



COLORADO
Governor Jared Polis

Colorado's parks and public lands are the foundation of the state's \$12.2 billion outdoor recreation and tourism economy, and the lifeblood of countless Colorado communities, small businesses and livelihoods. But more than that, they're central to our Colorado Way of Life. During the pandemic, Coloradans turned to the outdoors in record numbers, and the challenges of overcrowding on our popular public lands became even more pronounced.

These challenges required bold action, and the Polis administration, in partnership with legislative leadership, delivered with an historic level of bold policy and investment in our outdoors. The measures passed will provide an urgently needed surge of investment to address acute and pressing needs, but more importantly, foundational measures, like the Keep Colorado Wild Pass, which will **protect the Colorado we love and save people money**. The measures signed by Governor Polis include:

Groundbreaking Policy Achievements

SB21-249, The Keep Colorado Wild Pass - The Keep Colorado Wild Pass will save Coloradans money on their annual park pass and provide sustainable, long-term funding for our state's world-class outdoors, wildlife and the professionals and first responders that protect them. With this legislation, Coloradans now have the option to purchase this multi-jurisdictional pass accessing state and select federally managed areas during the car registration process.

Under Governor Polis, Colorado has created two new state parks, with Fishers Peak in Trinidad officially opening almost a year ago and the administration launched a new partnership in the Fall of 2021 among Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service (White River National Forest), and Eagle Valley Land Trust (EVLТ) to create Colorado's 43rd State Park at Sweetwater Lake.

Colorado is home to more than 22 million acres of public lands, ranging from wetlands to forests, canyon landscapes to mountain lakes. Governor Polis is a strong supporter of Colorado's outdoors and has fulfilled his pledge to double the amount of publicly accessible land trust enrolled in the Public Access Program.

Governor Polis also signed into law the Outdoor Equity Grant Program in June, which will increase access and opportunities for underserved youth and their families to enjoy Colorado's outdoors. This legislation creates the state's first ever "Outdoor Equity Fund", which will provide grants to promote equitable outdoor opportunities and access for disadvantaged Colorado youth.

Historic Levels of Direct Investment in our Outdoors and Lands (\$129.6 Million)

SB21-112 - Colorado State Parks Capital Improvements Stimulus

Colorado also made significant investments in our outdoor recreation infrastructure and conservation with major stimulus investments. SB-112 provided \$20 million for capital improvements to address increased usage and for increased access at twelve state parks. The bill is a component of a bipartisan stimulus effort developed by the Governor and the General Assembly to jumpstart Colorado's economy through investments in infrastructure projects. This conservation-focused legislation will help direct funds to outdoor projects in Colorado that protect irreplaceable public lands and expand outdoor recreation opportunities in the state.

HB21-1326 - Colorado State Parks and Public Lands Colorado Comeback Stimulus

Serving as bridge funding until the critical sustainable funding that will be provided by the Keep Colorado Wild Pass and Outdoor Equity Fund / Lottery proceeds bills come online, this bill invests \$25 million in federal funds to improve Colorado state parks. The bill provides:

- \$14.5 million for new state park infrastructure and development projects.
- \$3.5 million for state park staffing and maintenance needs.
- \$3.5 million to the Division of Parks and Wildlife to implement its statewide wildlife action plan and the conservation of native species;
- \$750,000 to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center to support backcountry avalanche safety programs;
- \$2.25 million to the search and rescue fund to support backcountry search and rescue efforts;
- \$1 million to the outdoor equity fund for use by the division to implement the outdoor equity grant program;

Wildfire Recovery and Prevention for our Lands and Waters: Colorado continues to face the impacts of climate change, including a multi-year, severe drought and wildfires. While drought and wildfires have been normal conditions in Colorado for years, the current intensity, severity and duration of the drought conditions and wildfires are not the same as what the state has experienced in the past. Governor Polis and the Colorado Legislature took action in 2021, in total \$88 million was allocated for wildfire recovery efforts on our lands and waters. A key part of this was the creation of Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) through SB21-258 to provide \$17.5 million to quickly move state stimulus funds to support on-the-ground work on wildfire risk reduction projects to protect life, property, and infrastructure.

Additionally, last session we passed legislation increasing immediate funding for the FRWRM program, and making increased funding available in future years while also stabilizing the fund away from severance tax dollars. 2020's record breaking wildfire season was not an anomaly, but a harbinger of what's to come if we don't take urgent action. We must be bold as we invest in wildfire suppression, the recovery of our lands and watersheds, as well as forward thinking mitigation and forest health efforts.

And that's exactly why, this session we passed legislation making significant investments, roughly \$85 million (\$84.6), in our lands and waters, to recover from and prevent the wildfire devastation we witnessed. These include:

- SB21-054 (\$13 million) toward forest restoration, wildfire risk mitigation, wildfire preparedness and post-fire recovery and mitigation efforts.
- SB21- 240 (\$20 million) would boost an existing Colorado Water Conservation Board grant program to protect watersheds from the impacts of wildfires. It also would set aside funding for a statewide watershed analysis of wildfire impacts.
- SB21- 258 (\$31.6 million) would set aside money for wildfire mitigation on federal lands with an emphasis on workforce development and cross-boundary coordination efforts.
- HB21-1260 (\$20 million) would allocate money toward the Colorado Water Conservation Board for the state's water plan. Of the funds, \$15 million would be transferred to the water plan implementation cash fund and \$5 million would be transferred to the water supply reserve fund.