

# STATE OF COLORADO

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John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

## B 2018 010

### **Creating the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council and Directing Action to Promote Conservation and Outdoor Recreation in Colorado**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution, I, John W. Hickenlooper, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order creating the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council and directing certain state agencies to act to promote conservation and outdoor recreation in Colorado.

#### I. Background and Purpose

In 2015, I launched the “Colorado the Beautiful” initiative with the goal of ensuring that, within a generation, every Coloradan lives within ten minutes of a park, trail, or open space. Following the launch of Colorado the Beautiful, state agencies have worked together to advance recreational opportunities for everyone. In undertaking these efforts, state agencies have sought to (A) expand economic opportunities for urban and rural communities; (B) promote conservation of Colorado’s wildlife, pristine waterways, and parks, trails, and open spaces; (C) respond to population growth; (D) promote diversity, equity, and inclusion; and (E) increase collaboration among state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and members of the conservation and recreation communities.

#### A. Economic Opportunity

Colorado’s outdoor recreation and tourism economies are bolstered by a range of outdoor recreation activities, including hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle riding, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, boating, walking on local trails, and picnicking at parks and playgrounds. I formed the Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry (“OREC”) within the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (“OEDIT”) in 2015 to focus on the growth of Colorado’s outdoor recreation economy. OREC’s mission is to inspire industries and communities to thrive in Colorado’s great outdoors.

Recreation activities add to personal health and engagement, and they provide significant economic vitality to communities. According to a report by Southwick Associates, completed in conjunction with the 2019 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, outdoor

recreation generated \$37 billion in consumer spending in 2017, resulting in \$62 billion in economic output to the Colorado economy. Spending on outdoor recreation by residents comprised 10% of Colorado's gross domestic product and provided for 511,000 jobs in the state. In addition, Colorado attracted more than 84 million out-of-state visitors in 2017, generating approximately \$20.9 billion in traveler spending, which in turn produced \$1.28 billion in state and local tax revenues.

## B. Conservation

Colorado's federally owned public lands comprise 40% of the state and are a treasured resource unique to the United States. Public lands provide recreation opportunities to visitors and residents alike, and they serve as a valuable tool to conserve Colorado's land, water, and wildlife resources.

Private lands complement the conservation and recreation value of public lands. Private lands are vital for conservation of natural resources and our western heritage, which has long defined Colorado. Working landscapes increase the viability of land, water, and wildlife assets by providing connected, intact habitats. Private lands can also serve as opportunities for recreation where few others exist, or as gateways to more expansive opportunities on our public lands. Colorado law provides liability protection for landowners who allow the public to recreate on their property free of charge.

Great Outdoors Colorado ("GOCO") is a key source of funding for wildlife, land conservation, and outdoor recreation. Formed by voters in 1992, GOCO invests proceeds from the Colorado Lottery in Colorado Parks and Wildlife ("CPW"), local governments, and land trusts to preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO has committed more than \$1.1 billion in lottery proceeds to more than 5,000 projects in all of Colorado's 64 counties, without any tax dollar support.

While there are clear economic and social benefits to encouraging more people to pursue outdoor recreation in Colorado, the need to balance growth of outdoor recreation with the need to preserve and enhance water, land, and wildlife is as important as ever. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") works to develop, preserve, and enhance the state's natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future residents and visitors. At the local level, local governments work to encourage growth in the outdoor recreation economy and limit impacts to communities and natural resources. Many communities have planning efforts underway to sustain and improve the quality of life for their residents in the face of expected growth.

## C. Population Growth

According to the State Demography Office, housed within the Department of Local Affairs ("DOLA"), Colorado's population is expected to exceed 8.5 million people by 2050, with more than 80% of the population residing along the Front Range. Colorado residents enjoy a

high quality of life, which includes access to outdoor recreation on magnificent public and private lands.

Colorado's expanding population has led to an increase in traffic on the state's roadways, which in turn has created barriers to getting people outdoors. Interstate 70 ("I-70") is one of the most heavily used roadways to access outdoor recreation. Today, drivers traveling along the I-70 Corridor and C-470 during weekend peak hours typically experience an extra hour of driving time compared to traffic-free conditions. Recent studies show that every hour of delay on I-70 costs the state, travelers, and businesses \$1 million. While efforts have been made to improve eastbound traffic, it is critical to continue to improve westbound traffic to recreational amenities and Colorado's rural communities, whose economies depend on recreation-based tourism. To ensure that residents and visitors alike can take advantage of outdoor recreation opportunities, state and local officials must take into account the state's transportation infrastructure needs.

#### D. Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The state's population continues to grow more and more diverse. Today, 30% of Coloradans are Hispanic, African American, Asian, or other persons of color. The State Demography Office estimates that by 2050, that percentage will increase to 48%. In light of the state's changing demographics, state agencies must adapt to ensure that they meet the needs of all Coloradans.

Specifically, the state must take a broader view of what constitutes outdoor recreation by bringing trails, parks, and other outdoor venues to every corner of the state. State agencies must hire staff members that reflect the state's demographic make-up and meet the needs of the communities they serve. The considerations impacting the state's ability to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor recreation illustrate why it is critical for outdoor recreation to be supported by cross-collaboration among agencies and organizations.

#### E. Collaboration

In 2017, a coalition of leaders from government entities, non-governmental organizations, and members of the conservation and recreation community formed the Colorado Outdoor Partnership (the "CO-OP") to accelerate opportunities and respond to challenges presented by a growing outdoor recreation economy. The CO-OP endorsed a set of principles to articulate the inextricable link between recreation and conservation values in Colorado. These principles state:

1. Outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation require that a diversity of lands and waters be publicly owned, available for public access, and cared for properly.
2. Within Colorado's diversity of land and waters, private land plays a critical role in preserving the ecological integrity of a functional landscape

that is necessary for robust and meaningful outdoor recreational experiences.

3. Recreation and conservation are needed to sustain Colorado's quality of life. Both are beneficial to local economic well-being, personal health, and sustaining Colorado's natural resources.
4. All outdoor recreation impacts public and private lands and natural resources. Coloradans have an obligation to minimize these impacts on places where they recreate and the larger landscape through ethical outdoor behavior.
5. Proactive management solutions, combined with public education, are necessary to care for land, water, and wildlife, and to provide the protections needed to maintain quality recreation opportunities.
6. Physical, biological, and social science must inform the management of outdoor recreation.
7. Stable, long-term, and diverse funding sources are essential to protect the environment and grow outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado.

In order to build upon the momentum created by Colorado the Beautiful and the CO-OP, and to continue to support collaboration among GOCO, DNR, CPW, OEDIT, OREC, DOLA, the Colorado Department of Transportation ("CDOT"), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment ("CDPHE"), I am creating the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council and directing certain state agencies to act to promote conservation and outdoor recreation in Colorado.

## II. Declaration and Directives

### A. Creation, Membership, and Mission of the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council

This Executive Order hereby creates the Inter-Agency Trails and Recreation Council (the "Council"). The Council shall consist of seven members, as follows:

1. The Executive Director of DNR, or his or her designee;
2. The Director of CPW, or his or her designee;
3. The Executive Director of CDOT, or his or her designee;
4. The Executive Director of DOLA, or his or her designee;

5. The Executive Director of CDPHE, or his or her designee;
6. The Executive Director of OEDIT, or his or her designee; and
7. The Executive Director of GOCO, or his or her designee.

The Council shall act to advance the Colorado the Beautiful mission to ensure that every Coloradan lives within ten minutes of a park, trail, or open space by:

1. Identifying opportunities to maximize existing resources that will advance sustainable recreation design and management, with consideration of wildlife conservation values;
2. Integrating CDPHE's public health models and socio-economic data into recreation planning and funding decisions, including the use of mapping and analysis tools to identify communities that have sustained health disparities and lower proximity to parks and trails;
3. Prioritizing data-driven decision-making through increased coordination and free exchange of geospatial data across state agencies to promote conservation, outdoor recreation, tourism, and physical activity in Colorado;
4. Connecting recreation priorities with state agency initiatives, such as CDOT's Regional Transportation Plans and their Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the DOLA Main Streets program;
5. Leveraging Colorado's partnership with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics to promote responsible recreation and use of natural and cultural resources by residents and visitors; and
6. Utilizing state technical assistance and resources to support local governments as they plan for future economic growth, outdoor recreation demands, tourism, and conservation goals.

B. Additional Directives to DNR and CPW

DNR and CPW are further directed to:

1. Increase opportunities to leverage public and private funding for new responsible recreational opportunities;

2. Disseminate information regarding current Colorado laws that shield private landowners from liability where they permit recreation on their land at no cost;
3. Facilitate partnerships in the implementation of the 2019 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan;
4. By November 2018, launch a free mobile application, "Colorado Trail Explorer," which will connect Coloradans and visitors to rewarding trail experiences; and
5. Increase the number of diverse CPW employees by 10% over the next five years through:
  - a. an assessment of institutional challenges and opportunities to attract, hire, and retain employees from diverse backgrounds; and
  - b. an evaluation of the success of current youth programs that prepare young people for careers in natural resources.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall continue in existence unless modified or terminated by further Executive Order of the Governor.



GIVEN under my hand and  
the Executive Seal of the State of  
Colorado this twenty-sixth day  
of October, 2018

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "John W. Hickenlooper". The signature is written over the printed name and extends to the right, ending in a long horizontal stroke.