



# PLAN Jeffco

Working to conserve Jefferson County Open Spaces since 1972



*The Boettcher Mansion as seen from the Mule Deer garden.*

## The PLAN Jeffco Monthly March 2026

*March 2026 – an extraordinarily early spring! After an abnormally dry winter, we're seeing early bloom on trees and bushes, which are starting to leaf out.*

*The bears have broken hibernation, the wild turkeys are breeding and nesting, the deer and elk are getting ready to birth their young. Be aware and be respectful of our parks' inhabitants as they go about the rhythm of their lives.*

*A quick reminder: March has historically been our wettest month. While you're trekking in the parks, anticipate trails that may be snow-covered or muddy. Don't be surprised if you encounter both conditions along the same trail. Make sure you've got the proper equipment and definitely dress in layers!*

*Jeffco Open Space Parks are open one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset, so use these hours to enjoy the park experience.*

*PLAN Jeffco is now a part of Colorado Gives...*  
<https://www.coloradogives.org/organization/PLANJeffco>

... and we want to thank every reader, and especially those who have donated to the cause, so that we can continue to advocate for acquisition and protection of open spaces and Jeffco Open Space, in particular.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads or BlueSky – or all five! The team will continue to write articles at <https://planjeffco.org/blog/>

**JOIN US AT**

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## What's New in the Blogosphere?

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### **Boettcher Mansion Gardens Re-emerge with the Spring**

*By Victoria Gits, PLAN Jeffco Staff Writer and Board Secretary*

Three years ago, the lovely, historic Boettcher Mansion on Lookout Mountain was surrounded by a mostly neglected landscape of overgrown grasses and weeds not really in keeping with the grand Arts and Crafts home known as a popular wedding venue.

Thanks to volunteer gardeners, today the grounds on three sides of the house are full of thriving annuals, perennials, shade-or-sun loving plants, flowering shrubs and vines. Even in mid-September one can peruse the zinnias, sunflowers, impatiens, daisies and mums – and petunias, calibrachoa, and sweet potato vine – lots and lots of them.

Instead of forgettable space, the outdoors is now a horticultural showcase and a destination worthy of taking visitors for a peaceful walk any time of day for free, with or without a wedding to attend. [Read more](#)



*Information Specialist Judy Smetana, Volunteer Program Coordinator Ronnie Terry, and Volunteer Gardeners Michelle Poole and Sandy Bates stand in front of the Boettcher Mansion display at this year's Volunteer Recruitment Fair, which was held at JCPOS Headquarters in Golden.*

## **OPEN SPACE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FAIR 2026**

Volunteerism isn't anything new – it's been around for hundreds if not thousands of years. Officially, volunteerism can be traced back to the 12th century in Britain, where more than 500 hospitals were staffed by volunteers.

The word "volunteer" stems from the Latin voluntarius – "willing, of one's own free will". It became part of the English language via Middle French, initially referring to someone who willingly offered themselves for military duty. Today, it has evolved to mean anyone entering service freely, whether military or community service.

Every year, Jeffco Parks & Open Space (JCPOS) hosts a Volunteer Recruitment Fair, during which time folks who are interested in becoming more engaged with our parks can investigate what being a hands-on part of Open Space might be like, i.e. entering service freely. [Read more.](#)

### **Upcoming Events**

<https://planjeffco.org/plan-jeffco-board-meeting-schedule/>

If you would like to attend a PLAN Jeffco Board meeting, please contact us at [ContactUs@PlanJeffco.org](mailto:ContactUs@PlanJeffco.org) prior to the day of the meeting.

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Did you forget to send your annual donation?  
Click on the button below and get caught up!

**Join or Renew My Membership**

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**Other New Stuff on the Website**

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## Stay up-to-date with what's happening at the PJ Board meetings

PLAN Jeffco March Board Meeting Minutes 3/19/2026 – DRAFT

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-3-19-2026-draft/>

PLAN Jeffco February Board Meeting Minutes 2/19/2026 – FINAL

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-2-19-2026-final/>

PLAN Jeffco January Board Meeting Minutes 1/15/2026 – FINAL

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-1-15-2026-final/>

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### Missed a PLAN Jeffco Monthly newsletter? Find them here...

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – February 2026

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/plan-jeffco-monthly-february-2026/>

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – January 2026

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/10607/>

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – December 2025

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/plan-jeffco-monthly-december-2025/>

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### What's been happening at the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) meetings...

*Regular Open Space Advisory Committee in-office meetings are generally held on the first Thursday of every other month, starting at 6:00 PM.*

<https://www.jeffco.us/1581/Advisory-Committee>

*Alternate month meetings are in the field. We have been assured that these in-the-field meetings are open to the public; the times and locations should be published on the County calendar.*

### OSAC at Open Space Headquarters – March 2026

The regular OSAC field trip scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup> was cancelled.

*Check the calendar for upcoming agendas*

<https://www.jeffco.us/1541/Event-Calendar>

*Find all available past meeting documents & videos at*

<https://www.jeffco.us/4528/Past-Meeting-Videos-and-Documents>



*Clematis peeking out through the screens surrounding the Bobcat garden.*

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### **Know Before You Go - [JCOS Alerts & Closures](#)**

Always check this page before heading out to the Open Space parks for current information on Park and Trail closures, openings, and other operations that may impact your Jeffco Open Space Park experience...

**NOTICE:** Tincup Ridge SLASH Yard will open on April 10 & 11, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for storm-related debris.

To help residents manage storm-related debris, the Jefferson County SLASH Program will offer two free public drop-off days for fallen branches and downed trees resulting from March windstorms.

Bring your woody slash materials to the Tincup Ridge Slash Yard, 101 Rooney Rd., Golden, on Friday, April 10, and Saturday, April 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

These drop-offs are intended for storm-related woody debris only, specifically fallen or downed branches and trees. Private companies and contractors are not authorized to dispose of material at any of our locations.

**REOPEN:** Lookout Mountain Preserve trail system, Boettcher Mansion, and Lookout Mountain Nature Center have reopened following intermittent closures.

**NOTICE:** Starting 4/1, the top of Jenkins Peak Trail at Elk Meadow Park will be closed for mountain pine beetle treatment.

**CLOSED:** Seasonal Wildlife Closures at multiple parks Feb 1- July 31

**CLOSED:** The northeast segment of the Two Brands Trail at Hildebrand Ranch Park will be closed beginning Monday, January 19, for trail maintenance.

**CLOSED:** The West Trailhead at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park is closed for scheduled improvements beginning May 5 through spring 2026.

**REMINDER:** Some JCPOS Parks have designated-use trails or alternating use days

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## JEFFCO PARKS & OPEN SPACE

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### **Dig In for Earth Day!**

**Where:** Van Bibber Open Space Park

**When:** Saturday, April 18, 2026

**Why:** a volunteer day focused on trail work and planting projects that help restore habitat, improve trails, and keep our open spaces healthy and beautiful for everyone. Volunteers under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. [For more information and registration, please see our volunteer calendar.](#)

### **\$9 Million Beaver Ranch Park Improvements Set to Begin May 2026**

*Contact: Matt Robbins, Community Connections*

*Director [mrobbins@jeffco.us](mailto:mrobbins@jeffco.us) or 303.271.5902*

Building on the 2017 Master Plan and extensive community engagement that assessed current park conditions and prioritized park-wide improvements, construction at Beaver Ranch Park is scheduled to begin in May 2026. The \$9 million investment reflects a shared vision to enhance the park's accessibility, safety, and overall visitor experience, while preserving the character that makes Beaver Ranch such a special place.

Construction is anticipated to continue through fall 2027, delivering a wide range of upgrades designed to better serve the community now and into the future. Visitors should anticipate varying levels of closures throughout construction.

The improvements are designed to enhance the visitor experience while supporting recreation, stewardship, and community connection. Key upgrades include safer access through a realigned main entrance connecting to Foxton Road, improvements to the park entrance road, and expanded parking with more than 100 upgraded spaces across two lots. [For more information go here.](#)

### **Hildebrand Ranch Park**

If you're in Hildebrand and you notice something a little odd off in the distance, you may be seeing a new wildlife survey technique which is being used by the OS Natural Resources team. It's called an adapted-hunt drift fence, a non-invasive wildlife monitoring system (AHDriFT) that combines traditional drift fences with game cameras to survey small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The drift fence guides the critters into an inverted bucket with a game camera attached at the top. The bucket is a pass-

through, with an entrance and an exit. The critters are free to come and go at will.

This method has been used in other parks and has reportedly resulted in good data. According to other studies, the AHDriFT system reduces observer time by up to 95% compared to traditional traps, requiring only monthly checks, and results in essentially zero mortality for the critters, compared to other types of trapping methods. So, if you notice one of these drift fences, leave it alone. It's helping us better understand the residents of our Open Space parks.

### **Elk Meadow/ Jenkins Peak Mountain Pine Beetle Treatment**

If you're hiking around Jenkins Peak in late March/early April, you may notice that certain trees have been marked. Open Space will begin treating 15 acres of Ponderosa pine at this location for mountain pine beetle. The treatments will start in April and will continue through the end of June. During this time, the top of Jenkins Peak Trail and the adjacent area will be closed; all other trails south of the Stagecoach Trailhead will remain open. Please be respectful and stay out of the area, as crew members will be working with dangerous equipment. These enforced closures for your safety.

### **Alderfer/Three Sisters OS Park**

The Bluebird Meadow Trail, located on the west side of the park, has a new boardwalk. The new section replaced the failing portion of the existing turnpike, which had succumbed to rot due to continual high water in this area. The elevated boardwalk ties into the existing structure, helping to prevent erosion, muddy sections, braided trails, and ongoing water damage.

The West Trailhead at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park will remain closed for improvement through spring 2026. [For more information, visit the Alderfer/Three Sisters Park webpage.](#)

### **Matthews/Winters Park Improvements**

The Bail Out trail improvement project is complete. The Red Rocks trail, which had been closed during construction, and the Bail Out trail opened on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Concrete block retaining walls were built to stabilize the hillside and encourage revegetation. Matting and soil lifts, which are bioengineering techniques used to stabilize eroded banks by wrapping layers of soil in biodegradable fabric to create terraces, were added, while the entire area was re-seeded. A concrete landing and roadside culvert were added for the pedestrian crossing. These improvements stabilized a slope that regularly sloughed onto the road, posing safety concerns for both trail visitors and passing traffic.

### **Matthews/Winters Park – Hot Spot Halted**

You're probably aware that Open Space has a fire-fighting team, called OSWFT. In last month's newsletter, we talked about the training they undertook with the Evergreen Fire Protection District. This month, OSWFT had an opportunity to put that training into practice.

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the OSWFT Team, along with Foothills Fire Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, responded to a call of a smoke plume originating from Matthews/Winters Park off Highway 93. One of our Park Rangers was the first on scene. While the Jeffco Sheriff's Office used their thermal imaging drone to locate the heat source, Open Space Rangers

closed the park to visitors. OSWFT Rangers joined Foothills Fire Department, hiked into the park and located the cause of the fire – an unattended campfire.

It was a very small fire, too small to officially receive a name, even though it was dubbed the “Eclipse Fire” (there was a lunar eclipse that evening).

PLEASE understand that, despite your personal feelings regarding spiritual activities, there is NO REASON to start a fire in any forest. We are in the midst of an extended drought; the potential for wildfire is extremely high. We encourage you to conduct these types of activities in the safety of your own back yard.

### **New Task Force Targets Mountain Pine Beetle Outbreak**

In mid-December the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners and JCPOS welcomed Governor Polis to Elk Meadow Park for a press conference announcing an executive order establishing the Ponderosa Mountain Pine Beetle Task Force.

The task force will bring together state, local, federal, private, and nonprofit partners to advance both urgent and long-term strategies. Its work will focus on strengthening cross-jurisdiction collaboration, developing innovative solutions, enhancing forest health programs, expanding public education efforts, and improving wildfire detection, suppression, and recovery initiatives.

Governor Polis also announced plans to submit a supplemental request to the legislature outlining recommended actions to support programs that assist landowners and protect forest resources statewide.

Jefferson County Commissioner Lesley Dahlkemper highlighted local efforts and announced an upcoming MPB Landowner Assistance pilot project, scheduled to launch in early 2026.

In addition to county leadership, members of the JCPOS Natural Resources, Stewardship, and Community Connections Teams were available to answer audience questions about MPB and the Elk Meadow Park forest health project.

Information for landowners about MPB, how to manage it, and the upcoming Landowner Assistance program is available at [Jeffco's MPB page](#).

### **Tick Season Has Expanded**

*from one of our OS Park Patrollers...*

So, Friday I had the pleasure of digging a tick out of my chest,  
Which honestly was more pleasant than the dirty hippy I had to evict from  
my belly button after a fun night at Gold Hill above Boulder last summer.  
I was all over Pine Valley last week and Apex after work Thursday.  
So it could've been either of those places,  
but it doesn't matter.

We usually have a 3-to-4-month tick season in Colorado starting in April and calming down mid-summer.

But our no-winter winter has thrown everything off and now we get a 5-month tick season.

We have three types of Ticks in Colorado,  
Which can all carry pathogens and diseases.  
Although very rare.

They can carry Colorado tick fever, (Relapsing fever)  
Rocky mountain spotted fever,

Tularemia,  
And a joyful form of paralysis,  
which interestingly subsides as soon as the infected tick is removed.

Ticks do respond to insect repellent with DEET,  
And they are repelled by oil of lemon or eucalyptus,  
For all you crunchy essential oil types.

So please,  
After any time in the woods or brushy areas for the next five months,  
Check your kids,  
Check your dogs,  
And check your goods,  
Because ticks are nature's own creepy pervert and are going to go straight  
for your business if you let them.  
They won't even buy you dinner.

Open Space Projects	Status	Expected Completion
Alderfer/West Trailhead improvements	under construction	Spring 2026
Beaver Ranch park improvements	permitting	Spring 2027
Boettcher Mansion roof repairs	procurement	Spring 2026
Clear Creek Canyon Huntsman Segment	under construction	Fall 2026
Clear Creek Canyon Central Segment	design	TBD
North Table Mountain trailhead improvements	design	Summer 2027
Settlers Drive SLASH site	design	TBD
Stafford Hogback new trailhead	planning	Summer 2028
Van Bibber - Indiana to the Fairmont trail	under construction	Spring 2027

For additional information on Open Space events go to the  
[Open Space Event Calendar](#)



# COLORADO Wildfire Resiliency Code Board

*Senate Bill 23-166 established a Wildfire Resiliency Code Board in the Division of Fire Prevention and Control to help enhance community safety and resiliency from wildfires through the adoption of codes and standards.*

*Defensible space and structure hardening requirements will apply to mountain areas and parts of the plains per the [proposed Wildland Urban Interface \(WUI\) map](#).*

*For more information go to <https://www.jeffco.us/2613/Regulation-Updates>*

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*The Boettcher Mansion on Lookout Mountain (originally known as Lorraine Lodge) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. It was added for its significant Arts and Crafts style architecture and its history as the summer home of Charles Boettcher, following its donation to Jefferson County.*

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## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

**As the West's scant snowpack melts, Coloradans brace for a lean water year**

*By Annie MacKeigan, The Water Desk, CPR*

*2/25/26*

Call it the winter that wasn't.

Throughout Colorado a record-warm and dry winter has come to a close. Attention now pivots to spring and the potential for additional snow to allay increasing drought concerns. Though, there appears to be little relief in sight.

The Denver-metro area went months without measurable snowfall this winter. The city's daytime temperatures often surpassed 60 degrees. Hikers

and trail runners rejoiced over the warm weather while grumbling skiers lamented their underused season passes.

<https://www.cpr.org/2026/03/25/snow-drought-colorado-water-impacts/>

## **Denver Water imposes twice-a-week restrictions on watering; outdoor surcharges ahead**

*Michael Booth*

3/25/26

Agency moves quickly after updates on “unprecedented” poor snowpack and runoff conditions

Denver Water drove home the serious nature of the 2026 drought Wednesday with a unanimous vote for two-day-a-week watering restrictions and warnings that the agency for 1.5 million Front Range customers is developing new enforcement plans and outdoor watering surcharges.

Denver Water customers can water this summer season on only two of seven days, with houses ending in even numbers taking Sunday and Thursday, and those ending in odd numbers taking Wednesday and Saturday. The state’s largest water agency also begged customers to not turn on their lawn systems at all until mid or late May, instead watering trees and shrubs by hand and holding off irrigation as long as possible in order to preserve reservoirs.

<https://coloradosun.com/2026/03/25/denver-water-restrictions-drought-front-range/>

## **Colorado officer helps young squirrels abandoned by mother as 'baby wildlife season' gets underway**

*Spencer McKee, The Denver Gazette*

3/17/2026

“Tis the start of baby wildlife season!,” reads a press release from the Westminster Police Department related to case that highlights how Coloradans should be on the lookout for younglings in odd places.

According to the police department, Animal Management Officer Wood responded to a call for help from a local auto shop related to a litter of baby squirrels – and their mother – that were found under the hood of a vehicle last week. It’s believed the “stowaways” had inadvertently “hitched a ride” inside of the engine compartment of the vehicle when the automobile was transported to the shop. [Read more here.](#)

## **Study finds lack of local wildfire mitigation resources in northwestern Colorado, where 4th largest wildfire in state history burned last summer**

*Ryan Spencer [rspencer@summitdaily.com](mailto:rspencer@summitdaily.com)*

3/17/2026

A study has found a mismatch between wildfire risk and mitigation resources in Colorado, including a lack of local resources in the northwest, where the fourth largest wildfire in the state’s history burned last summer.

The study by Colorado State University researchers is among the first to map local capacity to reduce wildfire vulnerability, according to a news release. It was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Forest Science* last year.

“Reducing vulnerability to wildfire requires the engagement of many different actors, including private landowners, local organizations and state and federal management authorities,” Karissa Courtney, the study’s lead author, said in an email. “A lot of resources have been directed toward

modeling and mapping wildfire risk, but complementary representations of local capacity have largely been lacking.” [Read more here.](#)

### **Steamboat announces closing date after dry winter**

*9News*

3/18/2026

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo. — Steamboat Ski Resort is preparing to wrap up its ski season earlier than last year, citing a dry winter across Colorado.

The resort announced its final day of operations is April 12, about a week earlier than 2025, when lifts continued running until April 20. The earlier closing comes after a below average snow season statewide, which impacted conditions across many Colorado ski areas. [Read more here.](#)

### **Denver Water gives update on Dillon Reservoir forecast**

*Kyle McCabe* [kmccabe@summitdaily.com](mailto:kmccabe@summitdaily.com)

3/15/2026

Representatives from Denver Water visited the Summit Board of County Commissioners on Friday, March 13, to give an update on Dillon Reservoir operations.

Nathan Elder, Denver Water’s water supply manager, said the conditions this year are “really poor,” with the amount of water in the snowpack sitting at 61% of normal. Since Denver Water started using its equipment measuring water in the snowpack in the late 1970s, Elder said, this year has the second lowest measurement.

“Pretty concerning situation up here,” Elder said. [Read more here.](#)

### **Rocky Mountain National Park begins fire restrictions in March**

*Sean McAlindin/Sky-Hi News*

3/14/2026

Due to extremely high winds, fire danger, and the extended weather forecast, Stage 2 fire restrictions are now in effect within Rocky Mountain National Park, the park stated in a press release today. This means that all campfires, including charcoal briquette fires, are not permitted anywhere within Rocky Mountain National Park.

This fire ban is effective beginning today, March 12 and will remain in effect until further notice.

Petroleum-fueled stoves and grills may still be used in Moraine Park Campground, in designated picnic areas, and in designated wilderness campsites. Stoves must be able to be turned on and off. During the winter season, Moraine Park Campground located on the east side of the park, is the only developed campground that is open inside the park. [Read more here.](#)

### **Colorado’s accidental climatologist taps 52 years of daily winter weather reports to confirm a troubling trend**

*Jason BLevins*

3/16/2026

GOTHIC — billy barr rifles through the spiral-bound notebooks stacked beneath his desktop computer and pulls out his journal from 1976-77.

The dog-eared pages toss up dust that dances in the sunlight streaming through his cabin window.

“OK, here is the total snowfall to date for today in 1977,” he says, his finger tracing notes from Feb. 11. “Total amount of snow, let’s see, was 196. That’s centimeters.”

He punches a calculator.

That's 77 inches. Today, we are at 100 inches. On this day in 1977, barr recorded 13 inches of snow on the ground near his off-grid home on a forested hill above the mining town turned alpine research haven. [Read more here.](#)

## **Popular creek might not appear in heart of Great Sand Dunes this year amid low snowpack**

*By Spencer McKee*

3/18/2026

By now it's no secret that it's been an extremely dry winter in Colorado this year – and the impacts of that dryness have stretched far and wide. One of those impacts will likely be that a 'bucket list-worthy' sight in Colorado fails to come to fruition this spring.

While March and April tend to bring a lot of snow to the state's Sangre de Cristo mountain range, trends seem to point to that not being the case in 2026. Coupled with already-low snowpack in the area, this will likely mean a significant lack of snowmelt – and a trickle down effect of that could mean that Medano Creek won't make an appearance, at least not at its typical scale. [Read more here.](#)

## **Colorado activates drought task force as hope for snowpack recovery dwindles**

*Ali Longwell alongwell@summitdaily.com*

3/17/2026

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis activated the state's Drought Task Force on Tuesday, March 17, as current conditions and future forecasts paint a grim picture.

"Colorado is experiencing the warmest year so far in our 131-year record, and one of the driest," Polis said in a news release. "Activating the Drought Task Force will help ensure we are protecting one of our most precious resources by closely tracking impacts, supporting communities and coordinating better as we prepare for the year ahead."

Given these historic conditions, the March activation this year marks an earlier-than-normal response as the state prepares for what Nate Pearson, the assistant director for water policy for Colorado's Department of Natural Resources, said is "going to be a really challenging year," at the Colorado Water Conditions Monitoring Committee meeting on Tuesday. [Read more here.](#)

## **Colorado River forecast warns that just one-third of normal water could flow to Lake Powell**

*Ryan Spencer, rspencer@summitdaily.com*

3/13/2026

As a record-hot winter continues across much of the West, forecasters are dialing back estimates for how much water will flow into the Colorado River during the spring runoff.

The latest models show that the Colorado River is projected to deliver only about 2.3 million acre feet of water — about one-third of normal — to Lake Powell, the nation's second-largest reservoir, this summer.

Colorado River Basin Forecast Center hydrologist Cody Moser said during a water briefing this week that if those projections were to bear out, that would be the fifth lowest amount of water delivered to Lake Powell in the past 63 years. [Read more here.](#)

## Colorado protects \$10 million historic ranch near Eldora, plans for new state wildlife area

Michael Booth

3/13/2026

Colorado Parks & Wildlife has acquired the 3,314-acre Tolland Ranch next to Eldora ski area for preservation as new state recreation space in a deal brokered by The Conservation Fund and announced as “an important victory for wildlife habitat and public land access.”

The Conservation Fund, which acquired the private property and is selling it to Colorado to be run as a state wildlife area, declined to name a price, but said the original listing of \$9.9 million was a “ballpark.” The state said some of the funds will come from \$12.47 habitat stamp fees added to hunting and fishing licenses. Great Outdoors Colorado and its lottery proceeds will also contribute to the purchase.

The deal avoids home development in 3,314 acres of scenic wildlife corridors, and promises 3 miles of trout fishing on South Boulder Creek.

[Read more here.](#)

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## COUNTY NEWS & HAPPENING

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### JEFFCO Sheriff'S Office LEA Report

<https://www.jeffcosheriffco.gov/news>

### TOGETHER JEFFCO

<https://togetherjeffco.com/>

Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan  
Scheduled for Hearing

The Jefferson County Planning Commission will hold a hearing regarding the updates to the Comprehensive Plan on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

Details are on the Comprehensive Plan page <https://togetherjeffco.com/cp>

View the FINAL Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

<https://togetherjeffco.com/cwpp>

View the FINAL Evacuation Annex Plan (EA)

<https://togetherjeffco.com/cemp>

View the FINAL Transportation & Mobility Plan (TMP)

<https://togetherjeffco.com/tmp>

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## OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

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### NOCO PLACES - A Common Voice for Public Lands

<https://www.nocoplaces.com/>

*Nine county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado are actively collaborating to address the challenges the mountains and foothills in this region are facing from high visitation and a growing population. We are committed to sustainable solutions, equitable actions, and beneficial land management practices for the long-term conservation of Colorado's public lands and the quality of the visitor experience.*

## Conservation and Recreation Vision

<https://www.nocoplaces.com/conservation-and-recreation-vision/>

**Programs and Workshops** <https://www.nocoplaces.com/unauthorized-trail-rehabilitation/>

**2025 Annual Report** <https://www.nocoplaces.com/reports/>

## COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

<https://cpw.state.co.us>

News & Media <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/NewsMedia.aspx>

CPW Podcasts <https://cpw.state.co.us/CPW-podcast>

eNews & Social Media <https://cpw.state.co.us/enews-and-social-media>

News Releases <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/NewsReleases.aspx>

### **Collared Gray Wolf Activity Map for March Released**

The March 2026 Collared Gray Wolf Activity Map is now available and displays the collared wolves' activity throughout the state during this reporting period. This map indicates watersheds where at least one GPS point from a collared wolf was recorded within the last 30 days.

### **State of Colorado announces interagency agreement on backcountry search and rescue operations to advance public safety**

DATE: March 25, 2026

DENVER – The State of Colorado through Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), in collaboration with the County Sheriffs of Colorado (CSOC) announce the signing of a State of Colorado Interagency Agreement (IAA) on the coordination and response to Colorado backcountry search and rescue emergencies.

### **Rebounding elk populations in Northwest Colorado prompts Colorado Parks and Wildlife to propose increased licenses for the 2026 Big Game Hunting season**

March 18, 2026

MEEKER, Colo. — After completing this year's annual classification flights, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) saw elk in the Bears Ears (E-2) and White River (E-6) areas returning to the population objective range for the first time since the severe winter of 2022-23. As a result, CPW is proposing an increase in hunting licenses for the 2026 Big Game Hunting season.

### **2026 Colorado Big Game License Draw – Quick Tips**

The 2026 Colorado Big Game brochure is now available, and now's the time to plan for the fall hunting seasons. This video provides tips to help you successfully navigate the Limited License Draw.

The application deadline for the Primary Draw is 8 p.m. Mountain Time on April 7th. Be sure to submit your applications early to avoid complications or delays!

### **YY brook trout make a splash in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's effort to restore native Colorado River cutthroat trout populations**

March 10, 2026

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has seen positive results in restoring native Colorado River cutthroat trout in Colorado through the introduction of Trojan male brook trout. Also known as YY brook

trout, Trojan males have two Y chromosomes, unlike the wild males that have one X and one Y chromosome. When introduced into wild fish populations of the same species, Trojan males only produce male offspring when they spawn with wild fish. As a result, without a breeding population of both male and female fish, the invasive species will eventually die out, allowing for the restoration of native species.

### **Colorado fishing licenses are now available for the 2026-2027 season**

Fishing licenses are valid from March 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027 (13 months). Regulations and pricing for annual, daily and multi-day fishing licenses are available in the new 2026 Colorado Fishing Brochure (Pesca en Colorado En Español). Youth aged 15 and under fish for free.

### **Jefferson Conservation District**

<https://www.jeffersoncd.com/news-events>

JCD assists private forest landowners in planning and implementing projects with the shared goals of wildfire mitigation and forest ecosystem restoration. JCD helps landowners plan and manage forestry projects on their land to reduce wildfire hazard and restore ecological integrity.

### **Bird Conservancy of the Rockies**

<https://www.birdconservancy.org>

Bird Surveys Conducted 26,114  
Products Informing Conservation 105  
Landowners Supported 638  
Acres Restored/Enhanced 33,901  
People Reached via Education 41,641

**Monitor Migration:** <https://www.birdconservancy.org/nfc-lightsout/>

**Bird Banding Results:** <https://www.birdconservancy.org/what-we-do/education/bird-banding/>

**Register for Bird Camps 2026:** <https://www.birdconservancy.org/what-we-do/education/bird-camps>

**Publications:** <https://www.birdconservancy.org/resource-center/publications/>

**Save the Date:** A Night For The Birds annual fundraiser

**When:** October 16, 2026 from 6 – 9 p.m.

**Where:** Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver, CO 80205

Tickets will be available in August

### **Denver Audubon**

<https://denveraudubon.org>

**What We're About:** <https://denveraudubon.org/about-us/>

**Denver Audubon Blog:** <https://denveraudubon.org/blog/>

**Where To Go Birding:**

<https://www.denveraudubon.org/resources#WheretoGoBirding>

**Native Plants for Birds:** <https://www.denveraudubon.org/colorado-native-plant-resources#NativePlantsforBirds>

**Conservation & Research:** <https://www.denveraudubon.org/conservation-and-research#ConservationandResearch>

**Upcoming Classes, Programs & Events:**

<https://www.denveraudubon.org/calendar>

### **Colorado Open Lands**

<https://coloradoopenlands.org/>

724,902 acres of land 3443 miles of waterways 807 projects in 50 counties  
**Waterman Property**

Located south of Pagosa Springs in Archuleta County along the Rio Blanco, this 330-acre property borders the river to the north, National Forest to the south, and sits adjacent to another conservation easement, with sweeping views of the San Juan Mountains in the background. Its protection strengthens an already connected landscape in this important corridor.

This highly scenic property features over a mile of riparian habitat along the Rio Blanco and half a mile along Leche Creek. It includes irrigated native grass meadows and pastures, supports livestock grazing, and provides critical habitat for bald eagle, northern leopard frog, and big game species including elk, mule deer, mountain lion, and black bear. Adjacent to San Juan National Forest and the El Rancho Pinoso conservation easement, the property contributes to a highly protected and ecologically connected landscape while remaining visible from several local roads.

This conservation success builds on the legacy of Southwest Land Alliance, whose exceptional portfolio of conserved lands in Archuleta County is now stewarded by Colorado Open Lands after our 2020 merger.

**Conservation Leadership Series 226** will kick off in April. This program was created for early- to mid-career professionals in any field (no prior conservation knowledge required) who are interested in engaging with land and water conservation and who want to bring their learning into their communities as conservation leaders. [Learn more here.](#)

**New Episode of Landlines podcast:** Landlines travels to Pueblo, Colorado, to the home of Dr. Henry Pollock and Dr. Judith Westveer, the executive director and associate director of Southern Plains Land Trust. SPLT owns and manages land in Bent, Baca, and Prowers counties in southeastern Colorado. They partner with Colorado Open Lands to permanently protect their land holdings through conservation easements currently totaling over 50,000 acres. Find Landlines by COL at RSS.com, Apple and Spotify, or stream it directly from <https://rss.com/podcasts/landlines>.

**History and Mergers:** <https://coloradoopenlands.org/history-and-mergers/>  
**Stay connected with COL** via text messaging – simply text PROTECT to 303-988-2373.

Fall 2025 Newsletter: <https://coloradoopenlands.org/publications/>

More Conservation Updates <https://coloradoopenlands.org/latest-news/>

### **Mountain Area Land Trust**

<https://savetheland.org/news/>

over 27,000 acres of land in its 6-county area  
Read about more News and Success Stories at

<https://savetheland.org/news/>

Sign up for MALT's newsletter at

<https://savetheland.org/category/newsletter/>

Mountain Area Land Trust (MALT) is pleased to announce the successful conservation of 910 acres at **Wellington Lake**, a treasured recreational and ecological landmark near Bailey in Jefferson County, Colorado.

Wellington Lake, owned by the Wellington Reservoir Company, is widely known for its stunning woodland setting, anchored by a 167-acre subalpine lake and framed by the dramatic and iconic “Castle” rock spire formation. Recognized for its scenic beauty, historical significance, and diverse wildlife habitat, the area offers extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, fishing, paddleboarding, swimming, rock climbing, and camping. Surrounded by Pike National Forest and located near Lost Creek Wilderness, the property also includes nearly 50 acres of wetlands, supporting the region’s rich ecological diversity.

### **Save the Date: Preserving Our Planet: A Curated Conversation with Mountain Area Land Trust**

**Where:** Colorado School of Mines, Mines Museum of Earth Science

**When:** Thursday, May 21st at 5:30 PM

**Why:** initial 2026 fundraiser, a private museum experience featuring behind-the-scenes tours and engaging conversations that connect science, conservation, and Colorado’s natural legacy. The evening will include drinks and heavy hors d’oeuvres, a live auction and paddle raise, and inspiring discussion about how we can shape conservation together. [Purchase tickets here.](#)

### **Keep It Colorado**

<https://www.keepitco.org/>

*Our mission is to unite, elevate and empower Colorado’s conservation community to protect the lands and waters that define our state.*

<https://www.keepitco.org/news/2025/6/24/spring-summit-2025>

<https://www.keepitco.org/whats-new>

### **Policy Update: Extending the Conservation Easement Tax Credit:**

Bipartisan legislation introduced on February 19 in the Colorado General Assembly would extend the state’s highly successful Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program. HB26-1230 ensures continued protection of Colorado’s farms, ranches, wildlife habitat, water resources, and outdoor recreation landscapes. [Read more here.](#)

**Keep It Colorado will award \$551,100 in assistance** to six nonprofit Colorado land trusts, which will support landowners who have volunteered to protect their properties through conservation. Over 7,000 acres will be conserved with these transaction cost grants. [Read more here.](#)

### **Spring Summit Registration:**

**Where:** Colorado Mountain College’s Spring Valley campus in Glenwood Springs

**When:** May 27-29, 2026

**Why:** This event is designed for those who work in land conservation, especially using voluntary agreements called conservation easements. Land trust staff, interns, fellows, board members, public agency staff, conservation professionals, land stewards, funders, partners, students, AmeriCorps volunteers, and others with an interest in land conservation are all welcome and encouraged to attend. [Learn more here.](#)

News & Press Releases at <https://www.keepitco.org/whats-new>

Event Highlights at <https://www.keepitco.org/out-and-about-event-highlights>

Land Trust Events at <https://www.keepitco.org/out-and-about-event-highlights>

Coalition & Industry Events at <https://www.keepitco.org/coalition-industry-events>

The Source Newsletter at <https://www.keepitco.org/the-source-newsletter>

### **Douglas Land Conservancy**

<https://douglaslandconservancy.org/>

over 28,000 acres of land in Douglas, Jefferson & Elbert Counties  
Annual Photo Contest at <https://douglaslandconservancy.org/annual-photo-contest/>

News at <https://douglaslandconservancy.org/news/>

#### **Save the Date: 2026 Under a Wild Sky Fundraiser**

**Where:** Maytag Ranch, Larkspur, CO

**When:** Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>,

**Why:** annual fund-raiser

**[Tickets on Sale Soon](#)**

#### **Save the Date: 2026 Oak Leaf Symposium**

**Where:** PACE Center, Parker, CO

**When:** October 22, 10am-3pm

**Why:** Each year, DLC presents the Oak Leaf Award to a regional conservation hero. We also recognize outstanding land stewardship with the Mel Sorensen Stewardship Award. This year's awards will be part of a half-day educational symposium inspired by our award recipients, who will be announced soon. The inaugural Oak Leaf Symposium is open to conservation professionals, DLC volunteers, and the public. The program includes a keynote and breakout sessions. We'll conclude with lunch and an awards ceremony for our honorees, whose dedication exemplifies our mission of land conservation and stewardship.

**[Tickets on Sale Soon](#)**

### **Stewards of Golden Open Space**

<https://stewardsofgolden.org/>

Map of the Golden Open Space Parks – [click here](#).

[Biological Survey of Golden Open Space Survey, Colorado Natural Heritage Program \(pdf\)](#)

[Common Native Plants of the Greater Golden Area \(pdf\)](#)

[Golden Rocks: The Geology and Mining History of Golden, Colorado \(pdf\)](#)

<https://stewardsofgolden.org/accomplishments>

### **Front Range Trails Conservancy**

<https://frtrails.org/>

A nonprofit that protects and advances public lands along Colorado's Front Range by effecting equitable, effective, and lasting change through trail and advocacy projects.

Trail building schedule: <https://frtrails.org/projects>

### **SOLVE (Save Open Lands, Vistas and the Environment)**

PLAN Jeffco's sister organization in Clear Creek County

<http://www.solveccc.org>

## Follow the postings from other conservation groups, listed at the bottom of each of our web pages

<https://www.PLANJeffco.org>

[Colorado Open Space Alliance \(COSA\)](#)

[Colorado Native Plant Society](#)

[Douglas Land Conservancy](#)

[Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust](#)

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## WANT TO SUPPORT OUR WORK?

[Join or Renew Your Membership](#)



*The Boettcher Mansion sign greets visitors as they approach what was once the "back yard" of the mansion.*

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## WATCH THIS SPACE...Local Goings-on

### Gross Reservoir Updates

As we head into spring and warmer weather, please remember that on-water recreation at Gross Reservoir does not open until May 22, 2026. Until then, visitors are still welcome to enjoy hiking, picnicking and fishing around the reservoir.

## Use Only What You Need!

The 2025–26 water year began with historically low snowpack, and severe drought persists across the state. Snowpack — which we depend on for our water supply — remains among the worst on record in our two primary watersheds: 55% of normal in the Colorado River Basin, the worst on record, and 42% of normal in the South Platte River Basin, the worst on record.

Given these conditions, the Denver Board of Water Commissioners today declared a Stage 1 drought, which includes mandatory limits on outdoor watering. Customers are restricted to two assigned days per week. ([Read more here.](#))

While the declaration is effective immediately, we are reminding customers that there is no need to turn on automatic systems until at least mid- to late-May.

Customers must also follow Denver Water’s standard summer watering rules and can expect to see increased enforcement of watering restrictions. In addition, a formal recommendation tied to drought pricing is expected to go to the Board of Water Commissioners on April 8. The temporary drought charges would place a premium on outdoor water use and will be in customers' June water bills for water used in May. These steps will help preserve water levels in our reservoirs and reduce the likelihood of additional restrictions later this summer, as conditions are not improving.

### **Protecting water, recreation and river health**

We know that communities in Colorado’s headwaters understand better than anyone how essential water is for local homes and businesses, recreation and tourism, and the health of the rivers and forests that many of you work in, depend on and care for.

With low snowpack and increased wildfire risk, we know you are already feeling the strain, and we know that keeping more water in the reservoirs helps protect local recreation economies and support river health.

In response to these conditions, we want to emphasize that we are committed to helping out customers achieve meaningful reductions in their water use today and into the future.

Stage 1 watering restrictions are mandatory, and we are asking customers to keep sprinklers off until mid- to late-May or later, depending on local conditions.

To help reduce demand, we offer resources for those who want to improve indoor and outdoor efficiency, including discounts on Garden In A Box and up to \$750 in turfgrass removal rebates, along with other tools that support more resilient landscapes.

We are also developing temporary drought charges that would place a premium on higher-volume outdoor water use, while keeping the cost per gallon for essential indoor water use, such as drinking, cooking and bathing, unchanged.

For general project information, please email [grossreservoir@denverwater.org](mailto:grossreservoir@denverwater.org) or call 303-628-6348.

Visit the [Project My Map](#) for the most current information.

Stay up to date at <https://www.denverwater.org/grossreservoir/news>  
Project Information & Impact: <https://www.denverwater.org/grossreservoir>

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Is there a project in your neighborhood that you'd like more information on? Here's a link to Jeffco Planning and Zoning, where the new interactive map showing ongoing applications and active permits is located (scroll down to the bottom of the page): <https://www.jeffco.us/786/Planning-Zoning>.

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PLAN Jeffco, a dedicated non-profit organization staffed completely by volunteers, has been at the forefront of conserving Jefferson County's open spaces for over five decades.

***Our foundational purpose from our bylaws remains clear - to advocate for and take actions to conserve and preserve open space lands in Jefferson County, while educating our visitors about the open spaces and their inhabitants.***

The "Open Space Resolution" we fought for and championed in 1972 has not only preserved our natural landscapes but has also enhanced recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

[Download the Enabling Resolution](#)

We remain committed to these efforts and encourage community engagement to ensure the health and beauty of our local ecosystems.

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**Support conservation in Jeffco, donate here so we can keep doing what we do!**

**JOIN or RENEW**

***Know someone who might be interested in this newsletter? Subscribe, like, share - forward this to them, and thank you!***

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## About PLAN Jeffco

In 1972, PLAN Jeffco launched the citizen's initiative which created the Jeffco Open Space Program, protecting more than 70,000 acres comprising 27 parks and more than 270 miles of trails.

Follow us on [FACEBOOK](#)

Enjoy our postings on [INSTAGRAM](#)

Part of [LINKEDIN](#)? So are we!

Like [THREADS](#)? They're fun!

Reach for the sky, join us on [BLUESKY](#)!

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PLAN Jeffco | 24395 Cody Park Road | Golden, CO 80401 US

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