

Opinion

It's time to invest in Colorado's great outdoors

Authors: Cam Chandler, Tucker Ladd - February 12, 2018 - Updated: February 12, 2018



Cam Chandler

Coloradans recently celebrated the arrival in our state of the prestigious Outdoor Retailer show, which relocated to Colorado in large part because our citizens and elected officials have expressed strong support for our public lands. The show itself is expected to bring more than \$45 million annually to Colorado's economy.

The Outdoor Retailer show is just the tip of the iceberg. Outdoor recreation in Colorado contributes more than \$34 billion to our economy, and more than 71 percent of Coloradans participate in outdoor recreation each year. As an angling business owner and leader of a statewide angling/conservation organization, our focus has been on fishing. In Colorado, fishing engages more than 760,000 anglers, supports more than 14,000 jobs statewide, and contributes \$1.9 billion to our economy every year.

Angling and other outdoor recreational opportunities are a huge part of what makes Colorado such a special place to live and work, but our abundant outdoor resources are not something we can take for granted. It takes continued work and investment to ensure that our parks and public lands, fish and wildlife, and recreational resources are managed effectively to provide great experiences for Coloradans and visitors to our state.



Tucker Ladd

This year, the Colorado General Assembly is taking up three bills that will collectively make the investments needed to secure the future of fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation in our state. We urge all legislators to support these much-needed measures for the benefit of all of us who rely on Colorado's outdoors for our quality of life and our livelihoods.

First, we strongly urge the Colorado Legislature to pass legislation reauthorizing the Colorado Lottery. With proceeds invested back into parks, wildlife and open space through Great Outdoors Colorado and funding to local governments statewide, the lottery has been a huge boon to public lands and recreation. We need to "Keep It Colorado" and ensure that this remarkable success story continues.

Second, funding should be assured for control of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) – such as the quagga and zebra mussel. These invasive species pose a serious threat to the health of Colorado's waterways and the recreation they support as well as to critical water supply infrastructure. Legislation establishing a sticker fee on motorized watercraft can provide funding for programs to combat ANS. Without such funding, many Colorado waters may be closed to boating recreation – a huge loss to our state's recreational opportunities and economy.

There's no free lunch, but history has shown that when Colorado invests in its remarkable outdoor resources, the people of our state and our economy benefit.

Finally, lawmakers should approve legislation allowing Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to make modest increases in the cost of fishing and hunting licenses (\$8 for most annual license types), to ensure adequate funding for sound fish and wildlife management. It has been more than a decade since the last license fee increase, and in the face of inflation and our growing population, CPW's ability to meet the demands on Colorado's fisheries and wildlife diminishes every year.

Under this bill, CPW will be able to better serve the sportsmen and women of Colorado through much-needed investments in providing public access, renovating aging hatcheries to maintain fish production and stocking in the years ahead, and addressing dam safety concerns at CPW reservoirs that might otherwise need to be drawn down, thereby reducing or eliminating high-value lake fisheries.

There's no free lunch, but history has shown that when Colorado invests in its remarkable outdoor resources, the people of our state and our economy benefit. Colorado anglers and businesses call on our legislators to be forward-thinking and make wise investments so that Coloradans can continue to enjoy world-class fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and other outdoor experiences and, through good stewardship, use those sustainable resources to support good jobs throughout the state.

Post Views: 202

[Aquatic Nuisance Species](#) [Cam Chandler](#) [Colorado Lottery](#)
[Colorado Parks And Wildlife](#) [Fishing Licenses](#)
[Great Outdoors Colorado](#) [Hunting Licenses](#) [Outdoor Retailer Show](#)
[Public Lands](#) [Trout Unlimited](#) [Tucker Ladd](#) [Zebra Mussels](#)

 **Related Articles**