



Colorado General Assembly  
Joint Budget Committee

# JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE STAFF FY 2024-25 BUDGET BRIEFING SUMMARY

*Department of Natural Resources*

*Executive Director's Office, Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Division of Water Resources*

The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for developing, protecting, and enhancing Colorado's natural resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future residents and visitors.

## FY 2023-24 APPROPRIATION & FY 2024-25 REQUEST

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, PARKS & WILDLIFE, WATER CONSERVATION BOARD, WATER RESOURCES)						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
<b>FY 2023-24 APPROPRIATION:</b>						
S.B. 23-214 (Long Bill)	364,080,691	42,466,523	279,907,686	8,126,203	33,580,279	1,362.6
Other legislation	98,715,878	(98,724)	98,807,571	7,031	0	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$462,796,569</b>	<b>\$42,367,799</b>	<b>\$378,715,257</b>	<b>\$8,133,234</b>	<b>\$33,580,279</b>	<b>1,363.9</b>
<b>FY 2024-25 REQUESTED APPROPRIATION:</b>						
FY 2023-24 Appropriation	\$462,796,569	42,367,799	\$378,715,257	\$8,133,234	\$33,580,279	1,363.9
R1 State Land Board biodiversity program	79,457	0	79,457	0	0	0.0
R2 CPW biodiversity and habitat	1,097,145	0	1,097,145	0	0	8.3
R3 Reverse wildlife cash and lottery trans.	(199,068)	0	(199,068)	0	0	0.0
R4 Park manager career progression	493,796	0	493,796	0	0	0.0
R5 River operations coordinators	394,025	394,025	0	0	0	2.8
R6 Create CWCB grants section	154,574	0	154,574	0	0	0.9
R7 IT infrastructure and support	101,693	0	0	101,693	0	0.9
R8 Wildlife dam safety staffing	140,071	0	140,071	0	0	0.9
R9 Wildlife management staffing	1,320,746	0	1,320,746	0	0	15.6
R10 Aquatics staffing and hatchery ops	1,014,939	0	1,014,939	0	0	3.7
R11 Staff for demand at state parks	578,158	0	578,158	0	0	6.4
R12 CPW information and education	290,730	0	290,730	0	0	3.6
R13 SLB outdoor recreation leasing	17,644	0	17,644	0	0	0.0
R14 CPW administrative support	393,511	0	393,511	0	0	5.5
Centrally appropriated line items	21,569,277	2,846,066	17,701,156	810,434	211,621	0.0
Non-prioritized decision items	1,720,883	223,884	1,442,608	53,830	561	0.0
Technical adjustments	1,697,089	0	(1,302,911)	0	3,000,000	0.0
Indirect cost assessment	716,506	77,962	716,565	(77,962)	(59)	0.0
Annualize prior year legislation	(96,232,375)	155,585	(96,387,960)	0	0	1.7
Annualize prior year budget actions	(3,416,770)	(124,111)	(2,994,170)	(122,746)	(175,743)	(2.4)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$394,728,600</b>	<b>\$45,941,210</b>	<b>\$303,272,248</b>	<b>\$8,898,483</b>	<b>\$36,616,659</b>	<b>1,411.8</b>
<b>INCREASE/(DECREASE)</b>	<b>(\$68,067,969)</b>	<b>\$3,573,411</b>	<b>(\$75,443,009)</b>	<b>\$765,249</b>	<b>\$3,036,380</b>	<b>47.9</b>
Percentage Change	(14.7%)	8.4%	(19.9%)	9.4%	9.0%	3.5%

**R1 STATE LAND BOARD BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM:** *This decision item will be covered in a separate staff briefing planned for November 30, 2023.*

**R2 CPW BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT:** The Department requests an increase of \$1,097,145 cash funds from the Wildlife Cash Fund and 8.3 FTE starting in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$1,166,199 cash funds and 9.0 FTE in FY 2025-26.

The request aims to support biodiversity coordination activities and is part of a larger effort that includes R1 State Land Board Biodiversity Program. Per the request, it is also related to “the work and forthcoming roadmap of the Governor’s Office of Climate Preparedness.”

The requested staff would work on: species conservation efforts, especially those related to amphibians and pollinating insects; data management related to species conservation; aquatic population genetics and habitat projects; terrestrial biology in southwest Colorado; resource stewardship; habitat protection; and private land conservation.

**R3 REVERSE WILDLIFE CASH AND LOTTERY TRANSFERS [LEGISLATION REQUIRED]:** The Department requests that the JBC sponsor legislation to transfer about \$1.5 million from the Capitol Complex Renovation Fund to the Wildlife Cash Fund (\$1.2 million) and the Parks & Wildlife Lottery Fund (\$0.273 million). This legislation would also stop future transfers from the Wildlife Cash Fund and CPW Lottery Fund to the Capitol Complex Renovation Fund and eliminate CPW’s *Annual Depreciation-lease Equivalent Payment* line item in the Long Bill, which is supported by the Wildlife Cash Fund.

The request asserts that previous transfers from these CPW cash funds, as required by S.B. 22-239 (Buildings in the Capitol Complex), were made erroneously. Specifically, federal and state law prohibit the diversion of Wildlife cash funds for non-wildlife purposes as condition of eligibility for about 45.0 million federal funds related to excise taxes on hunting, shooting, and fishing equipment. The request also asserts that transfers from CPW’s Lottery Fund conflict with the State Constitution. This request will be covered in greater detail in the Capital Construction briefing on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**R4 PARK MANAGER CAREER PROGRESSION:** The Department requests \$493,796 cash funds from the Parks Cash Fund in FY 2024-25—and \$530,777 in FY 2025-26—to implement an equitable career progression plan for the Park Manager job classes. This progression matches the progression plan for employees in the Wildlife Manager job classes.

In short, Wildlife Managers currently progress automatically from level II to level III after one year of successful performance; Park Managers do not. Park Managers must apply for a promotion from level II to level III. Per the request, this arrangement has contributed to a 75.0 percent turnover rate among Park Manager II staff (July 2018 to June 2023).

The requested funds would allow Park Managers to progress automatically from level II to level III after one year of successful work. It would also allow all current Park Manager III staff to move up to Park Manager IV and move Park Manager IV staff supervising an entire state park to Park Manager V.

**R5 RIVER OPERATIONS COORDINATORS:** The Department requests an increase of \$394,025 General Fund and 2.8 FTE within the Division of Water Resources (DWR) in FY 2024-25. The request annualizes to \$420,158 General Fund and 3.0 FTE in FY 2025-26.

River operations coordinators manage water moving across multiple water districts within the DWR’s seven water divisions. The request would allow DWR to hire two coordinators in the South Platte River Basin and one coordinator

in the Rio Grande Basin. With regards to the South Platte Basin, the two new coordinators would help two existing coordinators deal with increasing workload stemming from increasing population growth and water administration complexity. There is not currently a river operations coordinator in the Rio Grande Basin. Per the request, the new coordinator for the Rio Grande Basin would “ensure the correct determination and delivery of replacement water to streams” and help manage groundwater allocations.

**R6 CREATE CWCB GRANTS SECTION:** The Department requests an increase of \$154,574 from the Water Plan Implementation Cash Fund and 0.9 FTE starting in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$159,354 and 1.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request aims to consolidate the administration of the Water Plan Grant Program and the Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant Program into one Grants Section. The purpose of doing this is to increase the efficiency of both grant programs and to improve the ratio of staff to management. The additional FTE would oversee this new Grants Section.

**R7 IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT:** The Department requests an increase of \$101,693 reappropriated funds and 0.9 FTE in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$102,510 reappropriated funds and 1.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request would allow the Department to hire an Infrastructure and Network Product Manager to manage the Department’s network technology assets and prevent serious network outages.

**R8 WILDLIFE DAM SAFETY STAFFING:** The Department requests an increase of 140,071 cash funds from the Wildlife Cash Fund and 0.9 FTE in FY 2023-24. This would annualize to \$150,215 and 1.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request would allow CPW to hire an additional dam safety engineer. CPW is responsible for over 115 dams throughout Colorado, including 22 classified as “high-hazard.” The request asserts that the “current staff level of three dam safety engineers is insufficient to design, construct, and inspect these assets.” The request also notes recent turnover in these positions, with departing engineers citing the unmanageable level of work they faced “on a daily basis.”

**R9 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STAFFING:** The Department requests an increase of \$1,320,746 from the Wildlife Cash Fund and 15.6 FTE in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$1,416,464 cash funds and 17.0 FTE in FY 2025-26.

The request aims to support wildlife management activities and the demand for those activities stemming from population growth, human development, and federal and state regulations. Specifically, the requested funds would allow the Department to hire:

- 2.0 FTE Assistant Area Wildlife Managers in the Gunnison and Monte Vista regions;
- 3.0 FTE District Wildlife Managers in the Fort Collins, Grand Junction, and Colorado Springs regions;
- 2.0 FTE Property Technicians in the Glenwood Springs area and the greater Denver metro area (to support the newly acquired Mt. Tom property);
- 1.0 FTE Commercial Parks and License Manager responsible for dealing with commercial wildlife parks, which includes monitoring and enforcement related facility upkeep and prohibited species; and
- 3.0 FTE Deer and Elk Monitoring Technicians in the northwest, northeast, and southwest regions of the State.

The request also includes a technical adjustment to FTE numbers related to the existing General Fund appropriation that CPW uses for wolf reintroduction. The request would increase the number of FTE in CPW’s *Wildlife Operations* line item by 6.0 FTE to reflect the actual use of the \$2.2 million General Fund appropriation that already exists. These FTE include 1.0 FTE for a Wolf Conflict Program Manager and 5.0 FTE for Wolf and Wildlife Depredation and Conflict Specialists. Lastly, the request includes \$250,000 cash funds to cover changes to CPW’s online sales system.

**R10 AQUATICS STAFFING AND HATCHERY OPS:** The Department requests an increase of \$1,014,939 from the Wildlife Cash Fund and 3.7 FTE in FY 2023-24. This would annualize to \$1,042,970 and 4.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request aims “to support the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of fisheries for future generations.”

The requested FTE (\$425,111) includes two aquatic engineers, a hatchery technician, and a water resources coordinator. The request also includes \$589,828 for fish hatchery operating costs for CPW's 19 hatcheries.

**R11 STAFF FOR DEMAND AT STATE PARKS:** The Department requests an increase of \$578,158 from the Parks Cash Fund and 6.4 FTE in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$621,335 and 7.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request focuses mainly on Park Resource Technicians who would help manage park infrastructure projects and general maintenance at the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, North Sterling, and Lake Pueblo. The request also includes funding for administrative support at Staunton State Park, a marina program coordinator at Jackson Lake, and temporary staff at Sweitzer Lake and Ridgway.

**R12 CPW INFORMATION AND EDUCATION** The Department requests an increase of \$290,730 cash funds and 3.6 FTE for FY 2024-25, which consists of \$112,651 from the Parks Cash Fund and \$178,079 from the Wildlife Cash Fund. This would annualize to \$295,867 cash funds and 4.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request aims to add staff to CPW's Information and Education Section "...to address workload growth associated with increased participation in outdoor recreation and customer demand for education and outreach programs." These new staff include an Angler Education Program Assistant, a Graphic Designer, an Interpretive Sign Project Manager, and a Videographer.

**R13 SLB OUTDOOR RECREATION LEASING:** *This decision item will be covered in a separate staff briefing planned for November 30, 2023.*

**R14 CPW ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:** The Department requests an increase of \$393,511 cash funds from the Wildlife Cash Fund and 5.5 FTE in FY 2024-25. This would annualize to \$388,489 cash funds and 6.0 FTE in FY 2025-26. The request aims to reduce administrative burdens currently borne by field and program staff. CPW would use these funds to hire four program assistants to help with habitat conservation efforts, CPW's aircraft operations program, law enforcement record keeping, and the Colorado Wildlife Council. The requested funds also include a workforce development coordinator and an administrative assistant for CPW's License, Reservation, and Customer Operations section.

**CENTRALLY APPROPRIATED LINE ITEMS:** The request includes an increase of \$21.6 million total funds for centrally appropriated line items.

CENTRALLY APPROPRIATED LINE ITEMS						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
Salary survey	\$9,696,154	\$1,218,807	\$8,051,445	\$297,513	\$128,389	0.0
Health, life, and dental	3,143,837	125,179	2,712,524	296,593	9,541	0.0
PERA Direct Distribution	2,735,714	444,778	2,194,703	96,233	0	0.0
Payments to OIT	1,037,099	67,373	928,472	29,681	11,573	0.0
Risk management & property	975,797	2,116	973,943	467	(729)	0.0
AED	781,581	100,586	650,677	16,653	13,665	0.0
SAED	781,581	100,586	650,677	16,653	13,665	0.0
Paid family and medical leave insurance	710,814	100,637	569,401	25,133	15,643	0.0
Legal services	598,358	587,849	(806)	10,372	943	0.0
Vehicle lease payments	492,545	18,648	458,955	(7,078)	22,020	0.0
Workers' compensation	375,358	4,326	390,544	(778)	(18,734)	0.0
Shift differential	309,166	0	308,562	604	0	0.0
Capitol Complex leased space	230,976	73,263	100,036	34,812	22,865	0.0
Short-term disability	48,124	3,419	43,020	1,021	664	0.0
CORE adjustment	(339,218)	(25,020)	(298,236)	(7,776)	(8,186)	0.0
Leased space	(8,609)	23,519	(32,761)	331	302	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,569,277</b>	<b>\$2,846,066</b>	<b>\$17,701,156</b>	<b>\$810,434</b>	<b>\$211,621</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**NON-PRIORITIZED DECISION ITEMS:** The request includes a net increase of \$1,720,883 total funds for non-prioritized decision items driven by other agencies.

NON-PRIORITIZED DECISION ITEMS						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
NP Central Services Omnibus Request	\$1,611,854	\$221,800	\$1,336,902	\$53,152	\$0	0.0
DPS Digital trunk radio	82,339	0	82,339	0	0	0.0
CORE Operating Resources	26,690	2,084	23,367	678	561	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,720,883</b>	<b>\$223,884</b>	<b>\$1,442,608</b>	<b>\$53,830</b>	<b>\$561</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS:** The request includes a net increase of \$1.7 million total funds to reflection informational-only adjustments to non-appropriated sources like Great Outdoors Colorado grants, lottery funding, and federal funds.

**INDIRECT COST ASSESSMENT:** The request includes a net increase in the Department’s indirect cost assessment.

**ANNUALIZE PRIOR YEAR LEGISLATION:** The request includes a net decrease of \$96.2 million total funds to reflect the FY 2024-25 impact of prior year legislation.

ANNUALIZE PRIOR YEAR LEGISLATION						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
SB23-255 Wolf depredation comp.	\$525,000	\$175,000	\$350,000	\$0	\$0	0.0
HB 23-1242 Water conservation	230,848	0	230,848	0	0	2.0
HB21-1318 Outdoor equity	198,192	0	198,192	0	0	0.0
SB23-1265 Born wild license plate	137,000	0	137,000	0	0	0.0
SB23-172 Workers rights	11,923	11,923	0	0	0	0.0
SB23-177 CWCB projects	(97,030,000)	0	(97,030,000)	0	0	0.0
SB23-059 State parks local access	(274,000)	0	(274,000)	0	0	0.0
SB23-199 Native pollinating insects	(31,338)	(31,338)	0	0	0	(0.3)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(\$96,232,375)</b>	<b>\$155,585</b>	<b>(\$96,387,960)</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>1.7</b>

**ANNUALIZE PRIOR YEAR BUDGET ACTIONS:** The request includes a net decrease of \$3.4 million total funds to reflect the FY 2024-25 impact of prior year budget actions.

ANNUALIZE PRIOR YEAR BUDGET ACTIONS						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
FY24 R9 Wildlife staffing support	\$118,732	\$0	\$118,732	\$0	\$0	0.0
FY24 R8 State parks support	86,882	0	86,882	0	0	0.0
FY24 R15 Vehicles for water admin	54,268	54,268	0	0	0	0.0
FY23 R10 Records access system	8,844	0	8,844	0	0	0.0
FY24 R1 OGCC mission change	8,352	0	8,352	0	0	0.0
FY24 R5 Performance software	5,378	0	5,378	0	0	0.0
FY24 R14 SLB field operator	4,643	0	4,643	0	0	0.0
FY24 NPBA1 IT accessibility	(2,109,274)	(149,337)	(1,829,892)	(107,839)	(22,206)	(3.0)
Prior year salary survey	(1,221,566)	(41,522)	(1,023,606)	(2,901)	(153,537)	0.0
FY23 BA2 Big game policy	(150,000)	0	(150,000)	0	0	0.0
FY24 R7 Support for winter recreation	(108,612)	0	(108,612)	0	0	0.0
FY24 R2 CO River support team	(41,410)	12,480	(53,890)	0	0	0.6
FY24 R10 Business tech staff	(35,000)	0	(35,000)	0	0	0.0
FY24 R13 CO water plan mapping spec.	(17,640)	0	(17,640)	0	0	0.0
FY24 R12 Financial admin support	(12,006)	0	0	(12,006)	0	0.0
FY24 R11 Water and research projects	(8,361)	0	(8,361)	0	0	0.0

ANNUALIZE PRIOR YEAR BUDGET ACTIONS						
	TOTAL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	CASH FUNDS	REAPPROPRIATED FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	FTE
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(\$3,416,770)</b>	<b>(\$124,111)</b>	<b>(\$2,994,170)</b>	<b>(\$122,746)</b>	<b>(\$175,743)</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>

## SUMMARY OF ISSUES PRESENTED TO THE JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

**INFORMATIONAL ISSUE ONE-TIME FUNDING AUTHORIZED IN RECENT LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS:** This brief focuses on significant one-time funding allocated to the Department of Natural Resources during the 2021 and 2022 legislative sessions.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**JBC STAFF ANALYST:** Justin Brakke (EDO, CPW, CWCB, DWR)  
 (303) 866-4958  
 justin.brakke@state.co.us

**TO READ THE ENTIRE BRIEFING:** **TO READ THE ENTIRE BRIEFING:**  
 Go to <http://leg.colorado.gov/content/budget/budget-documents> to use the budget document search tool. Select this department's name under *Department/Topic*, "Briefing" under *Type*, and select a *Start date* and *End date* to show documents released in November and December of 2023.