

Infrastructure & Property Maintenance

OVERVIEW OF FY 2024-25 CAPITAL REQUEST



Overview of Funding Request

- Projects funded through this request further the goals of the Future Generations Act (Senate Bill 18-143) and Keep Colorado Wild Act (Senate Bill 21-249). This includes key projects like the Fishers Peak State Park trail design project, the Mt. Shavano Hatchery modernization project, and the Tarryall Dam rehabilitation project.
- CPW requests \$34,001,000 total funds for FY 2024-25:
 - \$31,201,000 in cash spending authority to rehabilitate and improve infrastructure and facilities on state wildlife areas and CPW offices;
 - \$300,000 of cash spending authority to rehabilitate and improve state highways on Colorado State parks;
 - \$2,500,000 of cash spending authority for infrastructure projects at state parks.

Background

The CPW Capital Development Program manages construction that supports operations at more than 1,400 facilities, including over 300 state wildlife areas (SWAs) and 43 state parks. CPW also has responsibility for more than 100 dams and funds the enhancement or replacement of fish hatchery pipelines and rearing container infrastructure, primitive and improved roads, bridges, irrigation conveyance infrastructure, and maintenance on other properties and infrastructure. Taken as a whole, CPW's capital construction projects support every CPW program and activity, including:

- Ongoing operations and administration at all state parks and central offices. CPW hosted more than 17 million visitor days at state parks in FY 2022-23;
- Managing hunting and fishing opportunities within Colorado. CPW sold more than 1.7 million hunting and fishing licenses in FY 2022-23. CPW also manages 19 hatcheries that breed, hatch, rear, and stock 90 million fish annually;
- Maintaining healthy wildlife habitats and populations.

These funds will support several capital construction projects that further the goals of the Future Generations Act and Keep Colorado Wild Act, including maintaining our dams, and maintaining and improving parks and wildlife areas. One important project that these funds will support is the **Mt. Shavano Hatchery modernization project** in Chaffee County. This project supports the goal of the Future Generations Act to modernize at least one division hatchery by 2025. The project consists of constructing a new hatchery building, sub-catchable and catchable rearing buildings, a public viewing area, a visitor center, and an administration building. Modernizing the Mt. Shavano Hatchery will increase CPW's ability to breed, hatch, and stock fish, resulting in a 30 percent increase in fish production, thus continuing Colorado's rich angling tradition. The **Fishers Peak State Park trail design and construction** in Las Animas County will expand areas for Coloradans to recreate outside. The project will add six to ten additional miles of trail and will protect wildlife habitat by minimizing travel in areas with seasonal wildlife closures. The **Tarryall Dam rehabilitation project** is another key project that this funding request will support. Most of the dams owned by CPW are at least 50 years old and require annual maintenance. The Tarryall Dam is approximately 90 years old and has known structural deficiencies, seepage concerns, and a higher risk of overtopping due to a significantly inadequate

spillway capacity. These funds will help to implement erosion protection, scour protection, parapet wall construction, joint rehabilitation, and other dam safety activities that will extend the life of the Tarryall Dam.

Property Acquisitions & Improvements

OVERVIEW OF FY 2024-25 CAPITAL REQUEST



Overview of Funding Request

- CPW requests \$25.0 million in cash spending authority for property acquisitions and improvements for FY 2024-25.
- The request will be funded from the Wildlife Cash Fund, primarily using habitat stamp revenue.
- This request will be used to conserve or improve wildlife habitat and acquire land and water for wildlife purposes, and to provide for improved public access for hunting, fishing and wildlife-related recreation. This includes securing water for wildlife-related water uses throughout Colorado, such as irrigation of habitat, fish production at hatcheries, and piscatorial uses in reservoirs.
- Habitats in Colorado face many challenges, like land development, climate change, biodiversity loss, and more. CPW staff are helping address these challenges through several initiatives, including funding habitat restoration and improvement projects. CPW will also use spending authority as needed to conduct stewardship activities on lands managed by the division.

Background

The \$25.0 million in requested cash spending authority for FY 2024-25 is continuing the same level of request approved in FY 2023-24, which was proposed following an analysis of recent grant requests submitted through the Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP) Request for Proposals (RFP). CPW has also seen an increased demand for funding for habitat restoration and enhancement projects in recent years. For example:

- **RESTORE Colorado** was launched in 2020 in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Federation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, CPW, and private foundations to pool funding and jointly award grants to restore or enhance rivers and streams, native grasslands, sagebrush, forests, and big game wintering range habitat statewide. To date, RESTORE partners have granted \$9.3 million to 36 habitat projects around the state, leveraging additional funds to result in \$30.7 million in total on-the-ground conservation impact. However, while \$9.3 million was granted through RESTORE over the past three years, \$40.2 million was requested during this period, leaving 80 projects requesting over \$30 million unfunded.
- **The Statewide Habitat Conservation and Connectivity Plan** will serve as a foundation for conservation efforts on high-priority landscapes, such as big game winter ranges and migration corridors. The plan will identify conservation actions, including voluntary land protection, habitat enhancement, water developments, highway crossing structures, and conservation strategies, that lead to more climate-resilient wildlife populations.

While programs like the CWHP and RESTORE have resulted in significant benefits for wildlife and outdoor recreationists, the programs struggle to fund the demand for investments in important conservation and recreation opportunities.

Colorado Wildlife Habitat Program (CWHP)

As the state's population continues to grow, so too does the pressure on our state's wildlife. It is critical for CPW and our partners to continue protecting the integrity of our natural landscape for current and future generations. The CWHP is a state-wide

program that supports CPW's mission by offering funding opportunities for landowners who wish to voluntarily protect important wildlife habitat, and/or provide sustainable wildlife-related recreational access to the public. The CWHP is an incentive-based, voluntary program that utilizes conservation easements and, in some circumstances, fee title purchases to accomplish strategic wildlife conservation and public access goals. The CWHP ensures Colorado's natural resources and critical habitat is protected, and that there will always be wildlife-related recreational opportunities available. Since 2006, CPW has invested approximately \$189,200,000 across the state to secure conservation easements on 284,500 acres, public access on 146,300 acres, fee title on 31,700 acres, and access along 377 miles of river bank.

The amount requested each year continues to grow far beyond the allocated funds. For example, through the 2022 RFP, the amount requested totaled \$43,346,000. In some earlier years, requests have totaled over \$70 million (2014). While the CWHP has resulted in significant benefits for wildlife and outdoor recreationists, including providing core funding for the acquisition of Fishers Peak and investments in dozens of critical conservation and access easements, the program could not fund the demand for investments in important conservation and recreation opportunities. As a result of increased revenue from habitat stamp and license sales, CPW is now in a financial position to meet at least some of this unmet need for habitat acquisitions.