



April 2, 2015

Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources
Policy and Planning
1313 Sherman Street
Room 111
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Colorado Parks and Wildlife 2015 Strategic Plan

Dear CPW Planning Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the upcoming Colorado Parks and Wildlife 2015 Strategic Plan. This letter contains the formal comments of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA).

Founded in 1988, IMBA leads the national and worldwide mountain bicycling communities through a network of 80,000 individual supporters, 175 local Chapters, 200 Corporate partners and 600 dealer members. IMBA teaches sustainable trail building techniques and has become a leader in trail design, construction, and maintenance; encourages responsible riding, volunteer trail work, and cooperation among trail user groups and land managers.

As a quiet human powered form of recreation, bicycles have impacts on natural lands that are comparable to any human activity. Unmanaged recreation always has the potential to create adverse impacts on our natural environment. However, thoughtful planning and management can avoid those potential effects while still allowing trails and access that are important to Colorado's culture, health and recreation.

IMBA is very interested in developing a working partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to establish a Strategic Planning document that suits the needs of future planning on state parks and federal lands and allows both recreation and wildlife to coexist and thrive throughout Colorado. A working partnership with CPW and IMBA can help to address some of the specific topic categories in the CPW Strategic Plan. We acknowledge these categories and would like to offer some feedback.

Perpetuating Wildlife Resources

It is through a variety of recreational pursuits that Coloradans and visitors alike experience and value our state's natural resources. While CPW is currently and traditionally heavily focused on wildlife management, the merger with State Parks has brought recreation more to the forefront

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than in the past. Smart planning and strategic partnerships mean that wildlife objectives can coexist with human-powered recreation so that both are successful. Supporting a diverse portfolio of recreational opportunities to meet growing demand while using best available science to inform decisions that harmonize wildlife and recreation management will best position Colorado for success. Through the success of the merger, IMBA believes that CPW is better positioned than ever to balance these important goals on both state park lands as well as on the federal estate where CPW influences planning decisions.

Mountain bike organizations, in particular, have a track record of successful trail stewardship, construction, maintenance and use in areas sensitive to wildlife, and stand ready to coordinate and cooperate with CPW to seek creative solutions to greater balance pressures of recreational growth with effective science-based wildlife management. Persistent cooperation, public engagement and educational resources shared and co-promoted can help develop a continued coexistence between recreation and wildlife for future generations.

Quality State Parks System

CPW influences decisions on federal, local and state open spaces, and should strive to be a model of innovation and cooperation in the way it manages its lands and users. Non-motorized use such as mountain biking is ever increasing and has become a significant way for our state's youngest demographic to recreate on public lands. Increased spending on state trails, grants programs and funding efforts can facilitate development of sustainable trail systems. A purposefully designed trail system is light on the land, accommodates a wide range of users, steers visitors away from sensitive areas, and provides a myriad of quality state park recreation experiences. Where the state park system cannot adequately serve local recreational needs, CPW should engage cooperatively with diverse interest on federal planning processes to utilize creative solutions that balance wildlife and recreation management rather than approach from a purely wildlife-centric perspective.

Enjoyable and Sustainable Outdoor Recreation

Trails funding is incredibly important to public land recreation in our state, and parks funding is critical to both the health of Colorado's economy and its citizens. Many state trails grants are also matched by local and federal government and foundation grants thus leveraging the impact of these dollars. Funding development of a network of sustainable trails that reduce the impact on the surrounding environment, including wildlife, provides for dynamic trail systems that can be enjoyed by a variety of user groups.

Educate and Inspire Active Stewardship

IMBA is a non-profit educational organization that works to create a powerful voice for trails, trail etiquette, public lands and management policies that are bike and user friendly. We continue to seek opportunities to inspire more people to experience the outdoors by bicycle. By cultivating organized cycling groups, together we create a desire to build better mountain biking. Each





year, IMBA members and affiliated clubs conduct more than one million hours of volunteer trail stewardship on America's public lands and are some of the best assistants to federal, state, and local land managers.

Customer Service

The best customer service a land management agency can provide is the ability to provide balance between recreation and wildlife management by listening to "customer" needs and desires and leading open and fair public discussion on how to achieve the balance we all seek. We believe that by doing so you can allow for human-powered recreation and wildlife to coexist and highlight CPW as a model of innovation and cooperation in the way it manages lands and the land's visitors. Doing so would provide a level of customer service that users can appreciate and lead to greater public engagement and value.

IMBA and our regional staff are excited to be involved with CPW Strategic Planning efforts. Whether it is helping to organize community engagement or assessment of potential trail alignments, we want to be involved. Our professional trail consulting team, Trail Solutions, is also available for consultation on designing and constructing sustainable trail systems. We greatly appreciate your goals to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and stewardship. We look forward to continuing a productive relationship in the future. Please feel free to contact us, Aimee Ross (aimee.ross@imba.com), Jason Bertolacci (jason.bertolacci@imba.com), or Mike Pritchard (mike.pritchard@imba.com) if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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