



Colorado Wildlife Federation

2023-2024 Impact Report

Conserving Colorado's Wildlife for Future Generations



Letter from the President

During the latter half of 2023 and the first eight months of 2024, the Colorado Wildlife Federation (CWF) has remained steadfast in its historic and present role of being a leading voice for the conservation of Colorado's magnificent wildlife and their habitats in face of Colorado's growing population, demand for outdoor recreational opportunities, and the push for solar and wind power development.

The Federation Board of Directors is proud to present our 2023-2024 Impact Report which highlights the great work that our small staff and volunteer board has accomplished.

Efforts to influence state Legislative actions are highly active during the annual Legislative sessions, as one example, in January this year when CWF Commissioners supported the Senate Bill 24-026 that requires Wildlife Commissioners to have meetings with their respective constituents.

There were multiple meetings with State and Federal land, water, and mineral agencies where our Executive Director worked tirelessly to advocate for wildlife and habitat considerations. Several are highlighted in the report.

On the informational and educational front, CWF has worked to improve our marketing outreach and re-vitalize our Becoming an Outdoors Woman program by adding new staff. Those efforts are highlighted in our report as well.

As a non-profit 501(c)(3) Organization, the Colorado Wildlife Federation accomplishes an amazing amount of advocacy and conservation planning with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Division, the Federal Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and other State, County, and local planners. We depend on grants, donations, and some specific project funding to support our staff and the great work they are doing. Please show your support through generous donations.

Enjoy reading this report, and get a sense of how the Colorado Wildlife Federation is helping you to do what you love to do, in Colorado's great outdoors.

Best wishes for a great 2025!

Robin Knox
Board President, CWF
KnoxR@coloradowildlife.org

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 sportspeople working cooperatively for wildlife



Emphasis on recruitment of a growing diversity of all citizens to Colorado's hunting, fishing, 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 also contribute to other educational programming events like the Día De Pesca.

2023-2024 Advocacy Activities

Balancing Wildlife Needs and Recreation Desires

- **New trail placement in the 285 region:** 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.
- **Conservation in the San Luis Valley:** She also serves on the wildlife mapping and the climate committees of the San Luis Valley Great Outdoors regional partnership to ensure an effective balance between outdoor recreational desires and important wildlife habitat conservation.
- **Influencing recreation plans:** CWF successfully worked to add important wildlife conservation provisions to the draft Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- **Conserving wildlife habitats:** 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.

Influencing the Legislature and Land Management Stakeholders

- **Testifying on wildlife bills:** CWF testified on six wildlife-related bills during this past legislative session. Each of these bills passed the general assembly and was signed by Governor Polis.
- **Commenting on important wildlife policy matters before the CPW 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 and 2024 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. Working with the TRCP and others, CWF was instrumental in getting the US Forest Service to recognize and protect Wildlife corridors in the revisions to their Forest Management Plans.
- **Participating in CPW-convened workgroups:** This included for recommending a range of uses for various State Wildlife Areas, its panel to recommend grant awards for CPW's Fishing is Fun program, and the Colorado Outdoor Partnerships' panel to recommend grant awards for regional partnerships.
- **Participating in steering committees:** During 2023 and 2024 Suzanne has served on the state of Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Steering and Technical Committees that has been developing a collaborative vision for climate-resilient conservation and restoration, sustainable outdoor recreation, and coordinated planning and funding.

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.

2023-2024 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

2023-24 Becoming an Outdoors Woman Events by Numbers

10 +
BOW EVENTS

150+
WOMEN
ATTENDING

50+
SCHOLARSHIPS
GIVEN



Showcase: 2024 BOW Weekend

You can watch our [summary video of the weekend](#) on YouTube.

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 2024 we hosted the event at CSU Mountain Campus in Pingree Park, CO for 47 attendees, including 15 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! There are 4 class sessions throughout the weekend. Each class session is 3 hours. All meals and lodging are provided for the weekend.

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.

Our 2024 BOW instructors and support came from



BOW Testimonials

- "Such a wonderful experience. 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 experiences and diverse bodies."
- "LOVED having women instructors and it felt inspiring to see."
- "Great community building event, awesome cool women! Pacing was excellent. Loved getting to sit in nature!"
- "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 loved being able to meet so many amazing people and learn new skills."
- "The instructors were really prepared and made a great experience."
- "I learned so much and I can't wait to put it to practice."
- "I loved how non-judgmental and open to difference the instructor was - the class felt especially safe."



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 2024 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. In 2024 we held two Día De Pesca events.

Día De Pesca Key Facts

300

ATTENDEES AT
EACH EVENT

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

A Colorado resident for 35 years with over four decades of experience in fisheries and aquatic resource management. Robin's background includes roles with the Western Native Trout Initiative and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.



GEORGINA MILLER

VICE PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR

A marketing consultant, Georgina brings her strategic expertise to help CWF grow. A devoted outdoor enthusiast, she values Colorado's wildlife and ecosystem.



MAKAYLA BYRNES

SECRETARY, DIRECTOR

Passionate about equal access to parks and protected areas, Makayla focuses on increasing outdoor recreation for underrepresented groups.



LAUREN WELLER

COLORADO WILDLIFE AFFILIATE REPRESENTATIVE TO NWF, DIRECTOR & CHAIR OF COMMUNICATIONS/ MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

A fourth-generation Colorado native, Lauren is dedicated to protecting wildlife and public land access for all to enjoy.



TIM EMERY

DIRECTOR, CO-CHAIR OF ISSUES COMMITTEE

A Colorado native and fishing enthusiast, Tim has been involved with Denver Trout Unlimited and served on the Colorado Wildlife Council.



MIKE HORA

DIRECTOR AT LARGE

A business executive turned conservation advocate, Mike seeks to balance land ownership interests with the need for responsible outdoor recreation.



BRENT MILLER

DIRECTOR

An avid hunter and angler, Brent is passionate about conserving Colorado's Wildlife for the next generation.



RYAN RICCI

DIRECTOR, CHAIR OF EVENTS COMMITTEE

An active hunter for over twenty years, Ryan supports various conservation groups and enjoys mentoring newcomers to hunting.



JOSHUA TORREZ

DIRECTOR

A native Coloradan with a background in technology staffing, Joshua is passionate about fly fishing and safeguarding wildlife habitats on public lands.



VICKI VARGAS-MADRID

DIRECTOR

Working at Denver Parks and Recreation as an Education and Wildlife Management Program Manager, Vicki enjoys various outdoor activities.



JACK CASTELLANO

DIRECTOR

Jack is a District Executive for the Greater Colorado Council at Denver Boy Scouts. He loves hiking, camping, and shooting.



GREG BENZMILLER

DIRECTOR

Raised in the Pikes Peak region, Greg has taken up fishing, rafting, skiing, hunting, hiking, camping, mountain biking, and orienteering. He wants to ensure future generations can enjoy Colorado's wilderness.

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, contact our Board President, Robin Knox today to make an impact!

Robin Knox
CWF, Board President
KnoxR@coloradowildlife.org

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, native plant 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

303 E. 17th Avenue, Suite 230
Denver, Colorado 80203



Newsletter

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



Email Address

info@coloradowildlife.org



Website

www.coloradowildlife.org

