

Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind Update

Purpose: Updating the 1998 document to align with our current knowledge of how Colorado land managers should plan for trails while incorporating plans to address wildlife impacts as well as highlight our Wildlife Impact Assessment process for how we evaluate trail grants through State Trails Program.

Audience: Internal CPW Staff, Federal and Local Land Managers, CPW Trail Grant Applicants, Recreational Trail Users, and Conservation Groups.

Scope: Focus on planning Colorado recreational trails while considering impacts to wildlife.

Content: Take the relevant principles from the existing document and update them with our current knowledge. Will also add our current wildlife review process for Trail Grants to continue and encourage early consultation with CPW. Share 2-3 Success Stories to highlight areas where proper planning resulted in trail users, CPW, and partners sitting cooperatively at the table together. Example - Salida area mountain biking clubs working to develop seasonal trail closures and self-policing each other to help with enforcement.

Format: We will consider this is as a living document that can be updated as we learn more. Decision will be made at a later to the exact format - PDF document that can be shared electronically or in print or as a website/online resource.

Internal Working Group:

Mix of Deputy Regional Managers, Wildlife Biologists, Wildlife Managers, Trails Program, Planning and Policy, Resources Stewardship, GIS, and Land Use Coordinators

Goal: Draft outline of the new document ready for review by June 30, 2020.

Themes that came up:

- 1) As our mission includes both wildlife management and outdoor recreation, CPW needs to be the leader in this effort but needs input from our partners to make this successful and relevant across the state.
- 2) Develop an understanding of what we as a group working on these issues currently know and what we do not know. And, acknowledge the desire to increase knowledge and continue to share that.
- 3) Desire to encourage systems thinking when looking at proposed trails with respect to the existing local/regional trail systems and looking at wildlife concerns over the landscape. Examining how a trail aligns with travel management/trail master plans
- 4) Highlight trail management techniques that can be used to help with this issue.

Task Force:

In 1998, the State Trails Program convened a multi-faceted stakeholder group to design and write the handbook, "Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind." The document's purpose is to support all Colorado land managers in planning for trails while incorporating strategies to address wildlife impacts. The former document has served as an excellent tool for trail planners throughout the state, but it has not been updated in 20 years. Much has changed in Colorado's conservation and recreation landscape over those two decades. Informed by the original document, a new version will:

- Provide the opportunity to build a common language,
- Align with current knowledge,
- Share recent success stories, and
- Update with new research.

With the guidance and support of an external facilitation team, CPW is convening a task force made up of 24 representatives (from USFS, BLM, NPS, USFWS, a mix of large, medium, and small municipalities and counties), to build ownership and wide support, and receive feedback and input from the agencies that who will be using the document. The external Task Force/Advisory Council will create the outline/rough draft of this document.

The updated document might take the form of an easily shareable PDF, a well-designed print version, or a dynamic website. The new format(s) will be part of the Task Force discussions and will seek to best meet the needs of the handbook's intended audience, including CPW staff, Local, State, and Federal Land Managers, CPW Trail Grant Applicants, the general public, Recreational Trail Users, and Conservation Groups.

Stakeholder Engagement:

An advisory group made up of representatives of recreationists, conservation groups, the land trust community, academic researchers, and GOCO will provide insight about how these technical decisions affect the human dimension and experience. To broaden and deepen stakeholder engagement we are hosting a virtual Partners Conference session and have given presentations for the Sportsperson's Roundtable and Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance. We will share the draft outline on our website for additional feedback upon completion.

Outcome of this Process:

- 1) A document to share with land managers, recreational trails groups, and the public at large to provide guidance on how to best design trail systems to address wildlife impacts based on our current knowledge.
- 2) Develop a common language and understanding for everyone who is working on trails and wildlife issues throughout the state.