-54%
	Number of in-person Hunter Education courses offered	FY20	403	N/A	N/A	403	N/A	194	-52%
	Participants in Hunter Education courses (in-person and online-only)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	16,800	17,200	2%	17,175	2%	30,547	82%
	Number of mentored hunts (CPW and Hunt Master Program)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	100	141	41%	101	1%	51	-49%
	Number of hunters in mentored hunts	FY20	444	N/A	N/A	444	N/A	314	-29%
	Amount awarded for Fishing is Fun grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$400,000	\$755,000	89%	\$650,000	63%	\$650,000	63%
	Number of Fishing is Fun grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	11	38%	8	0%	8	0%
	Number of paid public visitors to CSEC	FY19	2,814	2,814	N/A	6,578	134%	11,644	314%
	Number of event attendees at CSEC	FY19	1,693	1,693	N/A	2,639	56%	4,900	189%
	Number of competitions held at CSEC	FY19	61	61	N/A	175	187%	264	333%
	Amount awarded for large shooting range grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$545,000	\$725,000	33%	\$725,000	33%	\$1,538,733	182%
	Number of large shooting range grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	8	0%	9	13%	6	-25%
	Amount awarded for small shooting range grants	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$47,000	\$55,000	17%	\$60,565	29%	\$49,880	6%
	Number of small shooting range grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	8	8	0%	9	13%	7	-13%
	Number of range projects grants on CPW properties	FY19	13	13	N/A	13	0%	16	23%
Amount awarded for range projects on CPW properties	FY18	\$477,000	\$1,100,000	131%	\$1,090,400	129%	\$939,020	97%	

**Goal 2: Partnering with Stakeholders to Engage All Outdoor Recreationists**

Developing and sustaining partnerships with outdoor recreationists as well as increasing CPW’s relevance in the lives of all Coloradans helps to ensure that sufficient resources are available to fulfill our mission. CPW continues to cultivate new partnerships, strengthen existing partnerships, expand our reach, and explore and implement sustainable funding mechanisms.

**Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders**

CPW’s Partners Program is an outward-facing effort that brings together diverse interests from across the state, representing a wide spectrum of the outdoors in support of the agency’s mission to manage wildlife, provide a quality state parks system, and inspire people to be engaged stewards of Colorado’s natural resources. The Partners Program helps to foster alignment, awareness and trust among CPW and our many partners through three key initiatives: the Partners in the Outdoors Conference, the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) and the Colorado Outdoor Principles, as well as through extensive resource sharing and network building.

Through the annual Partners in the Outdoors Conference, CPW facilitates a signature platform for organizations to collaborate around the shared vision of advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. Along with the advice of the conference planning committee made up of 17 partner organizations, CPW staff determined that it would be best to host a scaled back virtual Partners in the Outdoors Conference during FY 2021 to address zoom fatigue and a saturated market of webinars in the outdoor conservation/recreation landscape that occurred during 2020. Accordingly, the conference agenda included a total of nine virtual events, each of which were timely and relevant to the outdoor and natural resource management industries in Colorado. The sessions included two opening keynote webinars, six CPW and partner-led sessions and a special closing keynote discussion with Governor Jared Polis and the Directors of both the Department of Natural Resources and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Total attendance for the live conference sessions was 947 individuals representing 380 partner organizations. Recordings from these virtual sessions are posted on CPW’s conference web page and will continue to be available for viewing. As of this writing, the conference session recordings have been viewed over 1,000 times. The conference was supported by eleven sponsoring organizations. In conjunction with the conference, CPW funds the Partners in the Outdoors Grant Program to support the agency’s longstanding goal of advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. Because of the cost savings realized from holding a virtual conference, CPW was able to double the size of the Partners in the Outdoors Grant Program in FY 2021, awarding 24 partner organizations a total of \$219,856 to assist work that advances the priority areas identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. A [post-conference report](#) of the FY 2021 Partners in the Outdoors Conference is available on the CPW website.

The Colorado Outdoor Partnership (CO-OP) is a collaboration of organizations representing the intersection





of conservation and outdoor recreation and interests related to land, water, and wildlife in Colorado. CO-OP member organizations represent several sectors, including: outdoor recreation, conservation, hunters and anglers, stewardship, agriculture and ranching, and government. The CO-OP works to ensure that Colorado's private and public lands and waters remain healthy to support diverse wildlife, outdoor recreation, agricultural heritage, and economic well-being for future generations. During FY 2021, CPW and DNR collaborated with the CO-OP to launch the Regional Partnerships Initiative as designated by the Governor's Executive Order B 2020 008. This statewide initiative encourages locally driven, collaborative solutions to support its mission of seeking solutions for conserving Colorado's natural resources while meeting the growing demand for outdoor recreation. Also during FY 2021, eight new members were added to the CO-OP to expand and balance representation on the CO-OP.

As part of this initiative, CPW partnered with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) to fund new and existing coalitions working to ensure that Colorado's land, water, and wildlife thrive while also providing for equitable access to quality outdoor recreation experiences. The following seven coalitions were awarded \$610,000 to advance the effort: Envision Recreation in Balance Partnerships, Metro Denver Nature Alliance, NoCo PLACES 2050, Ouray Recreation and Conservation Alliance, Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Routt Recreation Roundtable, and San Luis Valley Great Outdoors. Moving forward into FY 2022, CPW and the CO-OP will continue to expand the Regional Partnerships Initiative and aim to announce a second round of funding to support additional coalitions that meet the criteria under the state-level vision and are working to advance the development of local and regional planning elements to inform a statewide conservation and recreation plan.

Also related to CPW's work surrounding partnerships, during FY 2021, CPW embarked on two new partnerships in support of the agency's equity, diversity and inclusion goals. The first is a partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) on a multi-year effort to help explore ways to better recruit, retain, and reactivate Latino hunters. A two-part stakeholder roundtable of Latino hunters and conservationists was hosted with the goal of better understanding how state fish and game agencies can more effectively engage with this growing community. The Latino Hunter Roundtable provided CPW with some initial recommendations:

- Ensure that the agency has greater transparency surrounding the license draw process, why regulations exist, and how the collection of demographic data will assist the agency in designing inclusive engagement programs.
- Continue the translation of hunting regulations and its website into various languages, as they have done with the fishing regulations. Translation of pertinent information also communicates to the community an openness that they are welcome to participate in that space.
- Celebrate and share stories of Latino hunters, as well as other demographics, so there is a larger awareness of participation and knowledge of hunting conservation in diverse communities.

Additional recommendations from the Roundtable are being assembled into a toolkit that can be used by CPW and other state wildlife agencies.

Another exciting new partnership involves the American Indian Academy of Denver (AIAD). This partnership connects local Indigenous middle school students with education staff from four Colorado state parks to research and write an accurate account of the presence of Indigenous tribes on those lands. The participating state parks include: Roxborough, Mueller, Navajo and Vega.

Lastly, as part of CPW's Partners Program, 86 organizations have now signed on as an advocate for Colorado's Outdoor Principles showing a robust commitment to advancing and balancing outdoor recreation and conservation in Colorado. This is nearly double the number of organizations that had committed to Colorado's Outdoor Principles in the prior year.

#### **Growing new sources of funding**

During FY 2021, CPW and the Department of Natural Resources continued to explore sustainable funding streams and methods to increase the agency's relevance in the lives of all Coloradans. Several funding approaches have been deployed, or are awaiting implementation, that will help to ensure that Colorado's wildlife and outdoor recreation resources and heritage exist for generations to come.

A significant change to the way Colorado's state parks are funded took the form of Senate Bill 21-249, the Keep Colorado Wild Pass Act, during the 2021 state legislative session. The bill was approved by the Colorado General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Polis on June 21, 2021. Engagement of key stakeholders also drove support for adoption of legislation to create a Keep Colorado Wild (KCW) pass. The KCW pass will be available (starting in 2023) to Coloradans when they register their vehicles and will be an annual pass that grants access to Colorado state parks. Vehicle owners will be required to opt-out if they do not want to purchase the pass. CPW anticipates that this new park pass mechanism will increase park pass sales and provide a more stable funding stream for CPW. In FY 2022, CPW will design outreach and marketing to encourage Coloradans to purchase the KCW pass and draw upon the "sustaining Colorado for future generations" messaging that surfaced as a top strategy in the engagement plan developed in consultation with the marketing firm Cactus in FY 2020.

CPW is taking steps to increase donations, sponsorships, and other voluntary contributions. In early 2020, CPW added a "round-up" functionality to its IPAWS sales system, which allows customers to easily add the remaining change from the next full dollar increment as a donation to purchases made through CPW's online shop. In FY 2021, CPW raised \$335,182 in round-up donations as compared to \$55,403 in FY 2020. In addition, the average amount of round-up donation per week increased significantly in FY 2021 to \$6,446 per week, compared to FY 2020 when the average weekly total was just \$2,916. Round-up donations constituted 92% of all online donations received by CPW in FY 2021. The "donate" button on CPW's website contributed another \$31,577 in online donations during FY 2021. Just before the end of FY 2020, CPW updated all state park self-service payment kiosks with the ability to add donations to payments. In FY 2021, a little over \$2,000 was received through this payment route. Regular donations, those not processed online, brought in \$399,749 in FY 2021, about a 5% increase from the baseline.

Additional voluntary contributions include those made to the "non-game and endangered wildlife cash fund," which receives donations to CPW as a part of Colorado's state income tax return. Known as the income tax checkoff, this program provides Coloradans an opportunity to make an investment in Colorado's wildlife and habitats. CPW's "[Check it off for Wildlife](#)" campaign actively promotes the opportunity throughout the tax season on CPW's website home page and through other methods including social media, press releases, ENewsletters, the blog, the Colorado Outdoors magazine, as well as through outreach by partner organizations. Contributions from the income tax checkoff totaled \$240,636 in FY 2021, an increase of about 47% over the amount received in FY 2020. This funding is very important to Colorado's threatened and en-





dangered species and non-game conservation efforts.

Other projects are also underway that will increase the visibility of CPW’s sponsorship and donation opportunities. CPW is implementing a new giving platform that will support crowdfunding and event fundraising, in addition to serving as a donor database. While the software is still new, CPW will be able to grow individual donations and collect donor information in one central place. Further, CPW launched a new donation webpage that includes a google form where donors can notify CPW of planned gifts. This will be promoted as CPW continues to grow the philanthropy program and will serve as a tool to help with identifying prospects and begin stewarding legacy donors.

In FY 2021, revenue received from the issuance and renewals of the Wildlife Sporting License Plate, a specialty license plate that allows vehicle owners to show their support for hunting, fishing, and wildlife recreation, totaled \$498,119, an increase of nearly 20% from the prior year. Revenue generated from license plate sales and renewals is used to fund grants through the Fishing is Fun Program and the Shooting Range Development Grant Program. Some of the projects funded with revenue from the Wildlife Sporting License Plate in FY 2021 include:

- Blanca Vista Pond (Alamosa): Angling improvements on a 24-acre pond just north of Alamosa that emphasizes youth and family fishing opportunities. This project includes fishing jetties, aquatic habitat improvements, and shoreline stabilization. This project was funded with \$67,000 in license plate revenues and \$22,333 in local matching funds.
- Stone Creek (Eagle-Vail): This project includes the removal of two man-made barriers, construction of a low-flow channel, and bankside stabilization on Stone Creek in the town of Eagle-Vail. The project improved angling and aquatic habitat conditions on 1,300 linear feet of the creek. This project was funded with \$25,000 in license plate revenue and \$120,000 in local match.
- Delta Trap Club (Delta): Construction of a new Helice range. Helice is a form of trap shooting that uses a modified bird that flies erratically, more closely mimicking live birds in the wild. The range is the first of its kind in western Colorado. The range allows public access and hosts many youth and educational events throughout the year. This project was funded with \$37,100 in license plate revenues, matched by \$12,367 in club funds and volunteer labor.
- Pikes Peak Gun Club (Colorado Springs): Upgrades to existing trap and skeet ranges, redevelopment of bunker trap range, and entrance road repair and erosion control. Pikes Peak Gun Club has extensive public access and hosts many youth education and training programs and competitions. This project was funded with \$144,000 in license plate revenue and \$48,000 in club funds and volunteer labor.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) is also involved in identifying and strengthening funding sources for CPW. In March 2021, the Parks and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to approve a new Colorado State Wildlife Area Pass as an option to access state wildlife areas (SWAs). Colorado’s SWAs primarily exist to restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat. These properties were also acquired to provide wildlife recreation for hunters and anglers, but are also used in some cases for other types of compatible recreation. The SWA pass helps ensure that all visitors to these properties are contributing to their management and maintenance. The pass was created in collaboration with a working group comprised of outdoor recreationists from around Colorado to determine what the new pass would look like.

**Table 2. Goal 2 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 2	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
II. Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;	Number of Partners in the Outdoors Conference Participants	FY18	518	575	11%	742	43%	947	83%
	Number of organizations represented by Partners in the Outdoors Conference participants	FY18	234	255	9%	375	60%	380	62%
	Amount of revenue received from "nongame and endangered wildlife cash fund" donations	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$199,918	\$195,974	-2%	\$162,926	-19%	\$240,636	20%
	Amount of revenue received from round-up donations	FY20	\$55,403	N/A	N/A	\$55,403	N/A	\$335,182	505%
	Amount of revenue received from regular donations (not online)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$382,000	\$254,880	-33%	\$4,568,312	1096%	\$399,749	5%
	Revenue received from the issuance and renewals of the Wildlife Sporting License Plate	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$106,570	\$341,670	221%	\$420,839	295%	\$498,119	367%

### Goal 3: Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Employees

Managing Colorado’s wildlife and parks, along with the state’s outdoor recreational, terrestrial, and aquatic resources, requires the dedication of thousands of hard working staff, as well as volunteers who donate their time. Recruiting and retaining quality employees from diverse backgrounds is essential to achieving CPW’s mission and strategic goals. DNR’s commitment to its employees is reflected in its 7.1% turnover rate (FY 2021), one of the lowest employee turnover rates among State agencies.

#### Recruiting new employees

CPW is constantly looking at ways to improve its efforts around the recruitment of quality employees. During FY 2021, CPW’s Organizational Development Section continued refining the channels to identify and engage prospective employees. CPW’s recruitment efforts during the past year were focused on expanding the agency’s outreach and exploring different recruitment methods. As part of these efforts, the Section represented CPW at eight virtual career fairs targeting a variety of audiences including underrepresented students, veterans, and students in Park Ranger-specific programs.

CPW’s partnership with Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) saw participation from over 280 young adults, who contributed 37 weeks of work at 17 state parks, 13 state wildlife areas (SWAs), and two state fish hatcheries. Participants spent more than 885 hours engaging in CPW career exploration and learning about the agency. For FY 2022, CPW will again partner with CYCA awarding 48 weeks of work at 21 state parks, 16 SWAs, and two state fish hatcheries.

In its fourth year of partnership with CPW, Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK), a program serving underserved, culturally diverse youth in Arapahoe, Adams, and Denver Counties, sent their Urban Rangers to work side-by-side with CPW staff, where they gained natural resource professional development experience by learning about park management and visitor engagement. The youth spent time at Barr Lake State Park and Golden Gate Canyon State Park and visited a fish hatchery. A Certified Interpretive Guide training helped the Urban Ranger crew learn how park staff design and create engaging environmental education programs. The Urban Rangers also worked with park resource technicians on projects demonstrating how CPW balances recreation and conservation. The youth had the opportunity to meet and network with professionals in various careers within CPW, an experience that deepened their understanding and appreciation for CPW and the possible career opportunities ahead of them.

Additionally, the Section continues to identify ways to broaden and diversify its paid internship programs as a means to recruit future employees. Modifications to the Youth Internship Program (YIP) are underway that will provide more pathways to employment within natural resource careers for young adults. CPW staff are currently exploring the possibility of a YIP pilot program with partner organizations including CYCA and Hispanic Access Foundation.



Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) Urban Rangers working on a project at Golden Gate Canyon State Park.



CPW has been working to approve a Career and Technology Education (CTE) certificate that will provide high school students with a better understanding of possible career options in natural resources and offer them a head start on developing the knowledge and skills needed for these careers. This certificate program is authorized through the Colorado Department of Education and it is CPW's goal to help build more robust programs with the Junior College system and college systems to further the agency's future recruitment goals. On September 16, 2020, CPW Director Dan Prenzlöw signed an endorsement letter for the Ducks Unlimited Ecology Conservation and Management Certification that can be used with high school CTE programming across the state. While the impact of COVID with local school districts led to slow progress on the planning stages of this initiative, school districts were able to reengage with CPW in the spring and positive momentum has been made with three school districts along the Front Range that are in the beginning stages of offering a natural resources pathway in their schools.

The CPW Recruitment and Retention Team reconvened in FY 2021 and drafted an action plan with goals into FY 2022 that focuses on job fairs, recruiting new staff through alternative pipelines, and the agency's efforts to retain staff once hired. During the past year, the team reviewed the DNR exit surveys and identified specific areas to look at in greater detail within CPW. The team is currently conducting a thorough review of applicant and hiring data for each job classification and will compile a report to inform ongoing recruitment practices. Phase two of the project will include reviewing employment retention in each job classification.

Changes made in FY 2020 to open more opportunities for recruitment of talented employees, including broadening minimum qualifications and degree requirements, had a noticeable impact on the number of applications received for important positions in FY 2021. Specific to the Park Manager role, CPW expanded the types of degrees that will be accepted for the position. During FY 2021, CPW continued to see an increase in the number of qualified applicants for the Park Manager position, up 144% from the baseline, much of which is likely attributed to the new qualification standards. CPW also saw an increase in the number of qualified applicants for the District Wildlife Manager position, another challenging position to fill, of about 27% over the baseline.

#### Retaining existing employees

CPW's employees are the agency's most important assets. Retaining employees from diverse backgrounds within CPW's workforce is imperative to remaining relevant to all Coloradans and a specific area of focus under DNR's Wildly Important Goal on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and CPW's Strategic Plan.

During FY 2021, CPW worked with DNR to roll out mandatory EDI training to all staff. As of June 30, 2021 ninety-seven percent of DNR's staff had completed the four online EDI modules. Many staff have also taken other types of EDI training, including an ability awareness training to learn more about how to support and interact with individuals with disabilities. Presenters on EDI topics have been invited to hold workshops for various levels of supervisors and teams throughout the agency.

CPW continues to weave EDI into everything we do as an agency and is a top priority both internally and externally. A number of CPW staff are participants on DNR working groups that are focused on EDI, specifically on the Communications, Hiring and Retention, and Community Engagement working groups. These three teams meet consistently and have specific goals driven by a work plan that is approved by the DNR EDI Steering Committee. CPW also participates in a larger group called NoCo PLACES. NoCo PLACES is a working group of the many state, local, and federal agencies that work in Northern Colorado and have a specific group focused on EDI efforts. The group examines the areas where efforts may overlap and how we can be better partners with the communities we serve. Honing and perfecting CPW's staff and leaderships' skills to create a culture where employees feel welcomed, respected, valued and heard results in the agency's ability to retain employees in the long term, while also raising awareness of behaviors and practices that may need to be adjusted to make CPW a more equitable and inclusive workplace.

**"Equity is about creating systems where everyone can thrive.**

**Diversity includes all of us, it is about honoring the richness of differences and the unique strengths we bring.**

**Inclusion is about removing barriers to leverage our unique abilities, talents, and strengths and to create a workplace environment where everyone feels welcome."**

**- Dan Gibbs, DNR Director**

CPW continues to improve internal communications. Through the efforts of the Communications Working Group, in which CPW staff participate, a department-wide audit of internal communications was conducted. As a result, agency intranet pages will be updated to include an EDI component. Further, the Communications Working Group is studying DNR's history through the lens of EDI to examine how past policies, practices, and programs have shaped the DNR of today and to inform the DNR of tomorrow.

CPW takes seriously the importance of investing in professional development and training for its employees as a way to retain and strengthen the workforce. CPW's Organizational Development Section works hard to make training and professional development available to all CPW staff members from investments in the Daniels Leadership Program in partnership with the University of Denver to staff in-service opportunities, this team dedicates their time to ensuring CPW staff have the skillsets they need and want to succeed in their jobs. Unfortunately, the Daniels Leadership Program was cancelled during FY 2021 due to COVID restrictions; however, the next cohort is scheduled to move forward with in-person training starting in the spring of 2022. In conjunction with the Daniels Leadership Program, CPW is developing a series of monthly programs specifically for past graduates to keep the learning and relationship moving forward. CPW intends to involve past graduates in helping to design and implement a mentorship program that will provide mentorship training and ideas for staff who are interested in stepping into a mentor roll as a resource for other staff. The goal with this mentorship program is to eventually have mentors in place for each job class represented, serving as a resource for all current and new employees.

Managers and Leadership Team members regularly send staff to conferences, workshops, and trainings to expand understanding and the use of best practices. CPW also works with experts in many fields to ensure that agency staff have access to job related and industry focused opportunities, including working alongside their counterparts in other states. Through this collaborative approach, CPW stays on top of evolving trends in natural resource and recreation management. Even though training opportunities were limited by COVID restrictions during FY 2021, the Organizational Development Section continued to support employee development throughout the year. The Section brought in training on project management and even increased the training by an extra day because so many staff were interested in participating. CPW also continued to contribute to the cost of registration for employees who enroll in training opportunities and to promote various training programs offered by DNR HR and the State's Center for Organizational Effectiveness. Finally, the Section began a thorough review of CPW's applicant and hiring data for each job classification that will inform employee retention in each job classification.

#### Increasing volunteer resources

Volunteerism is a cost-effective way to help manage Colorado's natural resources while cultivating stewardship and building stronger connections between CPW and local communities. CPW's volunteers are critical to achieving the agency's mission and serve in a variety of roles, such as camp hosting, education and outreach, community science, habitat and trail work, maintenance and construction, wildlife projects, customer service, and many more.

The Volunteer Program provides recruitment, screening, training, retention, support and resources for state parks, wildlife areas, hatcheries, educational programs, and CPW administrative offices throughout Colorado. During FY 2021, CPW engaged 3,554 volunteers who contributed over 291,829 hours of time. This is an equivalent value of over \$8.8 million, or the time of 140 full-time employees.

Despite health guidelines imposed due to COVID-19, volunteers remained committed to CPW. On average, CPW saw about a 15% decrease in overall volunteer engagement when comparing FY 2021 to FY 2020. While this is unfortunate, CPW fared well compared to some organizations that ceased most or all of their volunteer engagement. From March through May of 2021, volunteer engagement levels rebounded, showing participation comparable to pre-COVID numbers.

Around 250 CPW staff work with volunteers across the state. Offering skill building and professional development for staff to effectively engage volunteers is critical to volunteers' experiences. To that end, program staff hosted the Annual Education and Volunteer Training. This staff training is typically held in person, but was offered virtually via Zoom in December 2020. The training had 90 attendees across four sessions, and the theme







**Expanding access to hunting and fishing**

In addition to CPW’s 364 State Wildlife Areas (SWA), which include public access rights on over 691,700 acres, around the state that are managed for conservation and wildlife-related recreation, CPW also partners with landowners to expand access to Colorado’s outdoors by acquiring public access easements for fishing and hunting on private land. Through the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP), an annual incentive-based grant program, private landowners have the opportunity to voluntarily protect important wildlife habitat and provide wildlife-related recreational access to the public. The program accomplishes strategic wildlife conservation goals and public access goals using conservation easements, access easements, and in some circumstances, fee title purchases. Through these partnerships, the CWHP has helped protect hundreds of thousands of acres of critical wildlife habitat while maintaining working lands and providing public access for wildlife-related recreational opportunities to Colorado residents and nonresidents alike.

In FY 2021, CPW closed on seven CWHP projects, increasing the total number of acres of perpetual access for hunting and fishing by more than 12,660 acres. Since the program’s inception in 2006, CPW has invested approximately \$171.7 million across the state to secure:

- Conservation easements on 253,000 acres
- Public access on 119,000 acres
- Fee title on 30,000 acres
- Access along 360 miles of river bank



CPW also saw an increase in term-limited access for hunting and fishing of about 5,000 acres in FY 2021, resulting in a total of over 1,677,600 acres of access specifically for hunting and fishing statewide, a 14% increase from the total number of acres in FY 2020.

Hunters, anglers, and wildlife-recreation enthusiasts can also access Colorado’s lands through the Public Access Program (PAP). The PAP provides limited, seasonal hunting and fishing opportunities on Colorado trust land across the state. State trust land enrolled in the PAP is open to a variety of wildlife-related uses and most are also working ranches leased for agriculture. In May 2021, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission unanimously approved the enrollment of an additional 69 state trust land properties encompassing more than 199,300 acres into the PAP for the fall 2021 hunting season, bringing the program to a total of 973,000 acres. This expansion fulfills DNR’s 2019 “Wildly Important Goal” (WIG) to double the amount of publicly accessible trust land enrolled in the PAP from 478,000 (in 2018) to 973,000 acres (in 2021). The enrollment of these additional lands in the PAP also accomplished DNR’s WIG goal around increasing public access to outdoor recreation from 1.88 million acres to 2.08 million acres by June 30, 2021.

In FY 2020, CPW enrolled PAP lands in the plains of Eastern Colorado, where bird hunting and small game hunting are popular, to provide a broader array of opportunities on state trust lands. Before that, the majority of PAP public access land was located in Northwestern Colorado where there is prime big game hunting. To further expand the geography and hunting opportunities available on properties enrolled in the PAP, FY 2021’s newly enrolled 199,000 acres are from trust land properties located throughout the state that range in size from single 640-acre sections of land to 10,000-acre properties.

Another way for hunters to get out in Colorado is through CPW’s Walk-In Access (WIA) Program. The WIA program is designed to open privately-owned land to public small and big game hunting by entering into annual public access agreements with landowners willing to allow public hunting on their land. Each year, CPW holds an enrollment period for landowners to offer their property into the WIA Program. Enrolled lands are posted with WIA boundary signs so that hunters can clearly identify properties that are open to WIA hunting. In FY 2021,

CPW enrolled over 175,500 acres in the WIA program, all of which are open for small game hunting, and 129,860 acres are also available for big game hunting. Colorado has had a relatively large number of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land expirations across the WIA range, which has had a significant impact on the quantity and quality of enrolled land available, and ultimately, on some wildlife populations. The CRP is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency. Landowners offer their land for enrollment, and when accepted, agree to establish cover for the life of the agreement, in return for an annual rental payment. CRP fields, when seeded to beneficial cover, can be critical habitat for many species of wildlife.

CPW’s Ranching for Wildlife Program started as a pilot program in 1986 with the intent to improve public hunting access to private land and to form a wildlife management partnership with participating landowners. Today, the program provides Colorado residents a unique opportunity to hunt on private ranch land that is normally closed to the public. Participating ranches provide public hunting recreation access to their land free of charge to those who draw licenses. The number of licenses on each ranch is determined by negotiations between the landowner and CPW. Through this program, hunters can play an important role in helping CPW and landowners manage wildlife populations on private land. In addition to providing public hunting access to successful license draw applicants, participating landowners are required to improve habitat on their ranch for both game and non-game animals, helping to preserve and enhance open spaces for wildlife to live and thrive and keep the hunting heritage alive for future generations. As of FY 2021, 29 ranches are enrolled in the program, providing more than 1.2 million acres of public access to hunting. Additional positive impacts of the program include:

- More than 50,000 acres per year with active wildlife habitat improvements.
- Improved livestock grazing systems on about 85% of the lands enrolled.
- Hunting seasons and license allocations in place to improve game movement and enhance hunter harvest both on and off ranches.
- About two-thirds of the ranches actively participate in exceptional youth hunting opportunities.
- About one-third of the ranches donate hunts to conservation organizations to be auctioned or raffled off to help raise funds for habitat improvement on private and public lands elsewhere (this is separate from CPW’s auction & raffle program).

Finally, public access to private land for high quality bighorn sheep hunting is provided by CPW’s Bighorn Sheep Access Program. Six ranches currently participate in the program, providing 474,000 acres of access to bighorn sheep hunting in Colorado. Big Horn Sheep Licenses are open to Colorado residents only. This innovative program provides incentives for landowners with suitable habitat to establish and maintain bighorn sheep herds in alignment with CPW management goals.

**Table 4. Goal 4 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 4	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
IV. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists	Number of non-motorized trail grants awarded	FY18	21	28	33%	17	-19%	20	-5%
	Non-motorized trail grants funding	FY18	\$3,433,893	\$4,349,026	27%	\$3,438,014	0%	\$3,520,752	3%
	Number of OHV trail grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	53	53	0%	57	8%	62	17%
	OHV trail grants funding	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$4,339,000	\$4,323,000	-0.4%	\$4,455,758	3%	\$4,366,730	1%
	Number of snowmobile trail grants awarded	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	44	44	0%	39	-11%	37	-16%
	Snowmobile trail grants funding	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$967,000	\$1,210,000	25%	\$1,278,763	32%	\$1,128,453	17%
	Trail crew hours	FY20	112,500	N/A	N/A	112,500	N/A	132,356	18%
	Total acres of hunting and fishing access statewide	FY18	1,190,300	1,163,100	-2%	1,474,300	24%	1,677,615	41%
	Increase in Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program acreage	FY19	4,418	4,418	N/A	22,117	401%	12,664	187%
	Total Public Access Program acreage	FY19	478,000	478,000	N/A	777,000	63%	973,000	104%
	Walk In Access Program - Small game access acres	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	177,621	173,096	-3%	223,386	26%	175,532	-1%
	Walk In Access Program - Big game access acres	FY19	86,000	86,000	N/A	159,352	85%	129,863	51%



## Goal 5: Increasing and Improving Big Game Populations

Colorado's big game herds and diverse habitat are invaluable features that create the unique fabric of the state. These resources require thoughtful and intensive management to accommodate the many and varied public demands and growing impacts from people. CPW is actively working to balance the ever-increasing human presence on the landscape with conservation of Colorado's world-class natural resources.

### Increasing and improving habitat for big game populations

Colorado is home to some of the largest big game herds in North America, primarily because of the state's diverse landscape and varied habitat types ranging from prairie grasslands to sagebrush plateaus, from pinyon-juniper woodlands to montane and subalpine forests, and semi-desert shrub lands to alpine tundra. During FY 2021, CPW spent over \$36.6 million for conservation and improvement of big game habitat in Colorado, a 15% increase from the baseline amount spent for these purposes.

CPW monitors how investments in habitat affect big game, using Herd Management Plans (HMPs). HMPs integrate the plans and intentions of CPW with the concerns and ideas of land use management agencies and interested members of the public to establish long-term objectives for how each big game species and herd across the state should be managed. HMPs are created through a public process, using the best available scientific information on herd populations and habitat conditions. In preparing an HMP, CPW staff aim to balance the biological capabilities of the herd and its habitat with the public's demand for wildlife recreational opportunities. The primary decision points needed for each HMP plan are: the number of animals that should exist in a specific geographical area called a Data Analysis Unit (DAU), and the desired sex ratio for the population of big game animals, or in other words, the number of males per 100 females. The selection of population and sex ratio objectives, which are set for a 10-year period of time, drive important decisions in the big game season setting process; specifically, how many animals must be harvested to maintain or move toward the objectives and what types of hunting seasons are required to achieve the harvest objectives. During FY 2021, a total of 29 herd management plan revisions were completed to better align the plans with long-term objectives.

CPW has a long history of studying and managing mule deer, dating back to the agency's origins. Together with the public and stakeholders, CPW works to stabilize, sustain, and increase mule deer populations in Colorado resulting in greater hunting and wildlife-related recreational opportunities. CPW is conducting several ongoing studies to determine the role that predation, energy development, recreation, and development play in mule deer survival. CPW works closely with hunters, landowners, community leaders and partner agencies to identify major areas of impact to mule deer herds in Colorado. Using the West Slope Mule Deer Strategy (WSMDS), approved in 2014, to guide management decisions and in line with a top WSMDS goal, more than 20 projects directly improving over 8,640 acres of big game habitat were completed in FY 2021 as part of this work. The projects cover a variety of enhancement techniques from native sagebrush community restoration to timber removal and prescribed burns. Many of these restoration projects have been completed in partnership with state, federal, and private partners. The original WSMDS grants which were slated to expire in FY 2021 were extended for one additional year and now expire June 30, 2022. As certain funding sources for the WSMDS expire in FY 2022, it's expected that the amount of improved acreage in the coming years will decrease to around 1,500 to 3,000 acres per year, depending on if the project includes aerial seeding, forest thinning, or mechanical treatments, factors impacting the amount of money spent on each project. CPW's Habitat Unit also provided project support to the Bureau of Land Management through project planning, seed storage, mixing, and delivery logistics on another 20,000 acres of wildland fire restoration in WSMDS priority landscapes during FY 2021.

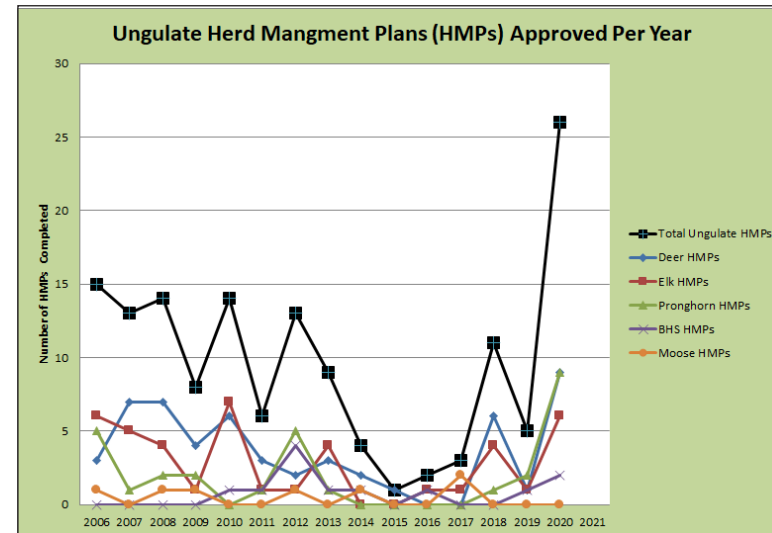


Figure 4: shows the significant progress made on HMPs during recent years.

CPW annually monitors well over 1,000 radio-collared mule deer in five Intensive Mule Deer Monitoring Areas to estimate survival. The last several winters have been mild and mule deer survival has been above average. CPW also conducts post-hunt herd inventories, primarily with helicopters, to estimate the sex ratios of males per 100 females and the age ratios of young per 100 females. In addition to survival rates, these ratios are needed to estimate population size using population models. During the post-hunt herd inventories in 2020, CPW staff classified 70,000 deer and observed an average sex ratio of 32 bucks per 100 does, which is the sex ratio that was also observed in 2019. Reproduction and fawn survival in 2020 was up compared with the previous year. This information indicates that buck-to-doe ratios have shown a response to CPW's management actions, and Colorado remains a premier destination for deer hunters. CPW is currently transitioning from the use of VHF radio collars to Satellite/GPS collars in the five intensive mule deer monitoring areas, which will lead to improved data collection and reduced reliance on airplanes to monitor herd populations.

CPW's Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) also helps to improve habitat for big game populations. During FY 2021, 19 local HPP committees and the State Council, made up of nearly 150 volunteers representing livestock growers, sportspersons, federal land management agencies and CPW staff met throughout the year to cooperatively discuss and, operating under CPW Commission approved plans, work towards reducing conflicts between big game and agricultural operators associated with forage and fences. In FY 2021, the HPP expended over \$2.7 million and leveraged cash contributions of more than \$6.5 million, in-kind services valued at more than \$848,350 and over 12,640 hours of labor from partners in efforts to reduce conflicts and meet game management objectives. More than 33,400 acres of habitat were improved along with 184 water development projects and 129 weed control projects through the HPP in FY 2021.

Finally, the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP) offers private landowners the opportunity to voluntarily protect their property containing important wildlife habitat through establishing conservation easements. The program prioritizes grants for conservation easements that support big game winter range, wildlife crossings, and migration corridors, public access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing, and protecting habitat for species of concern. In FY 2021, CPW closed on seven CWHP projects, increasing the total number of acres enrolled in the CWHP by more than 12,660 acres.

### Improving big game winter range and migration corridors

The health of Colorado's big game herds depend on intact and connected landscapes and habitats. For this reason, CPW is committed to protecting big game herds by maintaining habitat connectivity and working to remove migration barriers that may exist. Many of Colorado's major roadways are in low-lying areas, such as canyons, waterways and riparian corridors that are important big game winter range and movement corridors. The network of roads built across Colorado causes direct habitat loss and fragmentation and can create temporary or permanent movement barriers to wildlife species that desire to cross in order to access food and habitat resources. Wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) can have detrimental consequences to both humans and wildlife when animals are struck while attempting to cross roadways.

On August 21, 2019, Governor Polis directed CPW and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to work cooperatively to conserve Colorado's valuable big game resources through Executive Order D 2019 011: Conserving Colorado's Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors. The Executive Order underscored the importance of prioritizing conservation of big game winter habitat and migration corridors while emphasizing the importance of incorporating wildlife crossings into roadway planning and construction. CDOT and CPW signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2019, and are continuing to collaborate to reduce WVCs along segments of I-25, State Highway (SH) 9, SH 13, US Highway 160, US Highway 285, and US Highway 550.

The Executive Order also directed CPW to compile a [Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors Status Report](#), which was released in FY 2020. In collaboration with over 40 conservation partners, the report features CPW's compilation of the best-available science on Colorado's big game populations, including population status and trends, monitoring and inventory methods, seasonal habitats and migration corridors, and conservation threats and actions. The report will continue to inform future efforts to protect herds in areas where development, environmental, recreation and other pressures persist and makes recommendations for reducing habitat fragmentation and sustaining the State's big game populations down the road.



In FY 2021, CPW and CDOT partnered with the Southern Ute Indian tribe and several other organizations to construct a new wildlife mitigation project in southwest Colorado. The project will construct several features on U.S. Highway 160 between Durango and Pagosa Springs that will promote safer travel for motorists, enhance safer movement of wildlife and reduce WVCs along this section of highway. This project has been in the works for nearly a decade, with 15 CPW staff from the Southwest Region and Area 15 working on this project. The \$11 million project will be funded with: \$8.6 million from CDOT, \$1.3 million from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, \$750,000 from CPW, \$317,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, \$100,000 from Mule Deer Foundation (via a private donor), and \$75,000 from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The Colorado Highway 9 Wildlife Crossing Project, which was completed in 2016 by CDOT in cooperation with CPW and many other partners, constructed a first-of-its-kind wildlife overpass and underpass system on an 11-mile stretch of Highway 9 between Green Mountain Reservoir and Kremmling. From November 2015 through May 2020, CPW participated in an effectiveness monitoring study of the project, with the final report being released in March 2021. Using analyses of WVCs, carcass data, and photo data from 62 motion-activated cameras, researchers documented more than 112,600 successful mule deer passages through or over the seven crossing structures -- a crossing success rate of 96% of mule deer utilizing the structures, indicating that the project has been very effective in assisting mule deer movement. Although fewer in number, other species using the structures included elk, pronghorn, moose, bighorn sheep, black bear, mountain lion, and coyote. There was also at least one recorded underpass crossing by turkeys and river otters. Overall, the wildlife crossings, continuous fencing, and associated mitigation features achieved major safety benefits, helping to decrease WVCs crashes reported to law enforcement by 92% and carcass counts by 90% relative to pre-construction levels. As a result of these interventions, an average of 13 crashes and 56 WVCs mule deer mortalities have been prevented each year since the construction was completed.



**A wildlife overpass (crossing) on Colorado State Highway 9 in Grand County, north of Silverthorne.**

Around mid-FY 2021, the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission passed rules concerning the protection of wildlife resources for oil and gas developments. Within those rules, there was established the Oil and Gas Compensatory Mitigation Program. For oil and gas developers who must perform off-site mitigation, there is now the opportunity to pay directly into the CPW habitat mitigation fund for the protection of critical High Priority Habitat (HPH) that include:

- Bighorn sheep migration corridors and winter range;
- Elk migration corridors, production areas, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas;
- Mule deer migration corridors, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas;
- Pronghorn migration corridors and winter concentration areas;
- Greater sage-grouse priority habitat management areas;
- Columbian sharp-tailed grouse production areas;
- Greater prairie chicken production areas;
- Gunnison sage-grouse occupied habitat and production areas;
- Lesser prairie-chicken focal areas; and
- Plains sharp-tailed grouse production areas.

This new program will result in CPW receiving new funding from oil and gas development. For each new well pad developed in grouse and big game HPH, the developer will pay a one-time charge of at least

\$13,750. In addition, the developer will pay for indirect impacts of the development, with that payment being determined by a number of factors like habitat quality and existing development in the area. In most instances, CPW expects the indirect payments to greatly exceed the one-time payment. Developers can choose to relocate or modify their plans so that development occurs outside of HPH habitats and do not have to pay into the mitigation program.

Payments into the habitat mitigation fund will be made to CPW and CPW will be responsible for completing mitigation measures. The intent of the program is to use funds as closely as possible to mitigate impacted species and areas for the habitat disturbed by developers. While habitat work is the foundation of this program, funds can also be allocated towards habitat cooperatives, migration pathways, pinch points and crossings, easements, acquisitions, and studies investigating impact, management, habitat efficacy, and movement, among other habitat conservation strategies. For many years, CPW has shared a vision for planning habitat work across the state. This new funding stream provides the opportunity to make this vision a reality.

**Table 5. Goal 5 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 5	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
V. Increasing and improving the state's big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists	Amount spent on big game habitat and conservation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$31,974,000	\$37,607,522	18%	\$41,454,528	30%	\$36,652,373	15%
	Number of acres improved through Habitat Partnership Program projects	3-year average of FY17, FY18, FY19	21,215	18,066	-15%	24,998	18%	33,461	58%
	Number of acres improved through Colorado West Slope Mule Deer Strategy	FY19	11,300	11,300	N/A	8,375	-26%	8,647	-23%

### Goal 6: Identifying and Beginning to Plan a New Colorado State Park

Colorado Parks and Wildlife operates 42 state parks, providing access to some of the state's most awe-inspiring and unique outdoor recreation opportunities. Colorado's state parks continue to draw more visitors each year -- in FY 2021, more than 19.3 million people visited our state parks, a 13% increase in visitation from FY 2020. With many state parks experiencing record high attendance, it is important to maintain exceptional customer service to ensure a positive and memorable visitor experience. Unfortunately, unprecedented visitation has resulted in damage to natural resources, highlighting the need to educate crowds on the importance of recreating responsibly, continued investment from CPW in operations and maintenance, and where possible, expansion of the state park system to accommodate increasing public demand.

**Fishers Peak State Park Vision:**  
As it has for eons, Fishers Peak continues to provide for the life that thrives there and serves as a destination for those inspired by all that nature offers for generations to come.

#### Establishing Fishers Peak property as a new state park

The 19,200-acre Fishers Peak property was purchased in February 2019 through a collaboration between the City of Trinidad, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, GOCO, and CPW. The objective of the collaboration between the project partners is to conserve, evaluate and plan the sustainable use of the property for the enjoyment of the public while perpetuating the natural resources on the property.

In April 2020, CPW acquired the land and, working with our partners, began the process of developing Colorado's next state park. Throughout FY 2021, several significant milestones were reached including identifying a vision for the property, the formal naming of Fishers Peak State Park on July 16, 2020, and the public opening of 250 acres of the park on October 30, 2020.



**Fishers Peak State Park**



The Fishers Peak State Park master planning process continues and is expected to conclude in early 2022. The goals of the master plan include striking the appropriate design and management balance that supports protection, preservation, conservation and outdoor recreation. The master plan will serve as an overarching guide, outlining management priorities and specific management direction related to operations for CPW staff. Figure 5 illustrates the steps of the Fishers Peak State Park master planning process. Ongoing planning activities include gathering on-site data on natural and cultural resources to inform recreation planning, and gathering extensive input from partners, stakeholders and the public through public meetings, surveys, and panels, interest groups and work groups, Tribal consultation, and the park's website. Major themes have been emerging from these input processes: excitement and passion; protection of natural, cultural and historical resources; recreation opportunities that serve the community; and education/interpretation that tells the story of both the land and people.

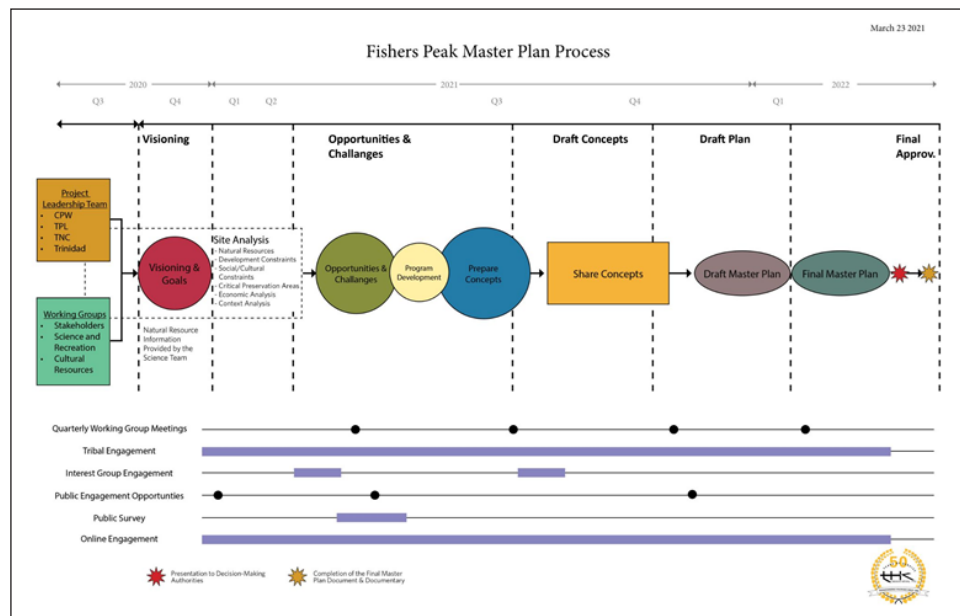


Figure 5

Fishers Peak State Park currently offers hiker-only access to three trails: the First Look Trail, a quarter-mile trail with views of Fishers Peak; the Discovery Trail, a short loop featuring interpretive signage; and the Challenge Trail, a steep 1.5-mile trail with a view of our namesake peak and the valley below. Visitors can also enjoy a scenic drive-in picnic area easily accessed from the parking lot.

Fishers Peak State Park will benefit from the passage of Senate Bill 21-112, which added \$20 million of General Fund dollars to support parks infrastructure projects that will be implemented beginning in FY 2022. The funding will help complete a trails feasibility study, which will guide the construction of environmentally friendly and sustainable trails. Approximately 15-20 miles of trails will be built for hikers and bikers, including a hiking trail to the top of Fishers Peak. Funding will also be used to create additional trailheads and trail amenities including signage and benches.

### Investing in operations, maintenance and customer service

CPW invests significant resources in providing outstanding customer service and excellent facilities throughout its state parks, while providing public access to almost 230,000 acres of park land statewide. In line with this commitment, during FY 2021, CPW devoted over \$11.7 million to maintain and manage recreational opportunities at Colorado's state parks.

Additionally in FY 2021, to better accommodate customers and continue the agency's culture of exceptional customer service, CPW implemented the following:

- Ability to pay with a CPWShop gift certificate for all transactions, even drawn licenses and application fees.
- Ability to renew OHV, snowmobile and boat registrations on-line.
- Promotional emails are being sent to customers to remind them to renew their annual licenses and park passes one month prior to expiration; CPW is seeing increased renewals through this effort.
- Revamped all of the disability and income-eligible license and pass applications and webpages to make them more customer-friendly.

Further customer service enhancements were implemented during FY 2021 related to the wildlife side of the agency:

- Inventory hold for leftover day - the license purchasing system now holds the license in a customer's cart for 15 minutes to allow them time to purchase it.
- Enhancing queue-it for high volume sales days to improve customer's online experience.
- All licenses not paid for in the Primary Draw were added to the Secondary Draw instead of the Leftover List.
- Fail-to-pay customers received 2-3 emails and a phone call to notify them of the necessary payment this year, compared to receiving just two emails last year.
- New reissue process for returned licenses, including a weekly preview list and set weekly release time. Previous years had a random release and no preview list.
- Launching of the myColorado app for digital fishing licenses. This is the first CPW digital license, with more to come in FY 2022.
- Improved Draw Recap report added this year for the Secondary Draw that matches the format of our Primary Draw Recap Reports.
- More staff have been trained on merging duplicate customer accounts so that merge requests can be processed quicker.

Another initiative aimed at improving visitors' experiences while also providing an opportunity to educate the public on responsible stewardship of public lands is the Leave No Trace program. Through the Leave No Trace program, parks can receive a Gold Standard Site Designation, a recognition awarded to public recreation lands that exemplify Leave No Trace ethics and showcase strong organizational commitment to the promotion of outdoor skills and stewardship in order to help preserve and protect the natural landscape for generations to come. CPW is proud of the state's three Gold Standard Sites: Roxborough, Castlewood Canyon and Barr Lake state parks. In order to be named a Gold Standard Site, the following criteria must be met:

- A history of successfully implementing Leave No Trace Outdoor skills and ethics into management, programming, outreach and education efforts at the site.
- Staff formally trained in Leave No Trace.
- Leave No Trace signage throughout trailheads, visitor centers and campgrounds as well as Leave No Trace language and messaging included in pamphlets, maps and other distributed materials for visitors,
- Leave No Trace interpretative programs including ranger talks, campfire events and trail outings for visitors.

Other Colorado state parks are pushing forward hoping to achieve the Gold Standard Site Designation as well. Eleven Mile, Golden Gate Canyon and Staunton state parks are currently working on obtaining their designation.

### Developing criteria to evaluate other new state parks

Demand for state parks continues to grow and in 2019, CPW developed criteria to use when considering properties for new state parks or expanding existing state parks. Input from CPW partners, the PWC and the comments of around 1,000 members of the public informed the criteria.

During FY 2021, CPW launched a search for future state parks. The effort included an invitation to the public to nominate potential properties based on the Future State Parks Criteria. To support this effort, CPW created a [parks criteria story map](#) to visualize the Future State Parks Criteria across Colorado through a series of interactive maps. Using public and CPW regional staff input, CPW developed a list of priority properties around the state to consider for new state parks. These sites were reviewed according to the future parks criteria, with several demonstrating strong potential for providing outstanding nature-based recreation and conservation opportunities.

### Future State Parks Criteria

CPW's vision is that Colorado's state parks connect people to natural wonders. Every state park should offer a unique place to experience Colorado and live life outside. To accomplish this vision, future Colorado state parks will support a system of state parks that:

- Provides outstanding nature-based recreation.
- Conserves natural resources.
- Meets Colorado's needs.
- Provides community value.
- Supports a financially sustainable system.



**Table 6. Goal 6 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 6	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
VI. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue	Amount spent on operations and maintenance at state parks	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$5,800,000	\$13,211,349	128%	\$10,167,821	75%	\$11,749,617	103%
	Annual state park visitation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	14,646,128	14,740,985	1%	17,066,484	17%	19,313,911	32%
	Acres of accessible state park land	FY 18	221,139	221,149	0%	227,905	3%	227,947	3%

**Goal 7: Reduce Maintenance Backlog and Repair for High Risk Dams**

CPW owns and operates 117 dams throughout the state, the largest inventory of dams of any owner in Colorado. Of these, 90 dams are jurisdictional, meaning the size of the dam is large enough to threaten human life and cause property damage downstream if the dam were to fail. As such, maintenance and rehabilitation of CPW's dams is of paramount importance. CPW has three full-time Dam Safety Engineers who, with the help of other dedicated staff around the state, manage all of the work and monitoring on CPW's dams. They perform regular dam safety inspections on all CPW-owned dams and maintain up-to-date Emergency Action Plans for First Responders. CPW is making dam rehabilitation a priority by allocating capital construction funds to dam improvement projects ahead of any other capital construction projects. Prioritizing the financial needs of CPW's dams has allowed for significant improvements to be made in dam operating conditions over the last few years.

**Rehabilitating High Risk Dams**

Water impounded by CPW's dams is used for downstream irrigation, fish hatchery operations, and water-based recreational activities. CPW's reservoirs are some of the most popular places to visit in the state. However, public infrastructure and population centers are often located downstream, which increases the likelihood of devastating consequences in the event of a dam failure.

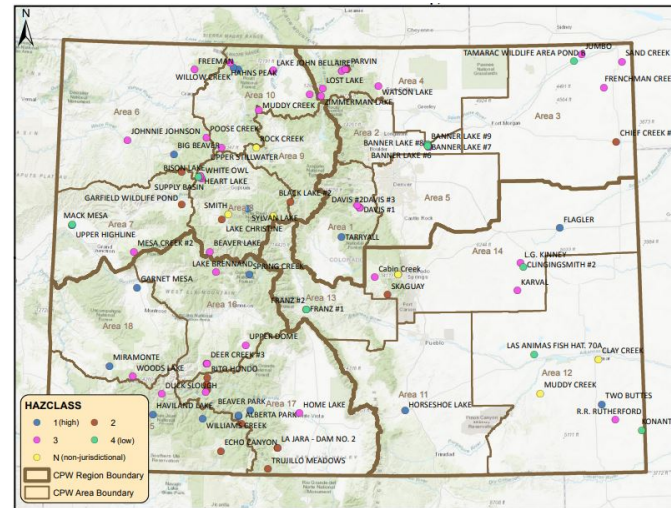
In 2014, CPW conducted a Screening Level Risk Analysis (SLRA) investigating the risk profiles of its dams to inform the prioritization of future repairs and maintenance. The SLRA and subsequent research found 22 of CPW's dams to be in a "high hazard" condition, with a loss of human life expected in the event of a dam failure. Another 15 dams were considered "significant hazards," with major property damage expected in the event of a failure. Of these 15 dams, three are Parks-owned dams and 12 are Wildlife-owned dams. The average age of the 37 highest risk dams is 73 years old, including six dams that were constructed over 100 years ago. Most of these dams were built between 1950 and the mid-1970s.

Based largely on the potential for loss of human life downstream and risks to environmental, economic, and recreational resources in the event of a dam failure, the SLRA evaluated the risk of CPW's high- and significant-hazard dams, further identifying 11 dams in CPW's portfolio that posed the greatest risks. Since the 2014 release of the SLRA's findings, four additional dams were added to that list when their routine safety inspections revealed conditions that exceeded an acceptable level of risk. Figure 6 depicts the CPW dam hazard classifications across Colorado.

Since FY 2016, CPW has committed more than \$40.6 million to rehabilitate high risk dams. The total dam maintenance and repair estimate for all CPW dams is about \$120.7 million. Most of this cost will be incurred by the Wildlife side of the agency, as the majority of the dams are Wildlife-owned. As of FY 2020, all three parks highest risk dams have been either repaired or have allocation of funding for full repair and work is expected to be complete by 2022.

**Reducing dam maintenance and repair backlog**

During FY 2021, several projects were underway to increase dam safety and longevity. In the past year, repair



**Figure 6**

and rehabilitation projects were fully completed at Chief Creek #3, Haviland, and Woods Lake Outlet. Gate repairs at Two Buttes were also completed. Work continued on the design and alternative options on Tarryall and Alberta Park and new alternative option studies began for Meadow Creek and Staunton State Park's Elk Falls dam. In the summer of 2021, construction work commenced for the full repair of the North Michigan Dam at State Forest State Park and Spring Creek Dam Outlet Repair. In addition to all of this, Dam Safety Engineers were also able to work on smaller projects including vegetation removal, updating Emergency Action Plans, routine maintenance, and planning efforts. Further, engineers were able to complete three hydrology reports to help CPW better understand how water moves in relation to the dams and potential dam failures.

As dams age and their structures deteriorate, more involved activities are needed to return them to compliance with safety regulations. Since FY 2016, CPW has allocated more than \$6.7 million for routine dam maintenance and just under \$2.2 million for other dam improvements. The availability of maintenance funding allows CPW to proactively care for these assets in an effort to reduce the need for large scale, costly rehabilitation that can result from prolonged deferred maintenance. Over the last five years, CPW has experienced at least one emergency dam repair annually. Projects of this nature require a quick response and reallocation of available funds, including dam maintenance funds, to stabilize rapidly developing, adverse conditions.

**Table 7. Goal 7 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 7	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
VII. Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all the division's 110 dams	Amount awarded for dam maintenance for high risk dams (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$29,534,172	N/A	N/A	\$30,604,171	4%	\$40,654,171	38%
	Amount awarded for dam maintenance (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$4,326,007	N/A	N/A	\$5,526,007	28%	\$6,726,007	55%
	Amount awarded for other dam improvements (cumulative)	Sum of FY16, FY17, FY18, FY19	\$749,568	N/A	N/A	\$1,119,568	49%	\$2,169,568	189%

**Goal 8: Increase the Number of Fish Stocked and Renovate Fish Hatcheries**

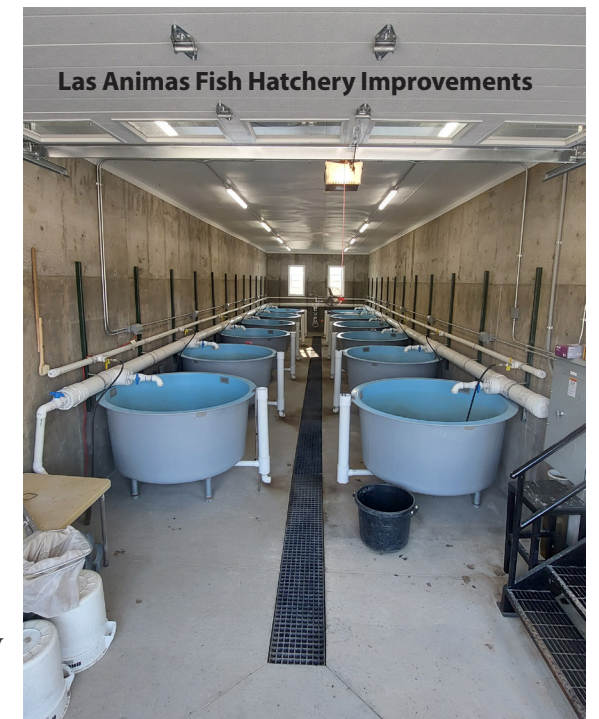
CPW operates 19 hatcheries that are dedicated to improving Colorado's fish populations and serve a critical role in the recovery of native fish species. Since 1881, CPW has been the lead agency responsible for fisheries management of public waters in Colorado. CPW's hatcheries support and enhance angling opportunities through the breeding, hatching, rearing, and stocking of fish in lakes and streams across the state. CPW's hatcheries also provide public educational opportunities through hatchery tours and informational materials.

**Increasing fish production**

FY 2021 was a fruitful year for fish production at CPW's hatcheries. In FY 2021, nearly 112 million fish were stocked, including catchable trout, sub-catchable trout, non-game species, and warm water species. This level of fish production is about 21% more than the baseline total number of fish stocked. Most of the increase in FY 2021 can be attributed to highly successful walleye and saugeye spawning and production in spring of 2021, which had a stocking total of 83 million fish. While this species-specific increase does not strongly impact the overall demand-supply situation in Colorado, it was very important in terms of making up for production lost in FY 2020 when the walleye/saugeye spawn was impacted by COVID-19. Overall in FY 2021, nearly 3.1 million catchable trout, 13.6 million sub-catchable trout, 205,635 non-game species, and 95.1 million warm water species were stocked.

**Modernizing and renovating the hatchery system**

The need for modernization and repair to CPW's aging hatchery system has been established as an essential component to its continued operation for the next 100+ years. In 2019, CPW began a multi-phase process to modernize the hatchery system. CPW completed Phase I of the hatchery modernization plan in FY 2020, during which a consultant provided an analysis of the fish stocking program.





During FY 2021, CPW continued work on the hatchery modernization plan, completing Phase 2. This phase included CPW's Hatchery Administration and Capital Development staff visiting 15 coldwater hatcheries with consultants to provide a comprehensive review of CPW's hatchery system. CPW staff provided fish production and GIS data to allow the consultant to complete a comprehensive study of the coldwater hatchery system and provide recommendations to improve efficiency and maintain fish production levels.

During the spring of 2021 a consultant was also contracted to complete Phase 3 of the hatchery modernization plan. The kickoff meeting to start Phase 3 involving CPW staff and the consultant occurred in summer 2021. The first task of Phase 3 will be to create a prioritization list of which hatchery units make the most sense to modernize. Additional tasks in Phase 3 will be to create a full design plan to modernize at least one CPW hatchery. CPW expects to complete Phase 3 of the plan by June 2022.

Two projects were completed or underway in FY 2021 to help reduce maintenance backlog in the hatchery system:

- CPW completed the construction of a new hatchery building at the Las Animas Hatchery, one of two CPW warm water hatcheries. The new hatchery building replaces an 80-year-old undersized and outdated building. As a result of the project, anglers will directly benefit through increased fish production and subsequent increases in the number of Largemouth Bass and Channel Catfish stocked in Colorado's lakes and streams.
- CPW also began work on a capital construction project to repair or relocate a non-functional well at the Roaring Judy Hatchery. This project will increase the water supply to the hatchery allowing for an increase in catchable and sub-catchable Rainbow Trout production.

CPW continues to increase investments in its existing hatcheries. In FY 2021, over \$2.4 million was awarded for hatchery maintenance, renovation and modernization. This total aligns closely with the amount awarded in FY 2020, and represents a 99% increase in funding compared to the baseline.

**Table 8. Goal 8 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 8	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
VIII. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state's 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old	Number of catchable trout stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	2,881,000	2,734,000	-5%	3,315,200	15%	3,095,843	7%
	Number of sub-catchable trout stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	18,563,000	16,277,000	-12%	16,165,612	-13%	13,593,019	-27%
	Number of nongame species stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	284,000	272,000	-4%	235,848	-17%	205,635	-28%
	Number of warm water species stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	70,514,000	78,601,000	11%	17,246,642	-76%	95,093,694	35%
	Total number of fish stocked	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	92,241,000	97,884,000	6%	37,019,297	-60%	111,999,436	21%
	Amount awarded for hatchery modernization/renovation/maintenance	FY18	\$1,216,225	\$1,343,600	10%	\$2,430,353	100%	\$2,425,029	99%

## Goal 9: Reduce Large Capital Construction Backlog

Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages more than 1,400 facilities across Colorado, including 42 state parks encompassing almost 230,000 acres, 364 state wildlife areas, 19 fish hatcheries, 700 miles of trails, 117 dams, and over 4,000 campsites. Buildings, shooting ranges, dams, roads, trails and other constructed facilities provide opportunities for recreation, cultural education and enrichment, and research. Similar to other physical assets, CPW's facilities and infrastructure need continuous maintenance and repair, and replacement after a certain point.

### Reduce capital construction and maintenance backlog

CPW continues to make significant investments in capital construction, allocating nearly \$19.5 million to large capital construction and more than \$9.6 million to small capital construction projects for parks and wildlife in FY 2021.<sup>2</sup> An increase to both the parks and wildlife small capital program budgets this year enabled the regions to allocate funding to maintenance needs across the state, allowing facility maintenance to take place before larger and more costly repairs became necessary.

Large capital construction was bolstered in a big way in FY 2021. During the legislative session, CPW received substantial funding from the general assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 21-112, which added \$20 million of General Fund dollars to support parks infrastructure projects that will be implemented beginning in FY 2022. The bill was a component of a bipartisan stimulus effort developed by the Governor and the General Assembly to jumpstart Colorado's economy through investments in infrastructure projects. The projects will provide facility and public access improvements at 12 parks statewide by expanding or enhancing facilities that are seeing a great deal of public use. Some of these exciting improvements include:

#### Steamboat camper services building

Steamboat Lake State Park has one camper services building servicing two major campgrounds. Visitors in the Sunrise Vista Campground are forced to drive to Dutch Hill to shower. There are 188 campsites using the current building, which results in crowding and maintenance challenges. The visitor experience is negatively impacted by the current situation. A second camper services building has been designed for the Sunrise Vista Campground and is ready to bid.

#### Ridgway group campground

This project will add a group campground to Ridgway State Park's camping options. A group campground is one of the highest priority requests from visitors at Ridgway State Park. Group campgrounds are a great way to connect larger families and group gatherings into one, more private, area within the park. Currently the park does not offer a separate consolidated group camping facility. Groups must reserve individual sites that many times are not within the same area, causing the group to be separated. The new group campground will provide individual sites closely grouped together with the flexibility to accommodate a variety of group sizes up to a capacity of 60+ individuals within the campground. The group campground will consist of 15 individual RV sites, 8-10 walk-in tent sites, a small camper services building with showers, and a group picnic shelter with fire pit and grills. This new Group Campground will help meet the increased visitation and camping demands the park is facing.

#### Pueblo boat ramp parking

Lake Pueblo is one of the most popular parks in the system and visitation demands continue to increase. This project will add additional paved parking spots at each boat ramp, to accommodate more boaters. The project also includes adding a new fish cleaning station and demolishing an old toilet building that is beyond its useful life and replacing it with a new, cost efficient vault toilet.

#### Cherry Creek-Swim beach services building

This project will replace a 45-year-old building that accommodates over 2,000 people on any given weekend day. It also addresses public safety and health concerns by providing an adequate number of toilets, sinks, and stalls, which are required by CDPHE to operate a natural swim area. In addition to compliance with regulatory standards, the new facilities will improve the customer experience, increase utility efficiency, and improve maintenance capabilities at the swim beach.

<sup>2</sup>This includes money allocated to hatchery modernization as mentioned in Goal 8 and internal shooting ranges as mentioned in Goal 1.



*Boyd Lake Campground redevelopment*

This project will redevelop the campground to remove 148 primitive campsites and replace them with approximately 200 new campsites, including re-configuring roads to minimize excess asphalt and providing concrete pads and full hookups for some campsites. This is the next step in the 2015/16 Boyd Lake Redevelopment Plan. Boyd Lake currently accommodates 50,000+ campers per year, and existing campsites are full during weekends from April through October, and at 80-100% capacity during the week with increasing shoulder and “off” season usage. Existing facilities are outdated and do not meet customer expectations.

*Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area - Salida East campground upgrades*

The Salida East site has been an area with little oversight where campers park wherever possible with little campsite organization. CPW worked with the Bureau of Land Management to obtain a lease to create a campground with designated campsites and other amenities. This request creates a structured campground that will add approximately 35 additional campsites, amenities and day use parking for river access.

During FY 2020, CPW Leadership approved the 5-Year Large Capital Plan, a planning tool that prioritizes and schedules projects that cost over \$100,000 for the next five years. In FY 2021, the 5-Year Plan was refined by the Leadership Team and used during the capital decision making process. The Plan will need to be updated each year, especially in light of the legislature’s large investment into CPW’s Capital Development projects this year.

To help inform the long-term strategic plan, the Capital Program continued to inventory CPW’s assets around the state, and more specifically, add the parks asset inventory into the existing Wildlife Asset Management system to enable CPW staff to determine existing asset conditions that will allow the agency to prioritize maintenance needs and funding levels into the future. Also during FY 2021, a more comprehensive GIS model was developed that includes many of the underground assets located within state hatcheries and parks properties. CPW continues to commit resources to address obvious or long-term maintenance issues. Two projects completed in FY 2021 that help to reduce the maintenance backlog include:

- Rosemont Reservoir SWA Vault Toilet Replacement: Rosemont Reservoir is a popular fishing and wildlife watching spot in Teller County. CPW invested \$100,000 to replace an antiquated, wood vault toilet structure with one that is in line with current standards. The old structure was replaced with a pre-cast concrete building that will provide visitors with a clean and sanitary rest room facility. Replacing old and failing facilities such as this vault toilet reflects CPW’s larger goal to make facility improvements that directly benefit the public.
- Highline State Park Beach Restroom Replacement: Highline State Park is an epicenter for outdoor recreation in the Grand Valley due to its two lakes, camping, and several hiking trails. The park is also used as a home base to explore the Grand Junction area. Like many of our state parks, Highline continues to see increased visitation. In FY 2021, CPW invested more than \$1.1 million on a new beach restroom facility, replacing an undersized, aging facility that was in need of repairs.

**“We all have an obligation to our lands, waters and wildlife to recreate responsibly and monitor how our increased outdoor activities impact the places we play. More Coloradans are enjoying our great outdoors – and this additional funding will help our agency expand park facilities based on the evolving needs of our park visitors to ensure we can maintain a quality park system for years to come.”**

**- Dan Prenzlow, CPW Director**

**Goal 10: Reduce the Need to List Additional Species**

Conservation of threatened and endangered species and habitat is an area of utmost importance and a significant focus of CPW. Conservation involves careful land use decisions, concentrated research, and cooperative partnerships. By balancing species-specific needs with policy requirements and broad reaching habitat-based projects, CPW uses many tools to effectively manage Colorado’s wildlife and crucial habitat, whether at-risk or thriving.

**Investing in non-game species conservation**

In FY 2021, CPW spent nearly \$9.2 million on the conservation of non-game species and habitat through research, population status monitoring and reintroduction, and habitat protection and restoration benefitting threatened and endangered species. Several priority species of greatest conservation need were impacted by these efforts including the Canada lynx, black rail, pinyon jay, brown-capped rosy-finch, and lesser prairie-chicken. The funds also supported ongoing implementation of sylvatic plague management to benefit black-footed ferrets, black-tailed prairie dogs, Gunnison prairie dogs, white-tailed prairie dogs and the species that depend on prairie dog-influenced ecosystems. These programs enable CPW to proactively gather information and implement conservation actions to prevent the need to list additional species in the future.

**Investing in wetlands conservation**

Wetlands are lands affected by water that support unique plants and soils, making up just 2% of Colorado’s landscape, but providing benefits to over 75% of the state’s wildlife species. The protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas is vital to the conservation of wildlife diversity in the state.

Wetland and riparian landscapes provide crucial feeding, resting and rearing habitat, and movement corridors. They also improve water quality and quantity, and create open space, educational opportunities, and economic benefits from hunting, fishing and bird watching.

CPW’s Wetlands Program annually awards competitive grants to CPW staff and partners for projects that restore wetlands and riparian areas. These projects create new managed wetlands, improve the function and management efficiency of existing managed wetlands, remove non-native invasive vegetation and replace with native vegetation, manage invasive cattail growth in wetlands, restore riparian habitat impacted by mining, and reconnect incised creeks with their floodplains. Projects are conducted on state wildlife areas, state parks, and other public and private lands. The program drives funding priorities to those projects benefiting species of greatest conservation need identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan.



**Table 9. Goal 9 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 9	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
IX. Reducing the division's known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks	Amount allocated to small capital construction	FY18	\$3,412,118	\$6,132,307	80%	\$9,359,138	174%	\$9,632,013	182%
	Amount allocated to large capital construction	FY18	\$10,333,380	\$17,643,850	71%	\$21,648,729	110%	\$19,461,949	88%

In FY 2021, the Wetlands Program did not award any grants, but rather, pooled the funds that would have been awarded in FY 2021 with the grant funding available for FY 2022. This decision was made by CPW Leadership as a means to allow project managers to catch up on project delivery following COVID-19-related slowdowns that occurred at the end of FY 2020. These delays required numerous extensions of Wetland funding appropriations and agreements throughout the year. The combined FY21/FY22 Wetlands grant awards ultimately amounted to \$3.0 million and the recipients of the grants have been selected and notified. Of the \$3.0 million distributed to 20 projects, \$2,560,813 was awarded to new projects and the remainder to budget increases for previously-approved projects that required funding adjustments prior to the grant cycle. Projects awarded FY21/FY22 grant funds will help to conserve or restore over 10,000 acres of wetland and riparian areas in Colorado, and specifically benefit thirteen SWAs, two state parks, eight priority waterfowl species, and thirteen Tier-1 at-risk species including greater sandhill crane, northern leopard frogs, boreal toads, western yellow-billed cuckoo, brassy minnow, and southwestern willow flycatcher. Included among the several project partners receiving FY21/FY22 grants are Ducks Unlimited, Colorado Open Lands, Bird



Conservancy of the Rockies, RiverEdge West, Central Colorado Conservancy, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, River Science, Republican River Water Conservancy District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

One significant accomplishment in FY 2021 was the landscape-scale wetlands conservation that took place in the San Luis Valley. The San Luis Valley hosts Colorado's largest-scale wetlands, important to waterfowl and species of greatest conservation need such as Sandhill Crane, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Rio Grande Chub, and Rio Grande Sucker.



American Avocets foraging at Russell Lakes State Wildlife Area, San Luis Valley

In FY 2021, CPW and partners completed 11 projects in the San Luis Valley, totaling 2,202 acres of wetland and riparian habitat conservation. In partnership with Ducks Unlimited, 1,360 acres of wetland restoration were completed on the Higel, Rio Grande, and Russell Lakes State Wildlife Areas. These projects improved water management infrastructure to allow efficient management of natural wetland flowpaths in the current time of limited water availability. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 8 similar projects totaling 842 acres were completed on private lands. Restoration practices also included installing wildlife-friendly fencing to better manage livestock grazing, and cottonwood/willow plantings to promote the native riparian plant community along the Rio Grande corridor.

CPW also awarded Wetlands Program funds for FY 2022 to facilitate 10,032 acres of wetland/riparian restoration in this landscape over the next five years. These projects will restore 6,276 acres of wetlands on the Alamosa, Baca, and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges, 3,750 acres of flood-irrigated meadows on private lands protected with conservation easements along the Rock Creek corridor, and 6 acres of stream and riparian habitat along McIntire Spring to benefit native fishes and other wildlife.

**Partnering with private landowners in pursuit of mutual goals**

Privately held land and water resources provide critical habitat to many wildlife species in Colorado. CPW has a long history of partnering with private landowners across the state to manage and perpetuate wildlife populations and conserve and improve habitat. Many of CPW's private land efforts seek to couple habitat conservation with public access to wildlife resources. Private landowners have played key roles in the conservation of rare species and, without their support, Colorado's remarkable wildlife abundance and rich hunting and fishing opportunities would not exist.

CPW has supported wildlife habitat on private lands through the Pheasant Habitat Improvement Program (PHIP) since 1992. This program was started as a partnership between CPW and Pheasants Forever, Inc. chapters, but has grown to include contributions from hundreds of people: chapter volunteers, private landowners, Future Farmer members, Boy Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Soil Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Districts, and other community groups. The partnership has truly been a private land habitat focused program, with benefits to many species including pheasants, northern bobwhite, scaled quail, greater and lesser prairie-chickens, grassland songbirds, pollinating insects and plains deer. Since its inception, PHIP has delivered over 332,000 acres of habitat with several hundred landowners. PHIP has also partnered with NRCS and Pheasants Forever Inc. to place several farm bill biologists and a state coordinator in USDA offices to assist landowners in enrolling in state and federal habitat conservation programs. These partner positions work directly with hundreds of landowners annually and serve as a one-stop shop for wildlife habitat conservation to private landowners.

The PHIP program has evolved over time to include initiatives that target specific wildlife resource concerns in eastern Colorado, one of which is the Corners for Conservation (C4C) program. C4C is an initiative that establishes restored grasslands in farmed dryland corners of center pivot irrigation systems and around

playa wetlands, creating habitat for upland birds and forage for mule and whitetail deer. As of FY 2021, the C4C partnership, working with over 65 landowners, has established more than 550 individual plantings and habitat improvements on 4,500 acres, encompassing 559 pivot corners across Colorado. These plantings offer diverse mixes of grasses and wildflowers that provide superb nesting and brood habitat for upland birds, high quality forage for mule and whitetail deer, and excellent habitat for a wide range of pollinating insects. The program has also improved 1,016 acres of playa buffers with 27 landowners over the past 5 years. Every acre of C4C land is open for public hunting access through the Walk-in Access program.

CPW has been active for decades, in coordination with the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and private landowners, to enhance wildlife habitat enrolled in CRP. The CRP establishes restored grassland habitat on privately owned, previously farmed, lands to address soil erosion, water quality, and wildlife habitat. For CRP habitat to provide maximum benefits to wildlife, it must contain the appropriate mix of grasses, forbs and legumes, and must be located in the correct areas. Private lands enrolled in CRP are critical to many species in Colorado, including lesser prairie-chickens, greater prairie-chickens, and sharp-tailed grouse depending on location in the state. CPW annually conducts lek surveys to monitor grouse populations during their annual breeding period, and this effort would be impossible to complete without the cooperation of private landowners allowing access for surveys.

Due to the importance of CRP habitat to many species, in FY 2020 CPW took the lead role in updating Colorado's State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) proposals within the CRP program. SAFE proposals are an effort to target CRP, establishing habitat in the proper areas for wildlife and impacting priority species on private lands in all corners of the state. FY 2021 offered the first enrollment opportunity in the newly updated SAFE target areas, and while the sign-up period is not quite over for this year, CPW's farm bill biologist partner positions have already enrolled over 10,000 acres in SAFE. SAFE proposals touch all regions of the state and include: the lesser prairie-chicken SAFE in southeast Colorado, the Upland Bird SAFE targeting ring-necked pheasants, greater prairie-chicken, plains sharp-tailed grouse and grasshopper sparrow in northeast Colorado, and the West Slope grouse SAFE targeting Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage grouse in northwest Colorado and Gunnison sage grouse in southwest Colorado. These SAFE proposals are expected to impact hundreds of thousands of acres for wildlife, while partnering with hundreds of private landowners.

Throughout FY 2021, CPW continued to collaborate with partners and private landowners on hundreds of projects. In Colorado, significant conservation work is accomplished through agreements between Pheasants Forever and Pheasants Forever Chapters, the NRCS, CPW, and many other contributing partners to fund Partner Biologist positions. These partner agreements go by various names including Farm Bill Biologist, Range and Wildlife Conservationist, or Habitat Specialist. In most instances the positions work out of NRCS offices, but depending on the position, they can be located almost anywhere in the state where there is a need for conservation work and partners willing and able to provide funding, office space, or equipment for a Partner Biologist position. Contributing partners participating in the agreements benefit from these Partner Biologist positions through assistance with workload and high quality conservation work on the ground. CPW further contributes to these partnerships by applying the funding match provided by Pheasants Forever to leverage USDA Farm Bill funds, allowing the partnerships to stretch their resources even further. Major accomplishments from these partnerships in FY 2021, which necessitate private landowner involvement to be successful, impacted various species of wildlife, insects, plants, and habitat across more than 172,300 acres in Colorado.

**Table 10. Goal 10 summary table of metric changes from baseline**

Goal 10	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
X. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts	Amount spent on nongame species conservation	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$8,933,515	\$8,856,548	-1%	\$10,147,410	14%	\$9,192,393	3%
	Total amount of grants for Wetlands Program	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	\$978,139	\$1,925,012	97%	\$1,286,630	32%	\$3,000,000**	**

\*\*As the result of a CPW Leadership decision, Wetlands grants were not awarded in FY21; instead, \$1.5 million that would have been awarded in FY21 was pooled with \$1.5 million available for awards in FY22. The total shown in this table represents the combination of those funds.

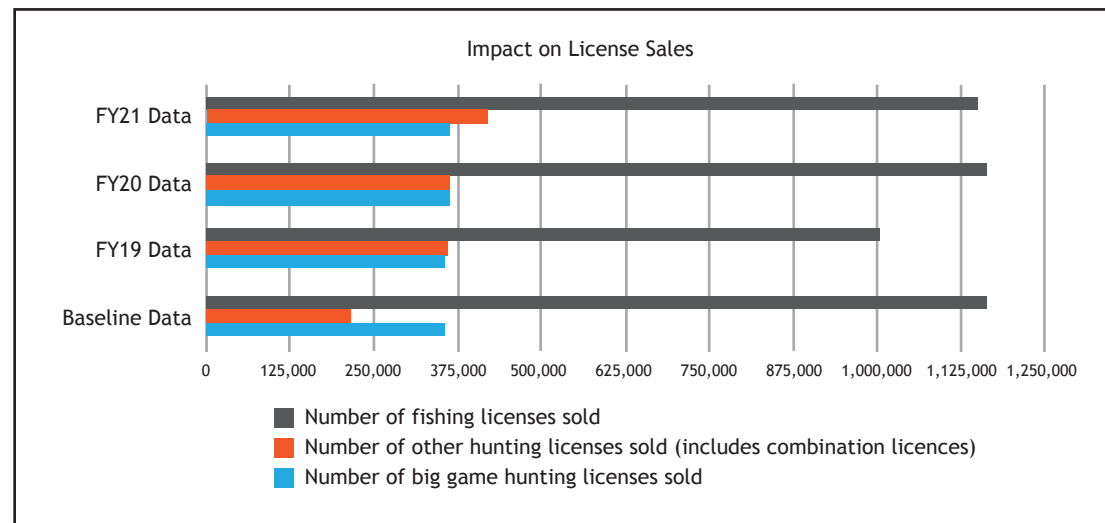


**Impact on License Sales**

During FY 2021, CPW sold over 364,450 big game hunting licenses, a 3% increase from the baseline average. Additionally in FY 2021, CPW sold 419,600 other licenses including combination hunting/fishing licenses. This is a 94% increase from the baseline average, which is likely attributable to the introduction of the qualifying license requirement implemented in 2019. This change requires all applicants to hold a qualifying license in the current license year prior to applying for the big game draw. Qualifying licenses include resident and non-resident spring turkey and annual small game, resident annual combination small game/fishing, resident senior combination small game/fishing (added as a qualifying license in FY 2020), and resident Veteran’s lifetime combination small game/fishing licenses. Finally, in FY 2021, CPW sold 1,154,351 fishing licenses, in step with the baseline average.

**Table 11. Impact on license sales**

Reporting Requirement	Metric	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	FY19 Data	FY19 percent change (from baseline)	FY20 Data	FY20 percent change (from baseline)	FY21 Data	FY21 percent change (from baseline)
Impact on license sales	Number of big game hunting licenses sold	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	353,811	358,359	1%	366,761	4%	364,453	3%
	Number of other hunting licenses sold (includes combination licenses)	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	216,029	360,379	67%	364,800	69%	419,600	94%
	Number of fishing licenses sold	3-year average of FY16, FY17, FY18	1,164,239	1,004,846	-14%	1,164,388	0%	1,154,351	-1%



**Appendix 1: Reporting Requirements for the Future Generations Act**

The Hunting, Fishing, and Parks for Future Generations Act was signed into law on May 4, 2018. It grants the PWC the authority to enact modest increases to state park entrance fees and increase prices for in-state hunting and fishing licenses. The new revenue derived from this authority will allow CPW to begin to address projected funding shortfalls of \$30 million annually for wildlife and \$11 million annually for parks by 2025.

The Act specifies 10 goals to fulfill by 2025, including:

- I. Increasing the number of hunters and anglers in Colorado in the face of national declines in hunting and fishing numbers through investments in recruitment programs, such as hunter education and Fishing is Fun, the development of the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex, and grants for shooting ranges in all regions of the state;
- II. Partnering with stakeholders to develop strategies to engage all outdoor recreationists, including hikers, bikers, climbers, and wildlife watchers, in funding the division and commission, maintenance of state lands and facilities, and management of wildlife;
- III. Recruiting and retaining qualified employees to manage wildlife, park, recreational, and aquatic resources;
- IV. Supporting access programs on public and private lands, including the renewal of existing high-priority leases that provide public access for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreationists;
- V. Increasing and improving the state’s big game populations through investments in habitat and conservation, including increased support for highway wildlife crossings to protect animals and motorists;
- VI. Identifying and beginning to plan the development of a new Colorado state park and investing in other initiatives to increase park visitation, maintain excellent customer service, and generate revenue;
- VII. Reducing the \$44.76 million maintenance and repair backlog by 50% for the 11 dams owned and operated by the division that pose the highest risks to life and property and establishing an appropriate funding stream to continue maintenance of all of the division’s 110 dams;
- VIII. Increasing the number of fish stocked in Colorado water to more than 90 million through the development of a statewide hatchery modernization plan, renovation of one of the state’s 19 fish hatcheries, and reduction in the maintenance backlog for all hatcheries, many of which are 70 to 100 years old;
- IX. Reducing the division’s known \$26 million large capital construction and maintenance backlog by 50% and establishing a capital development backlog strategic plan to provide a stable funding stream to address future maintenance projects at state wildlife areas and state parks; and
- X. Reducing the need to list additional state trust species under the federal “Endangered Species Act of 1973” 16 U.S.C. sec. 1531 et seq., by partnering with private landowners to improve species distribution and abundance monitoring and disease prevention efforts. (Section 2 (1)).

The Act also specifies the following reporting requirements:

“BY NOVEMBER 1, 2019, AND BY EACH NOVEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE DIVISION SHALL PREPARE A WRITTEN REPORT ON:

- (A) IMPACT THAT LICENSE FEE INCREASES, AS ESTABLISHED ON THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION OR BY THE COMMISSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 33-4-102 (1.5)(a), HAVE HAD ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SALES OF LICENSES;
- (B) AN ACCOUNTING OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES MADE WITH THE INCREASED FEES AND THE IMPACT OF THOSE EXPENDITURES ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE DIVISION’S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 2 OF SENATE BILL 18-143, ENACTED IN 2018; AND



(C) A LIST OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT, IN THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS, RECEIVED GRANT MONEY FROM THE SALE OF STATE MIGRATORY WATERFOWL STAMPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 33-4-102.5 (3)(b) AND AN EXPLANATION OF EACH GRANT AWARD MADE.

(II) THE DIVISION SHALL MAKE THE REPORT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND SHALL SEND EACH REPORT TO THE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY COMMITTEE IN THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

(b) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2022, AND ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1, 2025, THE DIVISION SHALL PRESENT ITS FINDINGS FROM, AND A SUMMARY OF, ITS MOST RECENT REPORT PREPARED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1)(a) OF THIS SECTION TO A JOINT SESSION OF THE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ENERGY COMMITTEE IN THE SENATE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES.

(2) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025.” (33-4-121(1)(a)(I), C.R.S.)

## **Appendix 2: Colorado Waterfowl Stamp Fund Grants**

Goal 10 discusses CPW’s Wetlands Program grant awards made annually on a competitive basis to CPW and partner organizations for wetland and riparian restoration work. These projects are conducted on state wildlife areas, state parks, and other public and private lands. Projects that benefit Tier 1 and 2 at-risk wildlife species from the State Wildlife Action Plan, along with waterfowl, are a priority for funding.

As also discussed in Goal 10, during FY 2021, the Wetlands Program did not award any grants, but rather, pooled the funds that would have been awarded in FY 2021 with the grant funding available for FY 2022. This decision was made by CPW Leadership as a means to allow project managers to catch up on project delivery following COVID-19-related slowdowns that occurred at the end of FY 2020. The combined FY21/FY22 Wetlands grant awards ultimately amounted to \$3.0 million. Of the \$3.0 million distributed to 20 projects, \$2,560,813 was awarded to new projects and the remainder to budget increases for previously-approved projects that required funding adjustments prior to the grant cycle. Projects awarded FY21/FY22 grant funds will help to conserve or restore over 10,000 acres of wetland and riparian areas in Colorado.

For Colorado Waterfowl Stamp funds specifically, \$400,000 was available for the FY21/FY22 pooled grant cycle. These grant funds support five projects that will impact 2,387 acres of wetlands habitat. Waterfowl Stamp grant partners include Ducks Unlimited and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies.





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