



## 2026 SPRING NEWSLETTER

### Colorado Wild Public Lands

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#### Hello CWPL Members, Colleagues, and Friends!

After a big public lands selloff scare proposed by Senator Mike Lee of Utah in 2025, Colorado Wild Public Lands and our fellow public lands colleagues were finally able to take a deep breath as we entered the new year. Not only were those selloffs pulled out of the *One Big Beautiful Bill*, but also the American people demonstrated that they cherish their public lands and will fight to ensure their lands are protected and conserved.

Unfortunately, the fight never stops for public lands protections. In February, the Department of the Interior adopted a final rule that clawed back the agency's prior National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations by 80%. This year, too, Congress has utilized an obscure law called the *Congressional Review Act* (CRA) of 1996 to attack safeguards for public lands. The CRA was originally designed to allow Congress to review last-minute rules enacted by outgoing administrations. Congress used it, however, to strip the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of its protected 225,000 acres of pristine waterways in the Superior National Forest of northeastern Minnesota. Introduced and passed in the House of Representatives, House Joint Resolution 140 will open the Boundary Waters to destructive mining that could forever taint the country's most visited water-based wilderness if passed in the Senate. And in West Texas, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol introduced plans to construct a border wall through Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Organizations and concerned citizens quickly sprang to action, protesting the construction of a wall in the least-crossed section of the United States-Mexico border and pushing CBP to remove its plans for the time being.

Advocates like you have helped keep these attempts to pull away public lands from public hands at bay. Increased public pressure has slowed the momentum of H.J. Resolution 140 in the U.S. Senate and could stall the bill's passing if it does not receive a vote within a 60-day window. At times, it can feel like these fights are ever-present and hopeless, but the past few months have proved just the opposite. When we all come together as one and stand up for our public lands, we have *enormous* power and have shown that our voices can be heard.

*Nicholas Green, Executive Director*



## Cotopaxi Jewish Colony

As the Locke Park Land Exchange enters into its comment period, we want to share insights into the unique history of the area. Following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of the Russian Empire in 1881, Jews were unjustly blamed for revolutionary sentiment throughout Russia and Eastern Europe. To flee antisemitic attacks and segregation, a group of Jewish immigrants settled in the remote area of Cotopaxi, Colorado in 1882. Described as “the poorest place in the world for farming,” the land surrounding the newly founded settlement provided only struggle and hardship. The Jewish immigrants, however, held onto their heritage and culture, building a synagogue in Cotopaxi to celebrate life even in the most difficult of times. Due to the difficulty of farming in the area and the harsh conditions they endured in the surrounding zinc mines, the Jewish settlers eventually left the Cotopaxi colony, which officially dissolved in 1884. Although the colony existed for only a few short years, its presence still



represents a testament to the fortitude and bravery many immigrants faced in America at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This little slice of Coloradan history that lies within parcels in the Locke Park Land Exchange adds to our state's diversity and culture, and we at Colorado Wild Public Lands hope that our history continues to be shared and appreciated.

## Compromise Mine Land Exchange

Colorado Wild Public Lands recently learned of a new potential land exchange concerning the Compromise Mine located on Aspen Mountain. It would involve the transfer of federal parcels located on Aspen Mountain to a private entity in exchange for non-federal parcels located on Independence Pass. The proposed land exchange seeks to use a less-often-utilized land exchange process called a legislative land exchange. These legislative land exchanges run through Congress and are enacted via legislation, rather than the administrative process that involves a federal agency executing the process. The legislative land exchange process can circumvent public input, as it does not have to adhere to the same rules that administrative land exchanges do. Your friends at Colorado Wild Public Lands, however, are working to ensure that this potential land exchange considers the public's best interest as it progresses.

## Updates on our Projects

**Locke Park Land Exchange near Hillside:** The U.S. Forest Service officially announced the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment of the land exchange on March 24, 2026 through April 22, 2026. We will provide our comments to the Forest Service during that period and encourage the community to input their own thoughts and concerns as well. Those comments can be submitted through this link: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?Project=63709>

**Blue Valley Ranch Land Exchange near Silverthorne:** At the end of 2025, an organization linked to the Blue Valley Ranch expressed a desire to implement a permitting system along the Lower Blue River. We expressed our concerns about the permitting system as an attempt to further privatize the stretch of the river to SummitDaily, which can be found here: <https://www.summitdaily.com/news/colorado-gold-medal-fishing-land-swap-lower-blue-river-concerns/>. Colorado Parks and Wildlife also conducted a study of trout near the Blue Valley Ranch, finding that excess feeding and stocking from the ranch had led to a significant rise in population decreases and fish lice infestation: <https://www.summitdaily.com/news/colorado-blue-river-fish-survey-health-decline/>

**Valle Seco Land Exchange near Pagosa Springs:** Following CWPL's appeal filed in August 2025, the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to schedule oral arguments, marking a significant and exciting update for the land exchange.

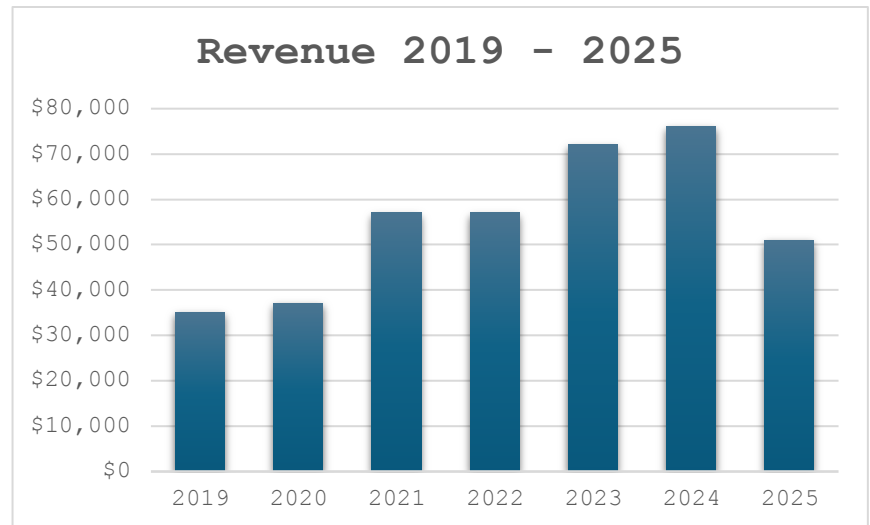
**Willow Creek Land Exchange Near Winter Park:** Following a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, Colorado Wild Public Lands received a large document release in January 2026 that provided deeper insights into reconfigurations of the federal parcel involved in the land exchange. This FOIA request (along with many others CWPL has filed in the past) increases transparency for the public to gather a better understanding of issues on our public lands. We are still awaiting a decision on our complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia regarding FOIA violations by the United States Forest Service for withholding appraisals and other documents.

**Buffalo Horn Land Exchange near Meeker:** As of March 2026, CWPL is still awaiting a ruling on our appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) submitted in November 2023.

**Rapid Creek Land Exchange in Pitkin County:** After receiving an overview of the land exchange from Pitkin County Open Space in April 2025, we are awaiting the beginning of a NEPA scoping and comment period.

## Financials

In 2025, Colorado Wild Public Lands experienced a lot of change, including the hiring of a new executive director. The candidate search and hiring process took several months during the summer of 2025, leading to a drop in total revenue during that period. CWPL, however, anticipates a much stronger 2026 financially as we increase our fundraising from both grants and individual donors.



## BALANCE SHEET – 2025

### ASSETS:

#### Current Assets:

Cash \*\$12,499.49

#### Non-Current

#### Assets:

Equipment \$1,300

#### Total

**\$13,799.49**

### LIABILITIES

Payroll Liabilities

\$10,235.78

#### Total Liabilities

**\$10,235.78**

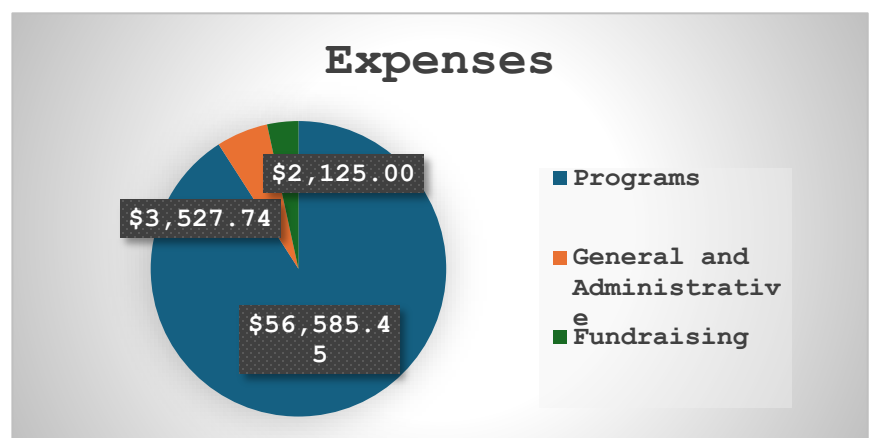
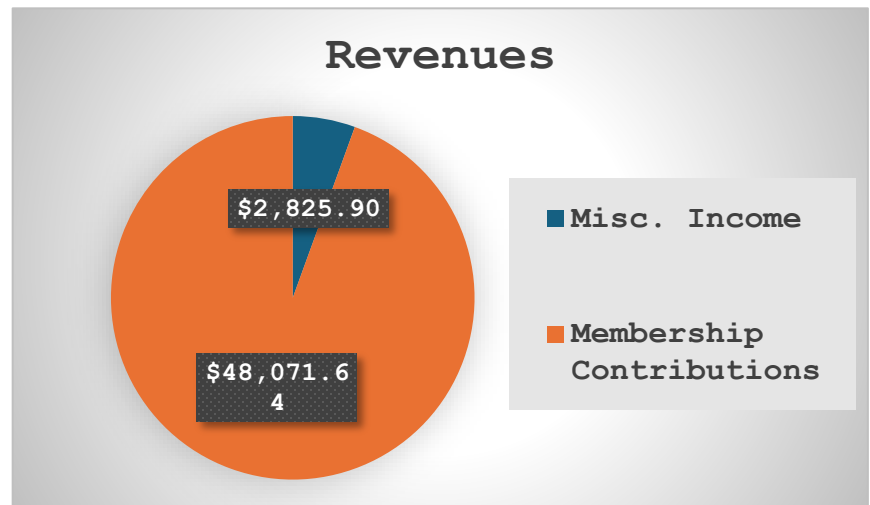
### EQUITY

Total Equity **-\$3,962.33**

### TOTAL LIABILITIES

**AND EQUITY \$5,372.80**

\*Figures are for fiscal year ending December 31, 2025, rounded to the Nearest \$100



**JOIN OUR BOARD MEETING!**

Colorado Wild Public Lands will be hosting our quarterly board meeting on April 1, 2026 at 5:30 P.M. at our office at 23272 Two Rivers Road, Basalt, CO 81621.

All are welcome to join!

## THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS!

We at Colorado Wild Public Lands sincerely thank each and every one of our members and supporters who have helped our organization impact and protect public lands in Colorado in 2025.

### PARTNERS

Southwest Property Law - Maya Kane  
Parsons Law Office - Jeff Parsons  
Energy and Conservation Law - Travis Stills  
JVAM Law - Benjamin Monarch and Ryan Jarvis  
Hogan Lovells: Michael Theis and Liz Och  
Denver Law - Neil Levine  
40BWorks - Suzanne Jackson  
Max Ink - Reina Katzenberger  
High Country Conservation Advocates  
San Juan Citizens Alliance  
Wild Earth Guardians  
Independence Pass Foundation  
Crystal Valley Environmental Protection Association  
Rocky Mountain Wild Women for Wildlands  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness  
Rocky Smith Consulting

### CORPORATE SPONSORS AND GRANTS

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Kroger Company  
Colorado Gives Foundation  
Fidelity Charitable  
REI Coop



store.

Thank you for supporting CWPL's work!

There is another way to help if you have a digital shopping card at Kroger Food Stores, which includes City Market, King Soopers, Smiths, and Ralphs.

It won't cost you a thing. Just log in to your account and hit the Community Rewards tab. Select Colorado Wild Public Lands or the code WH042, and Kroger will make donations to CWPL based on the amount you spend in the