

CCTWS Fall 2025 Newsletter



COLORADO CHAPTER
The Wildlife Society

Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society
September 2025

List of Board Members:

<https://wildlife.org/colorado/officers/>



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Song for Autumn

Don't you imagine the leaves dream now
how comfortable it will be to touch
the earth instead of the
nothingness of the air and the endless
freshets of wind? And don't you think
the trees, especially those with
mossy hollows, are beginning to look for

the birds that will come — six, a dozen — to sleep
inside their bodies? And don't you hear
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,
the everlasting being crowned with the first
tuffets of snow? The pond
stiffens and the white field over which
the fox runs so quickly brings out
its long blue shadows. The wind wags
its many tails. And in the evening
the piled firewood shifts a little,
longing to be on its way.

- *Mary Oliver*

President's Column

Dear CCTWS Members,

I inhaled some sort of flying insect on my dog walk this morning, and in my momentary pulmonary distress, I noticed some of the cottonwood leaves were turning yellow. "At least if I perish from the oft-forgotten mosquito-borne illness that is choking, I'll have gotten to see some fall colors this year," I thought to myself. Sometimes it takes reminders like these to slow down and look around. Sometimes it takes reminders from other people. There is a woman who is about to finish hiking the Continental Divide Trail and the Great Divide Trail (a continuation of the CDT through Canada) combined at the time of this writing. I am living vicariously through her and taking inspiration from her as I wile away the end of summer at the computer. Her trail name is "Stitches," and she weaves incredibly lyrical tales of her solo hiking adventures on the T app that shall not be named. One of the reasons through-hikes seem appealing to her is that there is a single, tangible goal every single day to the point of tunnel vision. I think that's why many of us enjoy outdoor pursuits: they force us to tune out the constant barrage of information and responsibilities to focus on getting safely up that peak, finding that elk or that warbler, or simply putting one foot in front of the other. I hope you all get a chance to distill life down to its simplest form this fall, and spend some time noticing the small changes going on in the natural world each day to slow time a bit as we ease into the season of rest.

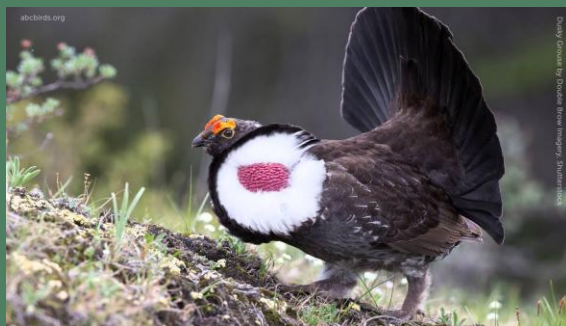
We on the CCTWS board shall never rest in the pursuit of planning our annual meeting, however! We have **our next annual meeting in Grand Junction, CO from February 17th-19th, 2026**, and we are getting so excited! The theme is **"Boots on the Ground: Conservation and Management in Practice."** We are planning storytelling sessions to hear from people with careers full of incredible stories from the field, a trivia night, and all of the usual happenings that accompany these meetings. We also have tons of awards that need nominees, and workshops that need leaders, so check out the calls for both below – the time is nigh to get involved! We hope to see you next February, and we wish you a safe and happy fall devoid of leaf-peeper traffic.

All the best,
Casey Setash

SAVE THE DATE

**CCTWS Annual Meeting
February 17th-19th, 2026
Grand Junction Convention Center
Grand Junction, CO**

**Boots on the Ground: Conservation and
Management in Practice**



Call for Professional and Student Award Nominations

Award descriptions can be found [HERE](#)

List of Professional Awards for 2025:

- The Professional Achievement in Wildlife Management Award
- Professional Achievement in Wildlife Sciences Award
- Jim Olterman Award for Professional Achievement in Wildlife Management
- Douglas L. Gilbert Award for Professional Achievement in Wildlife Sciences
- Blown Blunderbuss Award

Nominating is easy! Simply provide the name, position/title, and email address of the person you are nominating plus no more than a two-page description of why they deserve a professional award. Nominations are due to Jeff Henderson (henderson@pinyon-env.com) by **December 15th, 2025**.

List of Student Awards for 2025:

- Allen Anderson Award for Outstanding Wildlife Student (undergraduate; awarded plaque and wildlife-related book)
- Jim Olterman Scholarship Award (undergraduate; awarded \$1500)

The student awards require letters of recommendation from faculty or supervisors and several other requirements, so please check the website and start applications early! All materials are due to Jeff Henderson (Henderson@pinyon-env.com) by **December 15th, 2025**.



Call for Small Grant Applications

Grant descriptions can be found [HERE](#)

CCTWS offers a Management and Research Grant up to \$1000 and an Education grant up to \$1000.

We are using Google Forms to collect grant applications this year located at the following links:

[Research and Management Small Grant Application \(click here\)](#)

Past Winning Projects Include:

- Monitoring Big Game Responses to Mountain Shrub Mastication on Colorado's Western Slope
- Identifying factors affecting Colorado residents' adoption of wildscape gardening behaviors
- Variation in blood parasitism in a high elevation bird community

[Education Grant Application \(click here\)](#)

Past Winning Projects Include:

- Bird banding educational program at Ridgway State Park through Black Canyon Audubon Society
- Educational video production on the Black Canyon bighorn sheep herd
- Weed Free Wildlife Habitat: an educational strategy to promote weed awareness in the Gunnison Basin



Call for Board Member Nominations

We have several board positions that will become available starting at the annual meeting in February. Please considering nominating yourself or someone else to engage with CCTWS! Any society member from any sector of the wildlife profession is welcome to run.

President-Elect – Three year term (President-Elect, President, and Past President). Help plan and execute the annual meeting and coordinate/run monthly board meetings.

Secretary – Attend monthly board meetings to take notes in addition to the annual business meeting at the conference.

Board member at-large x 3 – Help plan the annual meeting, lead committees (if desired), and plan any additional events of interest.

Southeast Representative – Similar to board member at-large, but must live in the SE region of Colorado. Represents wildlife professionals in that section of the state.

Please submit nominations using [this Google Form](#) by November 15th, 2025.

Workshop Solicitation for Grand Junction Annual Meeting

We are soliciting proposals for workshops for our annual meeting which will be held February 17th-19th in Grand Junction Colorado. Workshops will occur on the first day of the meeting, Tuesday the 17th. We are asking for proposals for full day (8 hours) or half day (4 hours) workshops, and will provide you with a classroom style room at the Grand Junction Convention Center.

Please include in your workshop proposal:

- A brief (250 word) description of the workshop and how it will benefit CCTWS members
- The maximum number of people you would like to attend your workshop
- Any audio/visual equipment you would need for your workshop (power strips, a presentation screen etc.).

Note: CCTWS charges a nominal fee for workshops, \$10 a person, to pay for space at the conference center and hold spots for individuals attending your workshop. Workshop presenters are volunteers and will not be compensated for leading workshops. Also note that the conference center does not allow outside food to be brought in (e.g., coffee, bagels, or lunch). If you would like to provide food for your workshop attendees, please work with the CCTWS board to arrange that and ensure those costs are included in workshop fees.

Please send proposal information to Robin Russell at **robinrssl@gmail.com** by **December 15th 2025**.

Upcoming Birding Big Day!

October 11th, 2025 is eBird's [October Big Day](#)

Wherever you are on October 11th, take a few minutes to enjoy birds and share what you find on eBird. Participate from anywhere—even from home!

We at CCTWS challenge you to participate with other wildlife professionals and send us photos of you out birding. We'll post team photos to our social media accounts and in our next newsletter. Send photos to 4cctws@gmail.com



White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus* © Iker Fernández Martínez / Macaulay Library



Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee Meeting

September 24th 2:30 – 3:30 PM Virtually

Google Meet Invitation:

CCTWS IDEA Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 24 · 2:30 – 3:30pm

Time zone: America/Denver

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/aip-oipa-djs>

Or dial: (US) +1 502-442-2167 PIN: 127 373 669#

More phone numbers: <https://tel.meet/aip-oipa-djs?pin=6554968528506>

Our fearless leader, Dr. Pat Magee!, has stepped down from the IDEA committee, and Dr. Sara Bombaci will be taking over. We will use this meeting to discuss ideas for the annual meeting and introduce anyone interested in the committee to what it is and what we have been able to accomplish in the past. Everyone is welcome.



STUDENTS: Don't let this opportunity fly by!

DEADLINE

**FRIDAY,
SEPT 19, 2025**

Students planning to attend 2025 TWS Annual Conference are invited to apply for the **Wayne Sandfort Student Travel Grant (up to \$500!)**

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS

to the CMPS Students and Early Career Professionals Committee
grants@cmps-tws.org



FIND THE APPLICATION HERE:

<https://wildlife.org/cmp/student-travel->

[Application Link](https://wildlife.org/cmp/student-travel-)

Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Conservation Affairs Committee Quarterly Newsletter
September 2025

Introduction

The CCTWS CAC serves to advance wildlife conservation policy issues in Colorado and functions as part of a [network of TWS CACs](#) working on policy issues at the national, regional, and local level. Our primary goals for the CCTWS CAC are twofold. Here we aim to 1) track policy issues affecting wildlife in Colorado, and 2) both respond to and advance key wildlife policy issues for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife professionals in Colorado.

Much has happened at both the state and federal level since our last newsletter. At the state level we recap changes to the draft 2025 Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan, funding diversions to the state's wolf reintroduction program, and the upcoming Colorado General Assembly session. At the federal level, the volume of recently announced modifications to landmark federal legislation such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Air Act, by a variety of federal agencies has been dizzying. We provide an overview of proposed rule changes, reports, and pending legislation that would fundamentally alter wildlife conservation in the United States. This makes our collective effort to pay attention to and get involved with policy so very important.

Thank you for reading and acting where you can!

Sincerely,

The CCTWS Conservation Affairs Committee

Becca Windell, Nancy Billica, Jackson Doyel, Adam Gaylord, Kathy Griffin, Travis Rainey

State action

Colorado State Wildlife Policy Developments as of September 2025

Coloradoans continue to actively engage in discussion and action to address new and ongoing wildlife policy issues. Uncertainty marks discussions around policy direction, funding and resources, climate-changing conditions, and other factors challenging Colorado's wildlife and wildlife professionals. Several state-level developments should be of interest:

Colorado's Draft 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP): Updates & Background

The public comment period on Colorado's draft State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) closed on August 8, 2025. Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) together with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) are in the process of reviewing those comments and finalizing the draft plan which is due to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) by September 30, 2025.

Colorado's revised 10-year SWAP has been under development since early 2024. SWAPs were initiated as a requirement under the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant (STWG) Program established in 2000 by the U.S. Congress to provide funding to states, tribes, and territories to carry out conservation actions. The first SWAPs were submitted to USFWS in 2005, with subsequent updated plans due every 10 years. Research advances, monitoring programs, and continued changes within

the wildlife community have all been used to revise the last Colorado SWAP, published in 2015. Most notably, the draft 2025 SWAP includes a new sub-category of “Species of Greatest Information Need” that aims to direct future research effort by identifying animals (amphibians, birds, fish, and mammals) and plants where conservation action is limited by significant information gaps. See the [CPW overview of the draft 2025 SWAP](#) for more information.

All states receive a share of the federal funds, based on a formula that considers both state land area and population. In Fiscal Year 2025, USFWS is distributing a total of \$55.3 million across the US states and territories. Colorado has been allocated \$1.23 million in this process. A separate competitive grant program allocates additional funding to certain states and territories, but Colorado is not currently receiving any of those funds.

The [president’s FY 2026 budget request](#) proposes eliminating funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grant programs, along with cuts in other programs supporting wildlife. The proposed budget is not the final word, as Congress will ultimately decide how federal funds are to be appropriated in the coming fiscal year. However, the [total inflation-adjusted federal grant apportionments across states](#) are generally declining.

With or without the federal funding, Colorado’s SWAP is an important avenue for considering overall wildlife protection needs in the state and for planning new and continuing steps for addressing those needs.

Colorado’s Wolf Reintroduction Program: Funding Diverted But Reintroductions to Continue

With a budget deficit facing the state following the adoption of the new federal tax and spending law enacted in July 2025 (H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”), Colorado state legislators convened in a special legislative session in late August 2025 to determine how to balance the state’s budget. The wolf reintroduction program was one funding stream that raised contentious debate, with some hoping to use the budget crisis as an opportunity to stop future wolf acquisitions and releases. The final compromise redirects a portion of the state’s 2025-26 budget for the wolf program to Colorado’s Health Insurance Affordability Enterprise while supporting plans for continuing wolf reintroductions. (See Ali Longwell’s [review of the legislative debate over this issue](#) in the August 28, 2025, *Summit Daily*.)

The largest revenue source for the wolf program has come from the state’s general fund. However, the state has other funding sources that help to support the wolf program as well (e.g., the Species Conservation Trust Fund), and could also be bolstered with gifts, grants, and donations. Thus, while the diversion of regular budget dollars creates challenges, wolf recovery efforts are expected to continue in the coming season.

Colorado General Assembly: Preparing for the New Session Opening in January 2026

Fall is the season for state legislators to be finalizing their policy goals for the upcoming session that opens each year in January. In Colorado, state legislators are elected to 2-year terms in office. The Second Regular Session of the Seventy-fifth General Assembly will convene on January 14, 2026, and will end 120 days later in May 2026.

This is a good time for state wildlife professionals to be in conversation with state legislators to make sure they know and understand state wildlife concerns. *Consider reaching out to your state representatives and the committee members with responsibility over policy issues of interest to you.* (See the full list of legislators and committee members together with contact information [here](#).)

Federal action

Federal policies that both directly and indirectly support wildlife conservation are facing a wave of proposed rollbacks and reinterpretations across an array of government agencies with potentially far-reaching impacts. Collectively, these actions represent a coordinated weakening of foundational wildlife and climate protections, with most proposals still subject to public comment, rulemaking, and expected court challenges before becoming final.

Here is an overview of some of the current developments that we are paying attention to, followed by a list of each of these items and with relevant links and details to learn more: 1) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have advanced the rule change to rescind the Endangered Species Act's (ESA) definition of "harm," a move that—if finalized—would limit protections but is almost certain to trigger litigation. 2) The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed rescinding the landmark 2009 Endangerment Finding under the Clean Air Act, undermining the legal foundation for regulating greenhouse gas emissions and thus weakening a key safeguard against climate-driven threats to wildlife. 3) Similarly, the Department of Energy's (DOE) new climate report downplays the risks of greenhouse gas emissions and questions the benefits of climate action, drawing criticism from scientists and conservationists. 4) In Congress, the Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act (H.R. 180) seeks to narrow ESA authority by revising listing criteria, capping attorneys' fees in citizen lawsuits, and adding new procedural hurdles. 5) Finally, the USFWS has moved to rescind the ESA's long-standing 4(d) "Blanket Rule," which extends many protections of endangered species to those listed as threatened.

- 1. USFWS & NOAA: Proposal to rescind the definition of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act**
 - *Details:* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/17/2025-06746/rescinding-the-definition-of-harm-under-the-endangered-species-act>
 - *Status:* pending finalization and will likely trigger litigation if finalized
 - *Action:* awareness
- 2. EPA: Proposal to rescind the 2009 Endangerment Finding under the Clean Air Act Section 202(a)**
 - *Details:* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/01/2025-14572/reconsideration-of-2009-endangerment-finding-and-greenhouse-gas-vehicle-standards>
 - *Status:* currently soliciting public comments on proposed change
 - *Action:* visit link above to *submit personal comment by September 15th*
- 3. DOE: New climate report released challenging scientific consensus on greenhouse gas emissions**
 - *Details:* <https://www.energy.gov/topics/climate>
 - *Status:* comment period closed September 2nd
 - *Action:* awareness
- 4. Hearing on the Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act of 2025 (H.R. 180)**
 - *Details:* <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/180>
 - *Status:* the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries recently discussed this proposed bill that aims to modify ESA requirements for classifying species as threatened or endangered, establish caps on attorneys' fees for ESA lawsuits, and add regulatory requirements

-
- *Action:* awareness
 - 5. **USFWS: Proposal to rescind Endangered Species Act's 4(d) "Blanket Rule"**
 - *Details:* <https://www.wlj.net/usfws-to-pause-blanket-4d-rule/>
 - *Status:* proposal draft expected to be posted on Federal Register for comment by Oct 31st, 2025 with goal of posting final rule on or before Oct 31st, 2026
 - *Action:* submit personal comment once posted to Federal Register; CCTWS CAC aiming to submit comment

Policy engagement opportunities

- Submit personal comment to the [EPA's proposal to rescind the 2009 Endangerment finding under the Clean Air Act](#) by **Sept 15th, 2025**.
- Reach out to your state representatives and committee members with responsibility over policy issues of interest to you as we enter the upcoming Colorado General Assembly session.
 - A full list of legislators, committee members, and relevant contact information can be found [here](#).
- **Share your thoughts and ideas on other policy priorities you think the CCTWS CAC should be aware of.** Please add any and all thoughts to the following form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdkMnGfzUDRc7KLbwdtWHqXor_2IAjSRzEuyWCqDyL7CQMgkg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=102736379333728033541

Thanks for reading. Look out for the next CCTWS CAC policy update in December!

Colorado State University - Pueblo Student Chapter Updates

After a summer full of thrilling field work for many of our members, TWS Colorado State University Pueblo Student Chapter is excited to be back in class for the fall semester! We're going to kick things off this month by volunteering for Creek Week which will be a stellar opportunity to bring TWS to the Pueblo community by cleaning up litter along the Fountain Creek Watershed. A few other upcoming activities we have planned are bug hunting with this semester's entomology class, wildlife board game night, and tortoise therapy and crafts to build enrichment for their enclosure. We plan to close out the semester with a guided goose hunt with Delta Waterfowl where beginner hunters will learn shotgun 101 and about the importance of hunting's role in conservation.



Rylee with a box turtle



Kieran with a Kirtland's warbler



Bird banding this summer



Lee looking for boreal toad tadpoles

Colorado State University Student Chapter Updates

The Colorado State University Student Chapter had a fantastic spring semester- and we are looking forward to an even better fall! Before summer began, we had several exciting events that ranged from volunteering to workshops and hands-on field work. One of these opportunities was the Wingshooting Adventure event hosted by Pheasants Forever. We learned about habitat conservation, gun safety, and hunting tactics in the field. Several of our members also took a trip to Mission: Wolf, camped on the property and did some volunteer work. They learned about the operations of the sanctuary, and wolf behavior, biology, and ecology. Another event we participated in involved partnering with professionals and many students to work on a fencing project. Students collaborated to rewire a fence between two ranching properties under conservation easements, making it more wildlife friendly. We have also continued with our ongoing CPW volunteer raptor monitoring and urban wildlife camera trap project programs.

This semester, we are looking forward to trips and activities involving fence-pulling, bridge-building, GIS, prairie dogs, black-footed ferrets, and elk! We are planning to host social events, and we will be welcoming professional guest speakers at our bi-weekly meetings too.



Wingshooting adventure



Trip to Mission: Wolf



Wildlife friendly fence workshop