

2026 Legislative Priority Proposal
Updated: 9/26/25

CONCERNING PROVIDING FUNDING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF COUNTY ROADS THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO STATE-OWNED PARKS AND STATE WILDLIFE AREAS, AND IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, UTILIZING OVERAGE OF THE KCW PASS AS THE APPROPRIATION	
Park County (Commissioner Amy Mitchell)	
Preferred Contact:	amy.mitchell@parkcountycogov
Co-Sponsoring Counties/Commissioners:	The following commissioners have voiced support for the bill: Erik Stone - Teller County, Warren Brown - Archuleta County, Terry Hofmeister - Philips County, Cody Davis - Mesa County, Tony Haas - Las Animas County, Paula McPheeters - Pueblo County, Dallas Schroeder - Elbert County, Arlan Van Ry - Alamosa County.
Who is your subject matter expert?	Nick Bredsnajder, Director of Public Works, Park County.
Has this proposal been approved by your BoCC?	Yes.
Have you reviewed the CCI Instructional Memo?	Yes.
Describe the problem your proposal will solve.	<p>Counties that have state parks are required to provide safe road access to park visitors. The extreme number of visitors creates a much higher traffic volume than the Highway User Tax Fund provides to counties. The disproportionate number of visitors accessing the parks compared to the residential population served by these roads is an unfunded mandate levied upon the 35 counties that host 43 state parks.</p> <p><u>Park County as an example:</u> With approximately 18,000 in population and 311,388 visitors to Eleven Mile and Spinney in 2024, many towing campers to the over 300 camp sites and boats to the marina and boat launch, Park County does not have the funding to maintain safe access to Eleven Mile and Spinney state parks. The state needs to provide funding to counties that do not have the financial ability to provide a road that can withstand the heavy traffic traveling to the heavily used state's parks.</p> <p>Visitors suffer vehicle damage when traveling to the state parks. A standard passenger vehicle is not designed to withstand heavily used gravel roads. Those who cannot afford a more robust vehicle are disproportionately negatively impacted. The state built the parks, people are coming, the state needs help!</p>

<p>Areas of Impact:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Road maintenance budget. The Public Works Road and Bridge Department's, Lake George division faces an impossible task to maintain the access roads; county roads 90, 92, 23 and 59. The Highway User Tax Fund (HUTF) does not provide sufficient funding to compensate for the high traffic volume. Park received for 2025 \$6,169,675 in HUTF for 1,576 miles of eligible roads providing \$3,915 per mile with only 150 miles of hard surface roads. According to Average Daily Trip standards, roads that suffer more than 500 trips per day should be a hard surface. The access roads to State Parks should be paved which is beyond the HUTF budget. 2. Emergency Responders. Lake George Fire District and Hartsel Fire District are responsible for responding to emergencies in the State Parks and the surrounding areas. Response time is diminished, and emergency vehicles are damaged by the rough surface of the heavily used roads. 3. Surrounding area residents. The 67 full-time residents, those with second homes and several businesses located on the state park access roads suffer vehicle damage and a negative impact on their quality of life due to the volume of traffic damaging the roads. 4. Park visitors, especially those who purchase a Keep Colorado Wild pass, have a reasonable expectation to be able to get to the park in any passenger vehicle.
<p>What is the ultimate source of this problem?</p>	<p>There is no existing funding for counties that must maintain roads that provide access to heavily used state parks. The Highway Users Tax Fund is insufficient to properly maintain the roads that serve the population of the counties, let alone to maintain the roads that suffer large traffic volume serving the state parks.</p>
<p>What is your initial proposal to solve this problem?</p>	<p>Establish a grant fund for counties that host state parks and wildlife areas, based on need, utilizing the revenue that exceeds the \$36 million designated in the Keep Colorado Wild (KCW) pass legislation. The Keep Colorado Wild Pass (KCW) was created for "using the pass fees to finance a number of goals of the division of parks and wildlife related to increased conservation of, safety at, and access to state parks and public lands; and making an appropriation." Under SB21-249, \$36 million is tagged for: State Parks \$32 million, Search and rescue \$2.5 million and avalanche safety \$1.5 million. The remaining revenue is dispersed 50% to the Outdoor Recreation Cash Fund and 50% to the Wildlife Cash Fund. According to SB21-249, "For each state fiscal year, the division will use the wild pass fees collected to achieve stated goals such as providing affordable access to state parks and public lands; managing state parks; supporting search and rescue and avalanche safety efforts; conserving vulnerable species and habitats; funding equity, diversity, and inclusion programs; and financing regional outdoor partnerships for community-</p>

	<p>driven planning and projects." The KCW is a self-generating revenue stream which will not impact the state general fund. Diverting the overage to road construction and maintenance to state parks will improve access to state parks, a stated objective of SB21-249. Once the demand has been met, allow the overage revenue to revert back to the Cash Funds.</p> <p>People who purchase a KCW pass have a reasonable expectation of being able to get to the park.</p>
Please provide sample language for this solution.	SB23-059 as introduced which can be easily amended.
Are there any solutions that do not require state-level legislation? Has your county explored these alternatives?	<p>Park County has explored all possible solutions since 2023. Park applied for Congressional Designated Spending, Community Project Funding and has been pursuing FLAP through FHWA. Community project funding for 2023 awarded \$850,000 which is nowhere close to the \$23,000,000 Park County needs to pave 24-26 miles of road. Additionally, Park has been pursuing a FLAP grant through FHWA which now has been paused until 2026. "If" the 2026 grant application is approved, the best-case scenario would be a 2029 start date for construction. No other road construction grants are available for this need.</p>
Has CCI or any other organizations sought a solution to this problem before?	<p>Yes, in 2023 SB23-059 was a CCI priority bill. The bill was amended to a study, which will prove the problem, and the bill provided for a \$2.00 stipend to be added to a park day pass if the county is approved for the stipend. This did not provide meaningful funding to pave roads. Total day passes purchased at Eleven Mile and Spinney state parks since the inception of the KCW in 2023 is 14,435, yielding \$28,870. For 2024 only 5,310-day passes were purchased yielding \$10,620.00. The stipend will not fund road construction or maintenance.</p>
What possible organization(s) would support your proposed solution?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coloradoans and out-of-state tourists who enjoy recreating at state parks. Namely the population of Denver and Colorado Springs who enjoy fishing, boating, paddle boarding and outdoor recreation within 2.5 hours from their home. 2. Residents who live on the roads that provide access to state parks. 3. Emergency Services - Fire and Ambulance who need to respond to emergencies at the state parks and nearby residents and cannot respond quickly due to the condition of the roads. 4. Employees working at the state parks who have to endure vehicle damage to get to work.
What possible organization(s) would oppose your proposed solution?	<p>DNR/CPW and the Governor, who want the overage dedicated to the Parks and Recreation Cash Fund and the Wildlife Cash Fund which are also funded by lottery revenue. The KCW revenue provided to the Parks and Recreation Cash Fund is created by the strategic outdoor recreation management and infrastructure cash fund CRS 33-10-11. This fund also</p>

	<p>requires a specified percentage based on more than \$20 million or less than \$20 million of lottery fund money, to be distributed to the infrastructure cash fund. The money in the cash fund is continuously appropriated to the Division of Parks and Wildlife for specified outdoor recreation and management purposes. The Wildlife Cash Fund, which was created in section 33-1-112 (1), also receives a specified percentage of lottery fund money based on an above or below \$20 million threshold. The KCW revenue provided to the Wildlife Cash Fund can facilitate the implementation of the restoration of gray wolves to Colorado per C.R.S. 33.2-105.8.</p>
<p>Have you spoken with any legislators about your proposed solution? If so, what was their response?</p>	<p>Senator Mark Baisley will sponsor the bill. Have not reached out to other legislators regarding a bill but have spoken to Senator Mike Weissman about the critical issue of road access to Eleven Mile state park after his constituent from Aurora connected us. I will reach out to legislators to garner support.</p>
<p>What are the financial implications of this problem to your county?</p> <p>Are there any financial implications to this solution either?</p>	<p><u>Financial implications:</u> Park County spends a higher portion of our \$6.1 million HUTF attempting to maintain the state park access roads compared to the remaining county roads, especially based on population. After one week of grading the roads, the surface is destroyed. Park is spending money and dedicating resources to serve tourists and forsaking residents.</p> <p><u>Financial implications for the solution:</u> None.</p>
<p>What are the financial implications of this problem to any other impacted parties?</p> <p>What are the financial implications of this solution to any other impacted parties? Please consider any relevant Colorado State Departments.</p>	<p>The impacted parties are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People who want to visit and recreate at a state park and suffer damage to their boat, trailer, camper or vehicle. Some suffer roll-overs driving too close to the shoulder. I have numerous letters and photos depicting the damage. 2. Emergency responders. Lake George Fire District has suffered a sheered-off shock absorber in-route to a structure fire which rendered the water tender inoperable and unable to reach the fire. Fortunately, the fire did not result in a wildland forest fire. 3. Residents suffer from dust inhalation, especially on the weekends when traffic is heavy, up to 1,000+ vehicles per day. 4. DNR may suffer reduced KCW Pass purchases since those on the front range who like to recreate at Eleven Mile and Spinney may not continue to purchase the pass due to the vehicle damage caused by accessing the parks. <p>Financial implications of the solution: The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Cash Fund and The Wildlife Cash Fund will not receive the excess funds. However, they receive 15% or 20% of the lottery fund, so they will still receive funding.</p>

Staff Feedback	<p>This proposal is more feasible than many of the tax-related concepts but still carries notable challenges. The Keep Colorado Wild Pass has only recently been implemented, and stakeholders are cautious about reopening the statute or reallocating funds. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and conservation groups will strongly defend the current allocations, arguing that any diversion of funds undermines the pass's original promise to voters and park users.</p> <p><u>Time Commitment:</u> Moderate. This would require negotiating directly with CPW, outdoor groups, and legislators to build consensus around adding a local-share component without destabilizing existing beneficiaries.</p>
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