

## Colorado Green Laws Conference Report

JoAnn Hackos. May 3, 2021 :

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We are now in the midst of the 2021 Colorado legislative session, with a number of bills that Audubon Rockies is supporting and some that we oppose. Jen Boulton, Audubon Rockies' lobbyist has been tracking key bills that provide an effective voice for the environment and for birds.

During the Green Laws Conference, Jen updated us on the various bills and Abby Burke, Audubon Rockies Western Rivers Regional Program Manager, updated us about Audubon Rockies' focus on healthy rivers.



Here are some of the legislative issues to follow:

- New tax write-off for Healthy Rivers (passed already) – be sure to include this on your Colorado tax return, probably next year.
- Pollinator license plate support to fund protection of pollinators. We'll need to sell 3,000 of these plates in 3 years.
- Funding for the Colorado Water Plan.
- Renewable energy grants for local governments.
- An aquatic nuisance bill (aimed at boats bringing mollusk infestations).
- Pollinator license plate support to fund protection of pollinators. We'll need to sell 3,000 of these plates in 3 years.
- Putting the Department of Natural Resources in charge of forest health rather than the Department of Agriculture.
- More funding for state parks.
- More funding for fire mitigation.
- Ban on plastic bags from stores.
- A better definition of Pumped Hydroelectricity so that it doesn't kill fish and increase flooding.
- The PAUSE initiative – proposed as a ballot initiative that we strongly oppose (more on this issue soon).

- Support for Jay Tuchten's appointment to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) commission.

Evergreen Audubon members might also be interested to know about the following:

- **Protecting Mountain Lions and Black Bears:** The courts have halted the CPW action to slaughter hundreds of mountain lions and black bears in Colorado. The killing has been underway for some time but has now been stopped. The court ruled that CPW violated the National Environmental Policy Act. CPW has been spending millions of dollars to kill 50% of the animals in the Upper Arkansas River area and the Piceance Basin in North West Colorado. It's about time this has been ended.
- **Audubon Colorado Water Policy:** Ninety percent (90%) of Colorado wildlife depend on healthy rivers and riparian areas. Riparian areas represent less than 2% of Colorado land, but one-third of these areas are polluted and 70% are badly degraded. Unfortunately, Trump's administration removed these areas from federal protection. Audubon is supporting a state bill that would restore specific protections for Colorado rivers and riparian areas. We need the support of our local legislators to get this bill on the agenda because there is already significant opposition.

Thank you to Denver Audubon, sponsors of the 2021 Green Laws conference.