



AGENDA

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

MARCH 2, 2023, 5-7 pm

ALL – VIRTUAL

*** due to adverse winter weather and icy road conditions and stakeholder concerns, this meeting is entirely on ZOOM

All agenda times are approximate. Items may be taken early or late.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81439302545?pwd=aDE0THZHNDhkUEVWaEdXeGxXR3lwZz09>

Meeting ID: 814 3930 2545

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AGENDA

TODAY'S MEETING OBJECTIVES: A **1) GAIN HIGH-LEVEL UNDERSTANDING OF COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE (CPW) CONSERVATION PRIORITIZATION MODELLING PROCESS AND MODELS. 2) IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDER REQUESTS FOR CUSTOMIZATION BASED ON ORRCA STAKEHOLDER VALUES 3) BUILD STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS AND FORWARD CUSTOMIZATION REQUESTS TO THE WORKING GROUP**

5 pm -- **Call to Order & ZOOM Ice Breaker**

- **LYNN PADGETT**, OURAY COUNTY COMMISSIONER

5:15 pm – **HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW OF THE COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION MODELING PROCESS with Q&A**

- **MICHELLE FLENNER** – MICHELLE has a BS and MS in Wildlife Ecology and Management and is a GIS practitioner with 20 years' experience of using GIS as a tool in natural resource management. She has been in the CPW GIS unit for 15 years. MICHELLE is currently working with the Lake County Recreation Planning effort and is assisting Jamin with similar models for Area 15 in SW Colorado.
- **JAMIN GRIGG** – JAMIN is the Senior Wildlife Biologist for CPW's Southwest Region and is involved with several Outdoor Regional Partnerships across the state. Prior, he was the wildlife biologist in Salida for 12 years, where he was involved in the collaborative Envision Chaffee County partnership. Through that process and Partnership, Michelle and I helped develop the Chaffee County Outdoor Recreation Management Plan and the Wildlife Habitat Mapping GIS model we will discuss today. This model has now been expanded into Lake, Gunnison, and other counties and hopefully provides a tool for mapping a composite of critical wildlife habitats on a landscape level. Through this process, counties and agencies and Partnerships have a tool to help plan where recreation infrastructure such as roads and trails might be appropriate and where it should be avoided to protect wildlife and natural resources.

6:00 pm – **brief break**

6:15 pm – **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE CPW BASE-CASE MODEL SPREADSHEET**

6:30 pm – **IDENTIFY ORRCA REQUESTS FOR MODEL CUSTOMIZATION**

6:45 pm – STATUS UPDATE on Recreation Inventory

7:00 pm – ADJOURN

- **Save the date:** 4th Monday of each Month, 5 to 7 pm – STAKEHOLDER MEETING at Ridgway 4H Event Center/Zoom Option. **NEXT STAKEHOLDER MEETING: Monday, March 27, 2023.**
 - WORKING GROUP MEETINGS are 2nd Monday of each Month, 5 to 7 pm, Zoom only. **NEXT WORKING GROUP MEETING: Monday, March 14, 2023.**
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OPTIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIALS:

1. **CPW “PLANNING FOR WILDLIFE IN OUR FUTURE AND BIG PICTURE, FAQ’S”, Provided by Jamin Griggs, CPW (ATTACHED BELOW)**
2. Wildlife Decision Support Tools for Recreation Protecting wildlife and associated economic, ecosystem and experiential benefits as recreation use increases in Chaffee County, Colorado Feb. 20, 2021 https://envisionchaffeecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ChaffeeRecPlanforWildlifeTools_2021F.pdf
 - <https://envisionchaffeecounty.org/>
 - <https://envisionchaffeecounty.org/recreation-in-balance/>

CPW “PLANNING FOR WILDLIFE IN OUR FUTURE AND BIG PICTURE, FAQ’S”, Provided by Jamin Griggs, CPW

Colorado’s landscape is experiencing changes as the state’s population and visitation grow. From community developments to increased vehicular traffic to the popularity of recreation on public lands, the result means there is less undisturbed land that wildlife need to survive.

Wildlife depend on habitat. Across Colorado, they have lost about half a million acres over the last decade. Wildlife is not only important for quality of life, it also supports tourism economies and contributes to a healthy ecosystem. We know that you love to see wildlife and understand your concern about the future of wildlife as the state grows and changes. To address the challenge of habitat loss, Envision Chaffee County / Lake County / LCOSI worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and other biologists to map the remaining high-quality undisturbed habitat — the lands that are most important to protect, enhance or restore.

The Planning for Wildlife Maps help your community get out in front of the challenge of habitat loss with a new approach and local solutions. Colorado Parks and Wildlife supports the maps, which are created using geospatial modeling and the best available data. The agency is monitoring wildlife populations and sharing that information to gauge effectiveness over time. Your community is asked to support use of these maps for planning so that quality habitat remains for wildlife to thrive into the future.

FAQs

1. How will the maps be used?

The community will decide this moving forward in Lake and Gunnison Counties. In Chaffee County, the Planning for Wildlife Maps are helping the county get out in front of the challenge of habitat loss with a new approach and local solutions:

- Foresters are planning wildfire mitigation treatments using the maps to identify high-quality habitat so they can incorporate improvements for specific species into their projects.
- Trails System & Conservation Plan partners have agreed to use the maps to improve existing trails and plan for new recreation assets.
- County Planners are beginning to use the maps in land use code updates to consider the most important remaining wildlife habitat as the county develops.
- CDOT & CPW has installed wildlife fencing to reduce vehicle strikes along highways around the state. These project areas are identified by number of strikes (not the maps), but fencing is proving to reduce mortality rates by up to 90%, and so it is addressing one of the factors challenging wildlife.

2. Questions about wildlife populations and tracking

CPW is committed to monitoring wildlife and has been for more than 100 years. Today the agency uses helicopters, collars and designated monitoring areas to track populations, survival rates and cause-specific mortality for a variety of species. This provides good data to manage populations, and judge the efficacy of community conservation efforts and the effects of naturally occurring dynamics such as disease and predation.

Note: Do not reference report card data or get too specific about population #s. It's okay to discuss general trends. CPW's agreement with the community is to monitor and manage populations (because that's the agency's role) but as soon as possible, revert the conversation back to the real challenge, which is habitat loss.

3. Questions about hunting

CPW's mission is to balance conservation of wildlife and recreational needs and that includes hunting. Hunting does not negatively impact habitat, and in fact supports wildlife when licensing fees are invested in habitat improvements. Hunting could cease today and the state would still face the challenge of habitat loss due to changes to the landscapes that wildlife need to survive. This involves community sprawl, increased vehicular traffic and growing recreation on public lands, among other factors such as disease and a warming climate. Hunting (and predators) are certainly a part of mortality for elk and deer; CPW does not consider that mortality to be additive but rather compensatory. CPW will continue to allow hunting while responsibly managing the number of tags, based on scientific data collected annually through tracking & monitoring. The agency's investment of income from hunting also will continue to improve habitat and support a future with thriving wildlife.

Note: A member of the public who is blaming CPW for the wildlife/habitat challenge because hunting is "morally wrong" should be diverted. Staff can do this by subtly agreeing to disagree on this point by restating CPW's basic mission (first sentence).

A tip: Staff should avoid referring to animals as “big game” in conversations with the general public about conservation. Non-hunters think of these animals as majestic and not “game.” Use of this phrase drives their minds toward this topic, many times with negative feelings or accusatory questions.

4. Questions/statements that put CPW in the “hot” seat or blame the agency

CPW recognizes that you (the community member and/or all citizens of Colorado) are concerned about the future of wildlife. Habitat loss is a statewide challenge, and we need you/your community to help address this loss on a local level if we are to have thriving wildlife in the future. The use of the Planning for Wildlife Maps for decisions such as development on the highest-quality remaining habitat is a first step to get out ahead of the challenge with a new approach and local solutions.

Note: Showing empathy (first sentence) acknowledges that the agency has authority to manage wildlife but diverts the blame. The agency can help address the challenge but the solution involves everyone. It is implied that the agency is not the cause of this problem and so therefore cannot solely solve it.

5. How are the maps made? What data is behind the modeling?

Geospatial modeling technology used in the project incorporates 30 wildlife habitats in Chaffee County, from river bottoms to high alpine wetlands. Iconic large species like elk and smaller mammals, fish, insects, plants and birds are included. In Lake and Gunnison Counties the wildlife habitats will be specific for the area – for example adding Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat in Gunnison County. The resulting Planning for Wildlife Maps identify the lands that are most important to protect, enhance or restore because they have the best remaining undisturbed habitat for the most and most sensitive species.

Note: Most members of the public trust in professionals/professional data. Details involving species lists, number of species and ranking methods may lead to irrelevant questions. If the point of the meeting is to explain how the maps can help solve the statewide challenge of habitat loss, questions about data collection or modeling methods should be diverted for the benefit of everyone else in attendance. The challenge is NOT that the state does not have good enough data or that the modeling process has flaws. Focus on the fact that the maps are based on “the best data” the state has today.

6. Why are certain species not incorporated into the model?

The model only considers species that have reliable habitat data. This includes larger species and some plants, insects and birds. It combines this data to identify habitat of the highest importance.

7. Why are elusive, wide ranging species left out?

Species such as lynx and bear are included in the model. Some highly mobile species, such as mountain lion, are not included because their habitats are so broad. CPW conducts helicopter flights every winter and collects deer and elk surveys that allow year-to-year comparisons to provide population estimates. That level of tracking is not possible because of the way lion live (we cannot count them from the air). The model combines the best species’ data to identify habitat of the highest importance.

8. Why is the mapping/wildlife conservation needed?

Residents and visitors highly value the wildlife. 95% of Chaffee Recreation Survey respondents and 97% of Lake County Recreation Survey respondents said that managing

outdoor recreation to support wildlife large and small is important – even more important than retaining multi-use experiences (83%) and adding trails/roads (43%).

Chaffee County lands provide regionally important habitat. CPW data show that Mule Deer collared in their winter habitat in Chaffee County spend their summers across eight adjacent counties from I-70 to Guffy to Westcliffe. Economic studies show that wildlife-related recreation (wildlife viewing, fishing and hunting) is the largest contributor to the county's recreation economy, at an estimated \$70 million per-year benefit.

Habitat loss continues as Colorado's population and visitation grow. The Planning for Wildlife Maps identify the remaining high-quality undisturbed habitat that wildlife need to survive. The next step is to support use of these maps for planning so that habitat remains available for wildlife to thrive into the future.