

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fifth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 26-0502.01 Clare Haffner x6137

HOUSE BILL 26-1008

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Lukens and Taggart,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Marchman and Rich,

House Committees

Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources

Senate Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 **CONCERNING MEASURES TO ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION**
102 **OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE, AND, IN CONNECTION**
103 **THEREWITH, EXPANDING THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND**
104 **WILDLIFE'S CAPACITY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION**
105 **COORDINATION, PLANNING, AND MANAGEMENT.**

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill requires the division of parks and wildlife (division) in the department of natural resources to expand the division's capacity for

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

outdoor recreation coordination, planning, and management and take a leading role in state-level coordination, strategic planning, and implementation of Colorado's outdoors strategy. The division is directed to, among other things, engage with relevant partners, stakeholders, and agencies to coordinate and incorporate wildlife, conservation, recreation, and climate-resilience considerations across agency planning and decision-making processes.

In addition, the division is required to support, in consultation with relevant entities, the planning, development, and maintenance of outdoor recreation infrastructure to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities while protecting private property rights, wildlife, and natural resources.

The bill also requires the division to create, and update at least annually, integrated regional outdoor recreation and conservation planning reports to inform division awareness and operational decision-making.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1. Short title.** The short title of this act is the
3 "Colorado Outdoor Opportunities Act".

4 **SECTION 2. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly
5 finds and declares that:

6 (a) It is the policy of the state of Colorado that the state's
7 unparalleled landscapes, wildlife, public lands, and outdoor experiences
8 be protected, conserved, and enhanced for the benefit and enjoyment of
9 current and future generations, while protecting the state's agricultural
10 heritage and private property rights;

11 (b) Outdoor recreation, access to quality outdoor experiences, and
12 the conservation of lands and wildlife habitats, all within the context of
13 a changing climate and growing population, are vital components in
14 ensuring a thriving future for Colorado's outdoors;

15 (c) Outdoor recreation is fundamental to Colorado's economy,
16 culture, and identity, contributing to public health, community well-being,
17 and the development of lifelong connections to the outdoors. Outdoor

1 recreation annually contributes \$65.8 billion to Colorado's economy and
2 supports 404,000 jobs, over 12% of the entire labor force in Colorado.
3 Ensuring safe, high-quality outdoor experiences is essential to sustaining
4 the state's outdoor heritage.

5 (d) Connecting youth to outdoor experiences is vital for ensuring
6 the long-term well-being of the state's residents, since research
7 demonstrates that outdoor engagement supports improved cognitive
8 abilities, fosters creativity and resilience, and is essential for promoting
9 public health and reducing stress;

10 (e) Colorado's outdoors face significant and urgent pressures from
11 growing populations, human disturbance, and development, alongside
12 severe climate-driven impacts such as wildfires, drought, and rising
13 temperatures;

14 (f) Thoughtful planning and management of outdoor recreation
15 can support conservation goals by reducing resource impacts, improving
16 stewardship, and sustaining the long-term health of the state's public
17 lands;

18 (g) As more visitors and Coloradans participate in all forms of
19 outdoor recreation, it is important to advance exceptional recreation
20 experiences that are accessible, inclusive, and sustainable so that future
21 generations may continue to enjoy the state's world-class outdoor
22 opportunities;

23 (h) To effectively manage these challenges, the state must
24 strengthen collaboration across conservation, wildlife, agriculture, and
25 recreation partners, local governments, tribal nations, and federal land
26 managers; develop shared tools and data; and align funding to support
27 voluntary, strategic actions that sustain high-quality recreation

1 opportunities while maintaining resilient landscapes, wildlife habitat,
2 working lands, and community values for all Coloradans;

3 (i) Colorado's outdoors strategy, developed by the department of
4 natural resources, the division of parks and wildlife, great outdoors
5 Colorado, the office of climate preparedness in the governor's office, and
6 the outdoor recreation industry office in the office of economic
7 development, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, provides
8 the necessary statewide vision and coordination to advance conservation,
9 climate resilience, and outdoor recreation opportunities;

10 (j) The general assembly recognizes the role that the Colorado
11 outdoor regional partnerships initiative, created by the governor's
12 executive order B 2020 008, plays in convening vital perspectives,
13 partners, and expertise in land conservation, land use, and recreation
14 planning. The initiative is a locally driven and powerful platform for early
15 and proactive coordination among stakeholders, helping to identify shared
16 priorities, reduce conflict, and advance tangible outcomes for outdoor
17 recreation and conservation statewide.

18 (k) Meaningful engagement with tribal nations is important, and
19 the collaborative framework developed in Colorado's outdoors strategy
20 is crucial to support ongoing tribal participation in statewide outdoor
21 recreation and conservation efforts;

22 (l) The outdoor recreation industry office plays a vital role in
23 advancing outdoor recreation. The mission of the office is to champion
24 industry, communities, and people through Colorado's great outdoors. The
25 office is a vital partner for the division of parks and wildlife in
26 coordinating outdoor recreation industry partnerships and supporting the
27 division in planning and outcomes for the advancement of exceptional

1 and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities.

2 (m) With approximately 60% of Colorado land in private
3 ownership, working with private landowners is also essential to the
4 success of Colorado's outdoors strategy, and it is important to ensure that
5 agricultural interests, private landowners, and local governments are
6 integrally involved in state efforts; wildlife habitats are protected; and
7 private property rights are upheld as conservation and recreation
8 management decisions are made;

9 (n) The division of parks and wildlife possesses a long history of
10 outdoor recreation planning, management, and recreational asset delivery
11 through its state parks system, which serves as a significant source of
12 exceptional and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. The
13 division's responsibilities extend beyond state park boundaries and
14 encompass outdoor recreation coordination, wildlife conservation, and
15 support for partners managing lands across all jurisdictions. As a leader
16 in outdoor recreation management, the division is well-positioned to play
17 a critical coordinating role in advancing outdoor recreation planning and
18 management statewide, beyond the boundaries of its current 43 state
19 parks.

20 (o) The division of parks and wildlife assumes lead responsibility
21 as the state's coordinating entity for advancing implementation of
22 Colorado's outdoors strategy, in partnership with the department of
23 natural resources, great outdoors Colorado, the outdoor recreation
24 industry office, the office of climate preparedness, and other state and
25 local partners. In this role, the division facilitates early and proactive
26 coordination and planning among agencies and stakeholders to reduce
27 conflict, improve efficiency, and ensure accountability in advancing its

1 goals and vision to find mutually beneficial outcomes that support and
2 maintain Colorado's world-class outdoor recreation and natural resources.

3 (2) The general assembly further finds the need to expand and
4 strengthen the division of parks and wildlife's capacity for the
5 coordination, planning, development, and management of Colorado's
6 outdoor recreation to ensure the state's recreation opportunities provide
7 high-quality visitor experiences that are responsibly managed to align
8 natural resources, wildlife, agricultural heritage, private property, and
9 public safety. The general assembly further recognizes the growing need
10 for the division to support recreation management and stewardship on
11 federal public lands, which necessitates increased staff capacity and
12 enhanced coordination with federal land management agencies.

13 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 33-10-102, **add** (2.5),
14 (2.7), (7.5), (10.5), and (13.5) as follows:

15 **33-10-102. Definitions.**

16 As used in articles 10 to 15 of this title 33, unless the context
17 otherwise requires:

18 (2.5) "COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY" MEANS THE STRATEGY
19 DEVELOPED COLLABORATIVELY BY THE DIVISION AND COORDINATING
20 PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ADVANCE COORDINATION, TOOLS, AND
21 FUNDING TO ALIGN, PRIORITIZE, AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO
22 SUPPORT CONSERVATION, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AND CLIMATE
23 RESILIENCE IN THE STATE.

24 (2.7) "COORDINATING PARTNERS" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT,
25 GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO, THE OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY
26 OFFICE, AND THE OFFICE OF CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS.

27 (7.5) "GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO" MEANS THE GREAT

1 OUTDOORS COLORADO PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY ARTICLE XXVII OF THE
2 STATE CONSTITUTION AND IMPLEMENTED PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 60 OF
3 THIS TITLE 33.

4 (10.5) "OFFICE OF CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS" MEANS THE OFFICE OF
5 CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS CREATED IN SECTION 24-38.8-102 (1).

6 (13.5) "OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY OFFICE" MEANS THE
7 OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY OFFICE CREATED IN SECTION
8 24-48.5-129.

9 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 33-10-119** as
10 follows:

11 **33-10-119. Parks and outdoor recreation capacity - outdoor
12 recreation coordination, planning, and management - duties of the
13 division - planning reports - legislative declaration.**

14 (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

15 (a) IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE DIVISION PERPETUATE THE WILDLIFE
16 RESOURCES OF THE STATE, PROVIDE A HIGH-QUALITY STATE PARKS
17 SYSTEM, AND PROVIDE ENJOYABLE AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR
18 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THAT EDUCATE AND INSPIRE CURRENT AND
19 FUTURE GENERATIONS TO SERVE AS ACTIVE STEWARDS OF THE STATE'S
20 NATURAL RESOURCES;

21 (b) THE DIVISION, PURSUANT TO SECTION 33-9-101, PROVIDES A
22 COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO OFFER THE GREATEST POSSIBLE
23 VARIETY OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO STATE RESIDENTS AND
24 VISITORS; AND

25 (c) THE DIVISION IS BEST POSITIONED TO SERVE AS THE STATE'S
26 COORDINATING ENTITY FOR ADVANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF
27 COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY, IN COLLABORATION WITH

1 COORDINATING PARTNERS AND OTHER STATE, FEDERAL, AND LOCAL
2 PARTNERS; TRIBAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS; AND INTERESTED
3 STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PRIVATE LANDOWNERS,
4 RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS, CONSERVATION STAKEHOLDERS,
5 AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS, AND WILDLIFE AND SPORTSPERSON
6 STAKEHOLDERS. IN THIS ROLE, THE DIVISION SHOULD FACILITATE
7 PLANNING AND DATA COORDINATION AMONG PARTNERS AND
8 STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN
9 ADVANCING THE STRATEGY'S GOALS AND VISION.

10 (2) THE DIVISION SHALL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN THE
11 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY SUFFICIENT TO EFFECTIVELY EXECUTE THE
12 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION.

13 (3) THE DIVISION SHALL:

14 (a) ENSURE THAT OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ARE PRIORITIZED
15 AND REPRESENTED WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE DIVISION; AND

16 (b) DEVELOP THE CAPACITY OF THE DIVISION TO INCREASE
17 COORDINATION BETWEEN OUTDOOR RECREATION, WILDLIFE, AND
18 CLIMATE-RESILIENCE EFFORTS AND INTERAGENCY PLANNING AND
19 ACTIVITIES.

20 (4) IN IMPLEMENTING SUBSECTIONS (2) AND (3) OF THIS SECTION,
21 THE DIVISION SHALL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

22 (a) STRENGTHENING THE DIVISION'S CAPACITY FOR COORDINATED
23 RECREATION MANAGEMENT, PARTICULARLY AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, TO
24 ANTICIPATE AND WORK THROUGH POTENTIAL CONFLICTS, BY
25 COORDINATING AND INCORPORATING WILDLIFE, CONSERVATION,
26 RECREATION, AND CLIMATE-RESILIENCE CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS
27 DIVISION PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING AND IN ALIGNMENT WITH

1 LOCAL PERSPECTIVES;

2 (b) PROACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH STATE, FEDERAL, AND LOCAL
3 PARTNERS; TRIBAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS; AND INTERESTED
4 STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PRIVATE LANDOWNERS,
5 RECREATION STAKEHOLDERS, CONSERVATION STAKEHOLDERS,
6 AGRICULTURAL STAKEHOLDERS, AND WILDLIFE AND SPORTSPERSON
7 STAKEHOLDERS, TO ENSURE THAT ALL PERSPECTIVES AND AREAS OF
8 EXPERTISE ARE CONSIDERED IN THE DIVISION'S PLANNING AND
9 MANAGEMENT PROCESSES;

10 (c) ADVANCING AND FORMALIZING INTERNAL PROCESSES TO
11 BETTER INTEGRATE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCE
12 MANAGEMENT INTO THE DIVISION'S CORE OPERATIONS, ENSURING
13 COORDINATION BETWEEN RECREATION ACCESS AND WILDLIFE AND
14 HABITAT STEWARDSHIP;

15 (d) COORDINATING AND BALANCING THE DIVISION'S
16 PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING PUBLIC PLANNING,
17 FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT, AND LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT, TO
18 ENSURE THAT RECREATION, WILDLIFE, CONSERVATION, AND COMMUNITY
19 PRIORITIES ARE CONSISTENTLY REPRESENTED;

20 (e) COLLABORATING CLOSELY WITH COORDINATING PARTNERS TO
21 LEAD ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES TO ADVANCE A
22 COORDINATED AND UNIFIED APPROACH TO ENHANCING OUTDOOR
23 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES, MANAGEMENT, AND PLANNING AT THE
24 STATE LEVEL;

25 (f) PROACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH TRIBAL NATIONS THROUGH THE
26 FRAMEWORK COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOPED IN COLORADO'S OUTDOORS
27 STRATEGY, ENSURING THAT TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES ARE

1 MEANINGFULLY INCORPORATED INTO STATEWIDE PLANNING AND
2 COORDINATION PROCESSES; AND

3 (g) SERVING AS A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION ON BEST
4 PRACTICES, TOOLS, AND STRATEGIES, INCLUDING THROUGH
5 ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORADO OUTDOORS STRATEGY TOOLKIT, TO
6 SUPPORT INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INCLUSIVE PLANNING PROCESSES AT ALL
7 LEVELS.

8 (5) CONSISTENT WITH THE MISSION AND DIRECTIVES OF THE
9 DIVISION OUTLINED IN THIS ARTICLE 10, AND AS THE STATE AGENCY WITH
10 PRIMARY COORDINATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION
11 PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT, AND REGIONAL
12 PARTNERSHIP COORDINATION, THE DIVISION SHALL:

13 (a) PROVIDE PROACTIVE APPROACHES TO VISITOR USE
14 MANAGEMENT TO FOSTER OUTCOMES THAT SUPPORT IMPROVED OUTDOOR
15 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES, NATURAL RESOURCE
16 CONSERVATION, AND PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE HABITATS AND WORKING
17 LANDS; AND

18 (b) IN ALIGNMENT WITH COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY,
19 SUPPORT THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF OUTDOOR
20 RECREATION FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS
21 STATEWIDE, WITH THE GOAL OF ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE AND
22 EXCEPTIONAL OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES WHILE PROTECTING PRIVATE
23 PROPERTY RIGHTS, WILDLIFE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

24 (6) CONSISTENT WITH THE DIVISION'S MISSION AND THE
25 OBJECTIVES OF COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY, THE DIVISION SHALL
26 WORK TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION, WILDLIFE
27 CONSERVATION, AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE OUTCOMES THROUGH

1 COLLABORATION, DATA INTEGRATION, PROACTIVE PLANNING, AND
2 REPORTING. TO FULFILL ITS DUTIES RELATED TO STATEWIDE OUTDOOR
3 COORDINATION, THE DIVISION SHALL:

4 (a) LEAD AND COORDINATE ACROSS STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL
5 PARTNERS AND TRIBAL NATIONS PARTICIPATING IN REGIONAL OUTDOOR
6 PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATED VOLUNTARY EFFORTS ASSOCIATED WITH
7 COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY; AND

8 (b) (I) DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A RECURRING INTERNAL
9 COORDINATION AND REPORTING PROCESS, INCLUDING BY CREATING
10 PLANNING REPORTS, TO INTEGRATE DATA, PRIORITIES, AND OUTCOMES
11 FROM WILDLIFE, RECREATION, CLIMATE RESILIENCE, AND REGIONAL
12 OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS, ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH THE GOALS
13 OF COLORADO'S OUTDOORS STRATEGY AND OTHER DIVISION EFFORTS
14 BOTH REGIONALLY AND ACROSS THE DIVISION. IN CREATING PLANNING
15 REPORTS, THE DIVISION SHALL:

16 (A) INTEGRATE AND SUMMARIZE KEY METRICS, OUTCOMES,
17 OPPORTUNITIES, NEEDS, AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FROM STATEWIDE
18 AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES;

19 (B) COLLABORATE WITH STATE, FEDERAL, AND LOCAL PARTNERS;
20 TRIBAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERS; AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS,
21 INCLUDING LOCAL COMMUNITIES, PRIVATE LANDOWNERS, RECREATION
22 STAKEHOLDERS, CONSERVATION STAKEHOLDERS, AGRICULTURAL
23 STAKEHOLDERS, AND WILDLIFE AND SPORTSPERSON STAKEHOLDERS;

24 (C) ESTABLISH PROCESSES WITH STATE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES
25 AND ASSOCIATED PARTNERS, SUCH AS THE OUTDOOR RECREATION
26 INDUSTRY OFFICE AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO PROGRAM, TO
27 IMPROVE COORDINATION AND EFFICIENCY ACROSS AGENCY PARTNERS;

1 (D) APPLY PROACTIVE AND ADAPTIVE APPROACHES TO THE
2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXCEPTIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION
3 OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT LONG-TERM RESOURCE VIABILITY;

4 (E) IDENTIFY AREAS OF ALIGNMENT AND POTENTIAL CONFLICT
5 AMONG RECREATION, WILDLIFE, CONSERVATION, AGRICULTURAL, AND
6 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND FACILITATE COLLABORATIVE
7 PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESSES WITH RELEVANT PARTNERS TO SUPPORT
8 MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL OUTCOMES;

9 (F) EMPLOY DATA-INFORMED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR
10 PLANNING AND INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC LANDS AND REGIONAL OUTDOOR
11 RECREATION RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND
12 INFORMED DECISION-MAKING AMONG PARTNERS;

13 (G) INCORPORATE CLIMATE-RESILIENCE STRATEGIES FOR
14 REGIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION AND CONSERVATION PLANNING TO
15 ADVANCE THE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY OF THE STATE'S NATURAL
16 AND COMMUNITY ASSETS; AND

17 (H) COORDINATE ACROSS THE DIVISION TO ENSURE THE BEST
18 AVAILABLE INFORMATION, INPUT, AND COLLABORATION. IN PARTICULAR,
19 THE DIVISION SHALL ENSURE COORDINATION BETWEEN WILDLIFE,
20 RECREATION, AND CLIMATE-RESILIENCE EFFORTS WITHIN THE DIVISION.

21 (II) THE DIVISION SHALL:

22 (A) REFER TO THE PLANNING REPORTS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION
23 (6)(b)(I) OF THIS SECTION TO INFORM DIVISION PLANNING, OUTREACH,
24 INVESTMENT, AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES; AND

25 (B) UPDATE THE PLANNING REPORTS AT LEAST ANNUALLY TO
26 REFLECT THE LATEST KNOWLEDGE AND ANY ASSOCIATED PLANNING
27 UPDATES AND FACILITATE IMPROVED AWARENESS AND COORDINATION

1 WITHIN THE DIVISION AND AMONG THE DIVISION AND OTHER AGENCIES.

2 (7) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION:

3 (a) REQUIRES ACTION OR PARTICIPATION FROM A PRIVATE OR

4 NON-STATE-GOVERNMENT ENTITY; OR

5 (b) GRANTS THE DIVISION DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY OVER

6 MATTERS THAT ARE WITHIN ANOTHER ENTITY'S JURISDICTION.

7 **SECTION 5. Act subject to petition - effective date.** This act
8 takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the
9 ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August
10 12, 2026, if adjournment sine die is on May 13, 2026); except that, if a
11 referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the
12 state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act
13 within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect
14 unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in
15 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
16 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.