

## Colorado State Trust Lands By the Numbers:

**435 K**

Total Landlocked  
State Acres

**18 K**

Federal Public Acres Landlocked  
by Closed State Lands

**558 K**

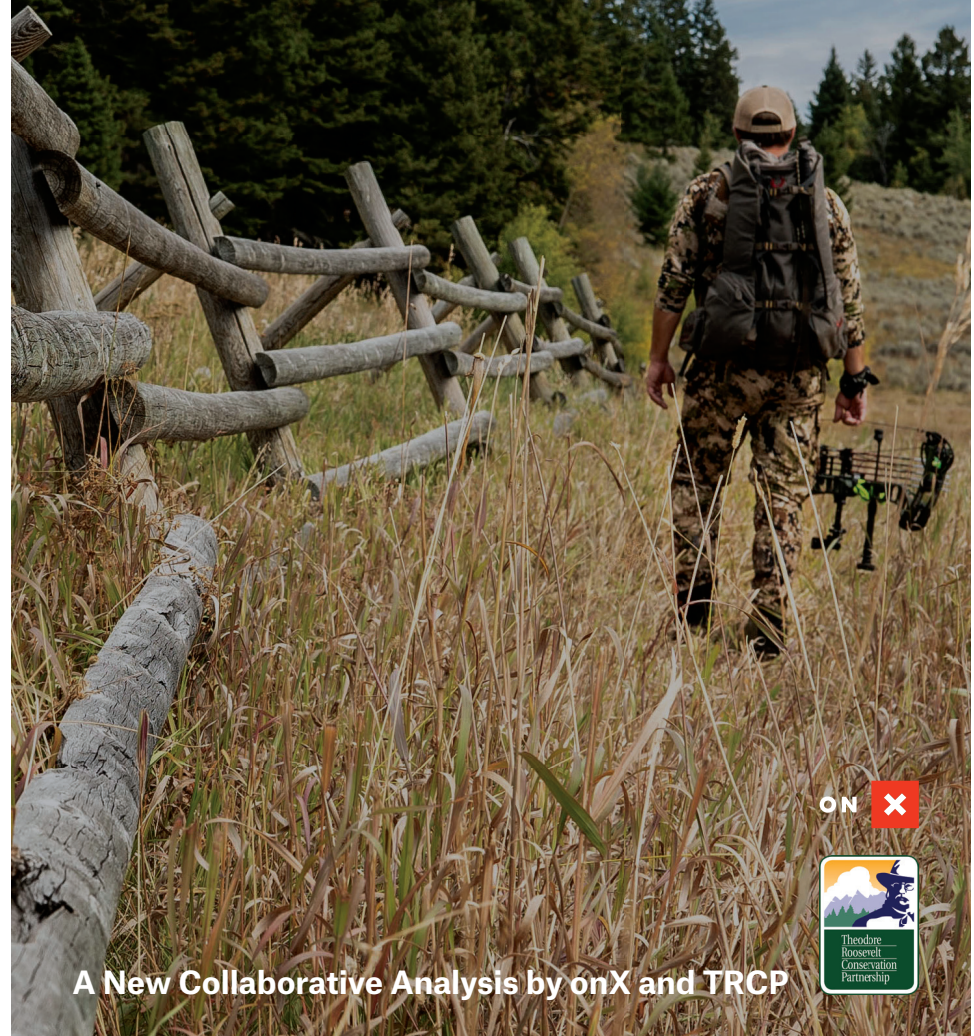
Accessible Acres  
Open to Sportsmen

**1.78 M**

Accessible Acres Closed  
to Recreation by the State

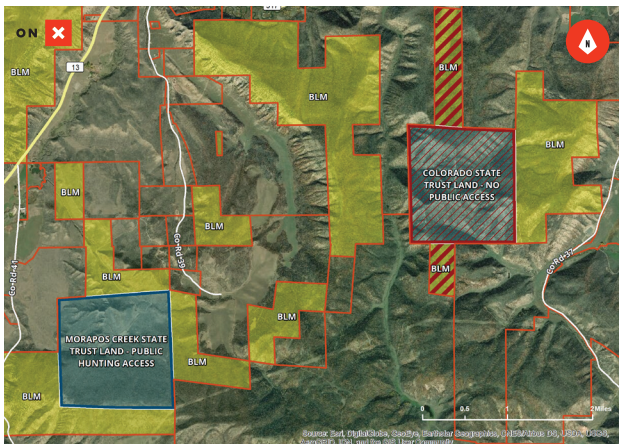
For more information contact:  
Jess McGlothlin, onX - [jess.mcglathlin@onxmaps.com](mailto:jess.mcglathlin@onxmaps.com)  
Joel Webster, TRCP - [jwebster@trcp.org](mailto:jwebster@trcp.org)  
Cover photo by Nick Venture of Become 1

# INACCESSIBLE STATE LANDS IN COLORADO.

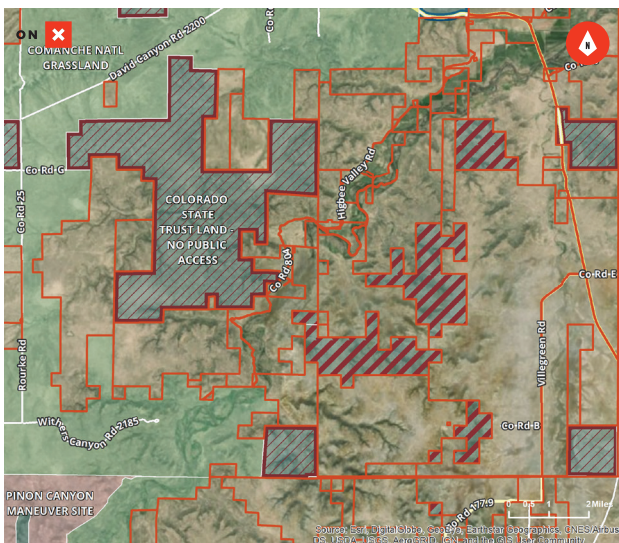


A New Collaborative Analysis by onX and TRCP









Colorado's state trust lands, some rendered inaccessible only by law and others also by surrounding private land holdings, could provide one of the single greatest public access success stories in the West today.



**Obstacles to Access:** State restrictions not only prevent hunters and anglers from accessing Colorado state lands directly, they sometimes prevent sportsmen and women from using adjacent federal public lands. While the parcel of state trust land enrolled in the CPW Public Access Program (left) offers the sole means of access to neighboring BLM lands, another nearby unenrolled parcel of state trust land (right) blocks recreationists from crossing onto two tracts of BLM public lands that would otherwise be open and available to the public.



**Untapped Potential:** While some Colorado state trust lands are open to hunting, most are rendered inaccessible by state policy. Some are also landlocked by surrounding private land holdings. Among those parcels shown here, located south of the Arkansas River in Otero County, more than 11,000 otherwise accessible acres are off-limits to the public and nearly 3,800 additional acres also closed by state rules cannot be reached without the permission of an adjacent landowner.

-  Landlocked State Trust Lands - No Public Access
-  Landlocked BLM
-  State Trust Lands - Public Hunting Access
-  Dept. of Defense
-  State Trust Lands - No Public Access
-  BLM
-  USFS
-  Private

## Public land access is the engine that drives an outdoor recreation economy worth more than \$887 billion in consumer spending, \$62.5 billion in Colorado alone.

While public lands and outdoor recreation often call to mind those places managed by federal agencies, such as the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management, state trust lands and state forests across the West offer some of our nation's finest hunting and fishing opportunities. But these lands are managed differently than federal lands as they are obligated to generate revenue, traditionally from activities like energy development, timber harvest, and grazing. And because these lands were originally granted to the states according to the where they fell in the cadastral grid, their locations on the ground often render them physically inaccessible to the public without the permission of a private landowner.

While this unique history has presented obstacles to management for the increasingly valuable purpose of recreation, *with the exception of Colorado, every state in the Mountain West with trust lands has opened their vast holdings to the public for recreation.* To achieve open-access policies while meeting their fiduciary responsibilities, many states have developed innovative programs that generate revenue from non-exclusive public recreation.

Colorado stands apart from other states when it comes to access to its trust lands. In cooperation with other state agencies, the State Land Board has made

a commendable effort to improve this situation by leasing 558k acres of state lands for sportsmen's access, and more can be done to open these lands to the public. State policy currently does not allow the public to use or cross 2.2 million acres of trust lands for any activity, including hunting and fishing. This further prevents sportsmen and women from reaching another 18,000 acres of federal public lands that would otherwise be accessible if Colorado's state trust lands were open to the public. What's more, 435,000 acres of trust lands across the state sit surrounded on all sides by private property and – unless steps were taken to establish access – still could not be entered without the permission of adjacent landowners even if these lands were opened for recreation by the state.

Colorado has perhaps the single greatest opportunity right now in the West to expand public access to outdoor recreation, and doing so could help the state fulfill its trust obligations. By looking to neighboring states for ideas, it could begin by opening the 1.78 million acres of trust lands that are accessible but closed to activities like hunting and fishing, and continue this work by establishing new access to landlocked trust lands. In accomplishing this, Colorado would create new possibilities for outstanding outdoor recreation and unleash the full potential of its economy.