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Fiscal Note

Drafting Number: LLS 24-0318 Date: February 16, 2024
Prime Sponsors: Rep. McCormick; Soper Bill Status: House Ag., Water, & Natural Res.
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Bill Topic: INVERTEBRATES & RARE PLANTS PARKS & WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Summary of Fiscal Impact: [] State Revenue [] State Transfer [] Local Government
[x] State Expenditure [] TABOR Refund [] Statutory Public Entity

The bill adds rare plants and invertebrates to the species that can be studied and conserved by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. It increases state expenditures on an ongoing basis.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2024-25, the bill requires an appropriation of \$867,983 to the Department of Natural Resources.

Fiscal Note Status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under HB 24-1117

Table with 4 columns: Category, Budget Year FY 2024-25, Out Year FY 2025-26. Rows include Revenue, Expenditures (Cash Funds, Centrally Appropriated, Total Expenditures), Total FTE, Transfers, and Other Budget Impacts.

Summary of Legislation

The bill adds rare plants and invertebrates to the species that can be studied and conserved by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under the “Nongame, Endangered, or Threatened Species Conservation Act,” which is renamed to be the “Nongame, Endangered, or Threatened Wildlife and Rare Plant Conservation Act.” The bill allows for CPW to conduct investigations and surveys of rare plants and invertebrates to determine any necessary conservation and management measures, and to undertake programs designed to conserve, protect, and perpetuate rare plants and invertebrates. The bill requires that the General Assembly appropriate sufficient funding either from the General Fund or the Wildlife Cash Fund (excluding revenue from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses) for the implementation of the bill. The bill also adds rare plants to the management programs that can be funded with the Species Conservation Trust Fund. The DNR must present on CPW’s rare plant and invertebrate investigations at its annual SMART Act hearing beginning January 2026.

Background and Assumptions

In accordance with the bill's requirements, the CPW will utilize non-license revenue to implement the bill, and no licensing fee adjustments will be required. For informational purposes, in addition to licensing fee revenue, the Wildlife Cash Fund receives revenue from the Colorado Lottery, the Keep Colorado Wild Pass, rents, and sales of publications.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures from the Wildlife Cash Fund by about \$1 million per year beginning in FY 2024-25. Expenditures are shown in Table 2 and detailed below.

**Table 2
Expenditures Under HB 24-1117**

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
Department of Natural Resources		
Personal Services	\$412,885	\$496,234
Operating Expenses	\$6,400	\$7,680
Capital Outlay Costs	\$40,020	-
Temporary Staff	\$254,475	\$254,475
Additional Staff Operating Costs	\$120,000	\$120,000
Vehicle Leases and Operating Costs	\$34,203	\$56,361
Centrally Appropriated Costs ¹	\$88,523	\$96,505
Total Cost	\$948,343	\$1,031,255
Total FTE	5.0 FTE	6.0 FTE

¹ Centrally appropriated costs are not included in the bill's appropriation.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife—DNR. Based on the CPW's other species conservation programs, the agency requires permanent and temporary staff, equipment, and vehicles to implement the bill, as outlined below.

- **Permanent staff.** The CPW requires 6.0 FTE beginning in FY 2024-25. Permanent staff includes an invertebrate coordinator, two invertebrate conservation field staff, an aquatic invertebrate specialist, a rare plant coordinator, and a pollinator coordinator. These staff will be required to design, direct, and report on field work and to survey and gather data on the distribution and habitat conditions of rare plants and invertebrates on an ongoing basis. Personal services costs include standard operating and capital outlay expenses, and have been prorated in FY 2024-25 for a presumed September 1 effective date.
- **Temporary staff.** The CPW requires temporary staff to support the field and survey work of the permanent staff. Costs assume the temporary staff will work a combined average of 13,050 hours per year at an average salary of \$19.50 per hour.
- **Additional staff operating costs.** The CPW requires funding on an ongoing basis beginning in FY 2024-25 for non-standard operating costs, which includes equipment, sample testing, various contracts, and per diem and travel reimbursements.
- **Vehicle leases and operating costs.** The CPW requires multiple vehicle leases per year beginning in FY 2024-25. Staff will be required to travel statewide, and vehicles will be shared between the permanent and temporary staff. These costs are reappropriated to the Department of Personnel and Administration.
- **Centrally appropriated costs.** Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which include employee insurance and supplemental employee retirement payments, are shown in Table 2.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2024-25, the bill requires an appropriation of \$867,983 from the Wildlife Cash Fund to the Department of Natural Resources, and 5.0 FTE. Of this amount, \$34,203 is reappropriated to the Department of Personnel and Administration.

The Department of Natural Resources has requested an appropriation of \$93,195 from the Wildlife Cash Fund, and 1.0 FTE, as a part of the funding requested in its R-02 Biodiversity and Habitat Staffing FY 2024-25 budget request. If this budget request is approved, then the full appropriation included in this fiscal note should be reduced by this amount.

State and Local Government Contacts

Natural Resources

The revenue and expenditure impacts in this fiscal note represent changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. For additional information about fiscal notes, please visit the [General Assembly website](#).