

Wildlife Report, Feb. 23, 2026, by David H. McCord, Wildlife Director

DNR Dir. Gibbs named Interim CPW Director Laura Clellan as the finalist for the Director position. The Commission will meet February 23 to consider the formal appointment. [She impresses me as a no-nonsense leader. I have not met her beyond our CWCP Zoom meetings.]

Thanks to the Colorado Firearms Coalition for below gun bills and outdoors bill.

SB26-004, (Red Flag). Increases number of entities that can file against persons believed to own firearms and be a danger to themselves or others. Adds health care agencies, behavioral health centers, K-12 schools, colleges and universities. Approved in Senate and sent to House as of 02/03. [Are these new entities qualified?] Oppose this one.

HB26-1008, Colorado Outdoor Opportunities Act, to expand the abilities of CPW to coordinate planning and management. There is some risk that it may diminish or eliminate hunting and fishing as forms of outdoor recreation. Sportspersons are given scant coverage and hunting and fishing are not mentioned.

HB26-1021, 2nd Amendment Protection Act to undo the harm from years of gun control laws. No chance of passing but deserves support, was "PIed", so dead.

SB26-043 would ban the private sale of firearm barrels and require their sales via an FFL holder. Could affect us where we want to swap out a ML barrel or build a ML kit. Oppose

HB26-1212: Constitutional Carry of Handgun, would allow anybody who can legally possess a handgun to carry that handgun concealed without a permit. Support

HB26-1144: "Ghost Gun" would ban home manufacturing of firearms and components and prohibit the distribution, and sometimes mere possession, of digital 3D-printing instructions for guns or gun parts. Could affect us where we build a muzzleloader. Bill is badly flawed, and appears to violate 1st Amend.

Call your representative and senator on any of these to express your opposition or support as they keep a record even though they may vote against us.

Find your state legislator: <https://leg.colorado.gov/find-my-legislator>

At the federal level: "Stop Online Ammunition Sales Act," ammo dealers to confirm buyer identity and report sales of more than 1,000 rounds to the U.S. Attorney General. [Unknown if reloading components, propellants, etc. are covered.]

Bear bill –no number as of 02/03. The CPW officers respond to thousands of bear problems, many of which originate when people leave edible garbage out where bears find it. There are an estimated 17,000

to 20,000 black bears in our state and 5000 complaints received in 2024; 68 bears relocated and 98 euthanized, at a cost of \$800,000. Under current law, a person is guilty of a crime for placing food or edible waste where it may be exposed to bears and the first offence gets a warning, that would change to criminal negligence and no first offense warning. The fine for a third or subsequent offense is raised from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Wolves. An adult breeding male wolf died in CPW's effort to re-collar in NW Colorado. About half of released wolves have died and no new releases are planned for this winter. One member of the otherwise capture Copper Creek pack not captured is a known livestock predator, Grand and Pitkin Counties. CPW staff are attempting to take it out; this wolf survived wounding from an earlier shot but persists.

Wolverine reintroduction approved, CWCP member Rick Cables: "... science first, trust the wildlife professionals, consider the affected parties when advancing wildlife conservations, etc."

A very bad petition to be considered by the CPW Commission: The anti-fur people represented by the Center for Biological Diversity submitted a petition to the CPW Commission to prohibit commercial sale, barter or trade of wildlife fur in Colorado arguing that commercial fur markets are no longer sustainable due to climate change and other pressures.

So, a BIG request, all of us to show up to the March 4 or 5 CPW Commission meeting in force to oppose the petition. The proponents have the same intent as the "Cat" initiative #127 and the anti-fur initiative in Denver. Further, the fear is they would like to prohibit fur trapping on public lands and would they also try to ban hunting on public land? We must not let them get a foothold.

Stay tuned for final March agenda and location details but please plan to attend so we can help protect our hunting and trapping heritage. Probable: at the Double Tree by Hilton, 8773 Yates, Dr., Westminster, [verify].

CPW Agenda will be available on or after February 23: <https://cpw.state.co.us>

Gov. Polis nominations to fill three openings on the CPW Commission, two from term limits, 1) John Emerick, at Large, Redstone, 2) Francis Silva Blaney, Sportsperson and Outfitters, C. Springs, and 3) Chris Sichko, Sportspersons, Boulder (to fill Murphy Robinson vacancy). None of the nominees appear to be big game hunters yet hunting represents one of the major recreation segments of Colorado's outdoors and rural economy.

From Gov. Polis' web site: Frances Silva Blaney is a professional fly-fishing outfitter and small business owner and co-owns Canopy Fly Fishing, a mother-daughter outfitter in Colorado Springs. She is a leader in the outdoor community as Co-Chair of Wild Watershed Broads, volunteer in CPW's River Watch Program, and has held Sierra Club and Trout Unlimited positions. She has knowledge of public land use, experience with Colorado's outfitting and angling communities, and passion for protecting ecosystems while maintaining recreation access. My thought, she is a fast learner and has reached out to the hunting side of the outfitter guide world.

Chris Sichko, PhD in ag econ, small plane pilot, fitherman and bowhunter. There is no indication he participated in big game draw or hauled a deer, elk etc. out of the woods.

His online bio: I'm an economist, professional pilot, wildlife photographer, and outdoorsman. For the last four years, I worked as a Research Economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, following the completion of my PhD. In this role, I published peer-reviewed papers and reports on environmental, labor, and agricultural topics, with my research appearing in top academic field journals and USDA reports. I apply a diverse set of skills—econometrics, statistics, data management, coding, and writing—to uncover patterns, understand relationships, communicate findings, and advance our understanding of how humans interact with the environment.

I oppose approval for John Emerick. His negatives need brought to the attention of the Senate when his review comes up in a few weeks. Anymore, I view Sierra Club credentials as a negative as they oppose trapping and have a limited support for hunting.

Comments on Emerick from an agriculture Net site: “Emerick is also the current treasurer of Colorado Wild, one of the state's wolf advocacy groups. He is also tied to the Rocky Mountain Wolf Project, the main backer of Proposition 114, which led efforts to bring the state's wolf reintroduction program through a ballot initiative in 2024. The president of Colorado Wild is Emerick's partner, Delia Malone, who is also the wildlife chair for the Colorado Sierra Club and a frequent attendee at CPW commission meetings, where she advocates for wolves and against hunting.”

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