



**COLORADO  
WILDLIFE**

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FEDERATION

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**COLORADO WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
2024-2025 IMPACT REPORT**

Conserving Colorado's Wildlife for Future Generations



# Letter from the President

The Colorado Wildlife Federation (CWF) Board of Directors is pleased to present to you, our loyal supporters and followers, our 2024-2025 Impact Report that summarizes the activities and advocacy actions that the Federation has focused on during the latter half of 2024 and the first half of 2025.

As always, it has been a busy time for our small staff and the CWF Board as we continue our proud heritage of being a unique and one of the most recognized advocacy and outdoor educational organizations in Colorado.

Our advocacy for good decision-making by the Colorado Legislature began with the start of the Colorado Legislative Session in January. You will read in our report about our efforts to support protecting the important habitat stamp program (critical to fund Colorado Parks and Wildlife projects that support wildlife habitat protection and development), and opposing efforts that would threaten using good wildlife science, and hunting and angling as important tools in managing wildlife policy and use decisions.

You will also read about how the CWF staff interacts with multiple State, Federal, County, and local organizations to help achieve good policy decisions, wildlife corridor and habitat protection and development that support the continuing and growing demand for the wide variety of quality outdoor recreational opportunities that make Colorado such a great place to live.

The Colorado Wildlife Federation continues to be a leading outdoor educational organization that promotes new participants in the outdoors through our Becoming an Outdoors Woman program and the Hispanic "Dia de Pesca" youth angling opportunities. As a non-profit 501(c)(3) Organization, the Colorado Wildlife Federation accomplishes an amazing amount of advocacy and conservation planning with the organizations we partner with. We depend on grants, donations, and some specific project funding to support our staff and the great work they do .

Thank you once again for your commitment to Colorado's fish, wildlife and wild places. We look forward to your continued support and shared dedication to conservation.



# What We Stand For



## Mission

Colorado Wildlife Federation (CWF) promotes the conservation, sound management, and sustainable enjoyment and use of Colorado's wildlife and wildlife habitat through advocacy and education.

## Guiding Principles

- Wildlife management and conservation are primary
- We act on a scientific basis
- We are committed to Colorado's communities with and through diversity and inclusion in outdoor recreation
- We believe in behaving ethically and encouraging ethical outdoor recreation

# Our Pillars

## Pillar 1: Advocacy

CWF works with elected and appointed officials, as well as other nonprofits to promote sound wildlife habitat and management policy. CWF is a leader in seeking and finding common ground among wildlife enthusiasts, sportsmen and women who fish and hunt, and other outdoor recreators.

The issues impact the public who care about Colorado's wildlife and want their children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy this irreplaceable fish and wildlife resource.

### Colorado Wildlife Federation Key Advocacy Involvement Areas



Hunting, fishing, and other conservation organizations working together to address policies and issues impacting wildlife habitats and populations, especially on our public lands, through science-based management of wildlife in Colorado



Support for landowners and sportspersons working cooperatively for wildlife heritage



Emphasis on recruitment of a growing diversity of all citizens to Colorado's hunting, fishing, wildlife, and outdoor recreational heritage

## Pillar 2: Educational Programming

CWF's flagship program is Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW). BOW is a national education program that strives to make women more comfortable in, and more aware of the outdoors as they learn or improve outdoors skills in a fun setting. Courses include fly fishing, outdoor photography, archery, navigation, birding, stream ecology, and more.

We are proud to serve as a founding partner in Hispanic Fishing Day / Dia de Pesca. We offer local families a memorable fishing experiences together with Colorado Hispanic Chamber, Denver Parks and Recreation and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

# Sept 2024–Aug 2025 Advocacy Results

## Balancing Wildlife Needs and Recreation Desires

- **Integrating wildlife habitat needs into outdoor recreation projects:** Our Executive Director serves on the steering committee of the Outside 285 regional partnership that spans areas of Jefferson, Douglas, Clear Creek, and Park counties. We have worked actively in this regional partnership to develop a plan for eliminating trails along a riparian corridor at Indian Creek and routing a new trail that avoids wildlife habitat. We also are protecting bighorn sheep in South Park by rerouting certain alpine trails in South Park.
- **Conservation in the San Luis Valley:** She also serves on the wildlife mapping and the climate committees of the San Luis Valley Great Outdoors! (SLVGO!) regional partnership to ensure an effective balance between outdoor recreational desires and important wildlife habitat conservation.
- **Ensuring wildlife conservation receives equal footing with outdoor recreation:** She has served on the state of Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Steering and Technical Committees that have developed a collaborative vision for climate-resilient conservation and restoration, sustainable outdoor recreation, and coordinated planning and funding. She also sits on the GOCO/CPW scoring committee to recommend grant awards for regional partnerships.

## Testifying on All Wildlife Bills in State General Assembly

CWF testified in support of the following bills during the 2025 legislative session.

### Passed and enacted:

- **Bill creating a study of state trust lands and stewardship trust lands (HB 25-1332)** with a working group that will make recommendations on or before September 1, 2026 to the Governor, House Agriculture, Water and Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee and the State Land Board and its Executive Director.
- **Bill continuing the Colorado Habitat Stamp program (SB25-049):** clean bill that removes the sunset and continues this important program indefinitely. The program began in 2006 and has operated smoothly, investing funds to benefit wildlife habitat and access to habitats through landowner conservation easements, public easements and fee title transfers.
- **Bill requiring local government review of specific fencing projects on Sangre de Cristo land grant lands in the San Luis Valley. (HB 25-1023).** This new law is important as local government review would likely enable elk, deer and pronghorn on these lands to continue safely crossing.
- **Bill classifying bison that wander into Colorado from Utah as big game (SB 25-053).** All bison had been classified as agriculture.

### The following bill did not pass:

- **Bill to prevent motor vehicle collisions and protect Colorado's wildlife (HB 25-1303)** was intended to help fund infrastructure tools at highest risk wildlife highway crossings. It had passed the House but failed in the Senate Finance Committee. It was an important bill with dedicated bill sponsors. We hope to try again.

# Sept 2024–Aug 2025 Advocacy Results

## Wildlife Management Challenges and Progress

- **Commenting on important wildlife policy before the CPW Commission and the Energy and Carbon Management Commission:** CWF makes important public comment on at least one policy issue at each CPW Commission meeting. CWF participated in the successful rule makings before the Energy and Carbon Management Commission in 2023, 2024, and 2025 to adopt CPW's High Priority Habitat map updates.
- **Making wildlife management recommendations:** CWF participated in 10 federal land use planning processes for managing wildlife on public lands in Colorado.
- **Conserving wildlife habitats on public lands:** As Colorado's needs rise for solar energy installations on our public lands, we stand firm to advocate appropriate siting of facilities that safeguards important wildlife habitats. CWF provided extensive input to the Colorado Energy Office and Department of Natural Resources to minimize conflicts and promote avoidance and minimization of potential impacts to wildlife resources.
- **Planning the State Wildlife Action Plan summit:** In October 2025, we are proud to host a Summit to galvanize support and ideas among conservation leaders for implementation of Colorado's State Wildlife Action Plan. This Plan focuses on species of greatest conservation need and greatest information need.
- **Supporting aquatic restoration projects:** CWF is bringing to life important aquatic restoration projects through compelling story telling.
- **Participating in specialist workgroups:** Our Executive Director has been appointed to the State Trust Lands Conservation and Recreation Work Group via a formal letter from the Majority Leader, pursuant to law that enacted HB 25-1332. Other workgroups have included working to find common ground among stakeholders in CPW's furbearer working group and in its beaver management planning stakeholders process.
- **Preventing wildlife fragmentation:** CWF led the push to avoid wildlife fragmentation and gains stream and wetlands buffers for iconic South Park during the BLM's decade-long Eastern Colorado resource management planning process.
- **Engaging with sportsmen to protect wildlife:** Tim Emery, CWF Issues Committee Chairperson was appointed to the Sportsperson's Roundtable in February of 2025. CPW depends on feedback and advice from our state's hunters and anglers to make the best decisions about the management of fish, wildlife, and habitat. To support this effort, CPW convenes a statewide Sportsperson's Roundtable and holds regional sportsperson meetings.

## Shaping the Media Narrative

- **Interviews for Colorado newscasts:** CWF has been interviewed for Colorado newscasts on policy matters such as Colorado BLM's Big Game Resource Management Plan Amendment which has synchronized its oil and gas rules with Colorado's wildlife protections in the Colorado's Energy and Carbon Management Commission rules. Another interview was how BLM's national oil and gas reform rules package would impact its Colorado leases. As CWF and NWF plan our Wildlife Action Plan Summit, our Deputy Director Madison was interviewed by Public News Service and our Executive Director Suzanne wrote an OpEd to explain the importance of the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan.



# Sept 24–Aug 25 Educational Programming

## Empowering Coloradans to Protect Our Wildlife

### Becoming an Outdoors Woman

CWF provides instruction to women for outdoor skills including:

- Archery
- Outdoor survival skills
- Hunting education
- Orienteering
- Birding
- Self-defense
- Hiking
- Wildlife tracks & sign
- Fly fishing
- Wilderness safety and first aid
- Plant ID
- Game processing
- Knots & knives
- Stream ecology
- Ecological landscaping in Colorado
- Trap and skeet

### 2024–25 Becoming an Outdoors Woman Events by Numbers

**8**

**BOW EVENTS INCLUDING  
BOW WEEKEND**

**175+**

**WOMEN  
ATTENDING**

**\$5,800**

**OF FULL AND PARTIAL  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
GIVEN - 15 TOTAL**





# Showcase: 2025 BOW Weekend

The BOW Weekend is an opportunity for women at any fitness level, 18 years or older, to learn hands-on outdoor skills. No experience is necessary! BOW is a supportive environment for learning, making lifelong friends, and having fun.

In 2025 we hosted the event at Easterseals Rocky Mountain Village in Empire, CO for 63 attendees, including 10 Bridges to BOW scholarship participants.

Attendees learn skills like archery, plant identification, hunting education, fly fishing, self-defense, map and compass reading, and LOTS more! All meals and lodging are provided for the weekend.

This weekend event is our most popular BOW program, with women coming from all over the country to participate.

The weekend's instructors are volunteers. Some are employed in the fields they teach, others are experts in their subjects, and several are Colorado Parks and Wildlife employees with years of experience in the flora and fauna of Colorado.

While many of our instructors are women, we do also have a few excellent male instructors who have long been dedicated to providing the very best instruction for our attendees.

**This year BOW has been supported by:**



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# BOW Testimonials

- I headed to Manitou after BOW to do in the Incline. At the top, I saw lots of chipmunks and 1 ground squirrel. I was so excited I knew the difference because of my Queuing Your Senses class with Carlee! I can't express how much fun I had. I learned so much and meet some amazing ladies. Thank you for this experience!
- Thank you for opening up Colorado BOW again. I have done Wyoming BOW and want to do others around the country but it is so good to have it available again in Colorado's beautiful mountains. You all were awesome and it was so good to meet you all. Thank you for all your hard work putting this together.
- Overall, such a wonderful experience. The CSU mountain campus is such a special place and so full of history. I met some really wonderful women (and really connected with one in particular - I feel like I have a new friend which is hard to do in middle age) and I loved that there were diverse backgrounds, diverse experience and diverse bodies.
- I thought the instructions were awesome and so inspiring! I thought the participants were amazing as well. It felt like a space where I could express my thoughts and have a meaningful discussion about them with others, which I think is really impressive.
- I think the program was really well organized, and it was cool to learn about how many BOW programs are out there! Also, so glad about Bridges to BOW!





# Other Educational Programming

## *Día De Pesca*

Día De Pesca is a partnership event aiming to get Denver Spanish-speaking communities outside and excited about fishing. It has been held since 2019 and in 2025 we held two events. It introduces families to fishing through instruction, casting exercises, and other environmental education programs throughout the day. The founding partners are Denver Parks, Colorado Wildlife Federation, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and Colorado Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. These partners coordinate and deliver a fun-filled, educational day of fishing.

## Día De Pesca Key Facts

**650+**  
ATTENDEES  
OVERALL

**10-20**  
VOLUNTEERS AND  
PARTNERS' STAFF



## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



# Meet Our Board

The Colorado Wildlife Federation is guided by a dedicated team of professionals and outdoor enthusiasts committed to protecting Colorado's wildlife and habitats. Our board and staff bring a range of expertise and a shared passion for conservation.



**ROBIN KNOX**

PRESIDENT AND  
BOARD CHAIR, CO-  
CHAIR OF EVENTS  
COMMITTEE



**GEORGINA MILLER**

VICE PRESIDENT,  
DIRECTOR



**MATT ELLEDGE**

TREASURER, DIRECTOR



**LAUREN WELLER**

CHAIR OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMITTEE,  
DIRECTOR



**TIM EMERY**

CHAIR OF ISSUES  
COMMITTEE,  
DIRECTOR



**RYAN RICCI**

CO-CHAIR OF EVENTS  
COMMITTEE, DIRECTOR



**BRENT MILLER**

DIRECTOR



**MIKE HORA**

DIRECTOR





**VICKI VARGAS-  
MADRID**

DIRECTOR



**JACK CASTELLANO**

DIRECTOR



**VANESSA  
LOGSDON**

DIRECTOR



**CHAY VENRICK**

DIRECTOR



**JOHN HOLST**

DIRECTOR



**JOHN HOWARD**

DIRECTOR



**GREG  
BENZMILLER**

DIRECTOR



**HENRY GARVIN**

DIRECTOR

## Interested in joining the board?

Join the Colorado Wildlife Federation Board and help protect the state's wildlife and habitats for today and future generations. Your voice and expertise can help safeguard our natural heritage. We will be opening up applications for 2026 in the Spring - look out for our announcement!

# Meet Our Staff & Representatives



## **SUZANNE O'NEILL**

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A former practicing lawyer with a master's degree in Environmental Policy and Management, Suzanne participates in state and federal planning processes, regularly testifies on wildlife-related issues, makes public comment on key issues before the CPW Commission, and serves on various state work groups. She is an avid wildlife photographer, gardener, angler, and outdoor enthusiast.



## **MADISON MARTIN**

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

A marketing professional turned biologist, Madison is passionate about protecting Colorado's wildlife and enjoys outdoor activities with her family.



## **ANNA ZAK**

### EVENT AND MARKETING COORDINATOR

A Colorado native with degrees in Human-Animal Studies and Environmental Sustainability, Anna is dedicated to protecting Colorado's wildlife and their habitats.



## **LEW CARPENTER**

### NWF REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Lew works directly with NWF affiliates in the Rocky Mountain region and has a background in outdoor journalism and TV production.



## **JEREMY VESBACH**

### REGION 10 DIRECTOR, NWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected by NWF affiliates, Jeremy focuses on state-level policy to protect lands, restore wildlife habitats, and ensure equitable access to public lands.

# How Can You Help?

To enable the Colorado Wildlife Federation to continue to be effective, grow our educational outreach programs, and promote sound wildlife habitat and management policy, we need your support.

## Donate

When you financially support us and donate \$10, \$100, or \$1,000 [online](#) or by check, you will be proud of your role in keeping Colorado's wild places safe and protecting wildlife.

## Join our King Soopers Community Rewards Program

As well as donating, consider joining our [King Soopers Community Rewards](#) as an easy way to give every time you shop!







## Connect with us



### Address

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### Newsletter

[Sign up to our bi-monthly newsletter](#)



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