# CASTLEWOOD CANYON STATE PARK

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

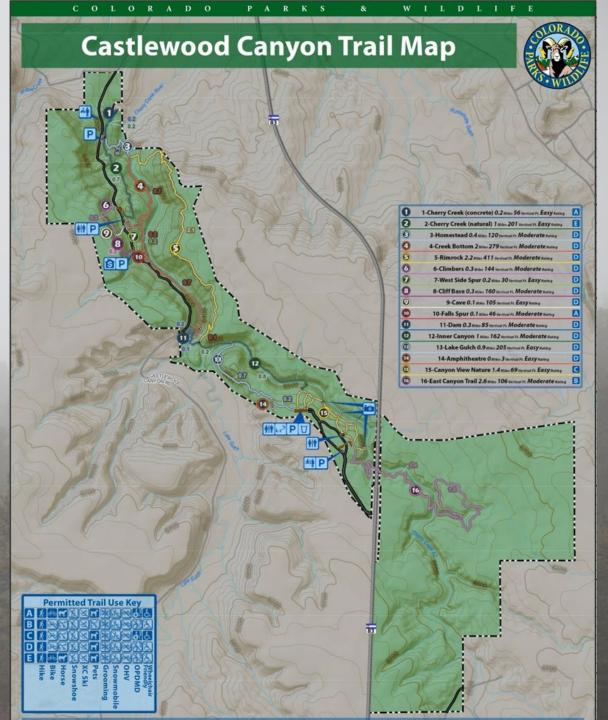
# Park Overview:

#### Acquired in 1979

- 2,628 acres: 500 owned by State Land Board, the rest by CPW
- Human presence for 5,000 years in rock shelters; recent historical sites include the Castlewood Dam (1890-1933), and the Kleinert Homestead (est 1893, Douglas County Historical Landmark)
- Designated Colorado Natural Area, Leave No Trace Gold
   Standard Site, internationally recognized birding area

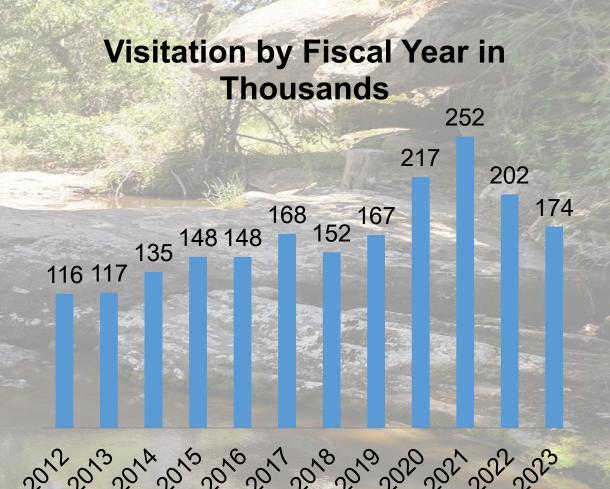
# Park Overview

- Day Use Only
- 12.9 miles of trail draw 85% of park visitors
  - Visitor Center, 3 event facilities, amphitheater and a canyon overlook
  - Rock climbing is also a significant draw
- Thriving wildlife communities include nesting raptors, turkey vultures, deer, elk and the northern leopard frog (a State listed species). The park also has considerable Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse habitat (Federally listed as threatened).
  - Seasonal area closures
- Law enforcement:
  - Calls for service are 95% search and rescue
  - Critical incidents



# Park Overview

- Operating budget of \$205k
- Staffing:
  - 4 FTE: 2 Rangers, Park Resource Tech (most recent addition in 2008), and Park Manager
  - 6-8 TWP
- 204 volunteers, 7,497 Hours in 2023
- Friends of Castlewood Canyon
  - 501(c)(3)Active in fundraising for projects, political support
- Education programs:
  - 4,500 K-12 students on Naturalist Guided Hikes in 2019
  - Went to zero during pandemic, and has not recovered well due to teacher and bus driver shortages



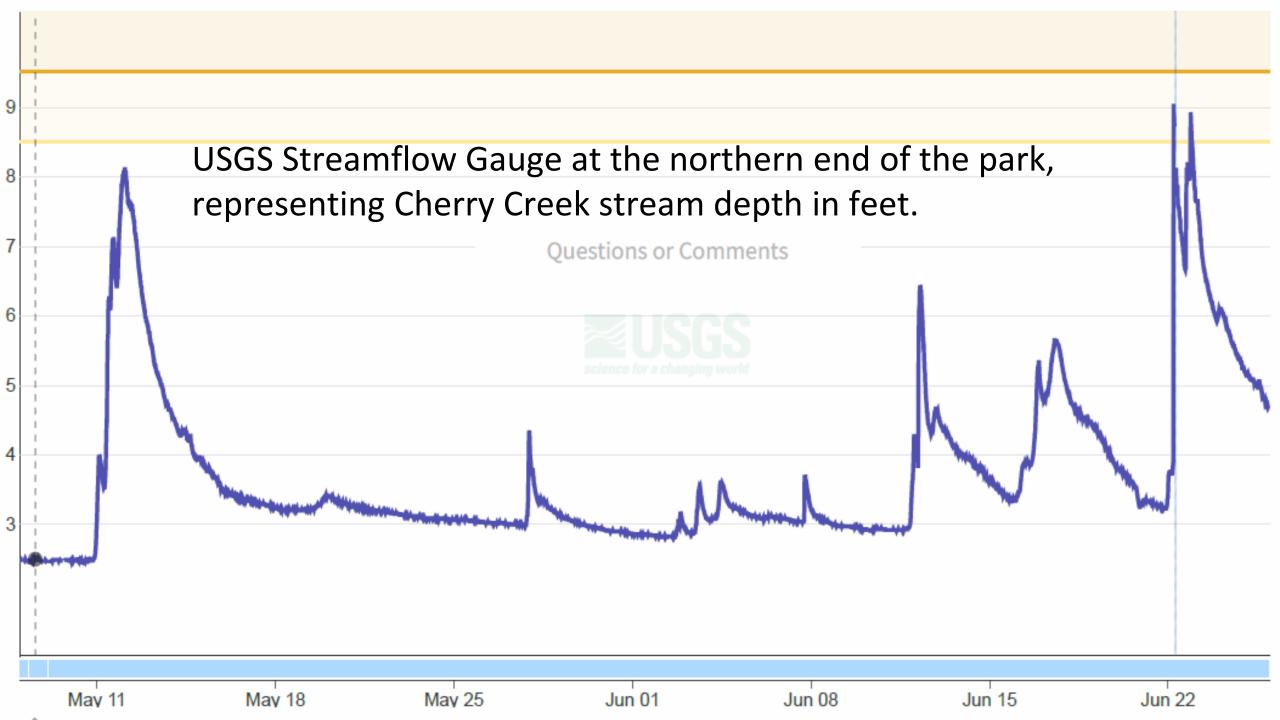


# In 2023 we were expecting more of this...

# ...but instead we got this

 2023 had our area's 3<sup>rd</sup> highest precipitation on record at 24.9"

- Behind 1965 at 30.4", and 1897 at 27.3"
- Average is 17.05"
- Rainfall was most concentrated in May and June, our busiest months
- Flooding, wet days and muddy trail conditions



## 2023 Floods at Castlewood Canyon:

 May 12<sup>th</sup> flood took out our Dam Bridge

Staff replaced this bridge in about a week
June 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> floods took out all 4 bridges in the park
Largely shut down our trail system
Also caused extensive trail

damage with repairs ongoing

#### **Castlewood Canyon Trail Map**

#### Homestead Bridge

Dam Bridge

Rock creek crossing (site of new construction)

Inner Canyon Bridge 2-Cherry Creek (natural) 1 ann. 201 Insmuth. Easynong
 3-Homesteed 0.4 ann. 120mmuth. Moderate sung
 4-Creek Bottom 2 ann. 279 Insmuth. Moderate sung
 5-Rimrock 2.2 ann. 411 Insmuth. Moderate sung
 6-Climbers 0.3 ann. 144 unsmuth. Moderate sung
 6-Climbers 0.3 ann. 144 unsmuth. Moderate sung
 7-West Side Spur 0.2 ann. 30 insmuth. Easynong
 8-Cliff Base 0.3 Insm. 160 insmuth. Moderate sung
 10-Falls Spur 0.1 ann. 46 insmuth. Moderate sung
 11-Dam 0.3 ann. 45 insmuth. Moderate sung
 11-Jane Guide 0.1 Main. 46 insmuth. Moderate sung
 11-Jane Guide 0.1 Main. 46 insmuth. Moderate sung
 11-Jane Guide 0.9 insmuth. Moderate sung
 13-Lake Guide 0.9 insm. 205 insmuth. Easynong
 14-Amphitheatre 0 min. 3 insmuth. Easynong
 16-East Canyon Tiall 2.5 insmuth. Moderate sung

Cherry Creek (concrete) 0.2 min 56 ve

Permitted Trail Use Key

East Canyon Bridge

## Inner Canyon Bridge

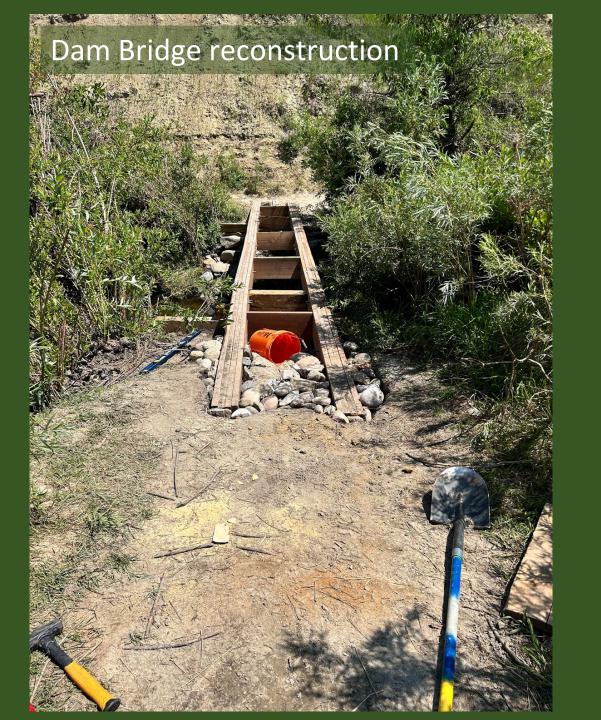






## Dam Bridge

 Carried .5 miles downstream and destroyed





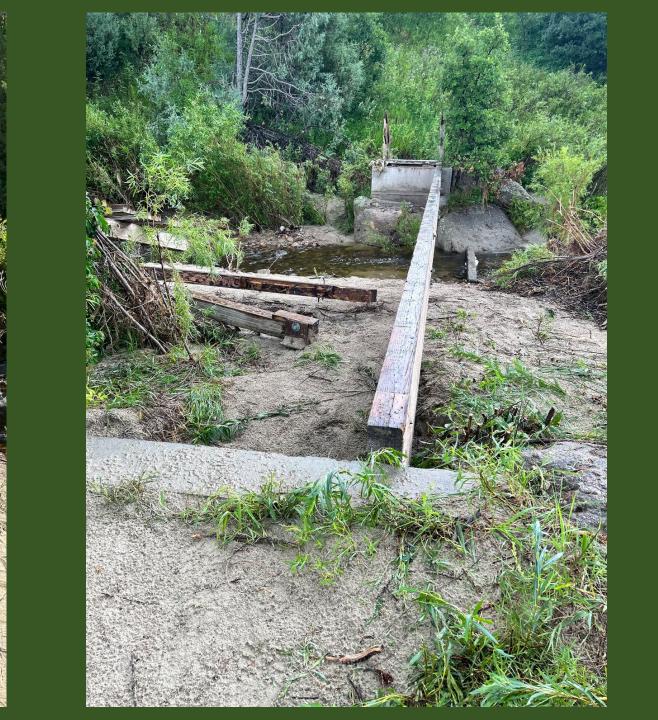
### Homestead Bridge

The states

Load-bearing portion is 3' thick of 2x4s
Had to be disassembled and reassembled in place
Done with the assistance of the Mile High Youth Corps

## Homestead Bridge disassembly and reassembly

the st





- Repairing, replacing, and refabricating our bridges was done in 5 weeks, entirely by hand, and with no additional resources than what were already planned for the summer.
- Kudos to Jordan Boge, Park Resource Technician, and to Michelle O'Lichney, Josh Lester (TiSP), Michael Boden, and Max Dubois (TiSP).
- We would also not have been able to complete the Homestead Bridge without the Mile High Youth Corps.



Additional projects completed in 2023:

- Installation of 3 new CXT vault restrooms
- Completion and immediate use of a resident volunteer full-hookup campsite
- Connection of our Homestead Parking Lot to the Cherry Creek Regional Trail, making Castlewood accessible all the way from downtown Denver (about 42 miles).



Installation of abutments for 85 ft. pedestrian bridge at our most popular trail junction. Completion is pending, and it will be above the 100 year floodplain.

## The future at Castlewood:

 We would like add a Community Engagement Specialist FTE to our staff. This position would be responsible for public education, outreach, and recruitment, training, and managing of our park volunteers.

 We are in the early concept development phase of a Education Center that will house up to 60 students out of the elements for education and interpretation.
 Our Friends group has already raised \$150k for this project

## Also coming in 2024 will be the Castlewood Canyon State Park Management Plan...

# Questions?

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