

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Board Policy A-102

SUBJECT: PARK MANAGEMENT PLANNING

AUTHORITY: The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation currently is not required by statute to develop park management plans. The Parks Board, however, believes that a strong park management plan serves as an important planning and budgeting tool for park managers and for use in agency-wide decisions.

DATE APPROVED: July 31, 2009

REVIEW DATES:

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I. PURPOSE

The *Colorado State Parks Management Plan Template* (Template) and the supplemental *Management Planning Instruction Guide* (Instruction Guide) were developed to ensure Division-wide consistency in park management plan content, style, and format. Using the Template and Instruction Guide as a point of reference, each management plan will describe the existing conditions of park resources, park enhancement opportunities, and the steps necessary to ensure the long-term protection and enjoyment of the unique resources at each park. Each park management plan will serve as an “overarching management guide” for each park by outlining management priorities and specific management direction. Perhaps more importantly, future park leadership and staff can refer to the management plan to readily “get up to speed” on park operations, needs, and issues. Other important aspects of the plan are that it:

- Serves as a point of reference and policy document for current and future Park staff, other partnering agencies, elected officials, and interested members of the public.
- Establishes accepted park management “zones” to guide future use and development
- Guides management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Provides a framework for monitoring and maintaining resources at a park.

- Identifies park enhancement opportunities including possible facility upgrades, new park facilities, restoration and rehabilitation projects, and important management initiatives.
- Serves as a guide for future park budget allocations and annual funding requests.

Because of the comprehensive nature of park management plans, it is expected that these be developed as part of a collaborative planning effort involving key Region, Park, Program and Section staff.

II. POLICY

Park Management Plans will be developed based on the approved planning framework reflected in the *Colorado State Parks Management Plan Template* (Template). Each park management plan will be the product of a collaborative effort involving key Region, Field, and Program and Section staff that will comprise a “Planning Team.” Possible Planning Team members include:

- Park staff
- Planning staff
- Assistant region manager or designee
- Natural resource stewardship/GIS staff
- Capital development staff

Each Plan should be reviewed annually with formal updates occurring every 10 years (pending available staffing and financial resources), with a detailed review occurring at the 5-yr mark to address possible amendments. Examples of when formal amendments to the plan may be necessary are listed below.

- There are changes to the land base (e.g., additional lands are purchased or portions of the park are sold off)
- Major new facilities or infrastructure are planned for the park
- A policy or directive is instituted that significantly affects park management direction
- Major changes to land use occur within or adjacent to the park
- Changes to the management zoning
- Significant environmental stress (i.e., fish kill, drought, etc.)

Relevant members of the management planning team should assist with any plan amendment as needed. Depending on the scope of the amendment, some staff will play more or less of a role in the amendment process. Staff members likely to be included in this process are the park manager, region manager or designee, GIS/natural resource stewardship staff, planning staff, and development staff. Depending on the scale, cost, or significance of a plan amendment, approval by the Parks Board may be warranted.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- A. Each park is unique and has different needs. Therefore, it is expected that members of each Planning Team use the Template as a point of reference and incorporate those sections that are most applicable to each park.
- B. Each park management plan will be developed based on a 10-year planning horizon.
- C. Most park management plans can be developed entirely by State Parks staff. However, consultants may be needed to assist with a particular element of a management plan (e.g., financial assessments, cultural resources, or public involvement) or, in some instances, development of the entire management plan (particularly for those parks with complex land ownership arrangements or those requiring NEPA compliance).
- D. Determination of the appropriate budget for each park management plan will likely vary by park and will depend on a variety of factors (e.g., whether the plan will be completed in-house or whether professional consultants are needed, level of public involvement necessary, and area of the state which the park is situated). The budget should be determined based on discussions between park managers, region staff, and planning staff prior to the outset of the planning process.
- E. Public input is an important part of the management planning process.

Policy No. A-102 is approved this 18th day of September, 2009.

By _____


Parks Board Chairperson

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