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Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Fiscal Note

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| Drafting Number: | LLS 24-0932 | Date: | March 18, 2024 |
| Prime Sponsors: | Sen. Will; Roberts Rep. McLachlan; Mauro | Bill Status: | Senate Ag. & Natural Resources |
| | | Fiscal Analyst: | Alexa Kelly 303-866-3469 alexa.kelly@coleg.gov |

Bill Topic: **RESTORATION OF WOLVERINES**

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|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Summary of Fiscal Impact: | <input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure | <input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Public Entity |

The bill authorizes the reintroduction of the North American wolverine by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. It increases state expenditures beginning in FY 2024-25.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2024-25, the bill requires an appropriation of \$852,808 to the Department of Natural Resources. See State Appropriations section.

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

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under SB 24-171**

| | | Budget Year FY 2024-25 | Out Year FY 2025-26 | Out Year FY 2026-27 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Revenue | | - | - | - |
| Expenditures | Cash Funds | \$852,808 | \$116,047 | \$59,728 |
| | Centrally Appropriated | \$14,034 | \$17,543 | \$10,526 |
| | Total Expenditures | \$866,842 | \$133,590 | \$70,254 |
| | Total FTE | 0.8 FTE | 1.0 FTE | 0.6 FTE |
| Transfers | | - | - | - |
| Other Budget Impacts | | - | - | - |

Summary of Legislation

The bill authorizes Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to reintroduce the North American wolverine in Colorado. As long as the wolverine remains on the list of threatened or endangered species under federal law, CPW may not reintroduce the wolverine until the species is designated as a nonessential experimental population by rule established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. If CPW reintroduces the wolverine, it must create rules for providing payment of fair compensation to owners of livestock for losses caused by wolverines.

The bill also authorizes \$750,000 from the Species Conservation Trust Fund for implementing the reintroduction beginning in FY 2024-25, which remains available until fully expended.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in CPW in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by about \$867,000 in FY 2024-25, \$134,000 in FY 2025-26, and \$70,000 in FY 2026-27. The bill requires an appropriation of \$750,000 in FY 2024-25 from the Species Conservation Trust Fund, which is available until fully expended. CPW’s staff and stakeholder outreach costs will be paid from the Wildlife Cash Fund. Expenditures are shown in Table 2 and detailed below.

**Table 2
 Expenditures Under SB 24-171**

| | FY 2024-25 | FY 2025-26 | FY 2026-27 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Department of Natural Resources | | | |
| Personal Services | \$78,614 | \$98,267 | \$58,960 |
| Operating Expenses | \$1,024 | \$1,280 | \$768 |
| Capital Outlay Costs | \$6,670 | - | - |
| Environmental Assessment Costs | \$750,000 | - | - |
| Stakeholder Outreach | \$16,500 | \$16,500 | - |
| Centrally Appropriated Costs ¹ | \$14,034 | \$17,543 | 10,526 |
| Total Cost | \$866,842 | \$133,590 | \$70,254 |
| Total FTE | 0.8 FTE | 1.0 FTE | 0.6 FTE |

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

Staff. The DNR will require 1.0 additional term-limited FTE beginning September 1, 2024, through January 1, 2027. The FTE will serve as a liaison between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and CPW to work through the federal environmental assessment costs. These costs will be paid from the Wildlife Cash Fund.

Environmental assessment costs. The \$750,000 appropriation from the Species Conservation Trust Fund authorized in the bill is expected to cover the costs associated with the federal environmental assessment process, otherwise known as the 10(j) process, to establish the wolverine as an experimental population. Work required by CPW includes cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, project management, record keeping, public communication planning, developing public meeting materials, and a federal Historic Preservation Act evaluation and tribal consultation. If any funds are left over after FY 2026-27, they will be used to implement the reintroduction process.

Stakeholder engagement. CPW will hold up to two stakeholder outreach and public engagement events annually to provide information on the restoration effort in FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26. Costs, which are paid from the Wildlife Cash Fund, include staff travel, location rentals, and administrative costs.

Legal services. The DNR may require legal services, provided by the Department of Law, to assist in the rulemaking process. No change in appropriations is required.

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 the following appropriations:

- \$750,000 from the Species Conservation Trust Fund to the Department of Natural Resources, which requires roll-forward spending authority until it is fully expended; and,
- \$102,808 from the Wildlife Cash Fund to the Department of Natural Resources, and 0.8 FTE.

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](#).