Welcome to the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), one of the nation’s most popular recreational areas. The Arkansas flows through the Upper Arkansas River Valley as well as abundant opportunities for camping, wildlife viewing, rafting, hiking, mountain biking, and OHV travel.

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area is a landmark cooperative effort between Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service. Through this partnership, the three agencies pooled their resources with outstanding recreation and public service programs to preserve the nationally significant Upper Arkansas River Valley.

The Arkansas flows 450 miles from its source in the Roaring Fork to the confluence with the Lake Fork to Pueblo as a Gold Medal Trout Fishery. Public fishing access is available on public lands and other state, federal and local entities. Most sections of the river can be accessed from the Arkansas Valley Recreation Area and local public facilities.

The Arkansas is one of the world’s most popular rivers for whitewater recreation. It is noted as a world-class fishery and provides an outstanding opportunity for local river residents and visitors to test their skills at rafting and canoeing. A variety of fish, including brown and rainbow, average 12 to 14 inches with the possibility of an occasional trophy catch. An estimated 50,000 anglers enjoy the Upper Arkansas River each year.

Fishing

Whitewater Recreation

From the peaks to the plains, the Arkansas is the state’s most powerful influence, shaping lives and landscapes...

Whitewater Boating

The Arkansas River flows through the Upper Arkansas River Valley as well as abundant opportunities for camping, wildlife viewing, rafting, hiking, mountain biking, and OHV travel.

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) includes 605,700 acres of National Forest land, BLM and state parks. The Laramie Valley is a treasure trove of recreational opportunities and offers world-class fishing, recreational boating experiences, waterfowl, big game and a wealth of wildlife opportunities. The Arkansas River is unique in that many of the sections offer boating opportunities for the entire family.

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Success Story

Located within a three-hour drive of Colorado Springs, Denver and other Front Range cities, the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area is a “backyard” to millions of Colorado residents. In addition, international and national recognition of the area’s outstanding resources and recreation opportunities has fostered a growth in tourism that is of equal benefit to local governments, private organizations and individuals throughout the recreation area. This growth has enabled the Upper Arkansas River Valley to become a part of Colorado’s secondlargest recreation area. This growth has enabled the Upper Arkansas River Valley to become a part of Colorado’s second-largest recreation area.

The Upper Arkansas River Valley is home to an abundance of wildlife, including black bears, elk, bobcats, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and mountain lions. The river is also home to a variety of fish, including brown and rainbow trout. The Arkansas River Valley is noted as a world-class fishery and provides an outstanding opportunity for local river residents and visitors to test their skills at rafting and canoeing. A variety of fish, including brown and rainbow, average 12 to 14 inches with the possibility of an occasional trophy catch. An estimated 50,000 anglers enjoy the Upper Arkansas River each year.

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Welcome to the Upper Arkansas River Valley, famous for its 14ers, whitewater, wilderness and wildlife. The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area offers many fun and exciting activities. Please:

- know your skill level
- be aware of risks involved in an activity
- be familiar with safety practices
- equip yourself properly

Visitor Etiquette

Hundreds of thousands of visitors boat on the river each year, and close to a million people enjoy the recreation area. Courtesy and respect for others will make everyone's experience more enjoyable. You can minimize your impact and help us protect this valuable resource by observing the following guidelines:

- respect private property and don't trespass
- keep noise down
- if you are boating, travel on opposite side of the river from anglers and avoid fishing holes
- learn and practice Leave No Trace backcountry ethics, including pack it in/pack it out
- use existing restroom facilities, or a portable toilet (groover), required by regulation
- stop only at well-established, well-used sites and avoid trampling streamside vegetation
- build fires only in grills and fire pans, required by regulation

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Visitor Center

- Annual passes, regulations, and guide books are available at the AHRA Visitor Center.
- The AHRA Visitor Center is located on the corner of G Street and Sackett Avenue in downtown Salida, one block North of Highway 291.

Access for the Physically Challenged

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area has fully accessible restroom facilities and at least one fully accessible campsite at each developed campground, except for Salida East, Point Barr and Valleymore (both on the river to itself access). Select river access sites have fully accessible restroom facilities, complete with accessible parking spots. Please call 719-539-7289 or visit www.reserveamerica.com for more information.