



# COLORADO BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS

*The sportsmen's voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife*

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**To: CPW Commission Members & Staff**

**From: Colorado Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers**

**Subj: Habitat Stamp Funding–Temporary Pause on Spending Needed**

April 30, 2017

Dear Commissioners:

As the leading sportsmen organization committed to speaking-up on behalf of Colorado's wild public lands waters and wildlife, the Colorado Backcountry Hunters & Anglers would like to express our concern about the potential diversion of Colorado Habitat Stamp funds away from the public land acquisition, permanent land conservation and permanent public access easements that the program has historically funded. Our organization represents well over 1,000 Coloradan conservation-minded public land hunters and anglers who are committed to maintaining intact fish and wildlife habitat, while also ensuring that sportsmen have quality public access to Colorado's fish and wildlife.

Between 2007-2015 Colorado's Habitat Stamp Program has helped protect more than 250,000 acres of high value migration corridors, wetlands and big game wintering grounds, while also providing public access to more than 117,000 acres. Currently, sportsmen are only picking up the tab for a small part of this. For example, in 2016 the total project costs associated with public land protection and access were matched 3:1 by private parties.

While BHA is open to discussing potential options for using Habitat Stamp Funds on non-traditional habitat and public access projects, we believe it imperative that public land acquisition and permanent conservation/access easements continue to be available as part of the suite of options provided by the Habitat Stamp Program. To keep these options on the table, we need time to bring stakeholders to the table to ensure that CPW's funds are spent in a manner that is fiscally prudent, biologically defensible and consistent with the legislative intent of the Habitat Stamp Program. Thus, we ask that you not allow the diversion of Habitat Stamp funds elsewhere until there are broader discussions with interested stakeholders.

Ultimately our interest is in doing what's best for the long-term benefit of fish, wildlife and the sportsmen of Colorado. Sportsmen, with the assistance of far-sighted legislators originally established the Habitat Stamp Program for the protection of habitat, migration corridors and connectedness of habitat critical for the long-term needs of Colorado's wildlife. Subsequent legislation has added public access as a component to the program. We believe that CPW should respect those legislative mandates. We're asking you to stand with us in deferring decisions on this year's habitat stamp funds rather than pursuing projects outside the prevue of the programs original intent.

In Data Analysis Units (DAUs) throughout the state, elk and mule deer populations are increasingly limited by a loss of habitat, and in addition hundreds of thousands of dollars of potential big game license revenues are foregone due to a lack of public access. The habitat stamp fund program is one of the best tools we have for helping solve both problems. Please join

us in speaking-up for Colorado's fish and wildlife by making sure that we have the time needed to ensure that the opportunity for public land acquisition and permanent conservation/access easements are not lost.

Thank you for your public service and consideration.

Sincerely,



David A. Lien  
Chairman, Colorado  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
*The Sportsman's Voice for Our Wild Public Lands, Waters and Wildlife*  
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