

Roxborough State Park interpretive master plan



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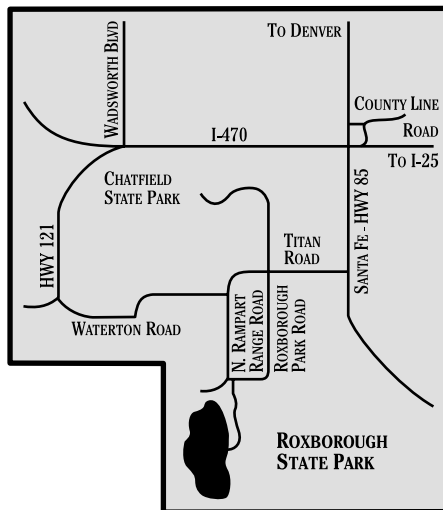
Part I: introduction



introduction

A. Site Description

Roxborough State Park is a 3,299-acre, day-use Colorado Natural Area located on the edge of the foothills 25 miles southwest of Denver. Roxborough is a geologically significant site with more than 1.3 billion years of geologic time represented in elegant sandstone spires and steep, colorful hogbacks. Because of its unusual landscape and location at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, Roxborough comprises a unique patchwork of ecosystems that provide habitat for a great diversity of animals.



Roxborough State Park Location Map

B. History and Purpose of the Park

In 1975, Colorado State Parks purchased 500 acres of Roxborough property, forming Roxborough State Park. In 1979, Roxborough received State Natural Area status. In 1980 the park became a registered National Natural Landmark. Roxborough was designated as a National Archaeological District in 1983. By 1984, Roxborough expanded to 1,499 acres. On May 15, 1987, Roxborough State Park opened to the public. Since opening to the public, Roxborough has grown to its current size of 3,299 acres. It is through the efforts of citizens and partnering agencies that Roxborough has been able to grow in size and visitation, while being maintained as a spectacular natural area.

1. Park Purpose

A Colorado State Park is defined as “an area having outstanding scenic and natural qualities containing significant archaeological, ecological, geological, and other scientific values so as to make imperative the preservation of the area by the Division for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of Colorado residents and visitors.” Specifically, Roxborough State Park exists to protect the unique scenic and scientific values of the park and to provide opportunities for recreation and education for park visitors in the Front Range foothills area.

2. Roxborough Management Goals (revised from *Park Management Plan, 1986*)

Roxborough State Park will be managed and maintained to insure the conservation and protection of its outstanding natural, cultural, and scenic resources.

Roxborough will foster environmental stewardship among citizens and visitors to the park by developing awareness and understanding of Roxborough’s natural and cultural resources through a variety of interpretive media.

Continual monitoring of park resources will document the condition of Roxborough and serve as an indicator of environmental change.

Establishing a strong support system of volunteers, friends, agency partnerships, and compassionate visitors will help maintain and conserve the unique character of Roxborough.

3. Roxborough’s Special Designations

Roxborough’s unique geology, “more picturesque sandstone than any other Front Range locality,” (Hayden, 1873) provides a striking canvas on which nature has painted a great diversity of ecosystems and plant communities. This array of vegetation and landscapes provides rich habitat for wildlife. The combination of geologic significance and ecosystem richness has earned Roxborough State Park National Natural Landmark and Colorado Natural Area status. Due to the high number of archaeological sites and a designation as a State Historic site,

Roxborough has a National Cultural District designation. Finally, because Roxborough is largely “maintained in its natural state” it has been identified as a “Core Reserve within the Chatfield Basin...a backbone of the [Chatfield Basin] regional reserve system.” (CBRN Plan, 1998)

4. *Roxborough's Works in Progress*

Currently, Roxborough staff, volunteers, and outside consultants are working on multiple resource inventories, a management plan update, visitor studies, noxious weed and prairie dog management prescriptions, a weed management plan, a trails plan, a stewardship plan, and a prescribed burn plan. Roxborough is also uncertain about how the Endangered Species Act and the presence and preservation of the Preble's Meadow jumping mouse at Roxborough will affect all plans and projects. These variables suggest that this plan must be highly adaptable and evolve with these developing situations.

C. Interpretation at Roxborough State Park

1. *Need for Interpretive Master Plan*

The goal of interpretation at Roxborough is to foster environmental stewardship among citizens and visitors to the park by developing awareness and understanding of Roxborough's natural and cultural resources through a variety of interpretive media. This interpretive goal is derived from the goal of interpretation and environmental education in all Colorado State Parks, which is to provide leisure opportunities that foster environmental stewardship among citizens and visitors to the state by developing awareness and understanding of Colorado's natural and cultural resources. (Colorado State Parks Five-year Interpretive Services and Environmental Education Plan, 1999)

Interpretation comes in a variety of flavors at Roxborough. For visitors who prefer formal interaction with a naturalist or a ranger, Roxborough offers guided hikes, children's programs, and indoor naturalist talks. Visitors seeking an informal interaction with a ranger or naturalist may choose to query a roving naturalist, phone

the park during business hours to ask questions, or discuss their interests and sightings with park staff and volunteers at the information desk. On busy weekends, discovery stations—tables with natural and cultural artifacts designed to draw visitors to them—may be set up on the visitor center patio. Discovery stations provide an inviting buffet where the visitor can take just a bite or a whole plateful of information with them. Visitors preferring non-personal interpretation may be introduced to Roxborough resources via a variety of wayside signs, visitor center exhibits, and self-guiding trail brochures.

2. *Purpose of this Interpretive Master Plan*

Completion of this interpretive master plan fulfills the first goal identified in the Five-year Interpretive Services and Environmental Education Plan (1999): “to develop a process to set statewide and individual park priorities for interpretive services.”

With both statewide and park-specific interpretive goals in mind, Roxborough management and interpretive staff feel a successful and useful interpretive master plan will accomplish the following:

- review Roxborough background and existing situation information
- review park management goals
- inventory and analyze significant natural resources at Roxborough
- inventory and analyze existing facilities at Roxborough
- inventory and analyze interpretive services at Roxborough
- characterize the Roxborough visitor and interpretive audience
- identify important themes and storylines for interpretation at Roxborough
- recommend appropriate interpretive products and media for addressing identified storylines; articulate themes, goals, and objectives for each product
- recommend tools for evaluation and visitor studies.

Part II: inventory and analysis



inventory and analysis

A. Natural Resources

1. Landscape/Geology

With elevations ranging from 5,900 to 7,600 feet, Roxborough's landscape beautifully illustrates a Front Range transition from plains to mountains. On the west border of the park, the rugged granite of Carpenter Peak is flanked by elegantly layered gneiss. The red sandstone spires of the Fountain Formation accent the foothills as they dip away and into the scrub oaks. The Roxborough landscape is characterized by two more sandstone hogbacks: the Lyons and the Dakota, before rolling into prairie grasslands to the east—encompassing over 1.3 billion years of geologic time. (For a complete look at Roxborough geology, please contact the park.)

2. Ecosystems/Plant Communities

Roxborough's varied landscape is the canvas upon which nature paints the patchwork of ecosystems and plant communities found at Roxborough. Signature montane forest ecosystem plants prefer the shallow, rocky soil of the hogbacks and Carpenter Peak. Ponderosa pines crown the Dakota Ridge and Lyons Formation and blanket the sunny slopes of Carpenter Peak. Douglas firs and aspens are tucked away on the shady slopes of Carpenter Peak and in ravines formed by the Fountain Formation. Patchy montane shrublands flank the hogbacks with scrub oak and mountain mahogany. Ribbons of

riparian inhabitants mark two intermittent streams and a wet meadow with cottonwoods, willows, sedges, and rushes. To the east, sloping saddles of deeper, well-drained soil between the hogbacks are carpeted with grassland ecosystem inhabitants like blue grama, big and little bluestem, and buffalo grass.

A variety of rare plants can be found at Roxborough, including American currant, prairie violet, forked spleenwort, and wood lily. (For a complete plant list, please contact the park.) A variety of noxious weeds are currently being controlled at Roxborough. Some of the priority plants on this "hit list" include yellow toadflax, Canada thistle, diffuse knapweed, and dalmatian toadflax.

3. Wildlife

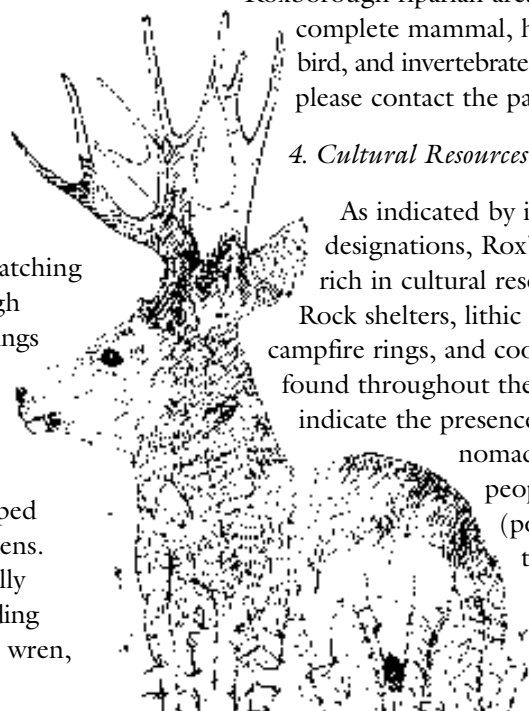
Roxborough's diverse landscapes and ecosystems provide ample habitat for wildlife. A typical wildlife watching foray at Roxborough would include sightings of mule deer, prairie dogs, rock squirrels, western scrub jays, spotted towhees, black-capped chickadees, and ravens. Audible treats usually include the descending song of the canyon wren,

guttural utterings from ravens, meadow voles rustling an escape through the leaf litter, and, in the spring, the exuberant call of the chorus frog. Coyotes and foxes leave mid-trail "calling cards" that are hard to miss. Golden eagles; Northern harriers; and red-tailed, rough-legged, and ferruginous hawks provide an ongoing air show—complete with barrel rolls and other acrobatics in season. A sighting of a coyote, red fox, rattlesnake, bullsnake, elk, or black bear is not unusual for smaller hiking groups. Elusive inhabitants like the bobcat and mountain lion are only rarely seen. While not as showy or exciting as a bear or mountain lion, the threatened Preble's Meadow jumping mouse is a distinguished resident of two Roxborough riparian areas. (For complete mammal, herptile, bird, and invertebrate inventories, please contact the park.)

4. Cultural Resources

As indicated by its special designations, Roxborough is rich in cultural resources.

Rock shelters, lithic scatter, campfire rings, and cooking pits found throughout the park indicate the presence of nomadic early peoples (possibly back to 10,500 BC).



American Indians including Apache, Comanche, Arapaho, Ute, and Cheyenne occupied the area hunting for buffalo, trading pelts with trappers, and planting limited crops along riparian areas. While the first European-American impressions of the Roxborough area came from the Long and Hayden expeditions, some of the most colorful historical tales come from early homesteaders and a Roxborough landowner named Henry Persse. The Persse Place, built in 1903, has been restored and is currently being used to interpret the timeless lure of Roxborough's natural beauty, past land uses at Roxborough, and the connection between today's visitor and Roxborough's day-trippers from the past.

B. Natural Resource Analysis

The salient natural resource at Roxborough is the geologic formations. The varied hogback country mixed with foothills and open prairie—spanning less than 1/2 mile—invites a mosaic of plant communities that, in turn, welcome the variety of animals that call Roxborough home. Roxborough's striking collection of natural resources has always attracted nature-lovers, settlers, and those seeking a quiet walk in wilderness. Because Roxborough is a resource-oriented park, it is important to consider the conservation of these resources in all management decisions and in interpretive messages. Damage or loss of these unique resources will mean the loss of what makes Roxborough a place worth preserving and visiting. Educated and informed park visitors have an essential role in the preservation and conservation of Roxborough.



Persse Place

C. Management Issues Inventory

1. Current Issues Facing Roxborough State Park

Many of Roxborough's current issues relate to external development pressure. Roxborough is located in Douglas County—Colorado's fastest growing county for the past four years. Roxborough's own neighborhood, the Roxborough Metro District, predicts a growth rate of up to 120% in the next ten years. Development in the Roxborough Park Community has placed Roxborough virtually in the "backyard" of many private residences. As a result, visual encroachment upon Roxborough's unparalleled scenic vistas is a concern for many park visitors.

In an effort to protect Roxborough from these external pressures, land purchases in the past three years have tripled Roxborough's acreage—creating additional management challenges. How these new lands will be used, what valuable resources reside within them, and how they relate to the rest of the park are all questions that have yet to be answered.

Other current issues facing Roxborough include:

- habitat fragmentation and edge effects associated with fragmentation due to development within and adjacent to the park
- non-native plantings and noxious-weed infestation
- illegal rock climbing and other unlawful off-trail use
- negative wildlife-human interactions
- pressure from individuals and special interest groups to allow more broad-based recreation opportunities, including ballooning, mountain biking, horseback riding, and hunting.

2. Existing Plans and Plans to be Completed in 2000

Roxborough has a number of plans that are either currently available or are in progress. Progress and completion of these plans will affect the management of the resources at Roxborough State Park. These plans include:

- The Park Management Plan (1986) documents the park purpose and establishes the basic guidelines for park operation to achieve this purpose. A draft revision of the Park Management Plan is due to the Parks Board in January 2001.
- Annual Interpretive Work Plan (completed February 2000) exists to review interpretive accomplishments from the previous year and to outline interpretive program plans and goals for the upcoming year.
- Annual Work Plan (2000) exists to review park accomplishments from the previous year and to outline park plans and goals for the upcoming year.
- Geographic Information System (GIS) links park resource data to real geographic points to enhance record keeping, resource tracking, and resource mapping.
- Resource Inventory (ongoing) helps provide baseline information on species inventory, diversity, population density, and specific location, as well as track special resources/resources of concern within park property. Includes cultural and natural resources.
- Prescribed Burn Plan (1999) outlines a plan prescribing fire as a weed management/habitat restoration tool.
- Weed Management Prescriptions (1999) prescribes Roxborough-specific priorities, tools, and methods for integrated weed management.
- Prairie Dog Management Prescriptions (fall 1999) prescribes and outlines a Roxborough-specific conservation plan for our two prairie dog colonies.
- Trail Feasibility Study (2000) examines the feasibility of trail development on new park property.
- Perse Place/History Interpretive Plan (2000) will identify salient interpretive messages for the Perse Place open houses and outline and design a training program for volunteer interpreters.
- Archaeology Survey (2000) revisits previously identified, culturally significant sites and surveys recent acquisitions for new sites.
- Stewardship Plan (2000) will inventory park resources and make recommendations for the preservation of those resources.

Information gleaned from the completion of several of the plans outlined above will help to shape interpretation at Roxborough in the future. An updated Park Management Plan will also help shape decision making.



D. Management Issues Analysis

Local growth is putting tremendous pressure on Roxborough in the form of edge effect, fragmentation, non-native plant introduction and infestation, visual encroachment, and requests for more broad-based recreation opportunities. The most important tools for conserving Roxborough's resources include the following:

- community outreach—to help residents understand and appreciate their backyard wildlands
- commitment to complete resource inventory and monitoring of both old and new parcels
- employ resource-based information and decisions to help special-interest recreation groups understand the reasoning behind continued limits on the spectrum of recreational opportunities at Roxborough
- continue emphasis on weed management by park staff
- complete management plan update
- continue augmentation of full-time staff with adequate seasonal funding, GOCO, and WIN-WIN dollars
- continue to build a strong core of at least one hundred active volunteer naturalists to help put more eyes and ears on the trail (this will help limit potential damage to the resource by collecting, dogs, off-trail use, and negative wildlife-human interactions).

Engaging and thoughtful interpretation and environmental education programs facilitate these management goals by creating an informed visitor who appreciates the unique resources at Roxborough and is ready to share that appreciation with others.

E. Human Resource Inventory

1. Full-time Employees

Roxborough has three full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. The park manager is responsible for managing the many aspects of park operation, resource management, and for supervision of the two full-time park rangers. One park ranger is responsible for overseeing revenue and maintenance operations in the park. The second park ranger is responsible for overseeing the park interpretation and environmental education program, as well as managing the Volunteer Naturalist Program.

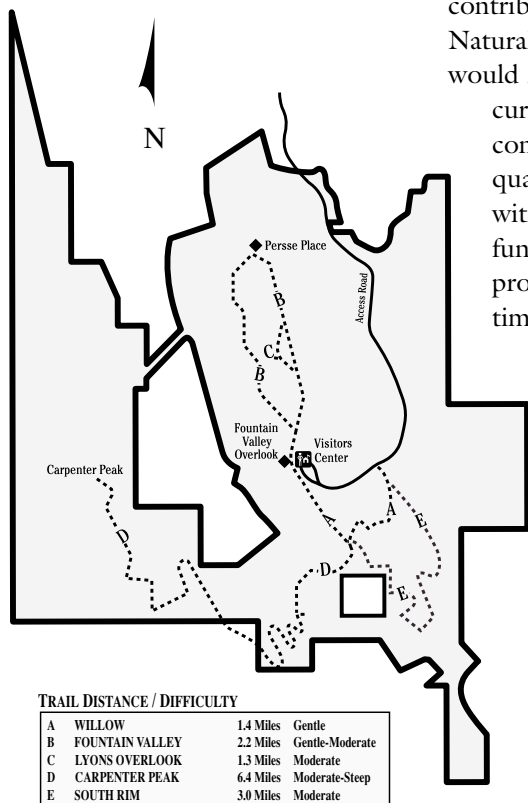
A recent FTE study conducted by KPMG recommended that Roxborough have 7.1 FTE! When asked to limit the recommendation to only the most critical FTE, they recommended no additional FTE with a reduction of .5 FTE interpreter and an addition of .5 technician. With visitation weighed heavier, the recommendation becomes: add 1.0 FTE technician and reduce the interpreter by .5 FTE. A potential FY 2001-2002 request compiled by the metro region manager and the director of administration was for an additional .8 FTE visitor assistant and an 1.0 FTE technician, for a total of 4.8 FTE.

2. Seasonal Employees

To complement the permanent, full-time staff, Roxborough hires many seasonal employees. State seasonals are permitted to work no more than six months out of any calendar year. Seasonal staff includes: one weekday (forty hours/week) and one weekend (sixteen hours/week) visitor center supervisor, one winter seasonal ranger (forty hours/week), two summer seasonal rangers (forty hours/week), one naturalist assistant (twelve hours/week), and one moonlight hike coordinator (eight hours/month).

3. Volunteer Resources

One hundred forty-five active volunteer naturalists contribute over 7,000 service hours annually (equivalent to three FTE). Volunteers help with a variety of park operations including: guiding scout, school, and other special groups; providing outreach programs, interpretive programs, administrative support, resource management assistance, maintenance project assistance, noxious-weed control, information services, and roving interpretation.



Roxborough State Park Area Map

F. Human Resource Analysis

Currently, Roxborough staffing levels are adequate to facilitate good interpretation. Without the extra help of GOCO dollars to fund (in part) the visitor center supervisor position and GOCO/WIN-WIN dollars to fund the naturalist assistant and moonlight hike coordinator positions, we would be unable to maintain our current quality and quantity of interpretive programming at Roxborough. Support from the park manager allows for the interpretive ranger to dedicate approximately 33% of her time to volunteer management. This contributes to a thriving Volunteer Naturalist Program. Roxborough would not be able to maintain the current levels of interpretive contacts, visitor services, and quality interpretive contacts without dedicated time and funds for our volunteer program. A permanent, full-time visitor center supervisor position would improve visitor center and visitor services by eliminating continuous turnover and training.

G. Facilities Inventory

Roxborough State Park is a 3,299-acre, day-use only park. Because Roxborough is managed as a Natural Area and a Core Reserve, facilities are limited to the following:

- Roads and parking: 2-mile entrance road (1.3 miles of gravel and .7 mile of paved) and 110 parking spaces (located in two large lots and five spaces at the Self Service station.)
- Structures: the entrance station (located at the beginning of the Entrance Road near the Roxborough Fire House), a 3,200-foot visitor center, a vault toilet, and an off-site storage area at Waterton. Twenty-three trailside benches provide hikers places to rest or enjoy a snack.
- Historic structures: the Perse Stone House (restored interior and exterior), the Perse barn (collapsed), two shacks (standing); Waterhouse house (a fixer-upper), and a mine loading dock.
- Visitor Orientation: twenty-one visitor orientation signs address hours of operation, pass sales, park regulations, trail orientation, and trail heads, and Parks Pass purchase procedures.

- Interpretive signs: seven wayside signs on the walkway up to and around the visitor center introduce visitors to some of the special resources at Roxborough. Three signs remind visitors that they are in rattlesnake, black bear, and mountain lion country. Thirty-two self-guiding interpretive trail posts help visitors locate interpretive points of interest along the Fountain Valley and the Willow Creek trails.
- Trails: Within its borders, Roxborough has a 12-mile trail system consisting of four main trails. While all trails can be accessed from the visitor center, the Willow Creek Trail and the South Rim Trails can also be accessed from the self-service station. An 80-yard surfaced walkway connects the upper parking lot to the visitor center patio. The 2.2-mile Fountain Valley Trail offers a gentle to moderate stroll through the Fountain Formation and past the historic Perse Stone House. The 3-mile South Rim Trail provides a more challenging climb to the south end of the park through the montane shrubland and along the Lyons Formation. The 6.4-mile Carpenter Peak Trail affords a 1,000-foot gain as you hike to the granite-topped foothill on the west side of the park. The 1.4-mile Willow Creek Trail is a nice trail for families due to the short length and the diversity of plants and landscapes through which it travels. Trail connections to Waterton Canyon and the Colorado Trail provide hiking connections to the adjacent canyons and beyond. Two scenic overlooks provide great views of the park landscape. The Fountain Valley Overlook—only 2 city blocks from the visitor center—is a popular destination. The Lyons Overlook, accessible from the Fountain Valley Trail, has a wood deck with benches so visitors can relax as they enjoy the great view to the west.

H. Facilities Analysis

Overall, adequate facilities exist for a positive visitor experience at Roxborough. A few changes and additions to the facilities menu could enhance the visitor experience considerably. Improved trail map signage would provide a quantum leap in visitor orientation. Recent changes in informational signs help highlight the stewardship role of the visitor. A future visitor center update/remodel with a focus on visitor orientation and comfort, as well as interpretation, would improve the chances of providing the desired visitor experiences. In the meantime, simple changes to the visitor center layout and aesthetics could be steps in the right direction. What is necessary is an interpretive analysis of the public space in the visitor center with this plan in mind. An analysis could recommend layout, exhibit space, and traffic flow based on simple changes or what we already have. Removal of wayside and interior exhibit signs that are in bad shape, ineffective, and outdated would provide clarity of desired storylines and reduce visual clutter.

There have been some suggestions for a short, handicapped-accessible trail that also appeals to families. These populations may be underserved at Roxborough. The trail feasibility study (2000) should make recommendations on this idea.





I. Interpretation Inventory

1. *Personal Interpretation Inventory*

- Indoor ranger/naturalist talks are geared toward a large audience and are conducted in the Visitor Center Auditorium. In 1998 fifteen programs were available: spiders; Halloween tales; soapmaking; photography; tracking; Wildlife Watch; conservation biology—prairie dogs, island biogeography, and fragmentation; wildflower slide show and book signing; Roxborough history; mining in the Roxborough area; mountain lion biology; black bear biology; and constellation myth and lore.
- Ranger/naturalist-guided hikes are geared toward a group of twenty-five or less and are out on one of the trails. In 1998 fourteen programs were offered: tracking, bird watching, wildflower identification, astronomy, geology, paleontology, weeds, moonlight hikes, drawing and painting, winter ecology, sustainability, mule deer natural history, nature meditation, and photography.
- Children's programs are designed with a specific age group in mind and are held both in the auditorium and out on the trail. Storytime is presented three times per month with a different program each time. The Roxy Puppet Theater performs once a month and has five scripted presentations. Roxy Kids Corner is presented at least twice a month with a different program each time. These programs are provided as advertised.
- Environmental Education (EE) programs: EE programming is scheduled three times a week (four times a week in May and October). EE programs are focused on an outdoor experience and the teachable moments and not on preprogrammed activities. Naturalists are trained to address "whatever slithers, scampers, flies, digs, or grows along the trail"—the landscape, plants, and animals—interpretively, but are not encouraged to follow a script or a "canned" activity. Teachers usually request an emphasis on certain topics that Roxborough can complement. The top two requested topics are geology and ecosystems, followed closely by plants and animals. The difference between living and non-living, habitat, Colorado history, American Indians, and insects are also common requests.
- Scout-specific programming is geared toward the needs of each group and the badge requirements they are trying to fulfill. In general, Roxborough can meet requirements for two Boy Scout badges, Naturalist and Forestry; three Girl Scout badges, Outdoor Fun, Outdoor Adventurer "try-its," or Outdoor Creativity Badge.
- Roxborough Ride is an eight-passenger golf cart driven by a naturalist around the Fountain Valley Trail and is for the physically disabled. Rox Ride tours are provided four to five times a week, May to October.
- Four Discovery Stations (theme-based, staffed tables with parts and props designed to encourage visitor interaction): geology, weeds, mammals, and birds.
- Historical Persse Place Open House: one to two naturalists, three and a half hours, once a month May to October.
- WIN-WIN (Wonders in Nature-Wonders in Neighborhood) programs: fourth grade curriculum—animal-people-plants-land relationships. Scheduled by Division of Wildlife and Denver Zoo. Facilitated by park volunteers, school staff, and WIN-WIN teachers.
- Roving naturalists: average one hundred naturalist hours per year.
- Teacher workshop: two-day training for teachers of all levels on the special resources at this park and how to use Roxborough for an outdoor classroom. Offered through the School of Mines for graduate college credit and facilitated by park staff.

- “Skins and Skulls”: a three-level cart full of skins, skulls, feet, and antlers from Roxborough wildlife. Often used as filler for tour delays like waiting for the restroom or late groups.
- “Bird Box”: A box full of study skin birds (in really bad shape) often used as filler for tour delays.
- Junior Naturalist Passport Program: Children earn stamps on their own passport by attending naturalist-guided programs. At four stamps they get a Junior Naturalist button and can get a different button each time they get four stamps.

2. *Non-personal Interpretation Inventory*

- Visitor center exhibits: two permanent exhibits; Wildlife Watching and geology; thirteen seasonal exhibits: touch boxes, weeds, volunteering, Chatfield Basin Conservation, bird nests, bird feeding and identification, tracks, scat, pods, signs of spring, wildflowers, edible and medicinal plants, and evergreens. Three picture books: Wildflowers, Birds and Animals; one recent sightings board (updated daily).
- Persse Place exhibits: One indoor exhibit on local families, local enterprises, and Henry Persse. One outdoor wayside on Henry Persse and past outings at Roxborough.
- Sixteen slide shows: fourteen scripted presentations (three park-specific), one outreach slide show, and one twelve-minute introductory slide show.
- Two self-guiding trail brochures: Fountain Valley and Willow Creek trails.
- History interpretation: one Roxborough history booklet, Hogbacks and History.
- Visitor library: fifteen titles ranging from birds to wildflowers.
- Interpretive signs: four wayside signs on the walkway up to and around the visitor center introduce visitors to the some of the special resources at Roxborough.

Three signs remind visitors that they are in rattlesnake, black bear, and mountain lion country. Self-guiding interpretive trail posts help visitors locate interpretive points of interest along the Fountain Valley and the Willow Creek trails. Three Watchable Wildlife signs introduce visitors to wildlife watching opportunities from the front porch of the visitor center.

- Adventure packs: backpacks available for check-out with activities on weather, wildlife, geology, and plants. These backpacks are not age-specific.

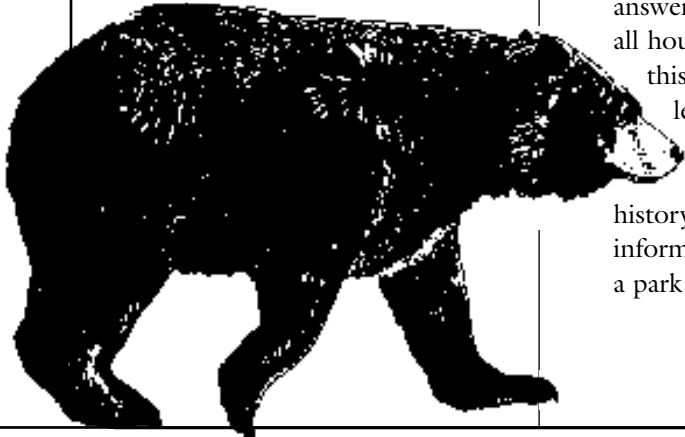
3. *Props and Parts for Interpretation Inventory*

Roxborough staff and volunteers have access to all interpretive “parts” and props. They are stored at the Roxborough Visitor Center.

- Puppets: thirty-one puppets and one free-standing puppet theater
- Pack-friendly interpretive tools: rubber scat and tracks, Roxborough critter cards, bird cards, track cards, bug boxes, and mission cards, are all frequent companions for a tour guide’s pack.
- Natural history collections: One mountain lion specimen, forty-eight bird study skins, three taxidermied bird specimens, mammal skins, mammal study skins, skulls, antlers, hooves, snake skins, nests, invertebrate, rocks, fossils, historic photos, and artifacts. Roxborough also has an extensive herbarium with over one hundred Roxborough plant families represented. (For a complete study and taxidermy specimen list, please contact the park.)



- Literary resources: More than 1,000 titles in the naturalist library, newspaper and magazine articles, resource file, studies on vegetation, archaeology, birds, weeds, mammals, and invertebrates. All of these are in a state of controlled chaos. Volunteers are currently working to organize the library and magazine articles.
- Digital resources: GIS and digital camera
- Visual resources: 350-slide wildflower slide collection, history photo and slide collection, and various park events and scenery photos (not organized)
- Evaluations of both school and public programs are administered on a regular basis. Our Volunteer Naturalist Program is evaluated once a year, and our Volunteer Naturalist Training Program is evaluated once every other year.



J. Visitor Orientation Inventory

Roxborough visitors need to know how to have a safe experience, how to be good stewards of the land, and what their options are for exploration and experiences. The following list outlines current resources for helping visitors find out what they need to know.

1. Personal Visitor Orientation

- Entrance station attendants (staffed up to four days per week) provide visitors with passes, answer questions, and remind visitors of park regulations before they enter the park.
- The information desk is staffed by a visitor center supervisor and/or volunteers during all hours of visitor center operation. Visitors can obtain information about programs, trail conditions, and get answers to natural history questions from the information desk.
- Roxborough's telephone is answered personally during all hours of operation. For this reason, the public has learned that they can call us and usually get answers to natural history questions, request information, and speak with a park ranger or naturalist.

2. Non-personal Visitor Orientation

- There are three trail maps posted at Roxborough. The Roxborough Park Brochure contains information about park resources, wildlife watching, regulations, programs, and trails. The trail map in the brochure is not a topographic map and is not current to new park borders and acreage. Brochures can be obtained at the self-service station, visitor center, and in the visitor center restroom area (accessible during all hours of park operation). The self service area has a 2 x 3 foot non-topographic trail map. The Information Desk Map, is a 4.5 x 3 inch topographic map of the park and trails.
- The Roxborough Web site is updated regularly with trail conditions and current park hours.
- Written information available at the visitor center includes: brochures on Waterton Canyon, Chatfield, fire ecology, Cherokee Ranch, mountain lions, black bears, and Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Maps of the Roxborough vicinity, Waterton Canyon, and metro region trails are also available from the information desk free of charge. A Waterton connection trail brochure is available at the visitor center or on the Carpenter Peak Trail. Park Pointers pamphlets orient visitors on regulations, climate, and safety.

- Twenty-one signs orient visitors to trail heads, regulations, and pass purchase procedures.
- Three signs remind visitors they are in bear, mountain lion, and rattlesnake country.
- Visitor comfort items include: two benches, three chairs, one table, one fireplace, and one comfortable chair in the visitor center.

K. Interpretation and Visitor Orientation Analysis

1. Personal Interpretation Analysis

Overall, our personal interpretation plate is full with primarily well-attended programs. We could get a better idea of the quality of our programming by improving the return on group program evaluations and using evaluations for public programs. We also could improve group tours by improving the communication of successful techniques among volunteer naturalists after each tour. Continual training of volunteers and staff in interpretive techniques and in appropriate subject matter is an essential part of maintaining this level of quality and visitor satisfaction.

One area of improvement would be in scout programming—since we know which badges scouts are going to request, we could better train our volunteers to reach badge goals. Along the same lines, since we already know the top five requested topics for school groups some topic-specific interpretive techniques training for volunteer guides on these topics would be beneficial. Teacher workshops could focus on the same set of “hot” topics, allowing these workshops to better meet the specific needs of the teachers enrolled in them.

Interest in Persse Place open-house staffing has waned among volunteers. An organized, focused, and fun approach to interpreting the Persse Place (and Roxborough history overall) is essential for successful interpretation of this resource.

Another observable hole is in our natural history artifact interpretation. Our “Skins and Skulls” and “Birds” boxes could use updating. Tired specimens need to be retired, themes need to be developed, and an overall re-evaluation of purpose and message is long overdue.

High attendance at young children’s programming indicates that we could do much more toddler/ pre-school programming. New “toddler-type” volunteer naturalists need to be trained to support a growing toddler schedule. New puppet show scripts relevant to park interpretive themes, management goals, and visitor orientation would be a favor to our many repeat puppet show attendees. High attendance at astronomy programs (as long as weather cooperates) and moonlight hikes indicates the schedule for these programs could be expanded (more astronomy programs, moonlight hikes expanded into fall and winter months). Low attendance at weekday evening programs on topics other than wildflowers indicates that scheduling these activities should be reevaluated. High contact numbers for “discovery centers” indicate that these are a good way to reach a lot of people on a specific topic and that we should consider expanding the number of topics and amount of time we offer them.

Volunteers are very interested in outreach programming using the tools and artifacts we already have. Perhaps a revival of the outreach program could increase awareness of Roxborough in communities while increasing our contact numbers. It would also give volunteers a fun activity for their “slow time” of the year.

2. Non-personal Interpretation Analysis

Non-personal interpretation at Roxborough has been fairly successful considering the lack of time and budget afforded to non-personal interpretation. In the visitor center, visibly successful non-personal pieces include the wildlife sighting board, wildlife book, wildflower book, wildflower café, visitor library, and touch boxes. Other exhibits that draw comments or questions are the bird feeding, medicinal plants, and geology exhibits. A track poster located at the front desk (not even park-specific)

seems to draw a lot of interest and stimulates questions. All of these exhibits are constructed in-house using staff and volunteer time, ideas, and talent.

While these in-house exhibits have been relatively successful, Roxborough could benefit from professionally planned visitor center exhibits that highlight our statements of significance (particularly geology), our charismatic fauna and how to interact with them (birds, rattlesnakes, mountain lions, bears), and other topics our visitors seem interested in, such as watchable wildlife and track and sign. While the taxidermy specimens are exciting and visually striking, without any interpretation to accompany them, the interest usually ends at reading the I.D. tag, unless the visitor gets to interact with a naturalist. The taxidermy eagle is tired and could use a replacement that better shows the actual silhouette of an eagle in flight. Perhaps all of these separate elements could be tied together in some sort of watchable wildlife theme. Existing displays (like the hall of fame and the history exhibit) need to be evaluated for effectiveness and removed or revamped if deemed ineffective.

Outside of the visitor center, teachers of school groups that we have to turn away for guided experiences would benefit from self-guiding kits on “hot” topics. The popular self-guiding Fountain Valley Trail Brochure is due for editing before the next printing.

The Willow Creek Trail Guide and the Hogbacks and History booklet need to be re-evaluated before their next printing. Additionally, the front porch (particularly the garden area) of the visitor center could be used to introduce visitors to geology, local habitats, plants, and animal track and sign. Exhibits that utilized the outdoor space would allow us to reach visitors with interpretive messages even when the visitor center is closed.

3. *Visitor Orientation Analysis*

Thanks to enthusiastic, customer-oriented, and informed staff and volunteers, personal visitor orientation is outstanding at Roxborough. It could be improved by funding longer hours of operation for the visitor center, especially summer weekend evenings. Funding a permanent, full-time visitor center supervisor would also improve the quality and consistency of our visitor orientation.

Non-personal visitor orientation could benefit from some updates and changes. A visitor center makeover to include enhanced visitor comfort would probably do wonders to enhance visitor experience and orientation, as guests would feel more comfortable just “hanging out”—asking questions, enjoying exhibits, visiting with friends, and browsing the sales area. Our introductory slide show update/revamp should be a priority once the Perse Place interpretive training plan and the archaeological survey are complete. Good trail

maps are essential at the visitor center information desk, the after hours/restroom area, the entrance station, and the self-service area. The sign at the beginning of the Fountain Valley Trail should be removed, as it is faded and outdated. Informing visitors of our naturalist-guided programming opportunities, self-guided tours, Junior Naturalist Passports, book sales benefits, and the Friends group could be improved as well.



L. Audience Inventory

The following visitor information was gleaned from the 1997-1998 Colorado State Parks Visitation Study. This study was conducted by Colorado State Parks employees and was coordinated by Jennifer Elling-Dodge, a former State Parks employee. This study had two main objectives: to develop and implement a reasonably accurate, cost-effective method of determining visitation at the state parks, which can be used throughout the park system, and to provide State Parks with statistically sound data to facilitate new and improved planning opportunities.

Who are our visitors?

- 61% of our visitors are male, 39% of our visitors are female
- 74% of our visitors drove fewer than 20 miles to get here
- 12 % of our visitors used an Aspen Annual to get into the park (indicating they are at least 62 years old)

Why are they here? (more than one choice was allowed in this survey)

- 92% of our visitors are here to hike or walk
- 27% of them are here to view wildlife
- 14% of them are here to attend an interpretive program
- 12% of them are here to sightsee

How long do they stay and how often do they come?

- The average number of hours in the park is 2.2
- The average number of visits in the past month is 1.8, and the average number of visits in the past year is 9.3

Are they in groups?

- Average person-per-vehicle counts were broken down by type of pass. Seniors averaged 2.2 people in a group, people with annual passes averaged 2.6 people in a group, and people with daily passes averaged 3.7 people per group.
- 5.6% of the people in the survey were part of a multi-vehicle group

While we have not questioned our visitors specifically about their experience preferences, we have an idea from informal dialogue at the front desk and on the trail. Many visitors enjoy the opportunity to discuss natural history questions with a naturalist or research queries at the visitor center. Visitors enjoy sharing wildlife sightings with park staff. Numerous compassionate visitors want to know how they can give back to the park. Others want to inquire about programming, wildlife viewing, and trail conditions.

M. Audience Analysis

On average, our visitors have driven fewer than 20 miles, have come here to hike or walk, and plan on spending less than half a day. They have probably been here in the past five weeks and will probably return several times during the year. This demographic—the local, repeat visitor—has great implications for interpretation at Roxborough. Some elements of both non-personal and personal interpretation need to change to accommodate park “regulars” (hence the popularity of the sighting board). Regulars like the wildflower café because they can get an instant update on current blooms. With the success of the wildflower café in mind, addressing other seasonally special facets of the park would probably be enjoyed and appreciated by regulars. Since many repeat visitors bring family and friends—visibly acting as tour guides—elements that remain constant or that illustrate our statements of significance would assist the “regulars” in their role as tour guide. (We often hear, “here’s that board I was telling you about.” “Here look at these pictures—there is one of a bobcat in here I really like.” “I’ve seen a snake here once, let me show you a picture.”)

Recent benefits for locals like the Junior Naturalist Passport Program have yet to be tested. If successful, more programs that reward repeat customers and family groups could be designed. Better information on stewardship opportunities would also help the park with management goals by transforming regulars into stewards.

N. Visitor Studies Inventory

The 1997 Visitation Study is the most detailed study we have of our visitors. Currently, we give visiting school groups the opportunity to evaluate our school programs with a group program evaluation. In spite of prepaid postage, many of these evaluations are not returned. At this time, Roxborough has no other regularly implemented evaluation tools.

O. Visitor Studies Analysis

The 1997 Visitation Study provided park staff with basic and enlightening information about our visitors. There is much more to learn. With a new management plan on the horizon, surveys that measure visitor satisfaction and/or collect suggestions on management issues have been discussed as an important tool for a healthy plan. Volunteers are looking for more input on the quality of their presentations, an indication that they would like to be evaluated more.



P. Stakeholder Inventory

Roxborough enjoys support and interest from many stakeholders.

Volunteers:

- Naturalists provide more than 7,000 service hours per year for interpretive contacts and projects. Our volunteers are a mixture of retirees, locals, frequent hikers/visitors, couples, nature enthusiasts, and scientists.

User groups:

- Frequent (average of nine times per year) and passionate visitors
- Waterton Canyon users (connecting trails to Roxborough)
- Colorado Mountain Club
- Native Plant Society
- Native Plant Master Certification Program
- Schools and universities—outdoor classroom for Denver University; Red Rocks Community College; Arapahoe Community College; CU Denver; Jefferson, Douglas, and Arapahoe county schools; Littleton Public Schools; and local day care providers

Local communities:

- Roxborough Park, Roxborough Village, Highlands Ranch, southwest Littleton, Englewood, and the Indian Creek community

Partnering agencies:

- CHEERS (Chatfield Environmental Education Resource System) agencies including: Chatfield State Park, South Platte Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service (CHEERS member), Thorne Ecological Institute, Denver Botanical Gardens, Chatfield Arboretum, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and South Suburban Recreation District—environmental education networking
- Denver Museum of Nature and Science—guest speakers and research partners
- Colorado Division of Wildlife—wildlife issues including mountain lions, Preble's Meadow jumping mouse, black bear; wildlife habitat management; and land acquisition
- JeffCo Cooperative Extension—Native Plant Master Certification Program and guest speakers
- National Park Service

Conservation partners:

- Chatfield Basin Reserve Network—conservation planning; Sierra Club—conservation programming
- Colorado Weed Network—weed management and information sharing

- Legislators and representatives, including Douglas County Commissioners—support for land acquisition and conservation
- Colorado State Parks Board members—support for land acquisition and conservation, provide direction for planning and programming, funding, set policy
- Department of Natural Resources—support for conservation, provide direction for planning
- Colorado State Parks—management and special programs—direction for management, programming, funding



Q. Funding Stakeholders Inventory

Funding for Roxborough operations, resources, and programming comes from many sources.

- The Friends of Roxborough fund land acquisition and educational opportunities. In 1998 they provided money for land and \$2,200 for education and volunteer support.
- GOCO/WIN-WIN dollars funded the assistant naturalist and moonlight hike coordinator positions.
- GOCO and Colorado Lottery dollars funded the visitor center supervisor position for five pay periods and provided money for land acquisition.
- The General Fund provides money for park operations, maintenance, capital equipment, and staffing.
- Private donations, unless otherwise directed, are earmarked for land acquisition, memorials, historic restoration, and interpretation.
- Rocky Mountain Nature Association offers education aid money in the form of 12% of all book sales.
- The Historical Society provided grant money for the Persse Place restoration, and the archaeology survey.
- State Grant Programs fund volunteer partnership grants.
- State Parks Foundation awarded Roxborough \$4,000 for an update of our geology exhibit (1999).

R. Stakeholders Analysis

Overall, Roxborough has a diverse core of stakeholders. Some of our greatest public relations work comes from our volunteer group. They are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and fun ambassadors for Roxborough. As satisfied volunteers require a certain level of care and feeding, only with continued funding, training, and staff support will Roxborough be able to keep these essential stakeholders involved. Our Friends group is another tremendous supply of success stories, stewardship, and funding to Roxborough. The Friends will need to maintain communication, celebrate success, and be innovative in their fundraising to keep their momentum.

We could do better to reach out to our neighbors who aren't in our volunteer core. A stronger presence at community events and special programs just for Roxborough-area residents would be one way to reach out to our local community. Attempts at networking with neighboring agencies have been met with varied success. Some group projects go well, and others seem to suffer from a lack of interest or time to commit to project completion. Communication is key, so we aren't reinventing the wheel all the time. Along those lines, better communication of park significance and management goals through exhibits and interpretive messages could do more to turn our frequent visitors into "stewards"—a benefit to us all.

Funding for the park and programs is adequate. Due to encroaching development, we could always use more resources for land acquisition. Increased funding for exhibits is a must for implementation of this interpretive plan. Funding for the volunteer naturalist program must continue at current levels in order to maintain the quality of the visitor experience. Eventually money for a visitor center update or redesign will be necessary to meet growing interpretive needs of Roxborough.

Staffing levels are adequate. At times, staffing puts limits on the number of interpretive programs we can offer. Big projects often get set aside for the urgent tasks of the day. Overall, Roxborough has plenty of active volunteers as we do not have problems getting needs covered (except the Persse Place). We probably don't need to create more jobs for volunteers. We probably do need to find suitable niches for those volunteers who don't yet know their niche. We also need to prioritize what we have on our plate so when volunteers have the time, funding, skills, and energy to complete a task, we have a task in mind for them.



Part III:
program/product development



program/product development

As evidenced in the previous chapters' inventories and analysis, Roxborough is a unique public resource with many compelling stories to tell. In an attempt to distill all that makes Roxborough special and worthy of preservation, the following statements of significance represent the compelling stories of Roxborough State Park.

A. Statements of Significance

- Roxborough is “on the edge” in many ways—between the mountains and the plains, the interface between northern and southern species, and communities and suburbs to wilderness.
- Roxborough’s landscape tells a fascinating geologic story—Roxborough’s unique cross-section of Front Range geology is an open book where visitors can read a 1.3-billion-year story of past landscapes and creatures in the rocks.
- Roxborough is home to an intricate patchwork of plants—four Colorado ecosystems: montane forest, montane shrubland, grassland, and riparian; and eight distinct plant communities allow visitors to enjoy a variety of landscapes as they stroll the trails. Roxborough is home to locally rare plants, including wood lily, American currant, bird-foot violet, and forked spleenwort.

- Get ready to enjoy wild wildlife watching at Roxborough—a great diversity of invertebrates, birds, mammals, and herptiles call Roxborough home. Because Roxborough wildlife enjoy the tranquil setting of a Natural Area, many visitors are treated to spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities (some visitors experience more wildlife interaction than they like). Mule deer, golden eagles, and songbirds are sighted daily, while coyotes, elk, and foxes are seen with frequency. Rare species or species of interest and/or concern include: Preble’s Meadow jumping mouse, black-tailed prairie dog, mountain lion, black bear, golden eagle, canyon wren, mountain bluebird, ferruginous hawk, and prairie rattlesnake.
- Roxborough is a park for all seasons—otherworldly rock formations, rich vegetation, and terrific wildlife watching opportunities amount to terrific scenic views that change hourly, daily, and seasonally.
- A visit to Roxborough is the ideal day trip—Roxborough is remarkably close to Denver, allowing for the flexibility of a half-day or day-long getaway to a wild and wonderful place.
- Roxborough inspires the artist in us all—outstanding scenery inspires the poet, artist, photographer, and writer that exists within all of us. Many Roxborough visitors spend their

time painting, drawing, journal writing, photographing, or discussing the beauty and wildlife that surround them. Many frequent visitors and locals consider Roxborough a “must see” for guests and friends—the beauty and tranquility inspire them to share it with the important people in their lives.

- Understanding Roxborough’s past cultures and how they are related to these resources can help us better understand our relationship to Roxborough today—prehistoric Indians, historic American Indians, and European settlers have left a richness of artifacts, stories, and structures behind. Study of their cultures and knowledge of how they used and related to the resources is of interest and enlightening to our current users.
- How do you make a special state park—the tale of how Roxborough moved from private land to a public park and core reserve is a unique tale of dreams, opportunities, stewardship, and citizen action.



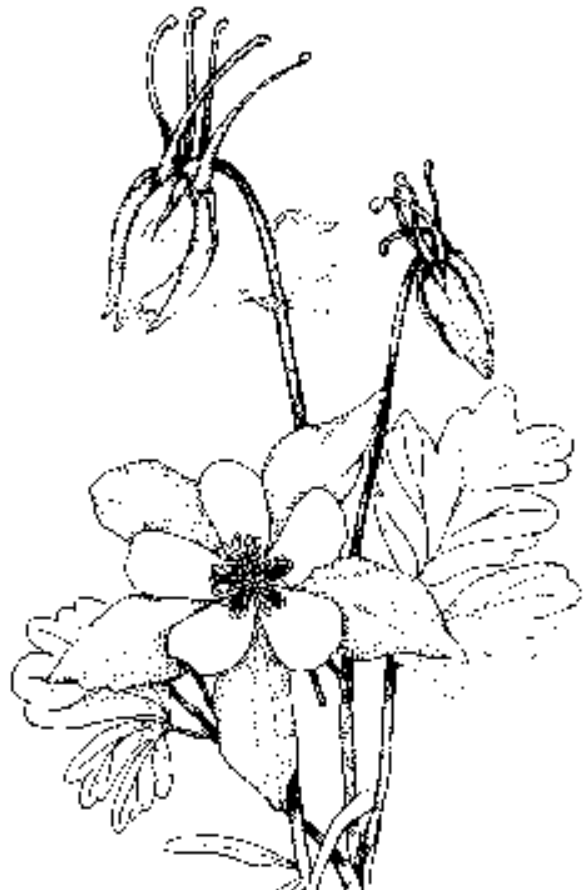
B. Desired Visitor Experiences

Roxborough's desired visitor experiences relate directly to the significant stories and unique resources the visitor encounters here. Most importantly, Roxborough staff and volunteers would like to foster a sense of stewardship, informed action, and involvement among first-time visitors, frequent visitors, and local residents through terrific interpretation and a positive visitor experience. Achieving this goal will allow management to create a balance between preservation and recreation with strong public support and respectful use attitudes. To accomplish this goal, Roxborough will need to provide outstanding interpretive opportunities, maintain exceptional public relations with our neighbors in Roxborough Park and Roxborough Village, as well as garner strong public support through Roxborough Volunteers, the Friends of Roxborough, compassionate visitors, and partnering agencies.

Roxborough is a significant place with many compelling stories to share. The staff and volunteers of Roxborough desire to bring the visitor closer to these stories and qualities while preserving the very resources that make Roxborough a special place to visit. At the same time we hope to make visitors aware of their role in the preservation of the resource they are enjoying. For these reasons, the desired outcomes of a visit to Roxborough are to:

- enjoy a tranquil experience in an extraordinary natural area "close to home."
- interact with wildlife and other resources in a way that does not negatively impact the resource or others enjoying the resource.
- begin to appreciate and relate to the unique natural resources that make Roxborough a place to preserve.
- help visitors understand their important role as stewards of this resource.

- experience comfortable interactions with park staff and volunteers while discovering Roxborough's unique natural history.
- help visitors understand that what they learn, discover, and experience at Roxborough has meaning and application in other open spaces, in their neighborhood, and all over the world.



Part IV: project and product recommendations



project and product recommendations

The following is a prioritized list of products and projects this plan recommends to improve and support Roxborough's interpretive efforts. They are designated as short term (one- to two-years) or long-term (three- to five-years) projects. Short-term projects are further designated as priority projects (●) and/or works in progress (⊕).

To facilitate the process of identifying appropriate projects and priorities, the following interpretive service correlation was created. These correlations match all Roxborough Statements of Significance and Desired Visitor Experiences with current and recommended programming and projects. In this way, holes in our programming are easily identified.



A. Interpretive Services and Statements of Significance Correlation

Items listed in italics are works in progress or top priority program/product recommendations.

“On the edge”

- *WWIP exhibit*, island biogeography class, *native garden*, *neighborhood classes*

Geologic story

- geology day, geology exhibit, mining programs, paleontology hikes, *native garden*, *improvements to geology exhibit*

Plants

- wildflower festival, wildflower scarves, Native Plant Master classes and public contacts, wildflower book signings, wildflower café exhibit, front desk wildflower book

Wildlife watching

- bird hikes, mule deer hikes, lightning beetle hikes, raptor programs, tracking class, Colorado Spider Survey classes, front desk animal book, wildlife sightings board, Wildlife Watch Program, WWIP exhibit

Unsurpassed scenery all year long

- Web site updates to include seasonal pictures, gearing up for winter hikes, astronomy programs

The ideal day trip

- most programs are less than three hours in length, *Web site info on things to do with different increments of time at Roxborough (e.g., half day—bring the kids to a Roxy Kids Corner program, take a short walk along Willow Creek, enjoy a picnic lunch on the visitor center patio)*

Inspiration for the artist

- photography classes, art classes, early park openings, summer concert series, *wildflower sketching classes*, *Rox Art Club—a monthly gathering of creative materials inspired by Roxborough—meant to be shared and admired by all in attendance*

Cultural history

- lamb spring tour, Persse open house, edible and medicinal plant hikes, hogbacks and history book, *visitor center history exhibit*

The story of a park

- hall of fame, southdowns dedication exhibit, National Natural Landmark sign

B. Interpretive Services and Desired Visitor Experience Correlation

Tranquil experience

- continue to purchase surrounding properties, limit development, limit broad-based uses, ensure that interpretive programs minimally impact others' ability to enjoy the resource

Interact with wildlife and resources as a steward

- strong volunteer core to be eyes and ears for potential harm, stress wildlife/human interaction safety in all wildlife watching programs, Halloween Tales program, bear and mountain lion country signs, rattlesnake exhibit, Wildlife Watch Program

Appreciate and relate to the unique natural resources

- all environmental education, personal interpretation, and non-personal interpretation; weed melodrama, conservation day, moonlight hikes, conservation biology training for volunteers, sustainability class, Junior Naturalist Passport program, visitor orientation, weed warrior program, trail maintenance program, self-guided tours (Fountain Valley Trail Guide and Willow Creek Guide)

Understand role as stewards

- weed melodrama, conservation day, moonlight hikes, sustainability class, Junior Naturalist Passport program, visitor orientation, weed warrior program, trail maintenance program

Comfortable interactions with park staff and volunteers

- volunteer naturalist training, staff training, Rambles classes, school tours, scout tours, Rox Ride, all personal interpretation

Project and Product Recommendations

- ① = priority project
- ⊕ = work in progress
- ☒ = eliminate
- ✓ = completed project

C. Short-term (one- to two-year) Recommendations

Visitor Orientation/Comfort

Short-term (one- to two-year) goals

- ✓ **Product:** A large, user-friendly, topographical map of Roxborough State Park for the information desk, the after-hours area, and possibly the entrance station. Project completed 5/30/00.
- ① **Product:** Improved visitor comfort at the visitor center. We would like to provide a better socializing place for visitors in our lobby. Currently it is stone, concrete, and has only one comfortable chair (which gets a lot of use).

Theme: The Roxborough Visitor Center is a comfortable place to relax, research, discuss natural history, and enjoy the company of friends.

Goal: To make visitors feel comfortable and welcome, research natural history topics or discuss with a ranger or naturalist, and in general, hang out in an inviting space.

Visitor Objectives:

- feel welcome to stay as long as they'd like
- know there are books for them to use, peruse, and buy if they'd like
- feel welcome to share sightings or discuss questions with a naturalist
- be inspired to think, discuss, and process their visit by the surroundings at the visitor center



Procedure or Process and Timeline:

May 2000: Capital budget requests submitted for \$5,000 for furniture and \$900 for ceiling fans. Bob Robinson has been contacted about construction of a coffee and end table. He needs dimensions and ideas.

January 2000: Space use consultant (Jack Curkman) will tour the visitor center

2000: Roxborough will receive recommendations from Jack. Park manager, visitor center supervisors, and interpretive services ranger will look at recommendations, evaluate for feasibility, and prioritize based on budget and other constraints.

Waiting for Jack 2000:

Interpretive services ranger will come up with short-term, to-do list and long-term, to-do lists including possible funding sources.

Design ideas: More lighting around library and on exhibit pieces, A “Park Meadows”-like living room area near fireplace that has Roxborough-appropriate furniture (a couch, loveseat, chair, coffee table, pillows, etc.) for relaxing and enjoying the fire in the winter

or the wildlife/wildflower books year round, matching chair by the picture window with a small table for browsing books or looking up a sighting.

Cost Estimates: \$4,000 could come from RMNA or capital budget requests

Personal Interpretation

Short-term (one- to two-year) goals

① ⊕ **Product: Persse Place open house volunteer training**

Topic: Persse Place interpretation

Theme: Yet to be determined

Goal: Create a fun, relevant training for Roxborough volunteers on the Persse Place

Procedure or Process:

1. Review, organize, and label Roxborough history photos, negatives, and files
2. Review and inventory all current Roxborough history interpretation (non-personal and personal interpretation)
3. Identify appropriate interpretive themes and storylines for future history interpretation at Roxborough; specifically identify salient themes and storylines for interpretation at the Persse Place

4. Create a volunteer training plan for Persse Place open house interpretation
5. Develop written training materials and/or notebook to augment training program
6. Conduct a Persse Place open house interpretation volunteer training for Roxborough volunteer naturalists

Timeline:

Completion of research paper—Feb 15, 2000

Completion of training materials and program design—July 30, 2000

Present training program to volunteers—August 19 and 26, 2000

Complete grant closeout—October 1, 2000

Cost:

\$4,752 for consultant

\$2,618 cash match

\$7,370 total grant



✓ **Product: Information packet and training on Scouts and frequently requested Scout badges for volunteer naturalists**
Project completed 4/00.

✓ **Product: Outreach revival meeting**
Product canceled due to lack of interest in training. Many of the interested volunteers are already accomplished public speakers and simply wanted to be asked to do any outreach programs for which we get requests.

✓ **Product: Spring tour season kick-off**
Product completed 3/00.

● **Follow up product: Published tour tips and tricks newsletter for the September volunteer newsletter**

Should include the following:

- cool tour ideas
- new tour tools
- new logistics items
- any other tour savvy we can come up with

Timeline and work program:

May and June 2000: Mary and Joann discuss what needs to be in this newsletter. Joann records ideas and articles on disk. Mary completes "Story of a Pebble" to be included in the packet.

June and July 2000: Solicit ideas from volunteers in the newsletters to be added to the document
August 2000: Joann and Mary finish the document for publication

● ⊕ **Product: Puppet camp!** A meeting for all interested puppeteers to gather for some training and for a revamp of the puppet program.

June 2000: Set date and advertise in Volunteer Naturalist newsletter

July 2000: Host puppet camp. Gather new ideas and act on them. While at puppet camp create script of the following wildlife/human interactions show (the product following this one).

September 2000: Have first of new ideas implemented for first fall show

● ⊕ **Product: Puppet show addressing positive wildlife/human interactions with bears, mountain lions, and rattlesnakes**

Topic: Positive wildlife/human interactions

Theme: What should I do when I see you?

Goal: Provide young children with the tools they need to act appropriately when they encounter wildlife

Objectives: Students will be able to explain what they should do in the event of an encounter with a bear, mountain lion, rattlesnake, bee, or spider

Procedure or Process:

April 2000: Interpretive services ranger and assistant will write script

May 2000: Script will be distributed to the puppeteers for practice

September 2000: Puppeteers will perform the new show

Cost estimate: four hours of interpretive services ranger time to write a script and to train volunteer puppeteers in performance techniques

●^{*} **Product: Create a well-prepared hiker station**

Topic: Preparedness

Theme: Hiking is fun if you are prepared for it.

Goal: Volunteers will use themselves to illustrate and outline the elements of a well-prepared hiker while sprinkling in some Roxborough rules, regs, and stewardship messages.

Visitor Objectives:

Even if they did not arrive prepared today, they will be able to list at least two ways to be better prepared for a hike. Volunteers will illustrate: proper shoes; layers; sun protection; water; a sense of the rules and regulations; knowledge of the trail length, difficulty, and start and finish; knowledge of local hazards; the importance of letting someone know where you are and what you are doing. This discussion should happen before they hit the trail and should take no more than five minutes.

Procedure or Process and Timeline:

January 2000: Suggestion and overwhelming approval for inclusion in the tour process

September 2000: Include this in the tour tips and tricks newsletter for September

●^{*} **Product: Orient teacher workshop training to top five requested school program topics**

Goal: Gear this training more to its audience—teachers

Visitor Objectives: Our current teacher workshops get rave reviews, but they could be made more relevant to teachers by correlating them more closely to the topics they request the most. Interpretive techniques should accompany all of the topics addressed.

Procedure or Process and Timeline:

May 2000: Evaluate 1998 and 1999 tour information for top-requested topics for school tours

August 2000: Compile ideas for ways to address these hot topics in the teacher workshop format

October 2000: Implement this hot topic—oriented curriculum for the fall teacher workshop

●^{*} **Product: Current bird study skin box**

Topic: Birds of Roxborough

Reason: Study skins are in very bad shape, detracts from their value as a teaching tool

Non-personal
Interpretation—Exhibits

Short-term (one- to two-year)
products

⊕ *Product: Visitor center space analysis.* Hire a consultant to examine the current condition of the visitor center for possible exhibit space while considering visitor flow and architectural limitations.

Goal: Analyze existing space for best use with this interpretive plan in mind

Procedure or Process and Timeline:

December 1999: Contact consultant (Jack Curkman) with scope of work and time line for project



January 2000: Consultant tour of facility. Provide him with building plans and DRAFT Interpretive Master Plan. Park manager, assistant regional manager, and interpretive services ranger will be present for tour.

April 2000: Consultant completes analysis and provides us with recommendations. Park manager, assistant regional manager, and interpretive services ranger meet to discuss, prioritize, and assess recommendations for feasibility.

May 2000: Interpretive ranger compiles all comments and suggestions into short-term and long-term goals and product/procedure plan for improving flow and layout at the visitor center.

Cost estimate: \$1,000 for consultant, cost of improvements yet to be determined

❶ ⊕ **Product: A beautiful, native garden in front of the visitor center.** Currently the Roxborough Visitor Center Garden is a mix of non-native alpine rock garden species and native “volunteer” plants. We would like to slowly convert this space to a showcase of local species and natural beauty. It will also serve as an exemplary native garden for adjacent neighborhoods to follow. It will serve to introduce visitors to the plants they may soon see along the trail.

Visitor Objectives: Basic geologic orientation, habitat introduction, native gardens can be beautiful, basic plant identification for charismatic flora

Procedure or Process:

September 1999: Amend soil, weed out dead plants, and prepare garden for winter. Interpretive services ranger works with Windflower Garden Club members to create a plant list and plant location map.

January 2000: Interpretive services ranger sends list of desired plants to local nurseries to determine availability of desired plants.

February 2000: George Brinkmann will begin work on a four- to five-year garden plan to include: garden map, recommended plant list, care and feeding instructions for each month/season, technical information, and interpretive sign recommendations.

March 2000: Interpretive services ranger will outline deliverables and deadlines for elements of the four-to five-year plan. George, garden club members, and interpretive services ranger will agree upon the deliverables for the plan.

April 2000: Windflower Garden Club and volunteer naturalists do spring weeding and planting

May 2000: Complete Volunteer Partnership Grant request for 00/01 grant money

August 2000: Plan fall planting and winter prep schedule. Begin discussion of interpretive signs in the garden. Revisit the stand-alone “rock garden” outside in the courtyard garden (large, touchable rocks oriented the same as what they see around them helps visitors see and touch the basic picture).



Cost estimate: In the short term, Roxborough has a Volunteer Partnership Grant for \$2,170 to improve soil (\$120), purchase plants and seeds (\$1,300), four-to five-year plan (\$600), and landscaping “bones.” George Brinkmann, volunteer naturalists and Roxborough’s Windflower Garden Club guided by George will provide the labor.

⊕ *Product:* **New geology exhibit inside the visitor center.** Currently our geology exhibit consists of several rock samples accompanied by descriptions of their age and deposition. We would like to jazz up this exhibit a bit by including some illustrations of possible wildlife watching opportunities that may have existed in the past. We would also like to improve the storylines and the quality of the output.

Topic: Roxborough geology

Title: The Shape of Roxborough

Theme: The unique rocks at Roxborough tell a 1.3-billion-year story of past landscapes and creatures if you know how to read them.

Goal: Help visitors learn how to read the geologic landscape of Roxborough.

Visitor Objectives:

- describe one past landscape at Roxborough and how we know it was here
- describe one past plant or animal that lived at Roxborough and how we know it was here
- ponder the mind-boggling story of life and landscapes in the western interior they can discover through geology and paleontology
- complement and tie into the Ancient Denver’s Project with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science

Procedure or Process:

Timeline:

October 1999: Write Foundation for Colorado State Parks grant request for improvements

December 1999 – February 2000:

Identify and contact potential funding sources. Contact designers, fabricators, etc. to get an idea of cost for each chunk.

March – May 2000: Determine the theme and storylines to be covered in exhibit

June – July 2000: Finish conceptual work on project. Determine the cost and feasibility of ideas. Weed out what we can’t afford and come up with a scope of work.

August 2000: Begin design and fabrication phase

December 27, 2000: Dedication of exhibit

Cost: \$50,000

Parks Foundation has provided \$4,000

Roy Swanson Memorial Fund is at \$3,500

Other contributors yet to be determined





Product: Move
hall of fame into
the auditorium

Process:

July 2000: Meet with park manager to determine which items need to be on display and desired location for each object.

July 2000: Draw map of new locations

July 2000: Fill out maintenance request for relocation. Will be completed as a “rainy day” project.

Product: Edit and reprint Fountain Valley self-guiding trail brochure

Process:

January 2001–April 2001: Park manager, naturalist assistant, and interpretive services ranger will compile, complete, and approve text edits and artwork by April 2001.

April 2001: Copy to State Parks art director

November 2001: New edition goes to print

December 2001: New version available to visitors

Product: Evaluate and reprint or redo the Hogbacks and History Booklet

Process:

February 2001: Complete application for Colorado Historical Society mini grant for this project. Continuation of this project depends on if we receive the grant.

✓ *Product:* Place new mountain lion in a safe and appropriate place. On the ledge above the fireplace.

Process:

June 2000: Project complete

Visitor Studies

Short-term (one- to two-year) goals

Product: Visitor survey in conjunction with the Park Management Plan revision in 2000

Design: There are many questions we would like to formally ask our visitors that we believe would improve our interpretive services. Some of these questions include:

- What is the most enjoyable part of your visit?
- Did you notice anything on the hike that brought questions to mind or you would like to learn more about? How would you like it addressed?
- If there was one thing you could change about this park, what would it be?
- What would make your visit more enjoyable?
- How did you find out about Roxborough initially?
- What is it about Roxborough that invites you here?
- Did you discover anything during your visit that you can take home? Use somewhere else? Use for another outing to another place?

✓ *Product:* Improve return on group and public program evaluations

Process: Hand out evaluations at the beginning of each tour or at the end when groups are gathering back at the visitor center. Make public program evaluations readily available for volunteers and advertise their use in the newsletter. Implemented tour season 4-6/00.

D. Long-term (three- to five-year) Projects and Products

Visitor Orientation/Comfort

Long-term (three- to five-year) goals

- **Product:** A ten-minute introductory slide show to Roxborough State Park

Topic: Roxborough State Park

Title: To be determined

Theme: Roxborough State Park is a unique resource to explore and discover.

Goal: To orient new Roxborough visitors to this exciting resource

Visitor Objectives:

- list two significant resources found at Roxborough
- describe one event that helped Roxborough become the unique park it is today
- articulate one resource-driven regulation Roxborough has (e.g., dogs, bikes, no off-trail use, no climbing)
- pick an appropriate Roxborough trail or activity for his/her ability and interest

Product: **Additional funding for visitor center supervisor position.** Either create a permanent full-time position and/or increase SWP funding for extended hours (summer evenings and weekends).

Product: **Rambles (naturalist-guided, public program) publicity display**

Topic: Rambles (naturalist-guided, public) programs

Theme: Join a naturalist for a guided program!

Goal: Inform visitors of the many public programs available to them

Objectives:

- know there are a variety of naturalist-guided opportunities at Roxborough
- describe where visitors can find out about guided hikes and programs at Roxborough
- list at least one upcoming activity that is being offered at Roxborough

- **Product:** Fountain Valley aerial view sign

Topic: Fountain Valley orientation

Reason: Outdated, faded, not necessarily for orientation. Will need to market the self-guiding trail brochure somewhere else.

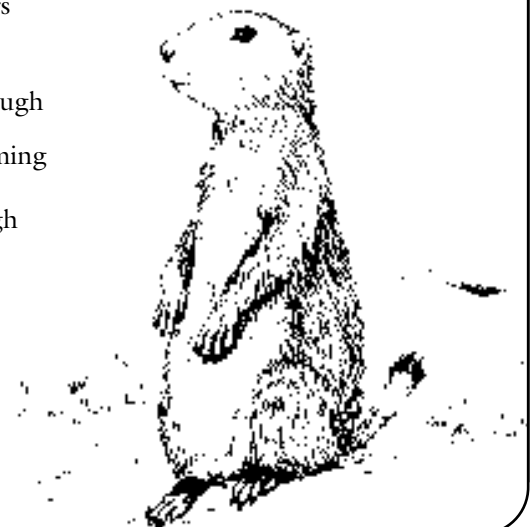
Procedure or Process: Coordinate with Park Manager II for the removal of sign

Personal Interpretation

Long-term (three- to five-year) goals

Product: **Bird study box to replace deteriorating bird study skin box**

Product: **Evaluation of skins and skulls cart**



Product: **Volunteer naturalist training** on top four teacher-requested school program topics at Roxborough (based on 1996-1997 tour season). Kits to cover each topic (mentioned in next section) should be created as these trainings happen, so ideas that volunteers have during training can be incorporated into the kits.

- geology (8), K–8 grade
- ecosystems (8), 3–12 grade
- plants (7), K–6 grade
- animals (7), K–6 grade

The number in parenthesis represents the number of times a similar program was requested.

Product: **Permanent Roxborough ecosystem exhibit**

Topic: Four main ecosystems at Roxborough

Title: To be determined

Theme: Roxborough State Park is a patchwork of interesting ecosystems that are easy to identify.

Goal: To introduce Roxborough visitors to the four main ecosystems found at Roxborough and how to identify them: grassland, montane shrubland, montane forest, and riparian.

Product: **Replace information covered in old visitor center history exhibit with a new exhibit**

Product: **A movable/seasonal exhibit on rattlesnake ecology and etiquette**

Topic: Rattlesnakes

Title: Rattlesnake Bill of Rights

Theme: As residents of Roxborough State Park, rattlesnakes have certain inalienable rights.

Goal: To help visitors appreciate the rattlesnake and understand that they are in rattlesnake country.

Product: **Visitor center exhibit on mountain lion ecology/etiquette**

Topic: Mountain lions

Theme: Because Roxborough is mountain lion country, mountain lions have certain inalienable rights.

Product: **A seasonal/movable exhibit on weeds and weed management**

Topic: Roxborough weed management

Title: To be determined

Theme: To be determined

Non-personal Interpretation

Long-term (three- to five-year) goals

Product: **Discovery packs** on top five teacher-requested topics at Roxborough (based on 1996-1997 tour season). These should happen in conjunction with the training for volunteers, only slightly delayed, so their ideas from training can be incorporated.

- geology (8), K–8 grade
- ecosystems (8), 3–12 grade
- plants (7), K–6 grade
- animals (7), K–6 grade

Product: **Roxborough geology/paleontology booklet—Story of a Pebble**

Product: **Edit/update/evaluate Willow Creek self-guiding trail brochure**

Product: **Create Roxborough Teacher's Guide**

●* *Product:* **Willow Creek self-guided brochure**

Reason: Outdated, based on seasonal wildflowers that aren't necessarily there anymore.

Product: **Junior Ranger/Family Adventure Program**
Maybe slight adjustments to the school-specific program kits could fill this need.



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