



WESTERN RIVERS  
CONSERVANCY



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## Scenic Stretch of Michigan Creek in South Park Conserved and Will Open to the Public



*The property the partners conserved lies along a quarter mile of Michigan Creek.*

*Photo Credit: Christi Bode/Western Rivers Conservancy*

**PARK COUNTY, Colorado** (February 14)– On Colorado’s Front Range, just upstream from Tarryall Reservoir in South Park, Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Colorado Open Lands (COL) have protected a highly scenic stretch of Michigan Creek, a principal tributary of Tarryall Creek and the South Platte River. The property will become Michigan Creek State Wildlife Area, managed by CPW.

“Protecting our iconic great outdoors for future generations to enjoy is one of my administration’s top priorities,” said **Governor Jared Polis**. “Colorado is home to some of the best outdoor recreation in the nation, and I am thrilled to continue our state’s legacy to preserve land and protect our great outdoors. This new State Wildlife Area protects our natural resources while offering Colorado hunters and anglers more recreational opportunities,”

Two years in the making, the effort was brought to life in 2023 when Denver-based fly anglers and conservationists John and Jan Lacher purchased the property and donated it to WRC. In late 2024, WRC placed a conservation easement on it with COL, permanently conserving a crucial stretch of the creek and the property’s 120 acres of wildlife habitat. The final piece was set into place today when WRC conveyed the lands to CPW, securing public access to the property and a quarter mile of Michigan Creek.

“We wanted to see this special piece of land conserved and open for Coloradans to explore,” said **John Lacher**. “We’re thrilled to have worked with Western Rivers Conservancy to ensure the property will forever remain protected and undeveloped.”

This is the second property WRC and CPW have conserved in the South Platte Basin. In March 2024, the partners conserved five miles of the well-known trout stream Tarryall Creek by creating the Collard Ranch State Wildlife Area. Michigan Creek flows into Tarryall Creek just a few miles downstream of the new state wildlife area and is a small but productive fishing stream in its own right.

“Conserving such a scenic and healthy stretch of Michigan Creek in an area so many Coloradans treasure is something to celebrate,” said **Allen Law, WRC’s Interior West Project Manager**. “Western Rivers Conservancy is thrilled we could expand our efforts in the South Platte Basin to help fish and wildlife thrive and to create better access to South Park’s waterways and open spaces.”

The property lies along a stretch of Michigan Creek defined by dramatic outcroppings of granite that tower over the winding stream. Above these cliffs, grassy uplands provide forage for deer and elk migrating between the low mountains of the Lost Creek Wilderness to the east and the wintering grounds of South Park’s open grasslands.

“The donation of Michigan Creek State Wildlife Area is a win for conservation,” said **Mark Lamb, Area Wildlife Manager for CPW**. “We are grateful for partners like Western Rivers Conservancy and Colorado Open Lands in the continued effort to preserve habitat and increase public lands for hunting and fishing. We will work to try to have Michigan Creek SWA open to the public by the end of the year.”

Now that the property is in the hands of CPW, its valuable fish and wildlife habitat will remain intact and new public access will be opened for anglers, hunters and wildlife viewers. Much of Michigan Creek flows through private land, so moving this property into public hands will provide people the rare opportunity to explore a South Park gem just over an hour’s drive from Denver.

“Protecting this land means that Coloradans will be able to access excellent fishing for generations into the future, helping them connect to the outdoors and enjoy Colorado's natural beauty,” said **Kelsey Kirkwood, COL’s Conservation Project Associate**. “We are grateful for our partnerships with Western Rivers Conservancy and Colorado Parks and Wildlife which allow us to create robust and meaningful conservation outcomes for the good of all Coloradans.”

*Funding for this project was provided by the Park County Land and Water Trust Fund.*

**Western Rivers Conservancy**

Western Rivers Conservancy's motto is "Sometimes to save a river, you have to buy it." WRC purchases land along the West's finest rivers and streams to conserve habitat for fish and wildlife, protect key sources of cold water and create public access for all to enjoy. To ensure the lands it acquires are protected in perpetuity, WRC transfers them to long-term stewards including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state parks and Tribal nations. WRC has created sanctuaries for fish and wildlife and secured recreational access along 250 rivers and streams around the West. It has protected more than 440 river miles and over 220,000 acres of land in nine western states. Its approach to river conservation is effective, tangible and permanent. More information at [westernrivers.org](http://westernrivers.org).

### **Colorado Parks and Wildlife**

CPW is an enterprise agency, relying primarily on license sales, state parks fees and registration fees to support its operations, including: 43 state parks and more than 350 wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, management of fishing and hunting, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating and outdoor education. CPW's work contributes approximately \$6 billion in total economic impact annually throughout Colorado. To learn more, visit [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us).