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Fiscal Note

Drafting Number: LLS 21-0959 **Date:** April 28, 2021
Prime Sponsors: Sen. Donovan; Rankin **Bill Status:** Senate Agriculture
Rep. McCluskie; Will **Fiscal Analyst:** Josh Abram | 303-866-3561
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Bill Topic: **BACKCOUNTRY SEARCH & RESCUE IN COLORADO**

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Government
<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Public Entity

The bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a study of the challenges of backcountry search and rescue and perform statewide outreach and training for volunteers. The bill increases state expenditures in FY 2021-22 only.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2021-22, the bill requires an appropriation of \$181,849 to the Department of Natural Resources.

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

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under SB 21-245

		Budget Year FY 2021-22	Out Year FY 2022-23
Revenue		-	-
Expenditures	Cash Funds	\$181,849	-
	Centrally Appropriated	\$20,143	-
	Total Expenditures	\$201,992	-
	Total FTE	1.1 FTE	-
Transfers		-	-
TABOR Refund		-	-

Summary of Legislation

This bill requires that the Division of Parks and Wildlife in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conduct a study to develop recommendations for addressing the challenges associated with backcountry search and rescue in the state. The bill details the minimum topics the study must address, including the availability of compensation and benefits, and training and other supports for backcountry search and rescue personnel and volunteers. The department must report its findings to the state legislature in January 2022.

The DNR must conduct outreach and training across the state on the physical injuries and psychological stress faced by backcountry search and rescue volunteers. This outreach may include working with a consultant and developing a grant program for local government and backcountry search and rescue organizations.

Finally, the bill updates the name of the Colorado Recreation Search and Rescue Card Program and the associated Search and Rescue Cash Fund to insert the word “backcountry.”

Background

Colorado’s current search and rescue program is supported by the Search and Rescue Fund, which reimburses local governments and search and rescue organizations statewide for the costs incurred to conduct search and rescue operations, including reimbursements for equipment and training. The Search and Rescue Fund is managed by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). The program receives funding from a surcharge for off-highway vehicle registrations, hunting and fishing licenses, and sale of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue Card (CORSAR).

State Expenditures

For FY 2021-22 only, the bill increases state expenditures in the DNR by \$201,992 and 1.1 FTE from the Search and Rescue Fund. Additionally, the DOLA will have workload and cash fund expenses to rebrand and market existing search and rescue materials. New state expenses are displayed in Table 2 and discussed below.

**Table 2
 Expenditures Under SB 21-245**

Cost Components	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
Department of Natural Resources		
Personal Services	\$101,044	-
Operating Expenses	\$1,485	-
Capital Outlay Costs	\$12,400	-
Travel	\$13,920	-
Contract Services	\$53,000	-
Centrally Appropriated Costs ¹	\$20,143	-
Total	\$201,992	-
Total FTE	1.1 FTE	

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

Department of Natural Resources. The DNR will require additional staff resources and contract services in FY 2021-22 only. New department staff is required to administer the required study and coordinate a stakeholder process and to report results. Contract services are required to conduct a search and rescue mental health program to include outreach and training on the physical injuries and psychological stress faced by search and rescue volunteers. The DNR will also have expenses for travel. Personal services costs are prorated for a presumed October 1 effective date.

Department of Local Affairs. Adding the word “backcountry” to the title of the CORSAR card and related materials requires staff time for rebranding and modifying printed program materials, web-based and electronic program material, and to conduct marketing and outreach to vendors and the general public. These efforts are estimated to require 0.1 FTE and \$15,000 in programming costs, but do not require new appropriations.

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 estimated to be \$20,143 in FY 2021-22.

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 2021-22, the bill requires an appropriation of \$181,849 from the Search and Rescue Fund to the Department of Natural Resources, and 1.1 FTE.

State and Local Government Contacts

Local Affairs

Natural Resources

Public Safety