

COLORADO STATE POLICIES

The Center for Western Priorities' **Western States Conservation Scorecard** evaluates each Western state in three areas: Lands and Access, Outdoor Recreation, and Responsible Energy Development. Our aim is to illuminate best practices and gaps in state-level public lands-related policy in the West. We hope to highlight where Western states are demonstrating leadership, as well as where they can improve. Please see the full report for a breakdown of methodology and the complete grading rubrics with scores at www.westernpriorities.org/statescorecard.

COLORADO	LANDS AND ACCESS	OUTDOOR RECREATION	RESPONSIBLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT
	AVERAGE	BEST	BEST

AVERAGE — LANDS AND ACCESS

Despite the state's outstanding support for public lands and conservation, access to Colorado's **state trust lands** and streams is some of the worst across the West. State trust lands in Colorado are off limits without a permit for a specific hunting season. Wading and anchoring in streams on private land is considered **trespassing**. On the bright side, Colorado was the first Western state to enact a **public lands day**, the first of which took place on May 20th, 2017. Colorado is also considered the best for conservation funding. The **Great Outdoors Colorado** (GOCO) is sustained by proceeds from the state lottery and provides funding to preserve and enhance the state's parks, wildlife, and open spaces. In FY2016, GOCO awarded \$64.3 million across 11 grant programs. Colorado also directs funds from a **Habitat Stamp** (a required \$10 fee tagged on to the cost of a hunting or fishing license) to fund the **Colorado Wildlife Habitat Protection Program**, which works to increase access and protect critical wildlife habitat. The state offers **Wetlands Project Funding** for restoration of riparian areas and the **Conservation Trust Fund**, which is administered to local governments for conservation and recreation projects.

BEST — OUTDOOR RECREATION

In 2015, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper opened the state's **Outdoor Recreation Industry Office** (OREC), becoming the second Mountain West state to have an office of outdoor recreation. Thanks in part to OREC, Colorado is **home to** 7,800 outdoor recreation firms, employing 177,700 people, with a \$6 billion annual payroll. OREC Director, **Luis Benitez**, helped play a prominent role in bringing the Outdoor Retailer trade show to Denver. Colorado also facilitates an **Outdoor Recreation Advisory Group**, comprised of over 30 individuals from across the outdoor recreation community. Colorado administers permanent grants for outdoor education through its GOCO **Inspire Initiative** grants, and the state's **School Yard Initiative**, which funds school-based projects that inspire play and outdoor learning. Colorado has no standalone statewide standards for environmental education, but they do incorporate standards in their science and social studies curriculums.

BEST — RESPONSIBLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Colorado has a wide range of state-level energy policies. Oil and gas development setbacks are in place, with a **1,000 foot** setback for multi-occupancy buildings and **500 foot** setback from residences. The state allows blanket bonding for oil and gas well reclamation and does allow self-bonding for coal operations, putting taxpayers at risk. When it comes to spill prevention and mitigation, Colorado's **Rule 906** requires oil and gas producers to report spills within the first 24 hours of discovery. The state provides a publicly-accessible **database** of spill information online. Colorado requires that companies share fracking chemicals through FracFocus. Like many Western states, royalty rates on energy extracted on public lands exceed the federal rate of **12.5 percent**. Colorado also charges a severance tax and conservation tax on production. Colorado has baseline water testing, requiring pre-drill testing and two rounds of post-drill testing at four locations within a half-mile of the well. Where the state truly shines is with its **methane capture rules**, which no other Western state has.