

From: dnr_cpw_getsocial@state.co.us,
To: salliet900@aol.com,
Subject: Colorado Parks and Wildlife in service to the public's trust
Date: Thu, Sep 9, 2021 9:00 am

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Travis Duncan
Statewide Public Information Officer
720-595-8294 / travis.duncan@state.co.us

Colorado Parks and Wildlife in service to the public's trust



Carrie Besnette Hauser is the 2021-22 Chair of the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission. She lives in Glenwood Springs.

by Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission Chair Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser

If you are like many Coloradans, you are probably familiar with or utilize the great assets managed by Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW). These include 42 state parks, including the recently created Fishers Peak State Park, which is a magnificent gift and legacy to our state.

Another 350 wide-ranging state wildlife areas provide unparalleled access to world class hunting, fishing, birdwatching and other outdoor activities.

CPW is one of the largest agencies in the state. It takes a wide range of professionals – from park rangers to wildlife officers to biologists to licensing professionals and so many others – to serve the public and protect our spectacular public lands while managing and protecting myriad wildlife and fish

species and their critical habitats.

Also fundamental to CPW's mission and operations is working closely with land owners, ranchers, agriculture producers, recreationists, outfitters and many other key stakeholders across Colorado to protect and preserve so much of what makes Colorado so special.

Given these compelling and sometimes competing interests, CPW is governed by a citizen's commission whose representative role it is to deliberate and determine how best to balance the demands on Colorado's parks and wildlife resources while keeping in mind how humans perceive and interface with these very same resources.

Perhaps no greater opportunity or challenge has faced the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission in recent memory than the restoration of the gray wolf to our state, as outlined in Proposition 114, which passed in November of 2020.

While voting patterns reflected differences of opinion about this complex issue, they also revealed opportunities to build bridges and trust across our state as CPW develops and executes a plan to restore and manage gray wolves in Colorado by no later than December 31, 2023. In this spirit, we will prioritize collaboration and proceed with transparency, humility, objectivity and integrity.

To accomplish this monumental and historic undertaking, CPW has retained the Keystone Policy Center to facilitate a broad-based stakeholder engagement process, inform the public and educate residents across Colorado about this initiative.

In mid-June, a public engagement website was launched at www.wolfengagementco.org, featuring important information about public involvement opportunities, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and a portal for online comment.

Two important groups are already hard at work to guide and inform the process: the Technical Working Group (TWG) and the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG). The TWG and SAG each had kickoff meetings in June and will meet monthly for the foreseeable future. SAG meetings will be held in different parts of the state, are open to the public and provide opportunity for public comment.

Other states in the west have preceded Colorado in wolf restoration efforts. CPW is grateful for their wisdom, lessons learned, approaches that worked well and mistakes to avoid. Perhaps the most basic and important point of advice received so far is to build trust from the start of the process – with all parties involved.

Trust and understanding are powerful antidotes to division and bridges to solutions and compromise.

So, our job as the CPW Commission is to ensure that the individuals, communities and counties on the Western Slope that will be most impacted by wolf restoration have front-and-center seats at the table. And, that those who believe the return of wolves to Colorado will have long term positive effects both for the species and the broader ecosystem have confidence that their perspectives are equitably considered.

It is an important and delicate balance to strike and a process that we hope will ultimately serve as a model for other issues that challenge our state whether by geography, perspective, socio-economic status, race or other factors.

In the meantime, the entire team at Colorado Parks & Wildlife will continue to work tirelessly so that you can safely visit a state park, take a child fishing or paddle boarding, access a boat ramp, prepare for the upcoming hunting season, go camping or gaze at the stars from a state wildlife area.

How lucky are we to live in such a special place with these amazing opportunities?

For more information about the work of Colorado Parks & Wildlife, the CPW Commission and the state's wolf restoration effort, please visit cpw.state.co.us.

Dr. Carrie Besnette Hauser is the 2021-22 Chair of the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission. She lives in Glenwood Springs.

###



CPW is an enterprise agency, relying primarily on license sales, state parks fees and registration fees to support its operations, including: 42 state parks and more than 350 wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, management of fishing and hunting, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating and outdoor education. CPW's work contributes approximately \$6 billion in total economic impact annually throughout Colorado.

