

HB26-1008, Outdoor Opportunities Act



Rep. Lukens & Taggart, Sen. Marchman & Rich

Summary

Colorado's outdoors are essential to the state's identity, economy, and quality of life. In order to keep up with the growing recreational use and management demands in the state, there's a need to expand and strengthen CPW's capacity to ensure the state can provide high-quality visitor experiences while protecting natural resources, wildlife, working lands, and private property. This legislation will improve collaboration, planning and management processes advancing better outcomes for outdoor recreation, conservation, agricultural and private landowners alike by:

- Building CPW's capacity to proactively support statewide outdoor recreation management and up-front planning, improve coordination and stakeholder engagement, and advance exceptional outdoor experiences while avoiding conflict and enhancing benefits to people, landscapes, wildlife and communities.
- Stewarding Colorado's Outdoor Strategy (COS) by providing CPW's leadership in implementation and continued coordination of the COS, along with improved capacity and collaboration with the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Initiative (RPI);
- Supporting voluntary planning efforts across outdoor recreation, conservation, wildlife, agriculture, local government, and other partners to maximize the effectiveness of the RPIs and provide better internal collaboration amongst CPW workstreams.



Background

Colorado's outdoors support healthy communities, thriving wildlife, working lands, and a \$65.8 billion outdoor recreation economy. As Colorado's outdoors face increasing pressures including growing populations, constrained management resources and a changing climate, it's critical that we seek a solution-oriented path prioritizing coordination among outdoor recreation, conservation, wildlife, agriculture, and local government partners to support informed decision-making and innovative thinking. CPW's mission guides the agency to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a high-quality state parks system and provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources.

Colorado's Outdoors Strategy and Regional Partnerships Initiative

Earlier this year, CPW and DNR, along with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office (OREC), and multiple local government, agricultural, nonprofit, and industry collaborators, launched COS. COS provides a statewide vision and framework for voluntary action that ensures Colorado's outdoors, people, community character, and ways of life thrive for generations to come. The RPI brings this vision to life by advancing regionally-driven collaboratives to deliver on the goals of the COS which include advancing climate-resilient conservation and restoration, ensuring exceptional and sustainable outdoor recreation.

Strengthen CPW's Role in Outdoor Recreation Management, Collaboration and Opportunity Advancement in Colorado

Through this legislation, CPW will formalize its role as the state's coordinating entity to support implementation of COS and RPI. This includes facilitating collaboration among agencies and partners, integrating data and metrics from existing efforts, and producing coordination reports that track progress, identify opportunities, and inform future investments. The legislation also bolsters CPW's capacity within the Outdoor Recreation & Lands Branch to serve as the lead coordinating agency to successfully support outdoor recreation opportunities that align with local community values across the state. By strengthening coordination and planning capacity within CPW, Colorado will be better equipped to manage growing recreation demands while also protecting wildlife and natural resources, our agricultural heritage and private property rights.

*Questions? Please contact Sarah Hamming, Acting Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Natural Resources
sarah.hamming@state.co.us*