



COLORADO
WATER CONGRESS
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SB21-249

SHORT TITLE: Keep Colorado Wild Annual Pass

LONG TITLE: Concerning the creation of an optional discounted parks and public lands access pass that is purchased at the time a motor vehicle is registered, and, in connection therewith, using the pass fees to finance several goals of the division of parks and wildlife related to increased conservation of, safety at, and access to state parks and public lands.

SPONSORS: Senators Fenberg and Donovan/Reps. Will and Tipper

COMMITTEES: Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

PURPOSE OF THE BILL: To create another funding option for supporting the division of parks and wildlife.

PROPOSERS OF THE BILL: Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Wildlife

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS: Hunters, anglers, outfitters, outdoor recreation advocates, boaters, Dept. of Revenue, CPW, DNR

BACKGROUND: The division of parks and wildlife is maintained on a cash basis, paid for by users. License fees were recently increased as were habitat stamps. CPW recently announced that it would have an alternative pass for persons wishing to use wildlife areas but did not want to purchase a hunting or fishing license (previously required) but would instead institute a separate fee. The bill proposes yet another way to pay for those amenities by attaching an optional fee when certain vehicles are registered.

Is this bill necessary this year? There is no deadline.

How does the bill change current law? Between Jan. 1, 2023 and Jan. 1, 2024, at the time a vehicle is registered a fee would be assessed (which may be declined by the vehicle owner). The fees are to be used for such purposes as providing affordable access to state parks and public lands; managing state parks; supporting search and rescue and avalanche safety efforts; conserving vulnerable species and habitats; funding equity, diversity, and inclusion programs; and financing regional outdoor partnerships for community-driven planning and projects. A person who declines to pay the fee at the time of registration may still purchase a state parks pass separately. However, the bill repeals limitations on the amount that the commission may increase fees for daily and annual park passes purchased by individuals who do not purchase the discounted wild pass. CPW must report its sales of the Colorado Wild Pass, the revenues generated, their expenditures, and the effect those revenues had on achieving the division's stated goals.

Does the bill affect the prior appropriations system? No

How is the bill implemented? CPW is required to 1) Develop language to notify motor vehicle registrants of their option to decline to pay the wild pass fee, which notice must be conspicuously placed on registration documents and on the division's and the division of motor vehicle's websites; and 2) Implement a public outreach campaign to educate the public about the availability of the wild pass through the motor vehicle registration process and about access to state parks and public lands that the wild pass will provide. On or before March 1, 2025 and on or before March 1, 2030, the division must report back to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over agricultural matters and report annually to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over natural resources.

Practical considerations: Will the creation of yet another funding mechanism for CPW will this prove confusing to the public? What are the benefits to the payer of this fee as opposed to other fees paid for specific services and purposes? It appears that this program is designed to broaden the base of fee payers, but what will happen if large numbers decline to participate? If a person trades vehicles in a particular year, will the person be assessed a second fee? Is the Pass tied to a particular vehicle?

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal note yet.