SAN LUIS VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP
& COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

DATE: **September 28, 2026**

TO: SLVCOG Executive Board Members

FROM: Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director

RE: SLVCOG General Board Meeting

The General SLVCOG Board meeting will be held on **Monday, September 28th, at 3:30 p.m.** in the upstairs conference room of the Depot at 610 State Avenue, Alamosa, CO.

Zoom link is provided below.

This is a hybrid meeting; a light meal will be provided at 4:45 PM

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5829095803?omn=81522891300;

Meeting ID: 582 909 5803; One tap mobile: +**17193594580**

Enclosed please find the following:

- September 28, 2026 - SLVCOG General Board Meeting Agenda
- 2nd Letter to the Town of Manassa
- Staff Updates & Sarah's Meeting Overview
- Combined June and July 2026 Financials
- Wolf (Collared) Activity Area Map
- July 27th, 2026 - SLVCOG Minutes
- CPW Press Releases
- Final Three Lakes CLEAR Press Release
- Western Watersheds Project Press Release

The San Luis Valley Council of Governments was organized in 2011 to promote regional cooperation and coordination among local governments and between all levels of government for the geographic area comprising the counties of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache, along with all 17 communities.

Please Limit Public Comments to 3 minutes or Request Additional Presentation Time from Jessie Barraclough, Executive Assistant: jbarraclough@slvdrg.org

SAN LUIS VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP
& COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

SAN LUIS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
GENERAL BOARD MEETING, 3:30-4:45 PM

September 28, 2026

San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Upstairs Conference Room
610 State Avenue PHONE: (719) 589-6099
Alamosa, CO 81101

AGENDA

Vern Heersink, Chairman, SLVCOG, Welcome, Open Meeting, Introductions
Jessie Barraclough, Executive Assistant, Roll Call, Quorum Status
Vern Heersink, Chairman
Approval of Agenda for September 28th, 2026
Public Comment—Limited to 3 Minutes Each Without Prior Request

Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director, Program Updates
Opportunity Zone 2.0
Representation for Manassa-Second Letter Sent
Housekeeping Item: How is the Current Meeting Schedule Working (or Not)?
Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development, BUILD, Grant—Brief Update

Tyler Ratzlaff, SLV Area Agency on Aging
Search for Director, Congressionally Directed Spending, Operations & Finances

Craig Barraclough, Regional GIS Director
SLV GIS Status, Funding Update (SIPA), and Recent Outcomes
Thank You, Mineral County, for Your Continued Support

Shawn Pagnotta, **Sr. Accounting Manager**
June & July 2026 Combined SLVCOG Financials
Note on Article V, Paragraph 1 of the SLVCOG Bylaws

Tom McCracken, Revegetation
Action Items:
SLVCOG Minutes from July 27th, 2026
SLVCOG June & July 2026 Combined Financials

Around the Valley (1–2-minute update from each board member jurisdiction on current activities/initiatives)

Adjourn
Next SLVCOG Meeting Date: November 23rd, 2026, at 3:30 PM—No October Meeting
The notice was approved by: SS and posted on 9/21 by JB. This notice may not be removed until 9/29, at 8:00AM

SAN LUIS VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP
& COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Date: August 21, 2026

Mayor Dan Bond and the Board of Trustees for the Town of Manassa
401 Main St
Manassa, CO 81141

RE: Town of Manassa Representation on the San Luis Valley Council of Governments (SLVCOG)

Dear Mayor Bond and Board of Trustees,

On behalf of the San Luis Valley Council of Governments (SLVCOG), I want to again express our appreciation for the Town of Manassa and its important role in our regional community. Strong participation from each municipality helps ensure that the San Luis Valley continues to work collaboratively on issues that affect us all.

Over the past several months, SLVCOG staff have made multiple attempts to contact the Town regarding representation on the SLVCOG Board. As we have not yet received a response, we are sending this follow-up letter to respectfully reiterate our request. Due to continued non-attendance, the seat currently assigned to Manassa is not actively participating in Council meetings. To ensure that Manassa's interests and perspectives are represented in regional discussions and decision-making, we kindly ask the Board of Trustees to appoint a representative to fill this seat.

We highly value Manassa's involvement on the SLVCOG Board and want to ensure your community remains informed and engaged in upcoming regional initiatives. Therefore, we respectfully request that you consider this appointment at your next meeting and provide a response to our office.

Per SLVCOG Bylaws, it is requested that the Mayor or Town Manager is designated as the representative. When making this designation, please designate both a primary representative and an alternate and provide email addresses and phone numbers for both individuals.

Once the appointments are confirmed, please share these details with Jessie Barraclough (jbarraclough@slvdrg.org) so we can provide the designated individuals with upcoming meeting materials and onboarding information.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued dedication to the San Luis Valley.

Sincerely,

Sarah Stoeber

Sarah Stoeber,
Executive Director

SAN LUIS VALLEY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP & COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Prepared for SLVDRG/COG Board Members

Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director

Meetings for July 28 – September 28, 2026

- Weekly Staff Meetings
- Individual Staff 1:1's—some daily/weekly
- Weekly Regional Economic Development Summit Planning with SBDC
- Nathan Johnson, Contractor, Multiple, Web Updates & PR
- Jamie Weingart, Multiple
- Weekly Collared Wolf Coalition
- Brian Lewandowski, Andy Setser, Regional Economic Development Summit Speaker Planning
- Kathy Woods, Multiple, Ongoing Development Support
- Ben Pacyga-Ongoing Legal Issues with the Business Loan Fund Collections
- City of Alamosa Economic Development Meeting
- Area Agency on Aging Policy Board Meetings-As Schedule Allows
- Tyler Ratzlaff, Laura Strother, Roni Wisdom, Area Agency on Aging, Multiple
- Linda-Rose Myers, Biotech Eco Fuels
- USDA- Robert McIlroy, Sallie Clark, Shawn Pagnotta
- SBA and USDA Unlocking Capital Rural Road Show
- Valley Commissioners Meeting
- Josh Glass, CTR Guns, Multiple
- Jim Corboy, Andy Setser, New Bio Fuel Business in the SLV, Several
- Meet and Greet Luncheon with Robert Kenny (Xcel Energy - Colorado President)
- Deborah Cameron, Wendy Stewart Martinez
- Steve Black, Steven Black Strategies, Speaker Opportunity, Transmission Development Forum
- Conejos County Board of County Commissioners Meeting
- Jack Becker, Josef Korbel School of Global and Public Affairs, Colorado Project Visit
- Loan Review Board Meeting, Dusty B WonderWorks
- San Luis Valley Transmission Forum, Colorado Energy Transmission Authority, CETA
- Marianna King, Shawn Pagnotta, CO State Forest Service Grant Application
- City of Alamosa Economic Development Director Interviews/Screening + Many Interviews

- Saguache County Board of County Commissioners Meeting
- Associated Governments of Northern Colorado Economic Development Conference in Rifle
- Global Fiber Certified Mail aka Formation Ag, LLC Legal Council Meeting
- Joseph Linares, Potential Diesel Mechanic School
- Colorado Natural Resources Trustee Meeting
- Alamosa County Board of County Commissioners Meeting
- SLV Transportation Planning Region Meeting
- Global Business Development Partner Annual Recap
- Enterprise Zone Peer Review Meeting
- Jim Corboy, Calvert Advisors
- Costilla County Board of County Commissioners Meeting (Virtual)
- Ryan Leclair, Alliyah Garcia
- Railroad Introduction, Jim Calvert and Tom Hobby, Keystone Industries
- Regional Economic Development Summit, Months of Meetings Related to This
- Community Development Block Grant Economic Development/Region 8 Check-In with Robyn Berkey
- Kate Garwood, Council of Governments Update
- Opportunity Zone Check-in
- Yula Montoya, Aaron Montoya, Rural Jump Start Discussion & New Business Development
- Simone Roy, Marketing Support
- SLVDRG/SUCO/OEDIT Collaboration, Funding and Technical Assistance
- Economic Development Administration, EDA monthly meeting
- Office of Economic Development & International Trade, OEDIT, Export Assistance/Grant Webinar
- Colorado Workforce Development Council Quarterly Meeting
- Economic Development Council Meeting—EZ Project Approval
- Area Agency on Aging—Resume Collection, Initial Screening for Basic Skills, Recommendation to Advance or Decline, Scheduling Interviews, Creation of Interview Questions, Scoring Rubric
- Area Agency on Aging, Assistance with Congressionally Directed Spending Online Application in Grants.gov
- Valley Commissioners' Meeting
- Alamosa Economic Development Meeting, Multiple
- Mineral County Board of County Commissioners
- Gwen Bonilla & Rosy McDonough, First Southwest Community Foundation
- San Luis Valley COG's La Veta Pass Rail Project (BUILD FY26) Kickoff
- San Luis Valley Water Leadership Presentation

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DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP
& COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Jessie Barraclough- Executive Assistant to Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director
Date: 9/28/26

Enterprise Zone

- Support for approval of contributions, pre-certifications, and certifications
- Communication with EZ Contribution Project contacts regarding state requirements
- Submitted new Enterprise Zone Project for Review by OEDIT

Scheduling

- Board Meetings: Packets, Minutes, Agenda, Posting in Kiosk, Refreshments
- Preparation, planning, and scheduling of weekly staff meetings
- Staff Retreat planning
- Scheduling staff volunteer hours with Alamosa Senior Center
- Executive Director calendar scheduling

Staff Training, Meetings & Follow-up

- Implementing strengths coaching within the organization as a result of attending the Gallup® Global Strengths Coach course in Broomfield, CO, in January.

Executive Support

- Special projects as needed- AAA meetings, GIS launch preparation, BUILD Grant launch
- Travel coordination
- Email follow-up
- Timesheets

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DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP
& COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Craig Barraclough
Date: 09/28/26

PROJECTS:

Grants Pending

- Funding Suggestion submitted to the Colorado 911 Services Enterprise Board - **$177,648** for creation and maintenance of optional Next Generation 9-1-1 data layers (3 years)
- Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request for GIS funding through Bennet/Hickenlooper offices - **$374,000**
- Reviewing additional funding sources

GIS/Mapping News

- Working on GIS map product requests for Mineral and Rio Grande Counties
- Built an Implementation Work Plan & schedule, based on the GIS Strategic Plan
- Learning about HB26-1113 to support voter record transition to GIS for all counties
- Starting work on GIS data governance and the Regional GIS Mapping Portal project

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

- Final CEDS submitted to EDA for review

San Luis Valley Council of Governments
Balance Sheet
As of Jul 31, 2026

Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
10000 Alamosa State Bank #165379	109,417.73
Total for Bank Accounts	**$109,417.73**
Accounts Receivable	
11000 Accounts Receivable	1,075.00
Total for Accounts Receivable	**$1,075.00**
Total for Current Assets	**$110,492.73**
Fixed Assets	
1770 Building	
1772 Gateway Unit 2	201,773.00
1773 Gateway leasehold improvements	148,227.00
1779 Depreciation	-219,466.00
Total for 1770 Building	**$130,534.00**
Total for Fixed Assets	**$130,534.00**
Total for Assets	**$241,026.73**
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 Accounts Payable	$0.00
Due to SLVDRG	17,787.80
Total for 20000 Accounts Payable	**$17,787.80**
Total for Accounts Payable	**$17,787.80**
Other Current Liabilities	
21000 Deferred Revenue	-1.87
Total for Other Current Liabilities	**-$1.87**
Total for Current Liabilities	**$17,785.93**
Total for Liabilities	**$17,785.93**
Equity	
32050 Net Investment in Capital Asset	144,671.00
32000 Unrestricted Net Assets	62,526.54
Net Income	16,043.26
Total for Equity	**$223,240.80**
Total for Liabilities and Equity	**$241,026.73**

Financial Reporting Note - Due to DRG

This schedule provides a detailed breakout of the Balance Sheet account “Due to DRG,” identifying amounts related to membership dues, RGN reimbursement allocations, and other reimbursable items payable to DRG.

June

Component	Monthly Amount
Membership Dues	$ 8,893.90

July

Component	Monthly Amount
Membership Dues	$ 8,893.90
Grand Total	**$ 17,787.80**

San Luis Valley Council of Governments
Profit and Loss
January-July, 2026

	Jan 1 - Jul 31 2026	Jan 1 - Jul 31 2025	$ Change	% Change
Income				
44500 Government Grants				
44530 Local Government Grants				
44530.1 Town/City funding	35,962.00	37,534.51	-1,572.51	-4.19%
44530.2 County Funding	71,521.00	70,361.36	1,159.64	1.65%
Total for 44530 Local Government Grants	**$107,483.00**	**$107,895.87**	**-$412.87**	**-0.38%**
44540 State Grants				
44540.2 DoLA Lease		3,850.00	-3,850.00	-100.00%
Total for 44540 State Grants	**$0.00**	**$3,850.00**	**-$3,850.00**	**-100.00%**
Total for 44500 Government Grants	**$107,483.00**	**$111,745.87**	**-$4,262.87**	**-3.81%**
44531 GIS Program Revenue	1,075.00		1,075.00	
45000 Investments				
45030 Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	125.71	148.18	-22.47	-15.16%
Total for 45000 Investments	**$125.71**	**$148.18**	**-$22.47**	**-15.16%**
Total for Income	**$108,683.71**	**$111,894.05**	**-$3,210.34**	**-2.87%**
Gross Profit	**$108,683.71**	**$111,894.05**	**-$3,210.34**	**-2.87%**
Expenses				
62100 Contract Services				
62110 Accounting Fees	1,300.00	1,200.00	100.00	8.33%
62150 Contract Services-IIJA	8,510.25	55,186.92	-46,676.67	-84.58%
62160 Contract Services - DRG	63,015.55	65,458.87	-2,443.32	-3.73%
Total for 62100 Contract Services	**$72,825.80**	**$121,845.79**	**-$49,019.99**	**-40.23%**
65000 Operations				
65040 Supplies	0	165.66	-165.66	-100.00%
Total for 65000 Operations	**$0.00**	**$165.66**	**-$165.66**	**-100.00%**
65100 Other Types of Expenses	0	15.00	-15.00	-100.00%
Total for 65100 Other Types of Expenses	**$0.00**	**$15.00**	**-$15.00**	**-100.00%**
68300 Travel and Meetings				
68310 Conference, Convention, Meeting	43.67	0	43.67	
Total for 68300 Travel and Meetings	**$43.67**	**$0.00**	**$43.67**	
Total for Expenses	**$72,869.47**	**$122,026.45**	**-$49,156.98**	**-40.28%**
Net Operating Income	**$35,814.24**	**-$10,132.40**	**$45,946.64**	**453.46%**
Other Income				
70100 Grant Income				
72013 DoLA Mini Grant	36,472.41	43,700.50	-7,228.09	-16.54%
72113 CCCS/Workforce Resilience Program (WRP) GIS - Income	10,890.83	1,880.34	9,010.49	479.19%
72115 REDI -Economic Outreach	8,432.58	0	8,432.58	
Total for 70100 Grant Income	**$55,795.82**	**$45,580.84**	**$10,214.98**	**22.41%**
Total for Other Income	**$55,795.82**	**$45,580.84**	**$10,214.98**	**22.41%**
Other Expenses				
80400 Program Match	0	4,893.20	-4,893.20	-100.00%
82000 Grant Expenses				
82013 DoLA Mini Grant Reimbursements	36,472.44	39,775.50	-3,303.06	-8.30%
82113 CCCS/Workforce Resilience Program (WRP) GIS -Expense	30,661.78	5,265.54	25,396.24	482.31%
82114 Pass Through Expense Account - DOLA Regional GIS	0	14,679.60	-14,679.60	-100.00%
82115 REDI - Economic Outreach Expense	8,432.58	0	8,432.58	
Total for 82000 Grant Expenses	**$75,566.80**	**$59,720.64**	**$15,846.16**	**26.53%**
Total for Other Expenses	**$75,566.80**	**$64,613.84**	**$10,952.96**	**16.95%**
Net Other Income	**-$19,770.98**	**-$19,033.00**	**-$737.98**	**-3.88%**
Net Income	**$16,043.26**	**-$29,165.40**	**$45,208.66**	**155.01%**

San Luis Valley COG
P&L By Project

CCCS Workplace Resilience Program		
CCCS Workforce Resilience Program (2024 to 2025) Income	$	10,890.83
CCCS Workforce Resilience Program Expense	$	30,661.78
REDI Economic Outreach		
REDI - Economic Outreach Grant - Income	$	8,432.58
REDI - Economic Outreach Grant - Expense	$	8,432.58

SAN LUIS VALLEY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES GROUP & COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

SAN LUIS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

July 27, 2026

Executive Board Minutes of SLVCOG Meeting Held July 27, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM. A quorum was established.

In Attendance
Vern Heersink, Commissioner, Alamosa County – Chairman
Tyler Ratzlaff, Commissioner, Rio Grande County – Vice Chair
Zeke Ward, Commissioner, Mineral County – Secretary/Treasurer
Delfino Garcia, Commissioner, Conejos County
Robert Espinoza, Commissioner, Costilla County
Liza Marron, Commissioner, Saguache County
Gigi Dennis, City Manager, City of Monte Vista
Katie Sickles, Town Manager, Town of Creede
Stephanie Pietras, Trustee, Town of Moffat

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Staff:
Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director
Jessie Barraclough, Executive Assistant
Shawn Pagnotta, Sr. Accounting Manager
Craig Barraclough, Regional Grants Navigator
Andy Setser, Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Contractor

Visitors:
Erin Minks
Gene Glover
Rachel James
Kaylee Romero
LeRoy West
Curtis Shawcroft
Brent Turner
Bryan Myers
Patrick Ortiz

Chairman Heersink
Chairman Heersink called for changes or additions to the July 27, 2026 agenda. Sarah Stoeber requested an additional update regarding the Town of Antonito be included after the Manassa representation discussion.

Agenda Approval
Tyler Ratzlaff made a motion to approve the July 27, 2026, Agenda as amended. Robert Espinoza seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment
None.

Brent Turner, Managing Director, Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust Enterprise
Sarah Stoeber introduced Brent Turner of Colorado Surplus Asset Fund Trust Enterprise (CSAFE) to provide an overview of investment opportunities available to local governments.

Mr. Turner explained that CSAFE serves approximately 650 Colorado local governments and manages approximately $7.5 billion in assets through two investment funds. He discussed the statutory authority under which local governments are permitted to invest public funds and explained that CSAFE investments are limited to the same investment vehicles allowed by Colorado law.

Mr. Turner reviewed CSAFE's governance structure, noting that the organization is governed by a board of local government officials and supported by professional service providers. He explained the differences between CSAFE Cash and CSAFE Colorado Core funds, emphasizing liquidity, capital preservation, and diversification as primary considerations for public fund investing.

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Sarah Stoeber, Executive Director
Sarah reported that all six San Luis Valley counties successfully submitted Opportunity Zone 2.0 applications by the June 30 deadline. In addition, SLVCOG submitted a regional application. She explained that the State of Colorado is currently reviewing all submitted applications and that future designations will be determined through the state review process.

Sarah informed the board that a letter was sent to the Town of Manassa in accordance with the SLVCOG Bylaws regarding lack of attendance and representation at meetings. Chairman Heersink signed the correspondence requesting that the Town designate an active representative. No response has been received to date.

Sarah also reported that a contractor assisting Antonito with a grant application contacted SLVCOG to ask for assistance with a CDPHE environmental grant related to lagoon improvements. Sarah explained that staff agreed to assist with the preliminary application phase without requiring full SLVCOG membership and dues payment. However, should the

project advance and require the preparation of a full application, Antonito will be expected to join SLVCOG as a full dues-paying member. Patrick Ortiz offered assistance and support letters should they be beneficial to the project.

Sarah concluded by referencing recent media coverage featuring interviews with herself and Craig Barraclough regarding SLVCOG and regional initiatives.

Tyler Ratzlaff, Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
Tyler Ratzlaff reported that South Central Colorado Seniors continues to make progress on organizational transition efforts; this includes development of a director job description and plans to begin a search for a permanent director. He shared that the organization is moving away from reliance on Congressionally Directed Spending funds due to funding delays. AAA is working with the Outcalt Foundation on financing options that would allow completion of the new senior center building. Tyler also noted that congregate meal services in Alamosa have been successfully relocated to Living Water Bible Fellowship. Until the State of Colorado determines that AAA should be under the SLVCOG's oversight, there is no involvement required of the SLVCOG.

Craig Barraclough, Interim Director of GIS
Craig Barraclough thanked Mineral County for its participation in regional GIS efforts and shared that he is working on maps requested by them.

Craig reported that the SLVCOG applied for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant on behalf of the railroad. The project would greatly improve freight rail access to key markets for agriculture, manufacturing, natural resources, and other key economic drivers in the region, fostering economic development, creating family-wage jobs, and improving quality of life. The project also improves a major choke point that caused derailments. This application had full legislative support and several letters of support from local governments.

Craig also shared that upcoming work on the Regional GIS Authority Program will focus on regional data governance and the eventual development of a regional web mapping platform. He anticipates beginning outreach to local governments soon as implementation moves forward.

Andy Setser, Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Contractor

Andy stated that the San Luis Valley Economic Summit will be held on September 2nd from 8:45 AM-3:30 PM. There are several noteworthy speakers lined up. Topics will cover water, economic adaptation, workforce, and AI.

Shawn Pagnotta, Sr. Accounting Manager

Shawn Pagnotta presented the May SLVCOG 2026 financials, reporting that total liabilities and equity are $300,984.60, which include allocations for membership dues and Colorado Community College System reimbursement.

She also presented the proposed 2027 SLVCOG budget, reviewing projected revenues, expenditures, and membership dues. Shawn explained that dues calculations remain consistent with the methodology established in the bylaws and that increases are primarily attributable to updated assessed property valuations. Discussion included the Administrative Services Agreement with SLVDRG and clarification that SLVCOG contracts for professional services through SLVDRG rather than employing staff directly.

Action Items

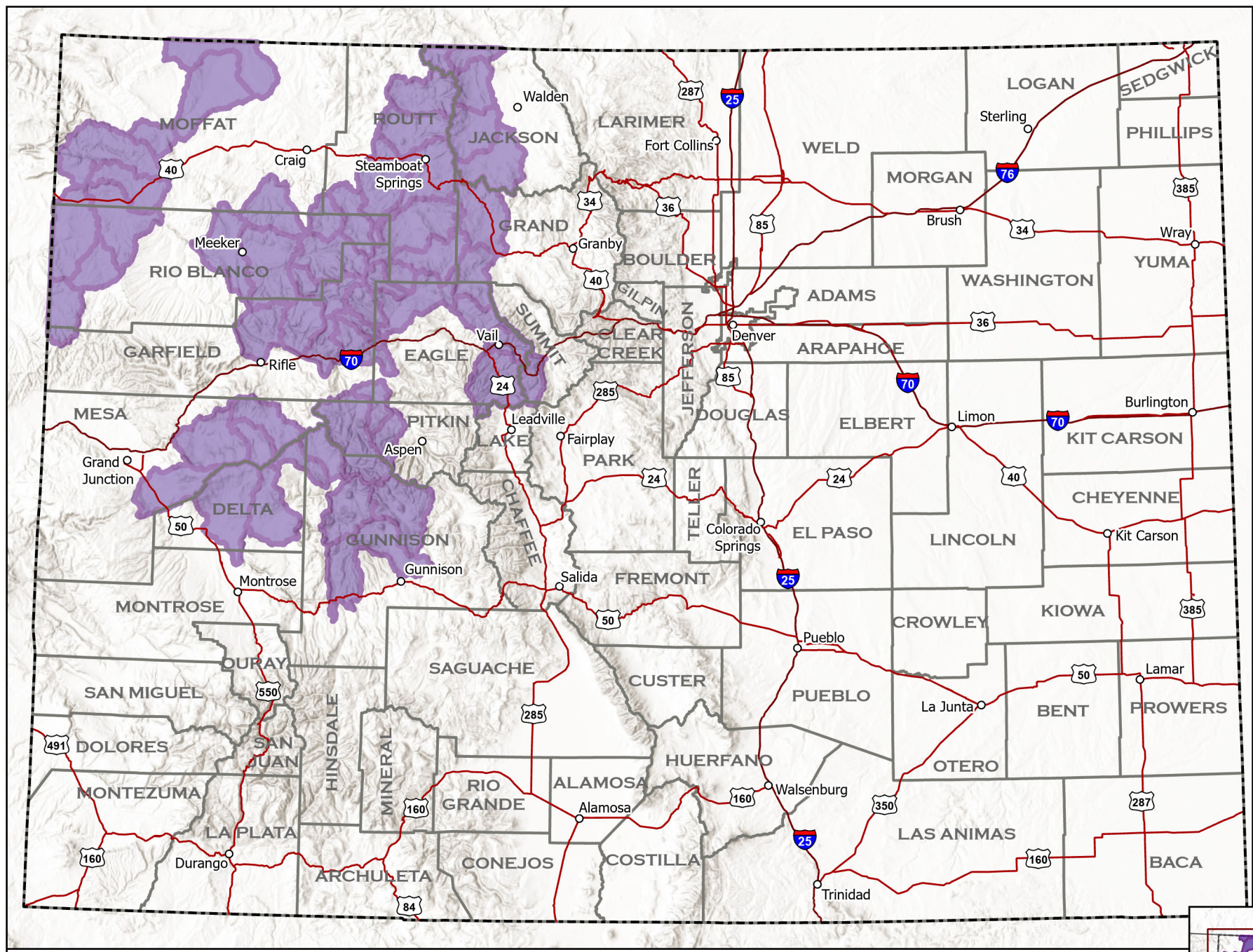
Robert Espinoza made a motion to approve July 27th, 2026 Minutes. Tyler Ratzlaff seconded. Motion carried.

Tyler Ratzlaff made a motion to approve the May 2026 Financials as presented. Zeke Ward seconded. Motion carried.

Tyler Ratzlaff made a motion to approve the 2027 SLVCOG Budget. Zeke Ward seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM. Vern Heersink noted that the 3:30 PM start time works sufficiently and that the **September 28th** meeting will begin at 3:30pm.

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Current as of
August 25, 2026
Published August 26, 2026

The minimum mapping unit is the local watershed.

This map depicts watersheds where collared wolves in Colorado have been from July 21, 2026 - August 25, 2026. In order for a watershed to indicate wolf activity, at least one GPS position was recorded within the boundaries of the watershed.

Simply because a watershed indicates wolf activity, it does not mean that a wolf or wolves are present throughout the entire watershed.

Wolf activity in watershed

A watershed is a geographic unit that drains water into a specific waterbody. These are also known as Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC). Information is shared at the HUC 10 level. More can be learned about HUC at https://water.usgs.gov/themes/hydrologic-units/.

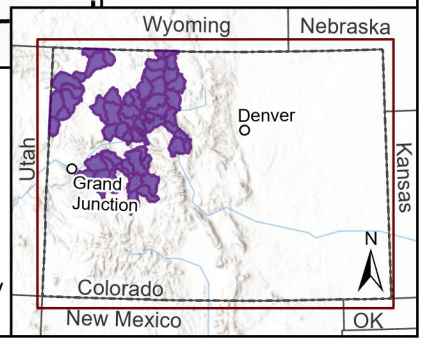
Collared Gray Wolf Activity

July 21, 2026 - August 25, 2026

1:2,700,000

0 40 80 160 Miles

Colorado Towns
Interstate
Highways
County Boundary
Colorado Boundary



Colorado Parks and Wildlife confirms establishment of new gray wolf pack

Share:

STATEWIDE

COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

Luke Perkins
Statewide Public Information Officer
303-392-5789 / luke.perkins@state.co.us

July 22, 2026

DENVER – Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has confirmed the formation of a new gray wolf pack: the Piney Ridge Pack in Eagle County.

With the confirmation of this new pack, CPW has confirmed successful reproduction in four packs this year: Piney Ridge, One Ear, Three Creeks and Copper Creek. Average litter size for wolves is 4-6 pups.

More information about packs will be included in the agency's 2026-2027 annual report released in spring 2027.

“Detection of pups in late spring or early summer is inherently challenging, because of their use of remote habitats in dense cover, secretive nature of very young animals, and time potentially underground,” said CPW’s Wolf Conservation Program Manager Eric Odell. “We are continuing to monitor the four reproducing packs in Colorado and will include minimum counts of the entire wolf population in our annual biological year report next spring.”

Pack formation carries a number of benefits to both individual wolves and the overall restoration program. Data in Colorado has shown that wolves in established packs have higher survival rates compared to dispersing wolves or wolves not in packs.

Pack formation also plays a role in conflict minimization efforts. Wolf movements become more localized than dispersing wolves since packs generally move within an established territory.

“We are still working from a modest amount of data in Colorado — due to the relatively new nature of our wolf population as well as its small size, — but so far we are seeing a clear pattern of wolves in packs surviving longer than wolves that are not in packs,” said Dr. Brenna Cassidy, CPW Wolf Monitoring and Data Coordinator. “For instance in the last biological year (April 1, 2025 - March 30, 2026) we experienced 10 mortalities among our wolf population, seven of these were dispersers and only three were pack members. This shows us the benefit of having more packs on the Colorado landscape for both adult survival and reproduction as we work to achieve the goals of the Colorado Wolf Restoration and Management Plan. ”

Territories formed by packs help CPW’s field staff prioritize where conflict minimization tools (such as fladry and scare devices) and techniques (like range riding and hazing) should be deployed to address potential wolf-livestock conflict.

CPW continues to be in active communication, specifically with producers who have known wolf activity localized near their operations and is working closely with them to ensure access to viable, reasonable, and effective conflict minimization resources. Additional information about CPW’s conflict minimization program can be found in the agency’s **Wolf-Livestock Conflict Minimization Program Producer Guide.**

The public can learn more about CPW wolf monitoring efforts and how it is increasing CPW understanding of wolf behavior in this recent story from the **Colorado Outdoors blog.**

Information concerning Colorado’s gray wolf packs can be found in the **2025-2026 Colorado Gray Wolf Annual Report** and will be included in the 2026-2027 annual report next spring.

Members of the public who believe they have seen a wolf are encouraged to submit a wolf sighting form **on CPW's website.** Receiving reports of wolf sightings from the public — especially with high-quality photos or video — is extremely helpful to CPW as the agency monitors and tracks the movement of gray wolves. This will become increasingly important as the population of uncollared wolves grows through successful reproduction and natural immigration into Colorado.

CPW would like to remind the public that gray wolves are a state and federal endangered species. Additionally, Colorado's wolf packs may be residing on privately owned lands. Going onto private lands without permission is considered trespassing which is subject to punishment by the local jurisdiction.

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Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is an enterprise agency, relying primarily on license sales, state parks fees and registration fees to support its operations, including: 43 state parks and more than 350 wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, management of fishing and hunting, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating and outdoor education. CPW's work contributes approximately $6 billion in total economic impact annually throughout Colorado.

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CPW Commission chair’s restrictive public comment shift rebuffed in 6-5 vote

By Brian Porter September 2, 2026September 3, 2026

LA JUNTA, Colo. – It’s the dysfunction of the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission, and not the public, causing marathon meetings that derail agendas, Commissioner

Dallas May said Wednesday.

He successfully opposed a plan by Chairman Jay Tutchton that would have significantly changed public commenting during the two-day meeting at Otero College in La Junta, minimizing the perspective of public officials and not absolutely guaranteeing anyone the opportunity to comment.

“Our elected representatives speak for thousands of constituents,” May said, supporting an existing policy which allows them priority in sequence and for added time of five minutes.

An example is Merrit Linke, who spoke to the Commission in July. He serves in Grand County with a population of about 16,000, and May explains many people he or others represent would have reason they cannot attend Commission meetings, whether in Ignacio in July or across the state in La Junta.

In another narrow, split vote of the Commission, a 6-5 majority supported May’s proposal not to change public commenting.

“I’ve been overruled on this twice now and I’ve learned,” Tutchton said following the vote.

Tutchton did not receive one supportive response from the public to his proposed policy change, he began in introducing the proposal.

“One of the main jobs of the chair is to make the meeting run on time,” he said. “Most of the changes are designed to help me as [the] chair keep the agenda on track.”

Changes should be made by the full Commission, May and Commissioner Frances Silva Blayney said.

But restricting public commenting to an hour and not creating many other opportunities during two-day meetings may not address Tutchton’s concerns. As evidence, on Wednesday the meeting was already an hour behind at lunch without a single public comment taken.

Tutchton wanted to implement a system commissioners admitted to not understanding related to “random” selection of public commenters. He would have allowed 40 minutes for in-person commenters to speak out of an hour, which commissioners noted would not necessarily guarantee a member of the public the right to speak after making significant time and financial commitments to attend.

“This change has been very confusing to the public,” Commissioner Frances Silva Blayney said. “The idea of having a randomized [chance] of if you get to speak is a really bad idea. I’m not going to drive four, five, or six hours to maybe have an opportunity to speak.”

Twice, Tutchton has lamented a practice which allows elected officials to comment with some preference. One of his reasons could have some merit, except that some could argue elected officials are members of the public, too.

“We are traveling to hear from people,” he said. “They are actually displacing us hearing from their constituents.”

Tutchton also noted the present election year and a possibility a candidate for office might get a speaking opportunity their opponents may not.

That could have been a reference to Greg Lopez, an independent candidate for governor who spoke at the last meeting. His opponents – Democrat Phil Weiser and Republican Victor Marx – could have attended the meeting and signed up to speak, as he did. Tutchton calls it “political grandstanding” to address the Commission in the fashion Lopez did.

The Commission should take note of the audience size and quantity of comment, May said, in a common philosophy that a filled room at any government meeting might mean the actions of a board are opposite the will of the people.

“The high volume of the public comment request is a reflection of the contentious nature of the items this commission deals with,” he said.

His motion included an opportunity to shift public comment after lunch on Thursday, moving an executive session up on the agenda. Some commissioners objected based on the narrow notice for the change.

“The meetings are going long because of long-winded comment of commissioners,” Commissioner Tai Jacober said, supporting more concise discussion rather than restricting public comment.

Added May: “Public comment has nothing to do with long meetings.”

Tutchton told the Commission he was not opposed to long meetings, but concerned with late return travels by CPW staff following longer meetings of the Commission.

May’s motion was supported by Silva Blaney, John Le Coq, Jacober, Jack Murphy, and Gabriel Otero, with Tutchton joining the minority of Jessica Beaulieu, Peter Maguire, Dr. Becky Niemiec, and, Richard Reading in supporting the proposed more restrictive commenting changes.

Tutchton says he will not renew the proposal in November, when the Commission meets in Fort Morgan.

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As Niemiec criticizes punishment, CPW says ‘a human being made a mistake’ in wolf killing

By Brian Porter September 2, 2026September 3, 2026

LA JUNTA, Colo. – The perspectives of gray wolf introduction activists spilled over Wednesday into discussion with staff by some members of the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission.

In January, a licensed hunter mistook a female gray wolf for a coyote and shot the animal. Realizing his mistake, the

hunter contacted CPW officials to report the hunting violation.

Gray wolves are a state and federal protected endangered species.

Commissioner Dr. Becky Niemiec on Wednesday pushed Ty Petersburg, CPW's chief of law enforcement, for answers, threatening to herself go to the district attorney. The wolf was translocated to Colorado from British Columbia in January 2025.

"[There were] two options available, to pay a fine or deal with it through court," he said. "We chose option 1 for a number of reasons. We thought it was the most effective way."

The hunter paid a $140 fine and received a five-point penalty, which angered many who support the wolf reintroduction as too lenient.

Niemiec, who failed to detail the reason she did not attend the meeting in person, continued to press Petersburg on what she described as "Option B". That could have resulted in a $100,000 fine and a year imprisonment.

"A human being made a mistake that he was truly remorseful toward," Petersburg said. "We thought it [Option A] was the most appropriate charge."

Niemiec countered: "There's still this public perception that you get this small fine and points on your hunting license."

Petersburg described the other option as a "hammer," reserved for something "more nefarious," like repeated poaching.

"We want to reward good behavior. We want people to do the right thing," he said, supporting in this case that the hunter did. "It is easy for people to do the wrong thing, and this gentleman did the right thing."

It followed a line of questioning in which Niemiec, in a Tom Cruise "A Few Good Men" interrogation style, told Petersburg, "Coloradans deserve an answer to this."

In a previous press statement, Petersburg said the hunter made an ethical call to self-report and cooperate throughout the investigation. Any charge that would have been selected in the "Option A" decision would have carried a similar fine and penalty, he said.

Commission Chairman Jay Tutchton considered an "Option C", to bring in the state attorney general's office. He considered it a negligent handling charge for the hunter.

"You pull the trigger, you're on the hook for what happens," he said.

But, as some commissioners criticized the decision made by CPW law enforcement, staff found an ally in Commissioner Dallas May.

"We have opened a Pandora's box," he said, explaining that every future case could become a matter for the Commission to discuss critically with law enforcement. "That's the problem with this."

Another commissioner questioned how the issue would be addressed in the future.

"We're here as commissioners to discuss issues of public concern," said Niemiec. "I see it as my duty to be responsive to

the public, and to bring up this topic."

The state's wolf introduction has broadly been criticized as largely unsuccessful. About half of the wolves that have been translocated to Colorado have died.

On a Wednesday call with 3rd District constituents, U.S. Rep. Jeff Hurd said, "It's not been transparent. It has not been accountable."

Photo credit: Colorado Parks & Wildlife

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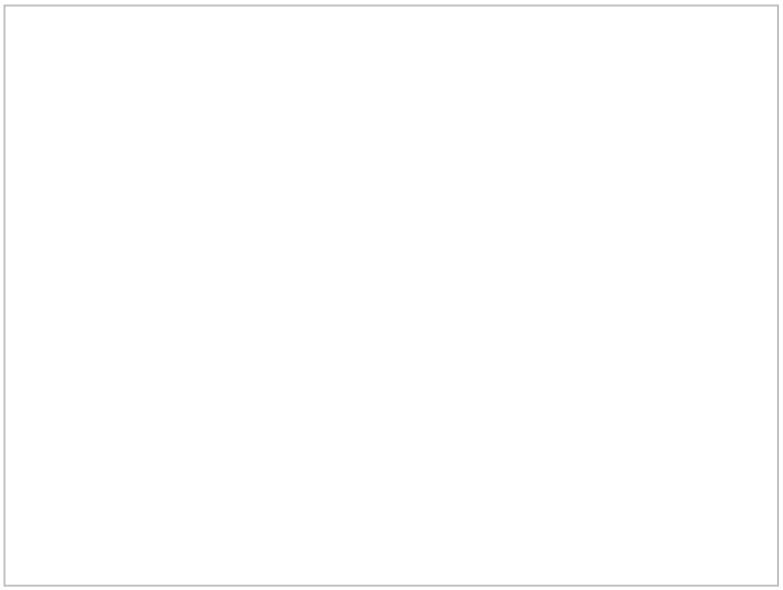
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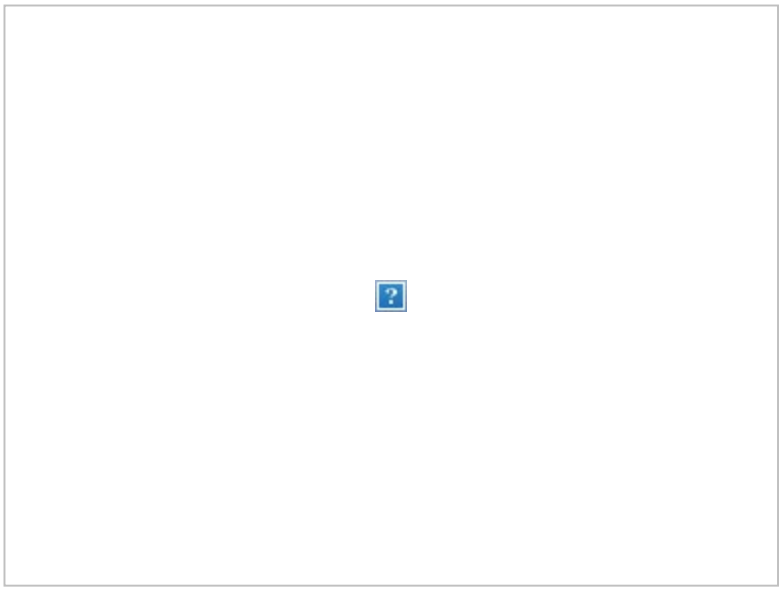
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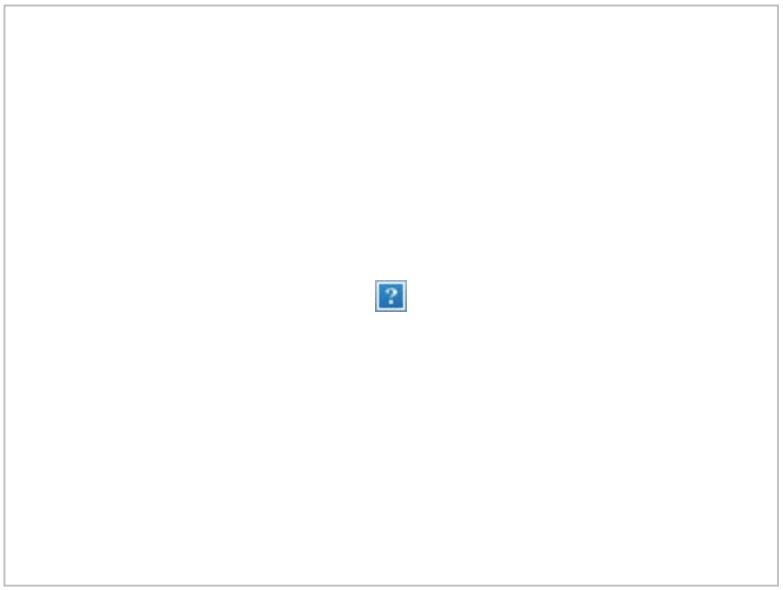
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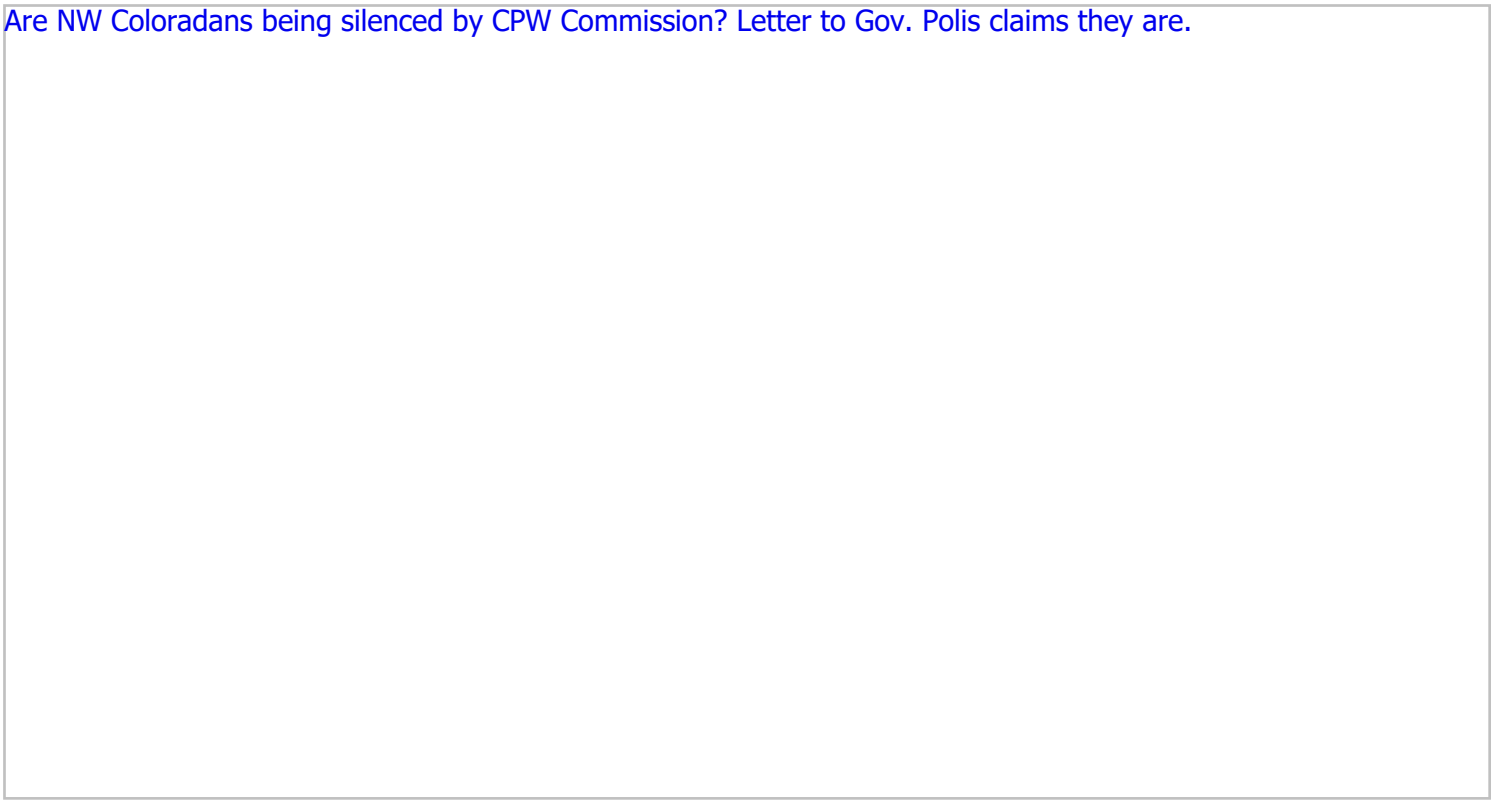
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 24, 2026

Landmark Agreement Launches Three Lakes CLEAR Initiative with $30 Million Commitment to Improve Grand Lake Clarity

Berthoud, CO – The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Northern Water), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Grand County, the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG), the Colorado River Water Conservation District (Colorado River District), and the Town of Grand Lake today announced a landmark agreement establishing the Three Lakes CLEAR Initiative, a long-term effort to improve water clarity, watershed health, and resilience across Grand Lake, Shadow Mountain Reservoir, and Granby Reservoir (the Three Lakes). The Three Lakes System is part of the federal Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project, which collects and stores water in Grand County and then diverts it for use by C-BT beneficiaries on the Front Range through a series of reservoirs, ditches, and tunnels. The CLEAR Initiative continues the ongoing Grand Lake Adaptive Management framework for managing C-BT Project operations and incorporates additional collaborative initiatives to enhance clarity and provide watershed health benefits within and upstream of the Three Lakes System.

CLEAR stands for Clarity, Legacy, Ecosystem, Adaptation and Resilience, reflecting the shared commitment by partners to protect and improve this important resource.

The agreement marks a major milestone following two decades of coordinated work to improve clarity in Grand Lake and water quality in Shadow Mountain Reservoir and reflects a renewed commitment to sustained action and investment. It also provides a long-term framework to continue and expand this work as the Grand Lake Clarity Stakeholders' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), established in 2016, expires in December 2026.

Today's action renews and expands upon that MOU, protecting the Three Lakes and tributary watersheds for the next 30 years.

As part of the agreement, Northern Water, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District Municipal Subdistrict, and the Windy Gap Firming Project Enterprise will provide $30 million over 30 years to address both C-BT system operations and the broader environmental conditions influencing water quality by supporting implementation of projects and initiatives that address watershed and lake conditions. Of that amount, $20 million will be directed toward project funding to accelerate near-term, priority on-the-ground improvements initiatives, while $10 million will build a long-term reserve fund intended to provide sustained, legacy funding and the flexibility to address future needs as conditions evolve beyond the 30-year agreement.

The initiative continues and strengthens the collaborative adaptive management of C-BT Project operations in the Three Lakes that began with the original MOU, using real-time adjustments to improve clarity in Grand Lake while balancing water supply, power generation, and environmental needs. At the same time, the initiative establishes a dedicated fund directed by the parties, to invest in watershed and system health projects that improve water quality and ecological conditions across the Three Lakes system and tributary watersheds.

Projects will focus broadly on watershed and forest health, reducing sediment and nutrient inputs, improving lake and reservoir conditions, and strengthening monitoring and adaptive management tools across the interconnected system.

"The foundation for this landmark agreement to improve Grand Lake clarity and create the Three Lakes CLEAR Fund was laid over decades of effort by many, representing all Parties, to improve and use our knowledge of the Three Lakes System for actionable projects that can move the needle for better Grand Lake clarity. The Parties have differing interests for sure, but we strive to find common ground because we have a spirit of mutual trust and respect," said Jeff Metzger, Town of Grand Lake.

Northern Water emphasized the enduring framework the agreement creates to support the long-term health and resilience of the Three Lakes System while benefiting communities on both sides of the Continental Divide. "The Three Lakes CLEAR Initiative demonstrates how shared stewardship of Grand Lake clarity and the health of the broader



Three Lakes System and its watersheds can strengthen the long-term resilience of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project for the benefit of Front Range water users while supporting the natural resources and thriving West Slope communities that depend on them. By creating a lasting legacy of collaboration and investment, this agreement helps ensure these shared resources will continue to be protected for generations to come," said Esther Vincent, Environmental Services Director for Northern Water.

Grand County Board of County Commissioners Chair Edward Raegner highlighted the importance of the agreement for Grand County and the local communities that have stewarded the Three Lakes watershed for generations. "This 30-year MOU reflects an unprecedented commitment to Grand Lake's health and the long-term future of the Three Lakes System. Grand County is proud to work alongside our partners to help preserve Grand Lake's water clarity for generations to come."

The Colorado River District emphasized the value of continuing the collaborative approach that has guided clarity improvements in the Three Lakes System for the past decade. "This MOU continues the collaborative approach that has guided clarity work in Grand Lake and water quality throughout the Three Lakes system since 2016. Over the past decade, we've gained valuable knowledge about how to effectively use adaptive management in the system, and this agreement will provide a strong foundation to continue that work for the long term. As a signatory to this MOU, the Colorado River District will continue to be a voice for the Western Slope and advocate for solutions that protect our water resources and the communities which depend on them," said Rebecca Briesmoore, Senior Water Resources Engineer with the Colorado River District.

NWCCOG Executive Director Jon Stavney also welcomed the long-term commitment. "Since the 1970s, our organization has been engaged in multiple efforts to protect and enhance the water quality of Grand Lake. This MOU represents a new beginning backed by a long-term commitment of substantial resources to the clarity of Grand Lake."

Additional details will be shared as implementation moves forward.

California wolf diet study shows that cattle are overpopulated

A California wolf diet study reveals just how thoroughly domestic cattle have displaced native prey on public lands.

WESTERN WATERSHEDS PROJECT
JUL 27, 2026



Photo by Taylor Wright on Unsplash

A new study from the University of California Davis on the diet of the state's expanding wolf population is causing quite a stir in the livestock industry, and also in wildlife conservation circles. The headline-grabbing finding was that beef has been found in 72% of wolf scat, while their natural prey were found in a smaller proportion of samples – 51% for small mammals and 45% for mule deer. Kind of makes it sound like

wolves are concentrating their efforts on cattle in northern California, right? That's the story that the livestock industry and its allies are running with. But a detailed analysis of the study itself reveals quite different (and surprising) conclusions.

Before we get into the details of the study, it's important to point out that when wolves are eating beef, it doesn't mean that they killed a cow. Wolves are happy to scavenge carcasses of animals killed by other causes, and a U.S. Department of Agriculture analysis show that natural causes like weather, disease, and poisoning are so common and prevalent that losses to predators of all species combined make up a very small proportion – only one-tenth of one percent – of cattle losses nationwide. That's half as many cattle as are lost to cattle rustling. Of those 99.9% of cattle out there that have died of other causes, wolves would be expected to scavenge any carcass they find out in the mountains.

The recent UC Davis study focuses heavily on biomass that wolves are consuming, or the combined weight of meat from different species that wolves are eating compared to the total combined weight of prey animals in the northern California mountains. Beef made up 50.3% of the biomass of wolf scats. Mule deer were next most, with 15.2%. Third place in total biomass, surprisingly were montane voles, making up almost 10% of the total biomass of wolf scats. Here, the size of the carcass becomes key – a single dead cow could feed a wolf for weeks, while it would take a really large number of mice to make up a measurable proportion of the biomass of wolf diets.

Ever seen the movie *Never Cry Wolf*? Dial it up on your favorite streaming platform, and give it a watch. Its portrayal of wolf-prey dynamics proves prophetic, and bears directly on California's experience (the political vilification of wolves by vested interests, wolves relying heavily on voles for sustenance). It's fiction, sure, and put out by Disney. But as a former Institute for Arctic Biology scientist, I can vouch for its scientific realism.

The UC Davis study dances around this issue of domestic livestock starving out the mule deer in the Modoc Plateau, even accidentally (on purpose?) forgetting to list competition for forage with livestock as a major factor in California's mule deer decline. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, a federal bureau founded to support farmers and the cattle industry, is more forthcoming. According the NRCS statistics, each cow-calf pair eats the same amount of forage as two elk, or six mule deer. So for every 12 months a cow-calf pair grazes in the national forests of the northern Sierra Backcountry, there will be six fewer mule deer.

California mule deer are pretty small for this species. Female mule deer in this study weighed an average of 70 pounds apiece, and their fawns weighed 5 pounds. An average cow, by contrast, was estimated by this particular study to weigh 1,200 to 1,500 pounds, while calves weighed 300 to 500 pounds. That's a big difference. So when a cow dies in the woods and the carcass is abandoned by its owner, that's one big pile of meat for a wolf to discover!

While beef accounted for 60% and 50% of the biomass in wolf diets in 2022 and 2023, respectively, mule deer meat made up 8% and 15% of the biomass in wolf diets in 2022 and 2023. So the story of wolves eating beef revolves around the fears of the cattle industry, right?

Wrong conclusion! Mule deer are so rare, compared to cattle, that even though they make up a comparatively small proportion of the wolf diet, wolves seem to be actively selecting for mule deer, while eating beef less in proportion to its availability. The researchers concluded, "Despite the high consumption of cattle among ungulate diet items suggested by our dietary analysis (88% in 2022, 78% in 2023), consumption of cattle was slightly lower than expected based on availability, which we estimated at 93% of the prey biomass available in 2022 and 86% in 2023. In contrast, deer composed a higher proportion of ungulate biomass consumed (12% in 2022, 22% in 2023) than expected based on

availability, which we estimated at 7% of the prey biomass available in 2022 and 14% in 2023."

The California Davis study's statistics on biomass make this point in very stark numbers.

So wolves in northern California are actively *avoiding* beef (even scavenging) and *selecting for* mule deer meat. But there's almost nothing but beef in the woods. That's due to the chronic overstocking and overgrazing of California's national forests by domestic livestock, a choice the U.S. Forest Service has been making for more than a century, resulting in dwindling populations of mule deer and other native species of wildlife. And, really, to stock cattle so heavily on public lands that 93% of the prey biomass is cattle, in one of the years of the study, while all the other prey species of native wildlife combined only amount to 7% of the biomass? That's not multiple use, or balanced management. That's a national scandal.

When you look at the study from this perspective, the problem comes into stark focus. The crisis isn't wolf predation on cattle, it's the complete eradication of native wildlife on California national forests by a radical overpopulation of livestock. So let's stop crying wolf, and address the real problem: Too many cattle on National Forest lands.

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