

Appendix E. Public input on draft Lathrop State Park Management Plan

The draft management plan was released via CPW's website on April 19, 2021. A public comment period from April 18 - May 18, 2021 included an online comment form and a Facebook Live Q&A session on May 11, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The comment period was advertised via the website, a press release and social media.

The Q&A had several hundred views including a few people participating with questions a comments during the live session. Fourteen responses were received via the comment form.

Screenshot of Lathrop State Park's website during the comment period:

The screenshot shows the Colorado Parks & Wildlife website for Lathrop State Park. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a "DONATE" button, links for "Calendar", "FAQs", "Contact Us", and accessibility icons, along with a search bar. Below this is the "COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE" header and a secondary navigation bar with "Things To Do", "Learn", "Places To Go", "About Us", and "Buy & Apply". The breadcrumb trail reads "Colorado Parks and Wildlife > Places To Go > Parks > Lathrop".

The main content area is titled "Lathrop" and features a large image of a lake with mountains in the background. To the right of the image is a weather widget showing "Current Weather" as "Dark Sky" with a temperature of "71° and rising" and "Clear" conditions with a wind speed of "4 mph (E)".

On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with links for: Camping, Fees, Jobs, Local Attractions, Maps and Directions, Nature, Park Activities, Park Conditions, Park Facilities, Publications, Trails, Volunteer Now, and History. Below the menu, the "Park Office" information is listed: "70 County Road 502, Walsenburg, CO, 81089". "Park Hours" are listed as "5AM - 10PM, Fishing From Shoreline Or From Hand Launched Boats On Lake 24 Hours A Day." "Office Hours" are listed as "Visitor Center Lobby Hours: Sunday - Thursday 8 Am - 5 Pm / Saturday - Sunday 8 Am -".

A prominent call to action box titled "Input Needed - Lathrop Management Plan" is displayed. It includes a "Deadline: All comments are due by May 18." and asks users to "Please review the draft Lathrop State Park Management Plan and submit your comments online by the deadline." Below this, it says "Thank you for taking time to comment. Your opinion is important to us."

At the bottom of the page, a paragraph states: "Colorado's first state park, Lathrop State Park, is 1,594 acres of recreational enjoyment nestled in the shadow of the Spanish Peaks in Southern Colorado."

Comment Form (available via Google Forms)

Lathrop State Park DRAFT Management Plan

Thank you for taking time to comment. Your opinion is important to us.

* Required

1. Natural Resources: Taking care of Lathrop's natural resources is a high priority as seen in Chapter 4 where a majority of the park land is zoned "natural" or "protected". Chapter 5 discusses how these areas and resources will be protected in to the future. Do you have other ideas or priorities CPW should consider in regards to the park's wildlife, plants, water and other natural resources?

2. Visitor Experience: How much of a priority should the following projects listed in the plan be for staff at Lathrop State Park? (Please select one response per row.)

Mark only one oval per row.

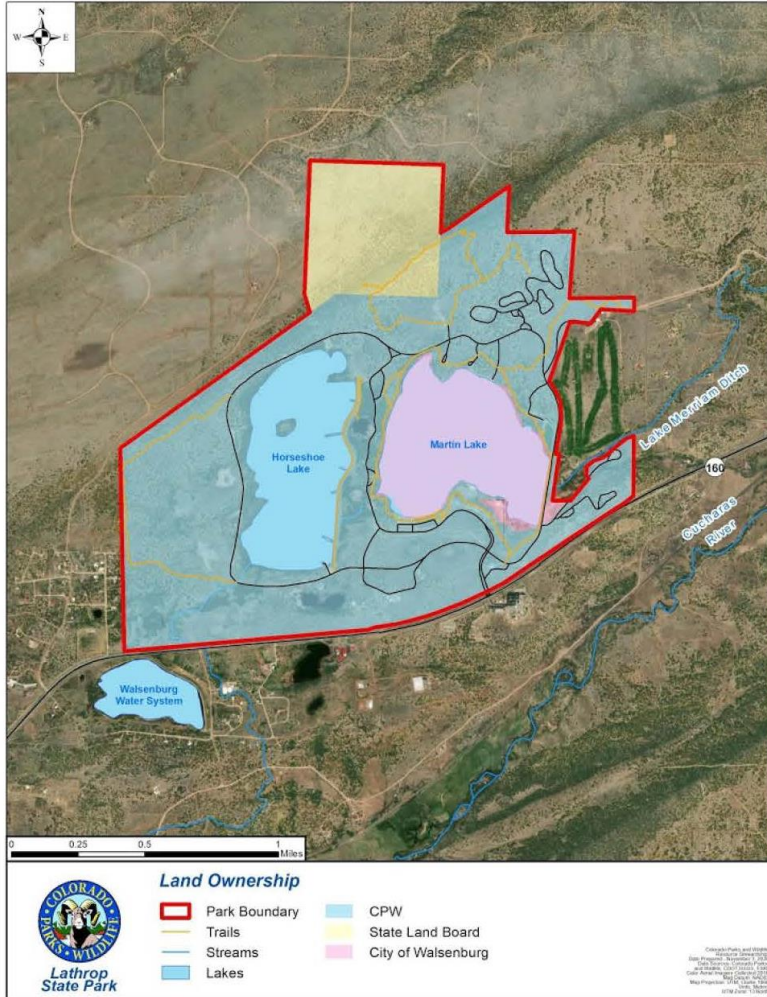
	Not a priority	Somewhat of a priority	Moderate priority	High priority
Upgrade/maintain the Youth Fishing Pond	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Redesign the Visitor Center Parking Lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modify the bike/horse trail to emphasize watchable wildlife opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Redesign West Beach (improve and locate parking, picnic and nonmotorized boat amenities away from popular fishing areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintain "natural character" of the undeveloped areas of the park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Yucca Campground is currently non-electric and located near the highway. To reduce noise for nonelectric and tent campers as well as improve this campground overall, which of the following potential projects do you consider priorities for improving camping opportunities at Lathrop? (Please select one response per row.)

Mark only one oval per row.

	Not a priority	Somewhat of a priority	Moderate priority	High priority
Convert Yucca Campground into an electric campground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Add new nonelectric camping sites elsewhere in the park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Add dishwashing station, replace vault toilets and add a shower building to Yucca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. CPW leases a 160-acre parcel from the State Land Board (yellow in the map below). The northern boundary of the park will be marked and fenced with no drive-in access. The park is considering extending the hogback trail to allow visitors to hike further into this parcel. What other ideas do you have for recreation opportunities in this area of the park?



5. Please indicate whether you disagree or agree with the following statements about the draft management plan. (Please select one response per row.) *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is clear to me what CPW may do at Lathrop State Park in the coming years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the long-term management approach to balance resource protection and provide quality visitor experiences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe the plan appropriately supports CPW and Park Goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Please provide any additional comments you have on the draft management plan.

7. Where is your primary residence? (Please select one.) *

Check all that apply.

- Walsenburg/La Veta
 Pueblo
 Trinidad
 Colorado Springs
 Denver/Boulder Metro Area

Other: _____

8. What activities do you enjoy at Lathrop State Park? (Please check all that apply.)

Check all that apply.

- Camping (nonelectric)
 Camping (electric)
 Boating (nonmotorized)
 Boating (motorized)
 Walking/hiking
 Fishing
 Watching wildlife
 Picnicking
 Other trail use (bike, horse)
 Swimming

Other: _____

9. Approximately how often do you visit Lathrop State Park? (Please select one.)

Mark only one oval.

- Once a week
 Once a month
 Once every few months
 Once a year
 Once every few years

Results and Management Implications

The input received via the comment form is greatly appreciated. The comments were very positive and supportive of CPW, Lathrop State Park and the draft management plan. A change to the final management plan as a result of this input is to clarify the intent of fencing the State Land Board parcel and that “wildlife friendly fencing” will be used to not limit wildlife movement between the park and surrounding habitat (see Q4 below).

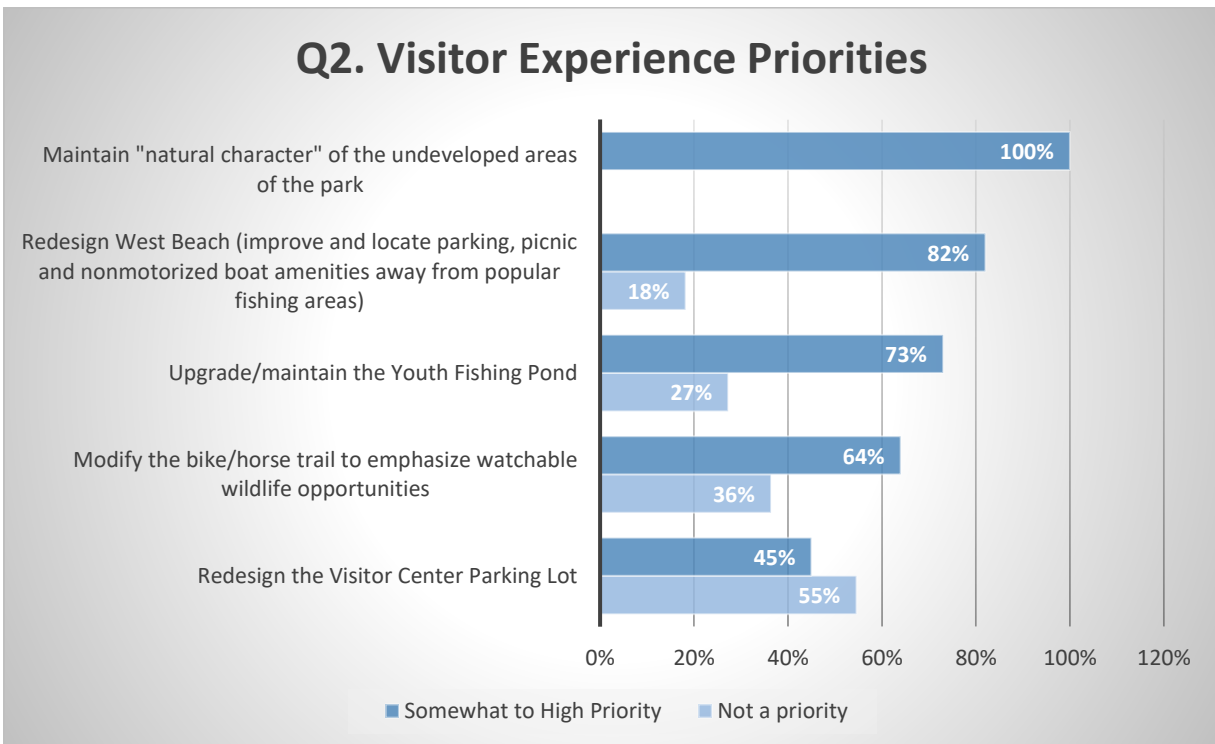
Q1. Natural Resources

One person submitted the following comment:

- *Keep duck and geese hunting during season to where we are today.*

Q2. Priorities for visitor experiences

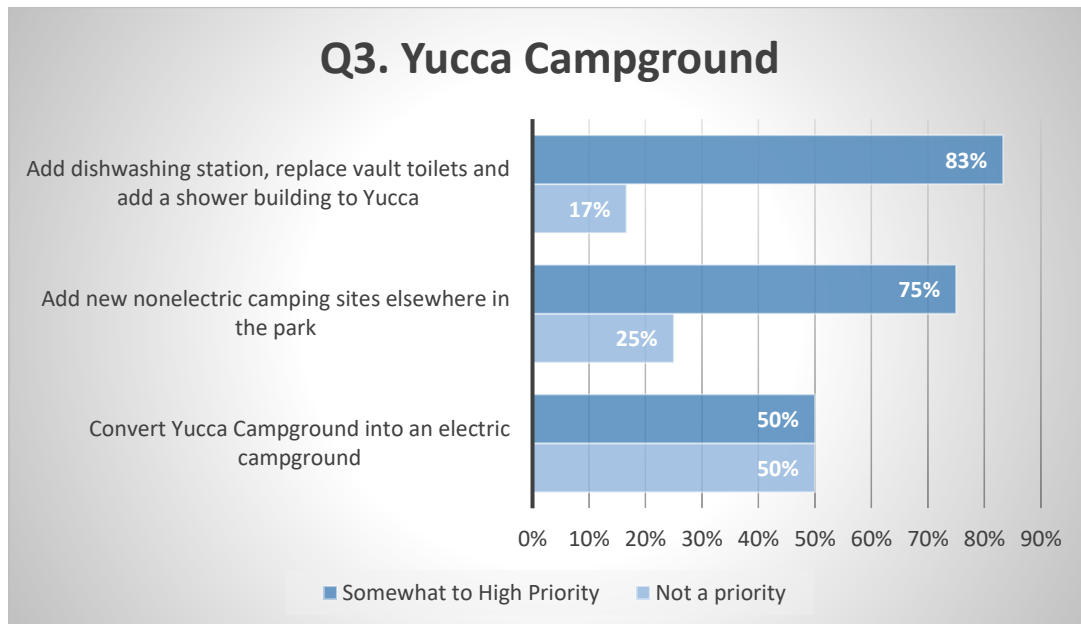
Eleven responses were received for each option except “maintain natural character” which had 12 responses.



- All 12 respondents selected moderate or high priority for maintain natural character. Of those, a third selected “high priority” for this option only.
- A majority of respondents said that all options were a priority to some degree except for “redesigning the visitor center lot”.

Q3. Yucca and nonelectric camping options

Twelve responses were received for all options.



- A majority of respondents indicated all options are a priority to some degree with improvements to Yucca and adding nonelectric sites elsewhere in the park overwhelmingly supported by respondents. There is also some support for converting Yucca to an electric campground.

Q4. Ideas for recreation opportunities for the SLB parcel

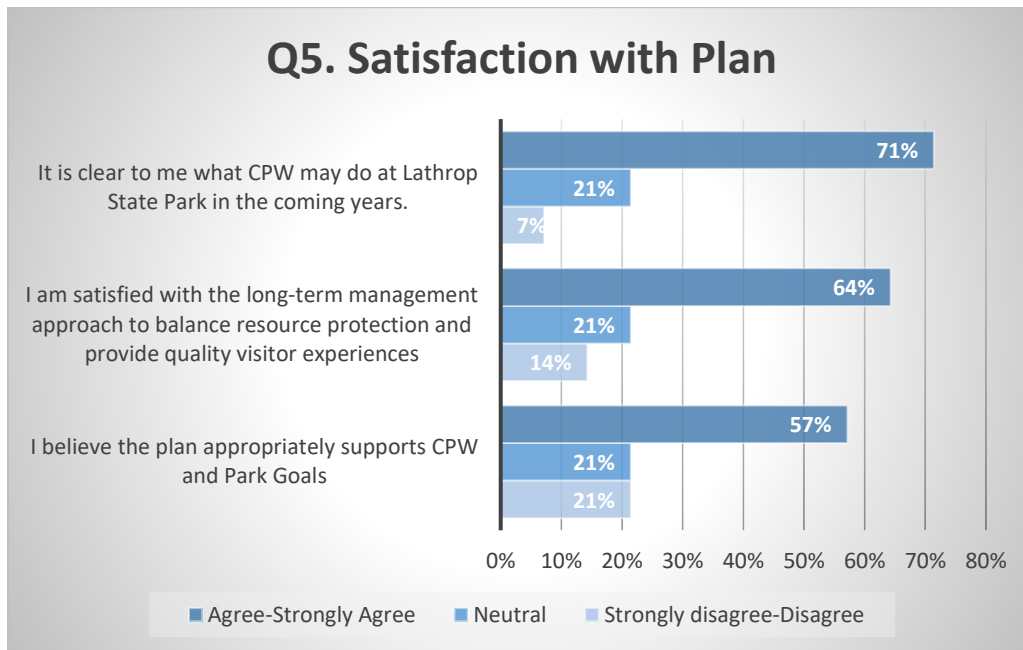
Five respondents provided thoughts and questions about this portion of the park. Most agreed that a trail allowing additional access from the hogback is a good idea. However, three people raised concerns about the impact of a fence to the wildlife and their movements. One person living on the north side of the park would like to have walk-in access for residents. One person expressed a strong desire for CPW to “do nothing” including no trail or fence.

CPW response:

- We appreciate the concerns raised over fragmenting habitat for wildlife. For this project, as with all of our fencing needs, we use “wildlife-friendly fencing” to ensure large and small mammals can maintain movement corridors and access to year-round habitat and resources. This is clarified in the final report. For more information please see:
<https://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/LandWater/PrivateLandPrograms/FencingWithWildlifeInMind.pdf>
- CPW and SLB are concerned about allowing walk-in access from a remote section of the park. While it is close to some neighbors, it is not easily accessible for limited staff patrolling to park to ensure there are no fire and safety risks nor the development of unmanaged/social trails.

Q5. Overall response to draft plan.

All 14 respondents submitted answers to all options in this question.

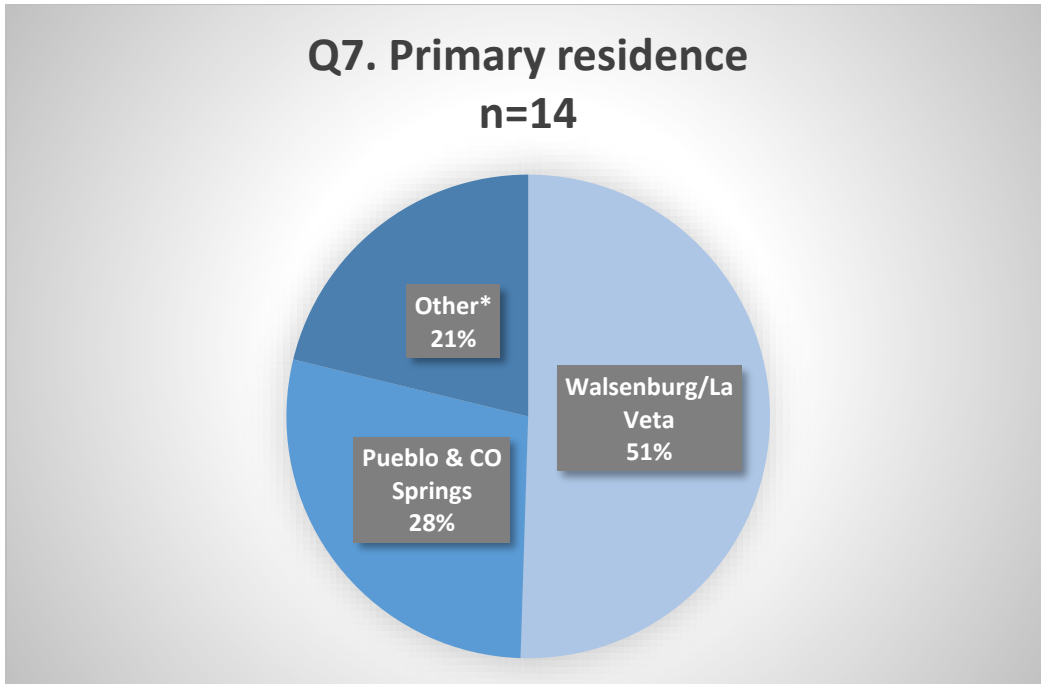


- A majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all statements indicating high satisfaction with the management plan.

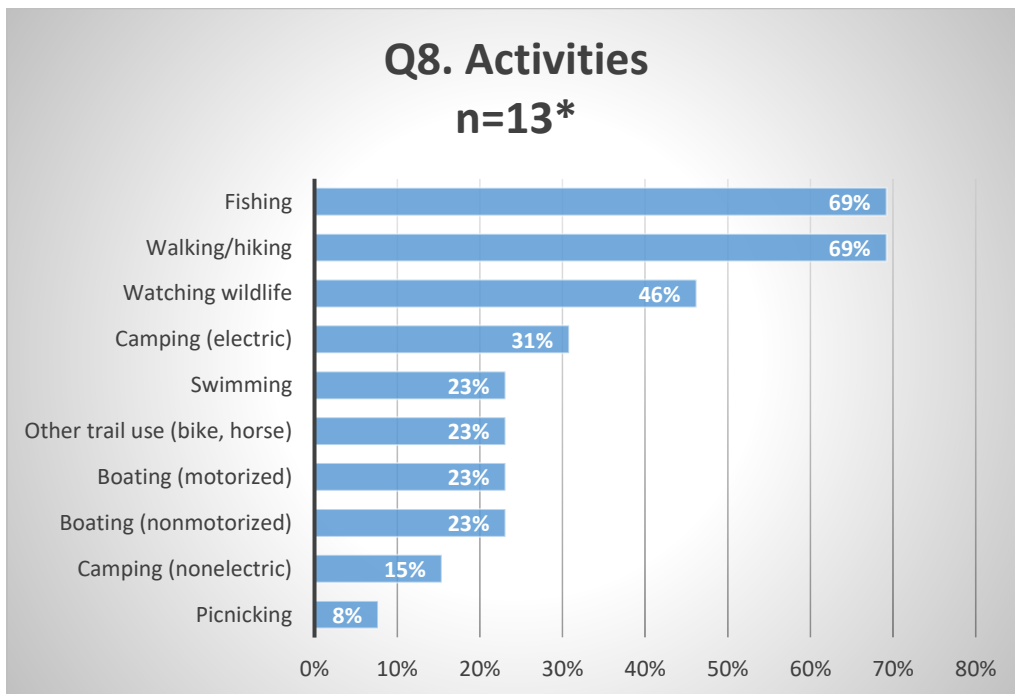
Q6. Additional comments

- More bridge style piers for fishing further from the shore.
- I am a huge fan of Lathrop State Park. It is one of the few places in the La Veta/Walsenburg area that allows public access to the natural beauty that surrounds us here. I don't always personally agree with the "improvements" to the park, for example, the completion of the concrete trail around Martin Lake. To my thinking, it erased some of the natural charm of the walk, the feeling of the ground under your feet as you strolled through the woods. However, the trail now is accessible to those in wheelchairs, to elderly using walkers, and to bicyclists who can enjoy it as well as those on foot. I understand that the park's access must serve the entire community. That community must include all residents, regardless of their species. After all, our intrinsic yearning to connect with our fellow creatures drives both the interest in and economy of all of our state parks.

Q7-Q9. Information about respondents



** Other: Denver metro, Rye, Denver but building a house in Walsenburg*



** Respondents could check all that apply*

Q9. Frequency of visits n=13

