

Colorado Sportsperson's Roundtable

March 5th, 2022, 11am - 4pm

Hybrid

Summary

Introductions

The hybrid Sportsperson's Roundtable in Salida, CO, began with a brief overview of the meeting agenda, introductions of roundtable members, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff in attendance.

Director Prenzlow's Welcome

CPW Director, Dan Prenzlow, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. Director Prenzlow provided an overview of major projects of interest to the Sportsperson's Roundtable. One project underway is an assessment of limited big game hunting license distribution. Director Prenzlow mentioned that CPW received over 10,000 responses to an initial comment form. Focus groups with residents and non-residents will take place in April in conjunction with a Big Game Attitude Survey (BGAS) sent out to a random sample of 6,000 Colorado residents and non-residents. Results from the BGAS are expected in late spring/early summer, which will be followed by public engagement to draft alternatives for potential changes to license distribution for the Parks and Wildlife Commission's consideration in the fall. Director Prenzlow also mentioned the Partners in the Outdoors Conference taking place in Vail, CO, April 18th-20th. Director Prenzlow proceeded to give an update on wolf reintroduction efforts. Due to the federal relisting of wolves, CPW will work in coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) on reintroduction, management, and hazing policies. Despite the added steps, CPW will move forward with planning wolf reintroduction on the same timeline as before, with wolves released by the end of 2023. Director Prenzlow provided a brief update on Keep Colorado Wild pass, the Habitat stamp, as well as the State Wildlife Area (SWA) pass sales. CPW is continuing to look at the use of SWA properties, reconvening the stakeholder advisory group for their input.

Legislative Session Summary - Alice Cosgrove Horgan, Director of Legislative Affairs

DNR Director of Legislative Affairs, Alice Cosgrove Horgan, provided an update on the current legislative session. Colorado is about half way through the 73rd general assembly. The Agriculture Committee expanded with two new members (Danielson and Fields), however the Committee will lose three term-limited senators-Donovan, Sonnenberg, and Coram-next year. The Senate Agriculture Committee is discussing the reauthorization of the habitat partnership program (HB22-1072). Bills of interest to the roundtable that are being drafted include:

- The non-game species tax checkoff reauthorization
- A bill that allows CPW to protect sensitive wildlife data
- A bill to improve backcountry search and rescue

A bill passed through the first chamber to offer a hunting safety class as an elective to middle school students. The committee has indefinitely postponed the bill banning hunting of lynx, bobcats and mountain lions. Some legislators are interested in taking up the issue of lead ammunition.

Some of the big budget items moving through the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) include approximately 15 full-time employees for CPW and more funds to facilitate public access (particularly at Sweetwater, CPW's newest state park). The JBC is also looking to pass some "smaller" budget items including asset repairs, radios, and other such important maintenance.

On March 10th, a confirmation hearing is to be held for Parks and Wildlife commissioners Marie Haskett and Karen Bailey [both were confirmed].

At this point, the floor was opened to questions. One question aimed at the hunter safety class and its ability to transfer to the high school level. The bill is focused at the middle school level with no live fire certificate and the students can get the live fire certificate separately with CPW if they would like. As of now, this elective is not proposed at the high school level, and based on the research done, middle school is a great time to reach kids about getting them into hunting and fishing.

Another question was raised in regards to the bobcat and mountain lion bill and the exact number of bobcats in Colorado. Alice is working to explain to legislators how CPW manages bobcats so that they understand the scientific approach of CPW. Alice also mentioned that the sponsor who proposed the bobcat/mountain lion bill may bring back a more limited bill focused on bobcats in the future.

Alice put her email in the zoom chat and encouraged anyone to reach out to her with any further comments and questions: alice.cosgrove@state.co.us.

License Distribution Update & Work Session - Brian Dreher and Jody Kennedy

Jody began this discussion with an update on the process looking at the distribution of limited big game hunting licenses. CPW staff began the review process internally, then sent out a public comment form, receiving over 10,000 responses, including 4,500 people who expressed an interest in volunteering for focus groups this spring. Staff also created the Big Game Attitude Survey and sent it to 6,000 randomly selected Colorado hunters (resident and nonresident) in March 2022. In terms of the timeline on this project, CPW is working towards presenting the feedback from the BGAS and focus groups to the Commission in late spring/early summer.

Roundtable members engaged in a discussion about limited license allocation. A roundtable member asked if allocation applies to over-the-counter (OTC) licenses. The response was that it only applies to limited license draw.

Brian Dreher, CPW Terrestrial Section Manager, then provided more background information with a powerpoint where he described that allocation is done at a hunt-code level, gave an overview of allocation splits, explained 'soft-cap,' and also provided an overview of elk hunt codes at the 80/20 split.

Due to internet issues and technology malfunctions, not everything was captured in this discussion.

There were some questions and discussion regarding hunting vouchers.

Another member asked about who the BGAS is being sent to and it was clarified that the survey was sent to a random sample of 6,000 Colorado hunters (3,000 residents and 3,000 nonresidents).

The discussion then turned to OTC licenses, with a few members concerned that Colorado is one of the few states where you can just show up and buy a hunting license. Several roundtable members voiced their opinions-one believes leftover licenses should be OTC and that there should be no specific youth allocation for leftover licenses and another member voiced that if there are leftover youth licenses, then those licenses should only go to youth through the leftover draw.

The conversation then turned to simplicity, where Brian mentioned that every option comes with trade-offs. Another member asked about CPW's business model and if the goal is to maximize income. The response was that income is a secondary consideration to biology with no policy to maximize revenue.

A question was asked about what the motivation is using landowner vouchers. Brian responded that these landowners are helping feed these herds for a majority of the year by giving them access to their land. So, while that animal may not be on their property during hunting season, they are helping ensure the health of these herds for the rest of the year. With no reward like the voucher, there is no way to acknowledge the contributions of the landowner to the big game herds.

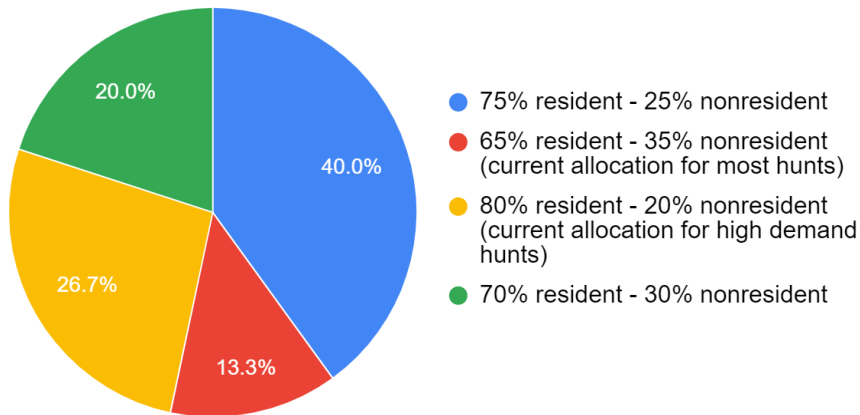
The roundtable participated in a poll and then discussed the results. When asked what the resident/nonresident allocation should be, the top response was 75/25. Some comments include:

- Recognition that income generated by non-resident licenses is vital to CPW and Colorado
- Outfitters also rely primarily on non-resident hunters

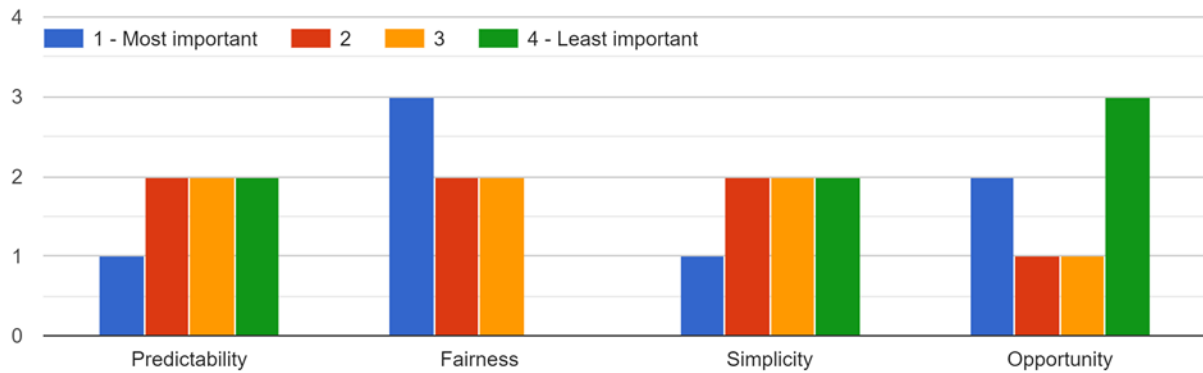
- Not everyone is super clear what the hybrid option entails
- OTC needs to be examined as Colorado’s population grows

Poll Results:

Which of the following alternatives would be the fairest way to determine how big game licenses should be allocated between Colorado resident and nonresident hunters? (Please check one.)



6. Which of the following are most important to you when considering gaining or using preference points? (Please rank these options from 1, most important, to 4, least important.)



Gray Wolf Restoration and Management - Reid Dewalt

CPW’s Assistant Director of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Natural Resources, Reid Dewalt, provided an update on gray wolf restoration efforts in Colorado. He mentioned the North Park breeding pair and their pups are doing well, and that CPW is working closely with a nearby landowner to provide hazing tools due to livestock damage. Reid recapped the planning

process and that it is a four-part plan: logistics and compensation plan (*completed*), management phase and what it looks like when wolves are on the ground (*currently in*), education phase, and finalize plans to release the wolves by December, 2023. The relisting of wolves by the federal government adds additional steps such as an Environmental Impact Statement and passing through the NEPA process-costing around \$1 million. CPW will need to come up with those funds.

Appropriate hazing techniques, as cleared by the USFWS ([see letter](#)) include:

- Fladry
- Guard animals
- Loud noises

Roundtable members asked a number of questions about wolf reintroduction and if human/wildlife conflicts will increase, protections for outfitters, and misconceptions about wolves. For more information about the wolf restoration process, members were encouraged to go to wolfengagementco.org for more information.

Regional Caucus Reports & Updates

Northeast Region

The Northeast Region held its caucus meeting on February 9th with 21 attendees. They announced the opening of Colorado Clays shooting park, which features electronic target screens. They anticipate this will be a popular facility. The Northeast caucus meeting had a number of CPW presentations shared on topics such as the effects of fire, big game license distribution, and public engagement. The Northeast caucus members discussed the lack of attendees and ideas for increasing participation.

Southeast Region

The Southeast Region held their caucus meeting on Facebook Live and had very strong attendance. Danielle Isenhardt, CPW License, Reservations and Customer Operations Manager, provided updates on license distribution, followed by updates on terrestrial, aquatic, and wolf issues provided by CPW staff. After this discussion they opened up the conversation to attendees to talk about Fishers Peak. There was also conversation around domestic versus wild sheep. This discussion then turned to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and related management practices.

Southwest Region

The Southwest Region caucus organizers began their update with discussing how they held their meeting online, with high numbers but more difficulties engaging in robust discussion. Jamin Grigg, CPW's Southwest Region Senior Wildlife Biologist, gave a presentation on recent elk and mountain lion studies. This was followed by a presentation from the aquatics team on taking bass out of Ridgway. They also had a discussion on license allocation and preference points. Rachel Sralla then gave a report on Ouray outdoor recreation crowding, how that is

linked to habitat conservation, and the issues surrounding those concerns. The Southwest Region ended with an update on wolf reintroduction.

Northwest Region

This caucus meeting began with Travis Black's introduction to the Northwest region as the new Regional Manager. This was followed by Habitat Management Program presentations provided by Brian Banulis, a license allocation presentation, and presentations on the aquatic programs in the Northwest region. The caucus then voted in Les Smith as a delegate for the Northwest region.

A roundtable member asked for more information documenting the responsibilities of roundtable members. CPW staff committed to providing more information.

Open Roundtable

The open roundtable portion consisted of a number of discussions.

Charter

The Sportperson's Roundtable charter emphasizes work on youth opportunities, habitat and financial sustainability. Members agreed that the topic of youth involvement should continue to be brought up in future conversations.

Public Engagement

As expressed earlier, the roundtable discussed increasing public engagement. The Northeast regional caucus decided that they will distribute information to various organizations and tell people to sign up for e-news. This discussion then touched on a number of topics:

- How to reach out to organizations and individuals
- Jonathan shared CPW e-news subscriber numbers: 423,936 total subscribers, of those, 371,123 are hunting subscribers
- It is helpful to have a virtual option for caucus meetings, and other public engagement meetings. People in the roundtable group may prefer face-to-face meetings, but they understand that many people like having the zoom option
- The roundtable had a discussion on Facebook Live versus YouTube versus Zoom and the benefits and drawbacks of these virtual options
- The group also discussed the need to balance content overload with making information easily accessible as they don't want to lose subscribers due to content overload

The Roundtable then learned that Jody had recently accepted a new position as the Regional Partnership Program Manager with CPW and congratulated her on her new job. *Much applause for her contributions to the Roundtable over the last 7 years.*

Partnerships with Recreational Groups

This discussion began on the topic of partnering with the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) community on trail maintenance as well as other groups such as mountain bikers. The members then briefly discussed the following:

- The need to engage in “new” groups on trails, habitat, maintenance, etc. because by being more engaged with these groups they can better coexist to protect the habitat they are all enjoying
- The work done by regional outdoor partnerships, trail coordinators, and other such people, which can go unseen, is very important work
- A recommendation for trail committees to have subcommittees for motorized and non-motorized user groups and those efforts need to be communicated back to the other local groups

Habitat Conservation

A member of the Colorado Bowhunters Association (CBA) brought up that CBA would like to be more involved in conservation projects around the state.

OTC Elk Licenses

This discussion began with the question of why archery hunters were limited in Units 80/81, but not rifle hunters. Brian mentioned that there is a 4-point restriction on OTC licenses, and also a social issue with crowing. When a unit goes limited, it pushes people into OTC units.

Younger people have also started going deeper into the backcountry during archery season. Lots of new technology is making it easier to get into the backcountry and is creating different pressures on the system, and CPW is working on ways to balance these different pressures.

Preference Points

There was discussion of point creep and encouragement for CPW to remain proactive and think 10-20 years down the road.

Fishers Peak

The roundtable discussed land uses at Fishers Peak State Park with a good portion of land designated for big game habitat with no public access allowed, other than hunters during hunting seasons.

San Juan Cutthroat Trout

A member mentioned that he was a part of a group that made a video on the San Juan cutthroat trout recovery efforts found on YouTube here: [Fish and the Flame](#).

The last few comments given by Jody include the plans for setting a date for the August Sportspersons Roundtable meeting; reviewing applications for open roundtable seats in the spring, and giving information on the Partners Conference taking place April 18th-20th.

Adjourn

Attachment 1: Sportsperson's Roundtable Meeting Attendee List

Roundtable Members:

Aaron Jones
Adam Gall
Brian Braaten
Chloe Lomprey
Erik Myhre
Kim Kokesh
Mark Scofield
Roy Karo
Ryan Britten
Steve Schake
Trent Peterson
Willie Kalaskie
Brian "Sol" Soliday
Lester Smith
Mia Anstine
Paul Navarre
Robert Terwillinger
Roger Cesario
Ron Goodrich

CPW/DNR Staff:

Jody Kennedy
Jonathan Boydston
Travis Black
Brett Ackerman
Jeff Ver Steeg
Brian Dreher
Mark Leslie
Dan Prenzlów
Alice Cosgrove Horgan
Reid DeWalt
Heather Dugan
Cory Chick
Lauren Truitt
Katie Lanter

Parks and Wildlife Commissioner:

Marie Haskett