



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 25-1323: DIVISION OF PARKS & WILDLIFE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Prime Sponsors:

Rep. Lukens; Taggart
Sen. Roberts

Fiscal Analyst:

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Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires Colorado Parks and Wildlife to support and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and establish a river recreation program. It also modifies state trails system requirements.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- State Expenditures
- State Revenue

Appropriations. For FY 2025-26, the bill requires an appropriation of \$169,099 from the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund to the Department of Natural Resources.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures ¹	\$202,408	\$599,466	\$1,035,849
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	1.6 FTE	5.0 FTE	9.0 FTE

¹ Fund sources for these impacts are shown in the table below.

Table 1A
State Expenditures

Fund Source	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cash Funds	\$169,099	\$496,395	\$853,583
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0
Centrally Appropriated	\$33,309	\$103,071	\$182,266
Total Expenditures	\$202,408	\$599,466	\$1,035,849
Total FTE	1.6 FTE	5.0 FTE	9.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill modifies a variety of duties for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Specifically, it clarifies CPW's role as the primary agency for outdoor recreation planning and requires the division to:

- support projects to advance high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities;
- provide a proactive approach to outdoor recreation development and management; and
- align outdoor recreation and conservation efforts with conservation priorities and climate resilience strategies.

The bill also requires CPW develop regional and outdoor recreation and conservation plans in coordination with various stakeholders.

River Recreation Program Creation

The bill requires CPW to establish a river recreation program, and in doing so:

- build a statewide coalition of river recreation, stewardship, and safety managers and advocates to ensure active participation;
- coordinate with various entities to align efforts with existing water management strategies;
- ensure that recreation opportunities compliment conservation priorities and address climate change impacts;
- identify and support high-priority rivers and recreation areas;
- enhance data collection and access to information on river conditions; and
- promote river safety and stewardship opportunities.

State Trails System Requirements

The bill modifies the requirements for the state trails system maintained by CPW. In addition to existing requirements, the division shall implement a coordinated approach to nonmotorized and year-round motorized trail planning and cooperate with tribal governments to adopt rules managing trails.

State Revenue

As a state enterprise, CPW generates over 90 percent of its annual funding from sources other than taxes or the General Fund. CPW relies primarily on license sales, state park fees, and registration fees to support operations. Fees collected by the division are not subject to TABOR. The bill does not provide for additional revenue to CPW, so it will consider all available revenue sources to phase in the requirements of the bill. Sources may include the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund, Great Outdoor Colorado funds, and federal funds.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures for CPW, in the Department of Natural Resources, by approximately \$200,000 in FY 2025-26, \$600,000 in FY 2026-27, and then by about \$1 million beginning in FY 2027-28 and in future years. These costs, paid from the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund, are summarized in Table 2 and discussed below. The bill also minimally affects workload for the Colorado Conservation Board (CWCB) to coordinate with CPW as needed.

Table 2
State Expenditures
Department of Natural Resources

Cost Component	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
Personal Services	\$144,434	\$440,401	\$757,658
Operating Expenses	\$2,048	\$6,400	\$11,520
Capital Outlay Costs	\$13,340	\$20,010	\$26,680
Vehicle Lease & Operating Costs	\$5,277	\$19,584	\$39,725
Travel Costs	\$4,000	\$10,000	\$18,000
Centrally Appropriated Costs	\$33,309	\$103,071	\$182,266
FTE – Personal Services	1.6 FTE	5.0 FTE	9.0 FTE
Total Costs	\$202,408	\$599,466	\$1,035,849
Total FTE	1.6 FTE	5.0 FTE	9.0 FTE

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

CPW does not currently have the dedicated staff necessary to implement the requirements of the bill. The division plans to phase in staff costs over the course of three years to meet staffing needs.

Staff

In total, CPW requires 9.0 FTE to fully implement the bill. Utilizing a phased-in approach, CPW will hire 2.0 FTE in FY 2025-26, which include an Outdoor Recreation Program Manager and a Colorado's Outdoors Strategy Coordinator. In FY 2026-27, it will hire 3.0 FTE, which include a Regional Partnership Manager, a River Recreation Program Manager, and a Nonmotorized Trails Program Manager. In FY 2027-28, it will hire the remaining 4.0 FTE, which include four Outdoor Recreation Managers. Personal services costs include standard operating and capital outlay and have been prorated in FY 2025-26 for the bill's petition clause effective date.

Vehicle Lease and Operating Costs

New staff will require vehicles to travel between 5,000 and 6,000 miles per year to sites and meetings statewide. Costs are based on rates set by the Department of Personnel and Administration at \$4,793 per vehicle lease and \$1,041 in operating costs per FTE.

Travel

Costs for staff travel are estimated at approximately \$2,000 per year per FTE. This accounts for an average of five overnight stays annually at \$400 per trip for hotel costs and per diem reimbursement.

Colorado Water Conservation Board

The bill also requires additional staff time from CWCB to coordinate with CPW on the implementation of the river recreation program. CWCB will need to participate in developing guidelines for river recreation management and review existing watershed plans. If necessary, CWCB will seek additional technical assistance through contracted services. This increase in workload can be addressed within existing appropriations.

Centrally Appropriated Costs

Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which may include employee insurance, supplemental employee retirement payments, leased space, and indirect cost assessments, are shown in the expenditure table(s) above.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2025-26, the bill requires an appropriation of \$169,099 from the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund to the Department of Natural Resources, and 1.6 FTE.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Natural Resources

Information Technology

The revenue and expenditure impacts in this fiscal note represent changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. For additional information about fiscal notes, please visit the [General Assembly website](#).