



COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

LOCAL ACCESS FUNDING STUDY

FINAL REPORT | November 2024



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INTRODUCTION

Colorado's state parks serve as invaluable recreational assets, drawing millions of visitors annually and significantly contributing to local economies. However, increased visitation to state parks in recent years has resulted in challenges to maintaining the access infrastructure within a park's surrounding community. Colorado Senate Bill 23-059 State Parks and Wildlife Area Local Access Funding (SB23-059) was created in response to these challenges and prompted the initiation of this study. The bill designated the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to detail the local infrastructure and services used by visitors to access state parks and to provide appropriate funding mechanisms to support, maintain, and improve access routes. This report represents the culmination of this work and was done in collaboration with RRC Associates, Fehr & Peers, and SE Group (the Consultant Team), from late 2023 to the fall of 2024.

The approved SB23-059 bill primarily focuses on establishing a mechanism to help local governments manage increased demand for state park access within their jurisdiction by allowing the request of an additional fee of up to \$2 on daily vehicle passes to fund access route maintenance. Revenues from this fee can support infrastructure such as roads, bicycle lanes, and shuttle operations used by visitors to access state parks. The bill also places several obligations on CPW related to this new fee program, including establishing the process for local governments to apply it, formalizing criteria for evaluating applications, setting and adjusting fee amounts, collecting and administering the fees, and ensuring that the revenue supports local access routes.

In addition to the implementation of this fee program, the bill required CPW to collaborate with local governments to conduct a study to better understand the underlying access concerns that led to the development of SB23-059 and investigate additional ways of addressing them. This requirement prompted the Local Access Funding Study project and the work of the Consultant team, who integrated extensive data collection, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous analysis alongside CPW leadership to deliver insights that will guide future legislative and funding decisions.

As directed in SB23-059, this report addresses the following key topics:

1) Local transportation infrastructure and services used by visitors to access state parks, including:

- a. Determination of past issues such access routes have faced, as well as current existing and potential future deficits
- b. Evaluation of resources currently dedicated to developing and maintaining these routes, including fees, assessments, taxes, and payments made by CPW in lieu of taxes
- c. Identification of new funding sources or partnerships to maintain these routes and address any identified deficits

2) Relationships between state parks and their local areas, including:

- a. Identification of opportunities for collaboration between CPW and local jurisdictions, both during the establishment of a park and throughout its operation
- b. Assessment of the impacts of use by visitors traveling to and from state parks on local transportation infrastructure and services
- c. Analysis of infrastructure costs incurred by local governments in supporting state parks
- d. Economic and community benefits and/or negative effects of state parks on local economies

3) Methods for determining which local access routes should be eligible for funding under the fee mechanism established by the bill



This report outlines the findings from site visits, stakeholder meetings, and analysis of secondary data, including county budgets and state park visitor cell phone data, resulting in a comprehensive overview of the current state of Colorado state parks' access routes. It also includes strategic recommendations for collaborative funding approaches to enhance infrastructure, ensure safety, and improve overall visitor experiences. As will be discussed, the relationship between state parks and their surrounding communities is multifaceted, each with their own specific characteristics. Ideally, this research allows for increased effectiveness in the management of Colorado's increasingly popular state parks and their corresponding access routes, ensuring that the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of state parks remain accessible to all without placing undue maintenance burden on local jurisdictions.

OVERVIEW OF SB23-059

Colorado Senate Bill 23-059, which evolved out of Colorado Counties, Inc.'s 2023 Legislative Agenda, was introduced in January 2023 and signed into law on May 19, 2023.

The bill begins with several legislative declarations emphasizing the importance of Colorado's natural resources and the challenges faced by local governments:

- A. Colorado's great outdoors and wildlife are among the state's most treasured resources, enhancing Coloradans' quality of life, bringing prosperity to the state and its residents, and representing the fabric of the state;
- B. Rapid increase in demand for outdoor recreation is challenging local governments' ability to maintain access;
- C. Despite tremendous growth in outdoor recreation, existing funding to support the variety of ways Colorado families access our state parks is insufficient;
- D. This leads to increased barriers for families and can deter visitors from accessing state parks;
- E. Local governments share the access goals of the state and rely on a financial partnership with the state and other partners to help meet the demand and ensure Colorado's outdoors are accessible to all;
- F. Establishing a new fee on daily vehicle passes may provide local governments with the tools to manage the access demands that continue to increase with the growing enjoyment of Colorado's outdoor spaces.



SENATE BILL 23-059

BY SENATOR(S) Baisley and Roberts, Rich, Bridges, Cutter, Danielson, Hansen, Hinrichsen, Marchman, Priola, Winter F.; also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Catlin and McLachlan, Bradley, Holtorf, Joseph, Taggart, Velasco, Weinberg, Wilson, Amabile, Bacon, Bird, Boesenecker, Brown, Dickson, Duran, English, Frizell, Froelich, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Hamrick, Herod, Jodeh, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Mabrey, Marshall, McCormick, Michaelson Jenet, Ricks, Snyder, Story, Titone, Valdez, McCluskie.

CONCERNING PROVIDING FUNDING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO STATE-OWNED OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL AREAS, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) Colorado's great outdoors and wildlife are among the state's most treasured resources, enhancing Coloradans' quality of life, bringing prosperity to the state and its residents, and representing the fabric of the state;

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

The bill instructs CPW to establish a program by which local governments (defined as a city, county, or special district of the state) can request an additional fee to be charged on daily motor vehicle passes for state parks located within their boundaries. CPW must also establish a set of criteria for evaluating such requests. If a request made by a local government meets the criteria established by CPW, the fee will be collected and transferred directly to the respective local jurisdictions. The bill sets a timeline for CPW to create this fee program throughout 2024, with the earliest collection of the fee to begin in January 2025.



The Draft Criteria & Process Development section of this report provides further details on the fee program as outlined in the bill and the steps taken by CPW to develop the application and approval process.

However, the establishment of the state park access fee is only one component of the bill. In sum, SB23-059 outlines a comprehensive framework to enhance state park access through fee-based funding mechanisms, a collaborative study, and strategic recommendations, all aimed at improving and maintaining the infrastructure that supports Colorado's state parks. This report serves to provide an inclusive study on access to Colorado's state park system as required by the bill and address the issues that led to its creation alongside potential solutions for the future.

STUDY DESIGN & RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The Local Access Funding Study was designed to comprehensively address the objectives outlined in SB23-059 summarized above and focuses on understanding and managing access to Colorado's state parks and the associated impacts on local infrastructure. To achieve this, the Consultant Team developed a multifaceted approach that combined local government engagement, extensive data collection, and thorough analysis to ensure a well-rounded examination of the relevant issues. Table 1 highlights the study's schedule and major tasks.

Several core goals guided the study's design. First, local government engagement was identified as a critical component, given the concerns that led to the passing of SB23-059. Many of the local governments involved were smaller counties experiencing increases in state park visitation, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased visitation puts additional strain on local infrastructure, raising concerns about the condition of access routes to state parks. Engaging with these local governments was essential to understanding their perspective on these challenges and identifying potential solutions.

The study also sought to build a comprehensive understanding of state park access through a combination of secondary data collection and analysis. The Consultant Team utilized mobile device data from Azira to gain insights into travel patterns to state parks across Colorado. The Mobile Location Data section of this report provides more information about the data source and methods used in this analysis, which provided valuable information on visitor home locations, the distribution of trips among various park access roads, and whether visitors were using park roads to access the park or simply passing through. The mobile device data helped generalize visitor home locations by county, offering a system-wide perspective on park visitation patterns across the state. The data was also analyzed in greater detail to examine specific access routes, trip origins, and the proportion of passthrough traffic for six parks that were selected for more in-depth case studies.





TASK		TIMEFRAME
PHASE 1	Task 1: Project kickoff meeting	October 2023
	Task 2: Project management plan development	Early November 2023
	Task 3: Presentation of project management plan	November 2023
PHASE 2	Task 1: Draft criteria/process development, review, and approval	December 2023 – March 2024
	Task 2: Meet with CDOT and DOLA to discuss study plan	Winter 2024
	Task 3: Local government engagement and data collection	Winter/Spring 2024
	Task 4: Stakeholder data standardization and consolidation	Spring/Summer 2024
	Task 5: Additional secondary data collection and analysis	Spring/Summer 2024
	Task 6: Develop Draft Study	Summer 2024
	Task 8: CDOT and DOLA comment period and Draft Study revisions	Summer 2024
PHASE 3	Task 1: Finalize study	Fall 2024
	Task 2: Presentation of the Final Study to the Commission	Fall 2024

Table 1. Local Access Study Schedule

Additionally, the study collected and analyzed data from local governments, including road and bridge budgets, existing agreements, and other relevant documents, to better understand the financial and operational challenges faced by these communities. A literature review was also conducted to assess the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Colorado, specifically focusing on the benefits of state parks to local communities. One key finding that emerged throughout the government engagement process was the need for more diverse and collaborative funding approaches, as some local governments struggle to identify and secure alternative funding sources. To address this, the study includes a thorough Grant Roadmap designed to assist local governments in navigating available funding opportunities.

The study's key outcomes include the development of an application process and evaluation criteria for local governments to apply for funding under SB23-059, a system-wide analysis with a two-page park access summary for each of 42 state parks across Colorado, in-depth case studies on six state parks, a Grant Roadmap to support local governments in securing additional funding, and a set of conclusions and legislative recommendations to guide future efforts in managing state park access and infrastructure.

The combination of local government engagement, comprehensive data collection, and targeted analysis provided a robust foundation for the study. The findings and recommendations presented in this report reflect the insights gained from these efforts and offer a path forward for managing state park access in a way that balances the needs of visitors with the capacities of local communities. The detailed methodology and results of the data analysis are discussed in subsequent sections, along with the broader implications for state park infrastructure management.

DRAFT CRITERIA & PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

As a core component of implementing SB23-059, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) was required to establish, by July 1, 2024, a formal process by which local governments could request an additional fee to be charged on daily vehicle passes for state parks within their jurisdiction. This process needed to be transparent, resulting in clear criteria which aligned with the intent of the legislation.

To achieve this, the resulting application process for local governments involves more than simply requesting the fee. Justification must be provided that the selected access route meets the bill's definition of a "local access route", which is a right-of-way, including bike or pedestrian paths, typically used to travel to or from a state park. In addition, the local access route must be within a three-mile radius to a state park entrance within the petitioner's jurisdiction and at least 50% of its traffic must be directly tied to state park visitation during one week of the year that does not include a major holiday weekend. The jurisdiction can use the funds generated by approved and enacted fees for constructing and maintaining city or county-owned roads leading to state parks, as well as for other eligible infrastructure and services, such as bicycle lanes, shuttle operations, and multimodal access routes.



Local governments can propose a fee amount in their applications, though CPW's ruling must ultimately determine the final fee amounts, which cannot exceed two dollars. The fees must be rounded to the nearest dollar, limiting the current options to \$1 or \$2. Every five years, CPW is required to review the fee for potential adjustments based on inflation or deflation, using the Colorado Department of Transportation's Construction Cost Index. These adjustments could allow the fee to exceed two dollars if necessary. The bill also

specifies that if a state park has multiple access routes maintained by different local governments, and more than one jurisdiction applies for the fee, these governments must agree on how the fee revenue would be apportioned. CPW will then distribute the resulting funds according to the agreement reached by the local governments.

Once a fee is approved and established, CPW will administer it annually. To cover the costs of collecting and administering the fee, CPW is authorized to retain a portion of the fee, capped at three and one-third percent of the total amount collected. The remainder of the fee revenue, after covering administrative costs, will be transferred to the State Treasurer and credited to the Local Access Route Cash Fund. This fund is continuously appropriated to CPW for the purposes outlined in the bill and is designated exclusively for improving local access routes to state parks, ensuring that the revenue generated benefits both the parks and the surrounding communities. Notably, the bill includes no provisions to sunset the additional daily vehicle fees once they are implemented.

In summary, SB23-059 directed CPW to develop a comprehensive and transparent application process for local governments, establish clear criteria for fee approval, and implement a system for the collection, administration, and distribution of fees to support the maintenance and enhancement of local access routes to state parks. Due to the timing of CPW's regulatory processes and the deadlines set in the bill, the criteria for the application and necessary review had to be developed before the completion of this study. The following section summarizes the process undertaken to do so in late 2023 and early 2024, as well as the resulting outcomes.



Criteria Process & Timeline

The process of developing the criteria required under SB23-059 began in late 2023, with the Consultant Team and CPW collaborating closely from the outset of the project. Given the deadlines imposed by CPW’s regulatory processes, it was crucial to begin this work early to ensure that the criteria could be reviewed and approved by the Commission prior to the July 1, 2024, statutory deadline. This deadline enabled an application and review period, with the first round of fees to begin January 1, 2025. Table 2 provides the timeline established to guide the criteria development process.

CRITERIA STEP	TIMEFRAME
Draft Criteria Created	November 2023 – January 2024
Draft Criteria Submitted for Commission Review	January 2024
Draft Criteria Presented to Commission	March 2024
Draft Criteria Finalized by Commission	May 2024
Final Criteria Implemented	July 2024

Table 2. Criteria Process and Timeline

Creation of the Criteria (November 2023 – January 2024)

The creation of the criteria was a collaborative effort between the Consultant Team and CPW. Recognizing that these criteria would be binding for the application process, a series of reviews was implemented to ensure that the process would be navigable for local governments of all sizes. The creation of the criteria immediately identified two major topics that local governments would need to address:

1) Route Qualification

Whether the roadway/access route qualifies under the definitions of SB23-059. Local governments must establish whether their access route fulfills the geographic and jurisdictional requirements outlined in the bill.

2) Funding Justification

Justification that the qualifying local access route requires additional funding for maintenance. Local governments are required to provide a variety of internal data sources, as well as justification for imposing this fee on park visitors.

At the onset of drafting the criteria, CPW’s regulatory experts provided initial guidance and gathered feedback about which metrics would be appropriate and necessary to include. These criteria were developed to align with the requirements of SB23-059 and related to the primary issues identified. The criteria were initially kept broad, with the understanding that some points would likely be refined during subsequent reviews.

The Consultant Team reviewed the draft criteria after CPW’s initial outline. The purpose of this review was to assess whether the criteria were acceptable and feasible for local governments to implement. The Consultant Team used a color-coded scale to evaluate each criterion: green for feasible and ready to implement, yellow for mostly feasible but potentially challenging, and red for likely difficult to implement. Following this review, most criteria were deemed feasible with minor or no revisions, while a few were identified as potentially too onerous for the application process.

After incorporating the Consultant Team’s feedback, CPW revised the criteria and shared them with the broader team for additional vetting and feasibility checks. By this stage, the criteria were ready for presentation to the CPW Commission.



Initial Commission Review (March 2024)

The CPW Commission conducted its first review of the draft criteria during its March 2024 monthly meeting. Commissioners were provided with background information on SB23-059, details of the study, and the drafted criteria. These materials were made publicly available online before the meeting.

Overall, few questions or clarifications were raised during the review. The one issue which resulted in significant discussion/questioning was the criterion requiring local governments to prove that 50% of the traffic on a local access route is tied to park usage. The Commission's main concerns centered on the rationale behind selecting this specific threshold—whether it was based on concrete data—and how local governments would gather and present data to meet this requirement. Following the meeting, the Consultant Team and CPW collaborated to assess whether this metric should be adjusted. After discussions, including consultation with the Commissioner who raised the concern, it was decided to retain the metric, with the understanding that unique situations might require closer examination.

Final Commission Review & Adoption (May 2024)

During the May 2024 CPW Commission meeting, CPW staff presented the proposed final criteria. These included not only the requirements for applying under SB23-059, but also procedural details related to the management of the program, such as audit requirements and fee collection schedules. The Commission formally adopted the regulations to implement SB23-059 State Parks and Wildlife Areas Local Access Funding as proposed, with no further changes. CPW staff reported there was no further discussion regarding the 50% requirement discussed during the initial review or any other topics.

With this formal adoption, local governments may now petition the Parks and Wildlife Commission to initiate rulemaking pursuant to SB23-059, codified in § 33-10-117. The final criteria and accompanying documents are described in the following section.

Final Criteria & Accompanying Documents

This section provides a brief overview of the application process as of publication of this report in fall 2024. Please refer to the CPW website for the current procedures and details.

The process of submitting a rulemaking petition to the Parks and Wildlife Commission begins with a written Local Access Funding Petition. CPW created a Petition Packet with additional guidance as a resource for local governments who may be considering submittal. The Local Government: State Park Access Fee Petition packet can be found on the Rules and Regulations page of the CPW website (<https://cpw.state.co.us/>) and contains the following details:

- 1) **Procedures and details for applying, including:**
 - a. Standing requirements necessary to file a petition
 - b. Petition requirements, evaluation metrics, and suggested data sources
- 2) **A broad overview of the petition process, fund disbursements, and required reporting**
- 3) **A more detailed walk-through of what to expect throughout the petition and reporting process**
- 4) **Frequently Asked Questions**

Procedures and Details for Applying

Petitions are due by May 31st annually to be considered during the same year, and if approved, implemented by January 1st the following year. Any petitions submitted after this date will not be considered until the next petition cycle the following year. Table 3 details the Standing Requirements to file a petition as of November 2024.



STANDING REQUIREMENTS	EVALUATION METRICS	SUGGESTED INFORMATION & DATA SOURCE(S)
1) It is responsible for an existing local access route(s) that provides access to a state park within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries	A “local access route” pursuant to SB23-059 is defined as a right-of-way, including a bike or pedestrian path, which is normally used to travel to or from a state park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of the local access route(s). • Detailed description of the local access route(s) (length of route(s), location of route(s), etc.). • Map(s) of the route(s)
2) The existing local access route(s) is located within a 3-mile radius to a state park entrance within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries.	N/A	GIS layer displaying local access route’s distance from the nearest state park’s entrance(s) and total length.
3) 50% or more of the traffic on the existing local access route(s) in the petitioner’s geographic boundaries is directly tied to park visitation during one week not including a major holiday weekend.	N/A	Visitor surveys, mobile location data analysis, and/or traffic count monitoring plans.

Table 3. Standing Requirements to File a Petition

If CPW staff determine that a petition meets the standing requirements to file a petition outlined above, the following steps will be undertaken:

- 1) **The petition will be presented to the Commission at the August or September Commission meeting of the same year**
- 2) **Based on the totality of the information provided by the petitioner, the Commission shall grant or deny the petition**
- 3) **If the Commission grants the petition, the Commission will approve the state park access fee at the November Commission meeting of the same year**
- 4) **Any approved state park access fee will then go into effect by January 1st of the following year**

Granting the petition and imposing the fee is at the discretion of the Commission and is not legally required. However, the Commission shall not unreasonably withhold approval of a request to create the fee. The Commission will consider granting the state park access fee if the petitioner can meet the Standing Requirements outlined in Table 3 and is able to meet one of the two following Petition Requirements. CPW will coordinate with the petitioner to provide access to relevant information and/or data as appropriate to meet the evaluation metrics.

Petition Requirement 1:

Identify the existing local access route(s) within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries in need of funding for maintenance, including the current and anticipated costs and benefits of such route(s), and prioritize the existing local access route(s) in terms of most urgent need of funding. Suggested information to support Petition Requirement 1 is outlined in Table 4.



SUGGESTED INFORMATION / DATA SOURCE(S)
Photographs of the local access route(s).
Description of the conditions of the local access route(s) based on existing Level of Service assessments.
If Level of Service assessments are unavailable/not applicable, petitioners may rate their local access route(s) using the rating scale outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POOR: extremely deteriorated roadways, may only be passable at reduced speeds; deep cracks, large potholes, and other signs of distress cover 50-75% of the route. • MEDIOCRE: Noticeably inferior both in ride quality and appearance; distress and defects are obvious. • FAIR: Mostly smooth ride, few signs of distress, some cracks and patches, small potholes visible. • GOOD: New or nearly new roadways, smooth ride, distress-free, minimal cracks and patches.

Table 4. Suggested Information to Support Petition Requirement 1

Petition Requirement 2:

Identify the need for financial assistance to support additional access to state parks within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries (supporting access may include maintaining and constructing local roads, bicycle lanes, shuttle operations, and multimodal access routes) through a state park access fee.

Petitioners may provide information and/or data on any combination of the evaluation metrics outlined in Table 5 to demonstrate the need for financial assistance:

EVALUATION METRICS	SUGGESTED INFORMATION & DATA SOURCE(S)
1. Existing infrastructure costs incurred by the petitioner in supporting access to the state park.	Quantitative data on infrastructure costs available to support this criterion.
2. Existing deficits with local transportation infrastructure and services within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries to the state park.	Quantitative data and/or detailed descriptions of existing deficits available to support this criterion (existing roadway funding, current maintenance budgets, etc.).
3. Quantitative data demonstrating how traffic from state park visitors negatively impacts the local access route(s).	Quantitative financial data available to support this criterion.
4. A brief narrative description of the economic and community benefits provided by state parks to businesses and communities within the petitioner’s boundaries.	Brief descriptive narrative on the economic and community benefits provided by the state park based on available information. If quantitative data is available to support this criteria, include as appropriate.
5. A comparison of the petitioner’s financial demands of maintaining transportation infrastructure and services needed to access state parks in relation to the financial demands of maintaining other local transportation infrastructure and services within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries.	Quantitative financial data available to support this criteria (existing roadway funding, current maintenance budgets, etc.).
6. Existing local government revenue, including fees, assessments, and taxes (including payments in lieu of taxes (PILT)) that are available to (1) develop and maintain transportation infrastructure; or (2) provide transportation services related to recreation, within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries.	Federal PILT financial data Impact Assistance Grants financial data (Colorado’s equivalent of PILT) May include an evaluation in coordination with CPW of the costs incurred by CPW to maintain internal state park roads that are being used by local, non-park visitor traffic as a pass-through to get from one side of a park to the other.



EVALUATION METRICS	SUGGESTED INFORMATION & DATA SOURCE(S)
7. Current resources available for and dedicated to local transportation infrastructure and services for a baseline of existing maintenance budgets and the predictability and reliability of these sources.	Detailed descriptions of current resources available (existing roadway funding, current maintenance budgets, etc.).
8. Any existing sources of funding, agreements, and/or partnerships with CPW and/or other government agencies to provide maintenance for local transportation routes and the type(s) of maintenance performed on an annual basis. If any such sources of funding, agreements, and/or partnerships exist, outline the amount of money/resources CPW and/or other agencies allocate towards maintenance of the local transportation route(s) on an annual basis.	Funding agreements, partnership agreements, etc.
9. If applicable, detailed examples of past issues with providing local transportation infrastructure and services used to access state parks within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries.	Brief descriptive narrative of past issues.

Table 5. Evaluation Metrics and Suggested Information to Support Petition Requirement 2

Petition Overview

Application cycles will be available on an annual basis. If a new state park is established after the application period, the petitioner with the new state park within their geographic boundaries must wait until the next application period to petition for the fee. The state park access fee shall apply to the entire state park within the petitioner’s geographic boundaries and shall not differ in price based on park entrance station location. When a daily vehicle pass is purchased at a state park, it is valid at any state park until noon the following day. However, any state park access fee revenue will be tied to the park where the daily vehicle pass was purchased.

If a state park has multiple local access routes that are maintained by multiple local governments, all of which request the state park access fee, the petitioner shall determine by agreement in writing how the fee revenue is to be apportioned if the state park access fee is granted; this agreement shall be provided to CPW prior to any fund disbursement to the petitioner(s). If a local government that was not a party listed in the initial petition or in the fee apportionment agreement wants to apply for the state park access fee after it has been approved by the Commission, the local government may enter into discussions with the local government(s) who were part of the initial petition and fee apportionment agreement in order to revise the fee apportionment agreement to attain a portion of the originally approved fee. CPW must be provided with the revised fee agreement before any funds will be disbursed to the additional local government.

Reporting Requirements

The Commission shall adjust the fee every five years to account for inflation or deflation. The first fee adjustment will occur in 2030 and will repeat every 5 years. Reporting is required to be submitted by September 2nd at the end of every 5-year cycle.



Reporting should include at a minimum:

- 1) **Expenditure details**
- 2) **A description of the project(s) that the local government is currently or is planning to use the disbursed funds on.**
The local government should demonstrate how the disbursed funds are being used or will be used to support access to state parks within their geographic boundaries, which may include maintaining and constructing local roads, bicycle lanes, shuttle operations, and multimodal access routes
- 3) **A description of how state park access has benefited or will benefit from the existing or proposed project(s)**

Inflation Adjustments

Any local governments that petitioned for and were granted the state park access fee prior to the first fee adjustment will automatically receive the inflation-adjusted fee at the start of the next 5-year cycle, rounded to the nearest whole number. Any local governments that petition for and are granted the fee after the first fee adjustment period will automatically receive the inflation-adjusted fee.

Fund Disbursements

CPW shall disburse any funds collected to the appropriate local governments on a quarterly basis from the Local Access Route Cash Fund, minus the administrative cost of collecting the fee, which is not to exceed 3.33% of the fee. There is no deadline within which the local government must utilize the disbursed funds. However, the local government's five-year report must demonstrate how the local government anticipates using the disbursed funds to support access to state parks within a reasonable period.





COLORADO STATE PARKS: SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS

Introduction

This section provides a wide-ranging analysis of park access and infrastructure challenges across Colorado's state parks, informed by extensive engagement with park managers, local government officials, and data-driven insights. The Consultant Team's efforts included broad analysis of the economic impacts of state parks on surrounding communities, site visits to many state park properties around Colorado, consultations with key stakeholders, and a thorough review of mobile location data to assess visitor patterns.

Each state park in Colorado faces unique challenges influenced by factors such as visitor volume, geographic location, and the availability of local resources. This section of the report offers a detailed overview of these challenges, supported by data that underscores the current state of park infrastructure and the ongoing need for investment in local access routes.

This system-wide analysis begins with a broad examination of the economic impact of Colorado's state parks. Then, an overview of the methodologies and data sources used in the local government engagement and mobility data components of the analysis are presented. These two components, local government engagement and mobility data, were the foundation for the detailed park-specific information provided in the concluding section of this system-wide analysis: individual park access summaries for 42 state parks across Colorado¹.

Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation in Colorado

Outdoor recreation is a significant and growing contributor to the U.S. economy, and its impact is particularly notable in Colorado. Nationwide, the outdoor recreation economy generated \$1.1 trillion in economic output in 2022, with a value-added of \$564 billion, representing 2.2% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP)². This sector's contribution was up 4.8% from 2021, and surpasses that of several major industries, including air transportation, oil and gas development, and motor vehicle manufacturing.

In Colorado, \$13.9 billion, or 2.8% of the state's overall GDP, came from the outdoor recreation industry in 2022¹. This was a 19% increase from 2021 and highlights the industry's continued strength in the state. Additionally, the sector supported 130,000 direct jobs in 2022, underscoring the critical role that outdoor recreation plays in Colorado's economy, contributing not only to economic output but also to employment and community well-being.

A 2023 study commissioned by CPW sought to understand the economic contribution of outdoor recreation within the state. The study found that 85% of Colorado's adult residents participated in outdoor recreation in 2023, contributing to a higher quality of life by promoting healthier and happier communities. We also know that Colorado draws significant out of state tourism based on its outdoor amenities. While winter activities such as skiing and snowboarding remain the largest economic driver in Colorado's outdoor recreation industry, activities such as fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching—key attractions at state parks and wildlife areas—also make significant contributions. In 2023, Colorado's state parks and wildlife areas supported nearly 77,000 jobs and generated \$12.5 billion in total economic output across the state³.

The economic impact of state parks is particularly relevant to local governments. State parks contribute to local economies by creating jobs, providing salaries, and generating county and local taxes through visitor

¹ As of publication, the Lone Mesa and Sweetwater Lake properties are both under development planning. Due to limited public access at this time, they are not analyzed in this report.

² Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, 2023; Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce

³ "The 2023 Economic Contributions of Outdoor Recreation in Colorado", 2024; Southwick Associates



spending. This impact varies regionally, depending on the types of activities available and the volume of visitors each park attracts.

To better understand this impact, a study commissioned in 2009 aimed to describe the economic impacts of state parks based on direct spending within local economies, defined as areas within a 50-mile radius of each park⁴. Visitors were asked to estimate their spending related to their trip to the park, including expenditures on lodging, gas, food, supplies, and other expenses both inside and outside the park. The study then calculated total visitor expenditures by multiplying per-vehicle visitor expenditures by the total number of visitors to each park during a one-year period from June 2008 to May 2009.

The 2009 study calculated direct spending for two distinct visitor populations:

1) All Visitors

This category includes all visitors to each state park, regardless of their origins. It captures spending by both non-local visitors (those traveling from more than 50 miles away) and local visitors (those originating within 50 miles of the park).

2) Non-Local Visitors

This more conservative estimate includes only visitors coming to a state park from an origin more than 50 miles away. The assumption here is that local visitors may have spent a similar amount of money elsewhere in the community if they had not visited the park, and therefore spending by locals is merely a redirection of dollars. The isolated non-local spending total represents a highly defensible and conservative assumption that these dollars are being brought into the community as a result of the trip.

The data from the 2009 study provides a baseline for understanding the economic contributions of state parks to the local areas surrounding them. While these estimates offer valuable insights, it is important to note that significant changes in economic impact would be expected given the time that has passed since the study was conducted. The data presented for six individual parks in the subsequent case studies section of this report highlights the enduring economic significance of state parks to their surrounding communities and reinforces the importance of ongoing investment in park infrastructure and access.

Local Government Engagement Process

Engagement with Colorado’s state parks and surrounding local governments was a major component of this study. As mandated by SB23-059, understanding the state of current access at each park and the associated costs, concerns, and existing arrangements with local governments was crucial.

The engagement process timeline is detailed in Table 6.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT	DATE BEGAN
State Park Managers Meeting	December 2023
Questionnaire about Local Access sent to State Park Managers	December 2023
Site Visits to State Parks	January 2024-May 2024
Meetings and Contacts with Local Government Officials	January 2024-July 2024

Table 6. Local Government Engagement Timeline

As outlined in the timeline above, engagement with park managers and local government officials began soon after the study's initiation in December 2023. The Consultant Team’s engagement process is summarized below.

⁴ “Colorado State Parks Marketing Assessment: Visitor Spending Analysis 2008-2009”, 2009; Corona Research, Inc.

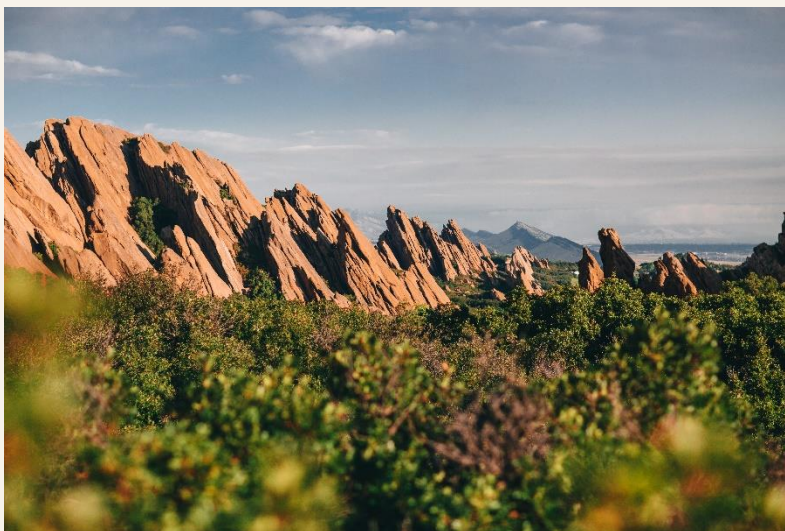
State Park Managers Meeting

The Consultant Team first met with the majority of CPW's State Park Managers at their monthly meeting and held a separate meeting with Deputy Regional Managers. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce state park leaders to SB23-059 and the study process, which would require the Consultant Team to contact many of the managers throughout the study. During these meetings, the team discussed possible local governments to engage with, as well as whether any existing discussions around SB23-059 were already taking place. These initial conversations helped lay the groundwork for the engagement process and ensured that state park leaders were informed and prepared to collaborate on the study's objectives.

State Park Manager Questionnaire

Following the presentation at the December 2023 State Park Managers Meeting, the Consultant Team distributed an online questionnaire to all state park managers to gather preliminary insights on issues related to park access and infrastructure. The questionnaire aimed to assess awareness of SB23-059, the perceived strain of park visitation on local infrastructure, and the extent of engagement between park managers and local governments.

The Consultant Team received responses from 22 of the 34 Colorado state park managers (with some managers overseeing multiple parks). The feedback from this questionnaire provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with managing park access and infrastructure from the park's perspective. The responses helped identify parks that were potentially complex and experiencing issues, which in turn shaped the subsequent engagement efforts.



Summary of Key Results:

- **Awareness of SB23-059**
The majority of state park managers were aware of the legislation, with most respondents familiar with its implications.
- **Perceived Strain on Local Infrastructure**
Responses varied, with many managers reporting a "Low" to "Moderate" strain on surrounding non-park infrastructure due to park visitation. A few parks reported "No Strain," indicating variability based on location and visitor volume.
- **Costs to Local Governments**
Opinions were divided on whether local governments incurred additional costs due to park visitation. Some managers acknowledged this issue, while others were uncertain or believed the economic benefits outweighed the costs.
- **Engagement with Local Governments**
Engagement levels with local governments were mixed, with some managers having initiated discussions or partnerships to address infrastructure impacts, while others had not.
- **Potential Funding and Partnerships**
The need for further exploration of potential funding sources and partnerships to support local infrastructure was evident, though responses indicated this area remains underdeveloped.



Site Visits & Meetings with Local Officials

In January 2024, the Consultant Team began in-depth local engagement, focusing on parks and their interactions with local jurisdictions. Based on the questionnaire responses, site visits and meetings were prioritized for parks with access routes eligible for the daily vehicle fee under SB23-059, particularly those where local governments showed interest in the legislation. This assisted with identifying specific parks for deeper analysis and case studies while also beginning to shape the study's overall findings.

Overall, every state park in Colorado received an in-person site visit and/or some form of remote engagement, regardless of SB23-059 eligibility or perceived interest. During site visits, the Consultant Team toured parks, observed access routes, and discussed the relationships between parks and surrounding communities. Key discussion points included the impact of park visitation on local infrastructure, jurisdictional responsibilities for maintaining access routes, and the potential need for additional funding mechanisms. These engagements also facilitated follow-up with local governments to collect data on transportation budgets, projects, spending, and funding sources, further informing the study's recommendations. Multiple diverse collaborative arrangements were revealed from these discussions, which are discussed further in the later Notable State Park Access & Infrastructure Case Studies section.

Mobile Location Data Source & Methods

Mobile location data was a key component of this project, used to identify travel and visitation patterns for state parks across Colorado. This data consists of anonymized information identifying specific devices, their locations, and timestamps. The data is passively collected from personal cell phones and other app-enabled devices for which users have opted to allow location services. The sheer volume of participating apps (currently more than 250,000 different apps provide location data) coupled with the near ubiquity of smartphones enables researchers to capture a broad range of users across different demographics and geographies. Moreover, because this data is passively collected, it allows for retrospective analysis of travel patterns going back to 2019, providing valuable insights into visitation trends over time.

For this report, the mobile location data was derived from the Azira Pinnacle dataset. This dataset was selected to help understand where visitors to state parks in Colorado live and where their trips to state parks originate. The analysis focused on data from the 2023 calendar year (January 1st to December 31st). The results of this analysis are presented in the Park Access Summaries section for each park.

While high-level home location data was analyzed for all 42 parks, the Consultant Team also selected six state parks for in-depth case studies, which are presented in a subsequent section of this report. These six parks were identified based on a variety of factors, including strong interest in SB23-059, complex access routes, previous discussions about park access issues, and engagement with local governments during the study. The case studies delve into the specific access issues faced by these parks and explore the collaborative efforts between park managers and local governments to address these challenges.

Home Locations Analysis

The analysis to determine the home locations of visitors was conducted using a data source known as the Common Evening and Daytime Locations report. This report identifies where a device typically remains during evening and daytime hours, which can be used as a proxy for the likely home and work locations of the device owner.

To map the home locations of state park visitors, the Common Evening Location data was used as a proxy for the home location of each visitor. The analysis involved filtering all trips that either started or ended at a state park and identifying each device's most frequent evening location as its home. If a device had multiple common evening locations, only the most frequent location was considered in the analysis. This methodology provides a broad understanding of where state park visitors are coming from.



In the Park Access Summaries section to follow, a figure is presented for each state park for which the Azira dataset contained sufficient 2023 data to analyze visitor home locations with confidence. Each figure illustrating home locations consists of two key components: a state map and a bar chart. Together, these two visual elements – described below – communicate the geographic distribution of visitors’ home locations and any seasonal variations in visitation patterns.

State Map:

- The map shows Colorado at the county level, with county borders clearly outlined and the location of the relevant state park marked.
- Counties are color-coded based on the percentage of annual trips originating from them as the home location (i.e., the estimated percentage of park visits made by residents of that county), with the darkest brown shading representing the county with the highest share of trips.
- All counties identified as the home location of at least one trip are labeled. Counties labeled, but shaded in white, account for fewer than 1% of trips.
- Counties without labels, shaded dark grey, represent locations from which no trips to the park were recorded in the home locations dataset.

Bar Chart:

- The bar chart illustrates the share of trips attributed by each individual county with greater than 1% of annual trips, out-of-state visitors, and all other Colorado counties (i.e., those each contributing at least one trip, but fewer than 1% of annual trips) combined.
- Beige bars represent the percentage of “all year” or annual trips attributed to each sector. To allow for comparison of seasonal visitation patterns, blue bars represent the share of summer trips, and dark green bars show the share of winter trips.

By comparing the map and bar chart together, users can quickly assess both the geographic distribution of visitor residency, and any seasonal patterns that might impact visitation. For example, several parks attract broader non-local visitation during the summer but see higher levels of local visitation in the winter.

Park Access Summaries

The following section presents the detailed park access summaries described above for 42 of Colorado's state parks. Each park summary highlights the most relevant aspects of each park’s local access routes and visitor patterns.

The first page of each park’s access summary provides the following key information:

1. A park map with clearly labeled access routes.
2. Total visitation numbers for 2023.
3. Possible 2024 fee revenue under SB23-059, assuming a \$2 fee on daily vehicle passes (See the memo presenting estimated revenue from CPW [here](#)).
4. Identification of potential fee applicants based on eligible access routes.
5. A narrative description of the park and its access points.

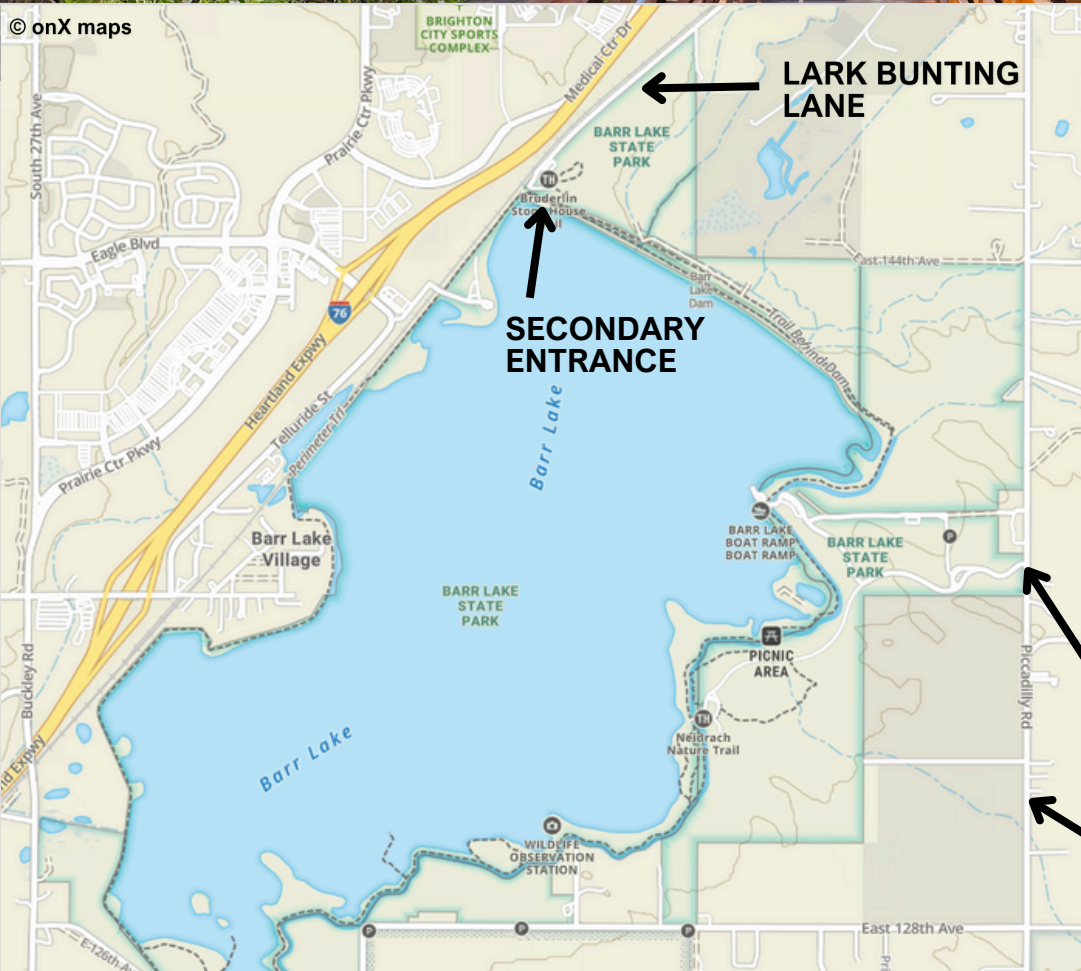
The second page of each park’s access summary presents the analysis of park visitor home locations, derived from mobility data, as described above. First, Table 7 provides an overview of each park’s key quantitative data (items 2 through 4 as listed above).



STATE PARK		2023 VISITATION TOTAL	2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE	POTENTIAL APPLICANT(S)
NORTHEAST REGION	Barr Lake	199,000	\$17,500	Adams County
	Boyd Lake	569,000	\$46,500	Larimer County
	Castlewood Canyon	168,000	\$29,600	Douglas County
	Chatfield	2,194,000	\$118,500	Douglas County
	Cherry Creek	1,682,000	\$124,300	Arapahoe County
	Eldorado Canyon	506,000	\$32,800	Boulder County
	Eleven Mile	204,000	\$24,300	Park County
	Golden Gate Canyon	1,543,000	\$33,200	Gilpin County
	Jackson Lake	213,000	\$16,400	Morgan County
	Lory	230,000	\$29,800	Larimer County
	North Sterling	190,000	\$6,000	Logan County
	Roxborough	173,000	\$21,400	Douglas County
	Spinney Mountain	70,000	\$3,900	Park County
	St. Vrain	250,000	\$18,000	Town of Firestone
	Staunton	300,000	\$21,500	Jefferson County
NORTHWEST REGION	Elkhead Reservoir	220,000	\$2,800	Moffat & Routt counties
	Harvey Gap	70,000	\$5,800	Garfield County
	Highline Lake	255,000	\$17,800	Mesa County
	James M. Robb	542,000	\$28,100	Mesa County & City of Grand Junction
	Pearl Lake	30,000	\$4,100	Routt County
	Rifle Falls	155,000	\$19,400	None
	Rifle Gap	270,000	\$11,500	Garfield County
	Stagecoach	273,000	\$9,900	Routt County
	State Forest	344,000	\$10,300	Jackson County
	Steamboat Lake	457,000	\$10,400	Routt County
	Sylvan Lake	109,000	\$6,200	Eagle County
	Vega	217,000	\$4,200	Mesa County
	Yampa River	156,000	\$2,000	Moffat County
SOUTHEAST REGION	Arkansas Headwaters	1,132,000	\$16,900	Multiple
	Cheyenne Mountain	193,000	\$16,200	City of Colorado Springs
	Fishers Peak	14,000	\$1,000	None
	John Martin Reservoir	218,000	\$7,100	Bent County
	Lake Pueblo	3,072,000	\$77,400	Pueblo County & City of Pueblo
	Lathrop State Park	117,000	\$10,800	Huerfano County
	Mueller	121,000	\$13,900	Teller County
	Trinidad Lake	222,000	\$9,900	Las Animas County
SOUTHWEST REGION	Crawford	264,000	\$3,500	Delta & Montrose County
	Mancos	25,000	\$3,500	Montezuma County
	Navajo	278,000	\$5,100	Archuleta County
	Paonia	15,000	\$500	Gunnison County
	Ridgway	966,000	\$29,400	Ouray County & Town of Ridgway
	Sweitzer Lake	43,000	\$4,600	Delta County

Table 7. Park Summary Overview

BARR LAKE



2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

199K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$17,500

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

**Adams
County**

MAIN ENTRANCE

PICADILLY ROAD

Located a short drive northeast of Denver near Denver International Airport, the main feature of Barr Lake State Park is its large prairie reservoir, comprising 1,950 acres of the 3,597-acre park. The park is a top destination for birders from the Front Range and across the western U.S. The park is open for day use only, offering a nature center and archery range, and opportunities for fishing, motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, geocaching, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing.

Barr Lake has two vehicle access points: the park's main entrance off Picadilly Road and the lesser-used North Entrance off Lark Bunting Lane. Both of these paved roads are managed by Adams County, and are currently in good condition. In addition to park visitors, Picadilly Road receives frequent oil and gas industry truck traffic and use by commuters. Traffic on Lark Bunting Lane is primarily local residents and users of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. According to park staff, the local jurisdictions – Adams County and the City of Brighton – view the park as an asset to the local community and have assisted the park in funding new amenities and activities. Given the present state of the park's existing access points and their use beyond park visitors, it is unlikely that it would meet the criteria for funding under SB23-059. However, future development is slated for the area west of the park, which could result in increased visitation and additional access routes.



Barr Lake State Park Visitor Residency

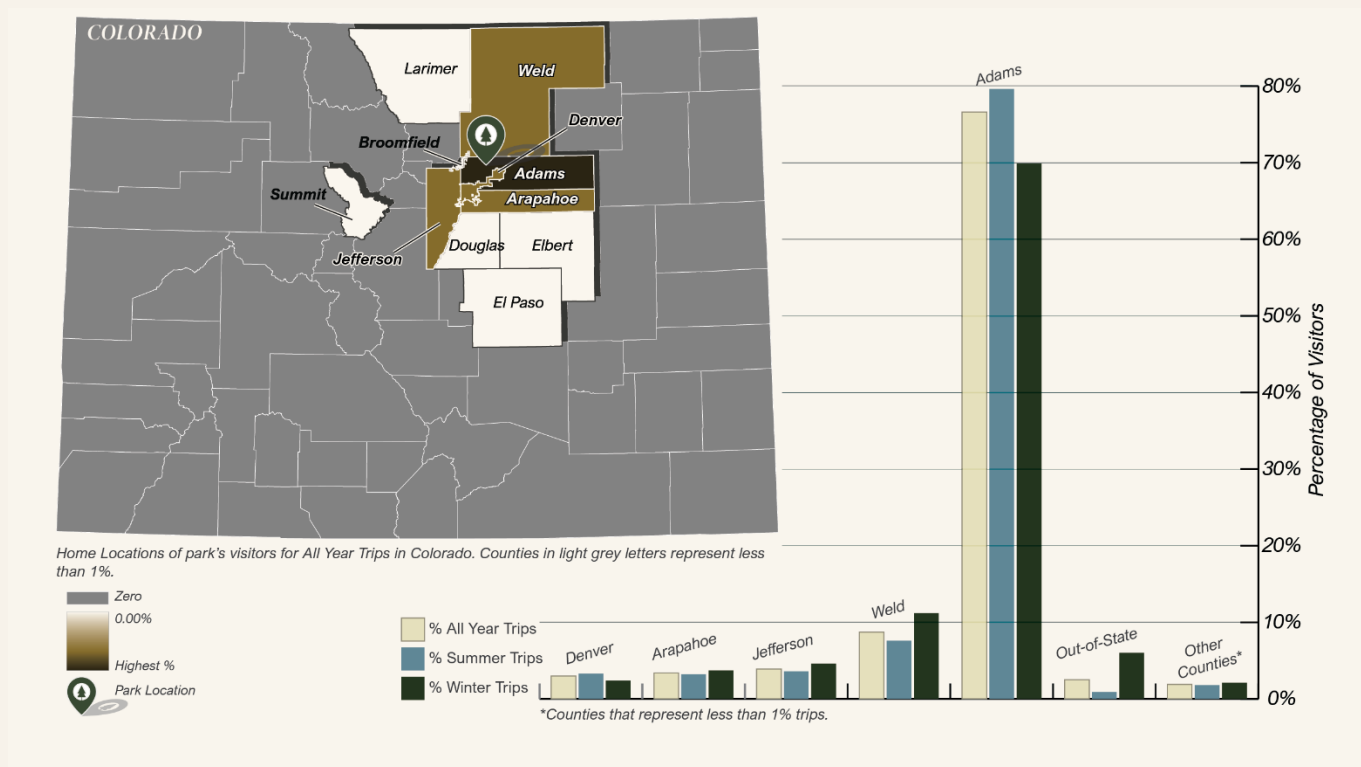


Figure 1. Home Locations of Visitors to Barr Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 1, local residents of Adams County account for approximately 75% of annual visits to Barr Lake State Park. This share rises to nearly 80% during the summer and drops slightly to around 70% during the winter.

Weld County contributes fewer than 10% of visitors annually, though this percentage increases to 11% in the winter. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round, with little seasonal variation.

BOYD LAKE



**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

569K

**2024 POSSIBLE FEE
REVENUE:**

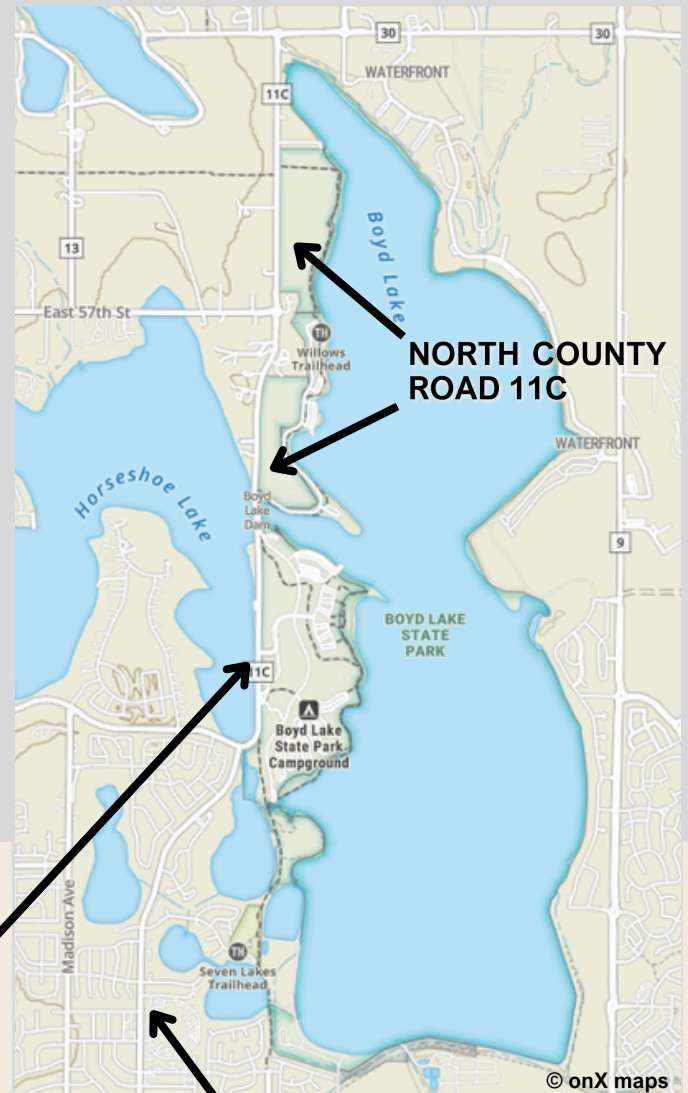
\$46,500

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

Larimer County

Boyd Lake State Park, located in Larimer County just an hour north of Denver, is a prime water-sports destination, providing 1,747 surface-acres of water for use by all types of watercraft. The lake is open to motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, and fishing, and the family-oriented park also offers a swim beach, year-round camping, hiking, biking, hunting, geocaching, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and ice skating.

The park has one primary entrance off North County Road 11C, a paved road that is heavily used by commuters within the City of Loveland in addition to park visitors. While the road is generally in good condition, it experiences significant backups on the park's busy days, necessitating additional management by park staff with support from the city. Extreme backups occur a few times a year, affecting surrounding roads in Larimer County and the City of Loveland. To address these issues, variable message boards are used to advise of traffic conditions on summer and holiday weekends. However, park traffic is thought to have a low overall impact on local road wear and tear. Because the road supports significant additional local traffic beyond park users, it is unlikely that it would meet the criteria for funding under SB23-059.



PARK ENTRANCE

**NORTH COUNTY
ROAD 11C**

NORTH BOISE AVENUE

© onX maps



Boyd Lake State Park Visitor Residency

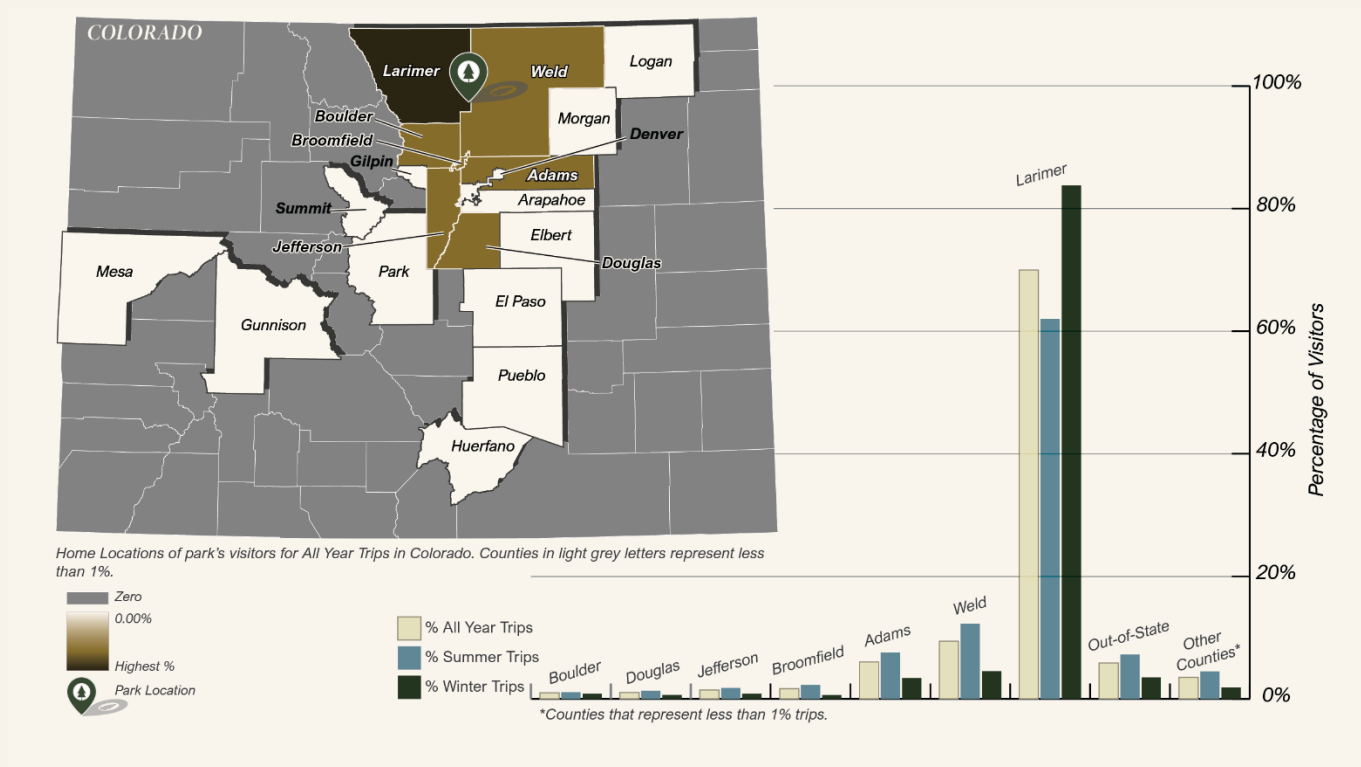


Figure 2. Home Locations of Visitors to Boyd Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 2, residents of Larimer County account for approximately 70% of annual visits to Boyd Lake State Park. The share attributed to Larimer County residents increases during the winter months (exceeding 80%) and drops slightly during the summer (just above 60%). These results indicate a strong local presence at Boyd Lake State Park throughout the year, particularly in winter.

Weld County follows as the second most common home location of park visitors, contributing around 10% of trips across all seasons. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round, accounting for higher shares of total visits in summer than in winter.

CASTLEWOOD CANYON



Preserving 2,004 acres of Colorado's Black Forest between Denver and Colorado Springs, Castlewood Canyon State Park is a day use area providing opportunities for wildlife watching and birding, hiking, technical rock climbing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

The park's roads serve both the park and the local communities. There are two primary access routes to Castlewood Canyon State Park. Most visitors enter the park from CO State Highway 83, which provides paved access to the visitor center and many of the park's facilities. Visitors can also access the park via Castlewood Canyon Road, which is paved north of Lucas Homestead Trailhead and unpaved to the south, and maintained by Douglas County. Recent improvements by the County Road and Bridge Department have included widening the road and installing culverts within the park boundaries. These enhancements not only benefit park visitors but also support the surrounding residential areas, whose occupants commute through the park. Park staff notes that while Castlewood Canyon undoubtedly contributes traffic to the local roads, the majority of the park's visitors utilize SH 83, and the impact on the County roads isn't believed to be significant enough to rank highly among the County's concerns. Based on discussion with local stakeholders and evaluations of the road system, it is currently unlikely that the local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059.

WEST ENTRANCE

LUCAS HOMESTEAD TRAILHEAD

CASTLEWOOD CANYON ROAD (PAVEMENT)

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:

168K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:

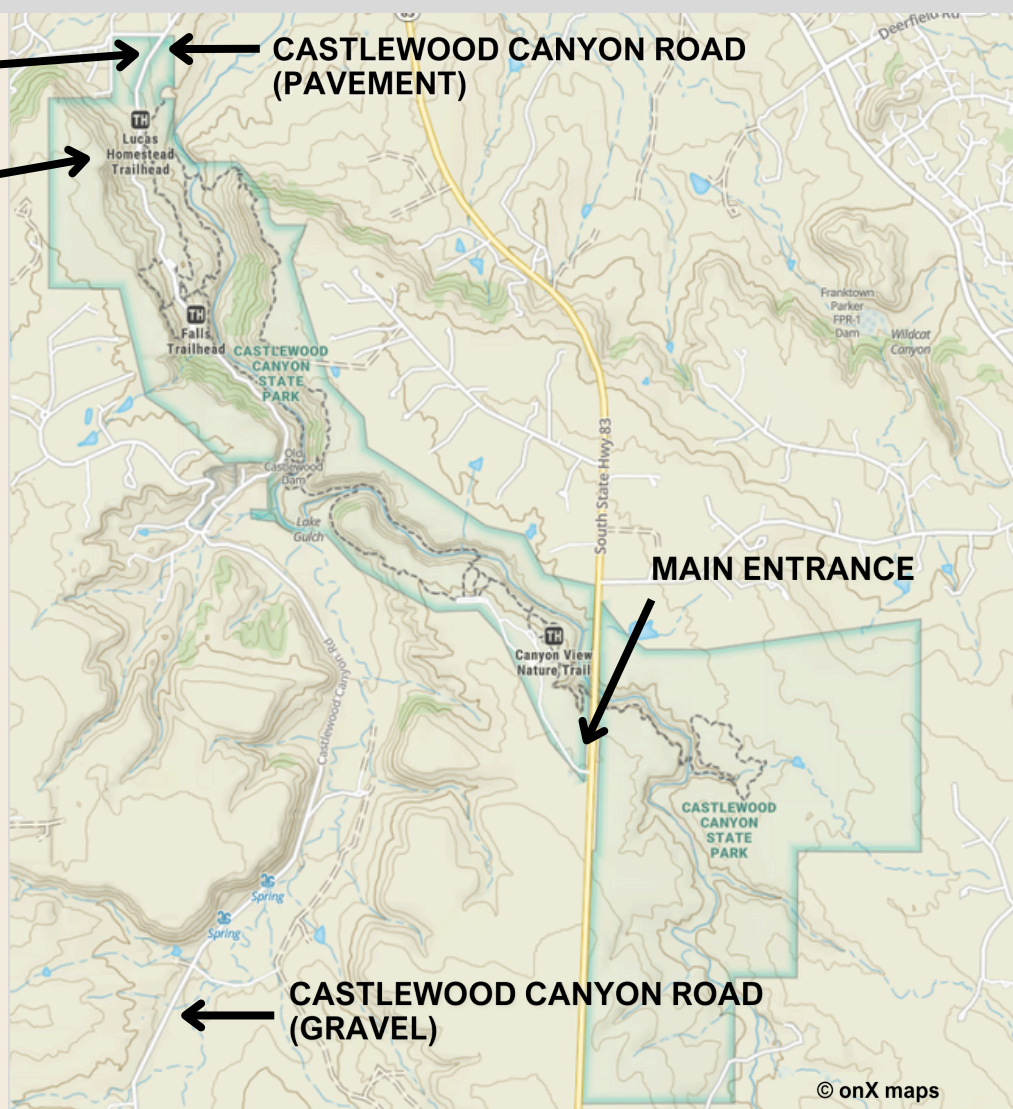
\$29,600

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Douglas County

MAIN ENTRANCE

CASTLEWOOD CANYON ROAD (GRAVEL)





Castlewood Canyon State Park Visitor Residency

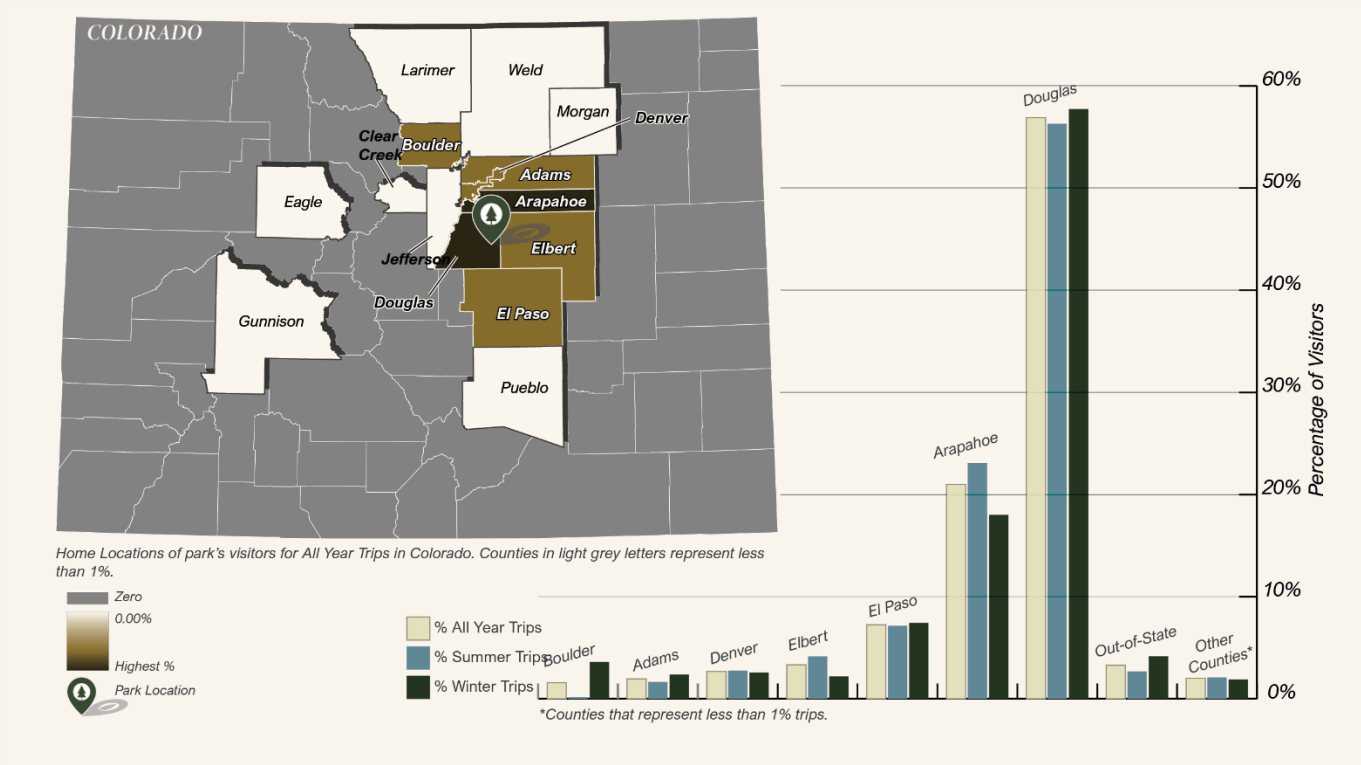


Figure 3. Home Locations of Visitors to Castlewood Canyon State Park

As shown in Figure 3, Douglas County is the primary home location of visitors to Castlewood Canyon State Park, accounting for approximately 56% of year-round trips. This proportion remains relatively consistent across both the summer and winter seasons, indicating a stable local visitor base throughout the year.

Arapahoe County follows as the second most common home location, accounting for around 20% of trips annually, with a stronger presence in summer than in winter. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.

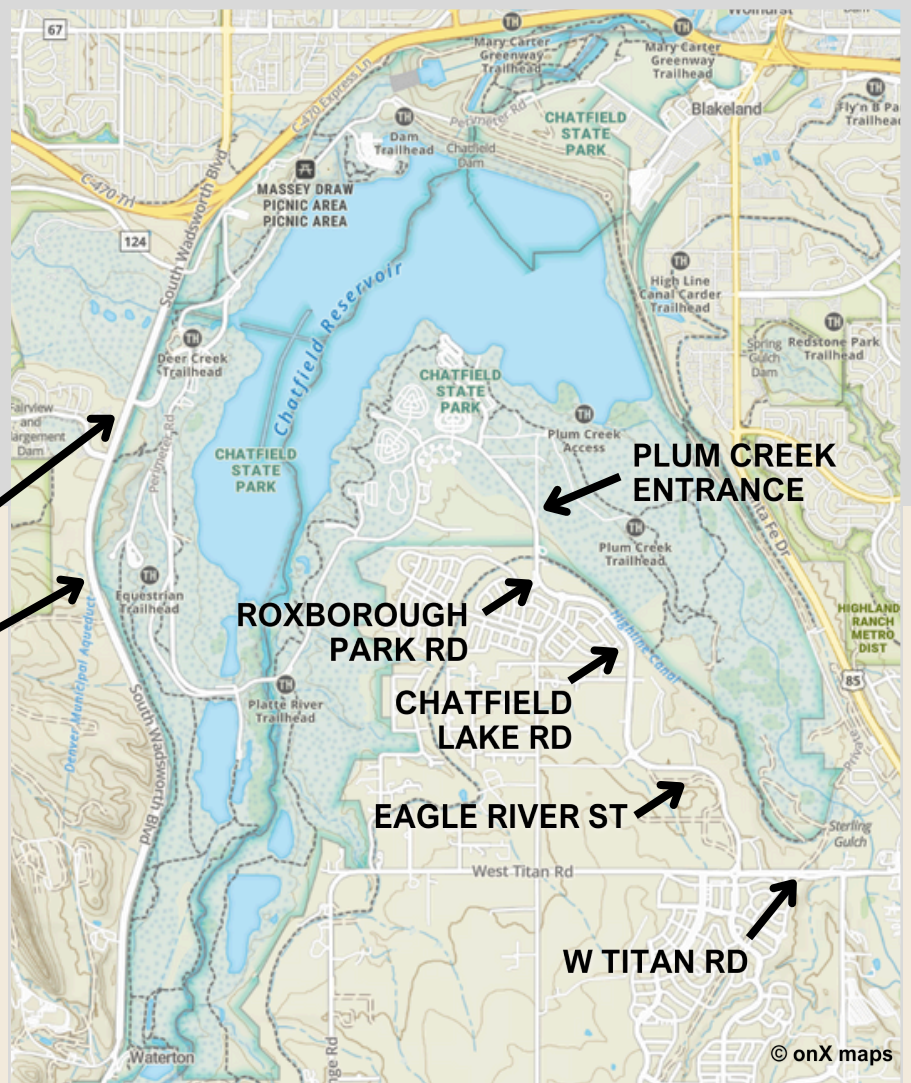


CHATFIELD

Located in the foothills southwest of Denver, Chatfield State Park was the 2nd-most visited State Park in Colorado in 2023. A main draw of the park is 1,500 surface-acre reservoir, which is open for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, swimming, fishing, ice fishing, and ice skating. An additional 4,000 acres of land provide opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and birding, year-round camping, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The park is also a destination for hot air balloon launching and model airplane flying and has a popular 69-acre dog off-leash area.

Chatfield State Park has two main motorized vehicle entrances and multiple additional entrances providing access by foot, bike, or horseback. The non-motorized access points are well integrated with adjacent neighborhoods; local agencies bear the costs of building and maintaining these access points, which see minimal use by non-residents. The primary motor vehicle entrance, located off CO State Highway 121, also serves nearby suburban neighborhoods, other recreational areas, and the Lockheed-Martin aerospace facility. The secondary motor vehicle entrance, served by two Douglas County Roads, sees less traffic, catering to fewer park visitors than the main entrance, and also serves other recreational areas and neighborhoods.

While park visitors contribute to traffic on all access points, the impact is considered negligible compared to other uses. Park staff indicate that their local partners, with whom they work closely, have never brought up funding for local access as an area of concern. The park is currently collecting data on daily pass sales in anticipation of petitioning for a \$2 fee increase for water projects starting in January 2025. Given these factors, as well as the fact that the access roads support substantial local traffic and commuters, it is currently unlikely that local jurisdictions will pursue funding under SB23-059.



**DEER CREEK ENTRANCE
(MAIN ENTRANCE)**

**S WADSWORTH
(CO HIGHWAY 121)**

**PLUM CREEK
ENTRANCE**

**ROXBOROUGH
PARK RD**

**CHATFIELD
LAKE RD**

EAGLE RIVER ST

W TITAN RD

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS: **2.2 million**

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE: **\$118,500**

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT: **Douglas
County**



Chatfield State Park Visitor Residency

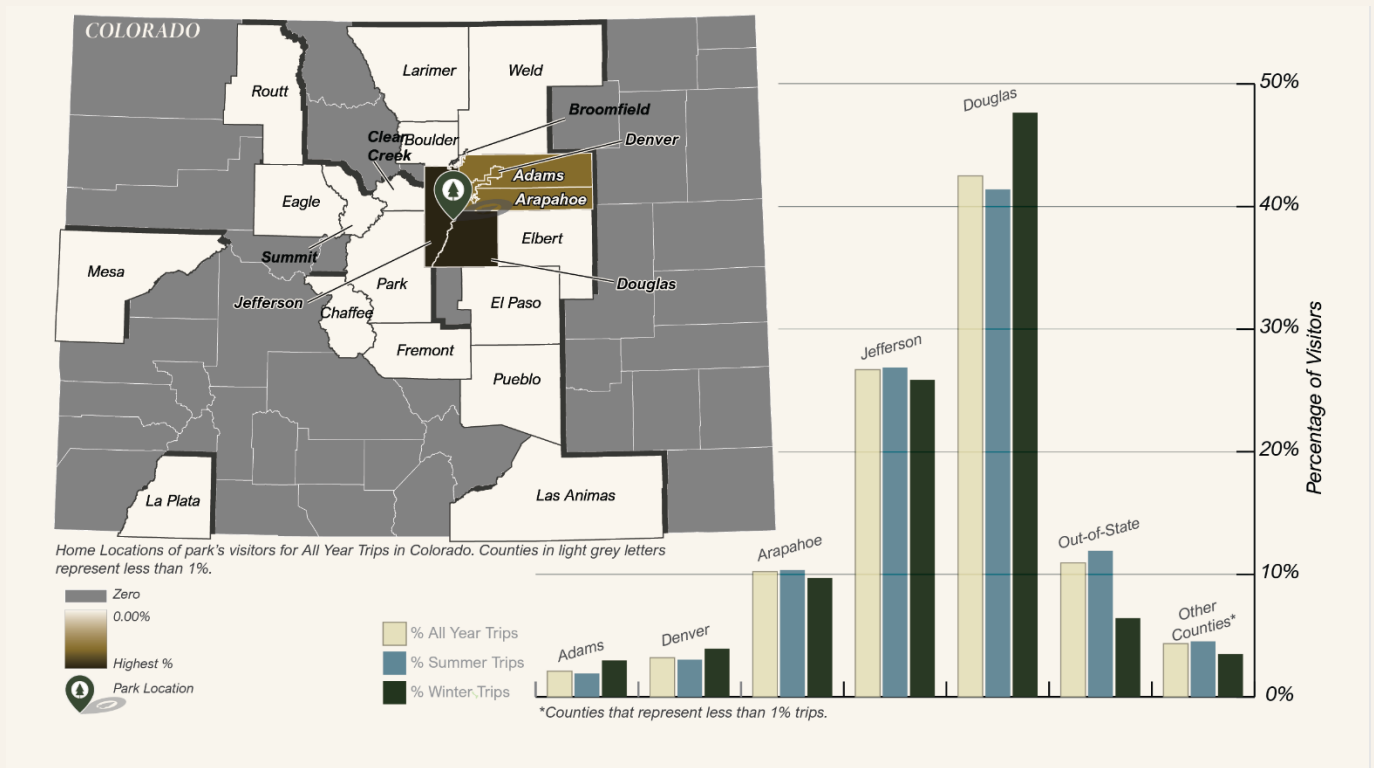


Figure 4. Home Locations of Visitors to Chatfield State Park

As shown in Figure 4, Douglas County is the home location for approximately 42% of year-round visitors to Chatfield State Park. This percentage rises to nearly 50% during the winter, highlighting a strong local presence in colder months.

Jefferson County follows, contributing around 27% of annual trips, with little seasonal variation. Visitors residing in Arapahoe County and out-of-state each account for roughly 10% of trips annually, although out-of-state visitation drops to about 5% during the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



CHERRY CREEK

A 4,200-acre oasis within the busy Denver Metro area, Cherry Creek State Park is a popular destination – the 3rd-most visited state park in Colorado in 2023 – anchored around its 880 surface-acre reservoir. The reservoir is open for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, swimming, ice fishing, and ice skating. The 4,420-acre park also offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, year-round camping, off-leash dog areas, a model airfield, a shooting range, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The park currently imposes a Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority Tax/Fee on both daily and annual passes.

Cherry Creek State Park has three main entrance stations: East, South, and West. The East Entrance, on East Lehigh Avenue, experiences the highest traffic, particularly from boaters. The South Entrance, on East Orchard Road, is popular due to the dog park, while the West Entrance, on East Union Road, is primarily used by boaters, and is the least trafficked. The roads leading to these entrances are in good condition. Significant infrastructure improvements were made in 2024 after a crucial east-west connecting road was rebuilt following flood damage in 2023. Because of the recent roadway improvements to Cherry Creek and the additional fee already applied, it is currently unlikely that local jurisdictions will pursue funding under SB23-059.



2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

1.7 million

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$124,300

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Arapahoe County

**SOUTH
ENTRANCE**

E ORCHARD RD



Cherry Creek State Park Visitor Residency

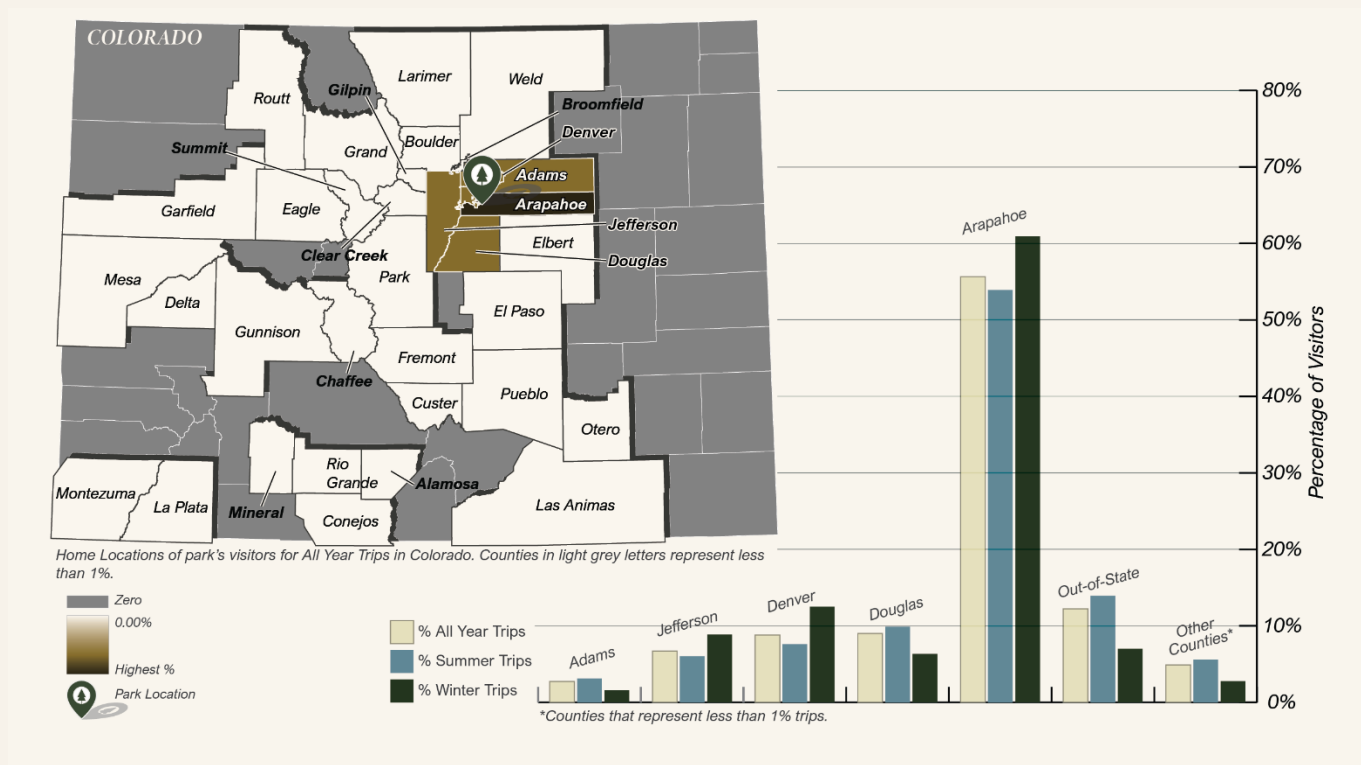


Figure 5. Home Locations of Visitors to Cherry Creek State Park

Cherry Creek State Park is one of the most visited state parks in Colorado, and mobility data indicates that while it has widespread draw, a large portion of its visitors reside nearby. As shown in Figure 5, Arapahoe County is the home location for approximately 55% of year-round visitors, and over 60% of winter visitors.

A combined 25% of annual visits are made by residents of Douglas, Denver, Jefferson, and Adams counties. Additionally, about 12% of visitors come from out-of-state. Although approximately 5% of visitors come from other Colorado counties, the map indicates that this small percentage is contributed by visitors residing across a wide range of counties.

ELDORADO CANYON



Located just outside the City of Boulder, Eldorado Canyon State Park is a world-class technical rock-climbing destination, which provides a notable draw to out-of-state visitors. The 1,393-acre day use area also offers opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and birding, fishing in South Boulder Creek, hunting with primitive weapons, geocaching, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

The park's main access route is via CO State Highway 170, which turns into a privately-owned road after the pavement ends. In addition to park visitors, this unpaved road is used daily by the private owner's large commercial trucks and requires consistent maintenance to remain drivable. Due to the private ownership and maintenance responsibilities, and lack of local jurisdiction obligation, this access road would not be eligible for funding under SB23-059. However, increased visitor use and this bottleneck to access has placed a strain on the local, non-park transportation infrastructure, and park staff have been working with numerous local partners to address this across the past several years.

In efforts to manage and limit vehicular traffic, the park operates a Timed Entry Vehicle Reservation system for motor vehicle access to the park on weekends and holidays during the busy summer months. During this time, Boulder County operates a free shuttle service to the park, which could benefit from better utilization and funding. Proposals to enhance the shuttle service include extending its route to include a stop at the newly opening Eldorado Springs pool, which could improve shuttle usage, but would likely require collaboration with the pool's owner. Since there is not a long-term funding plan in place for the shuttle, it may be a logical decision to apply for funding via SB23-059 as a method to maintain the shuttles in the future.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

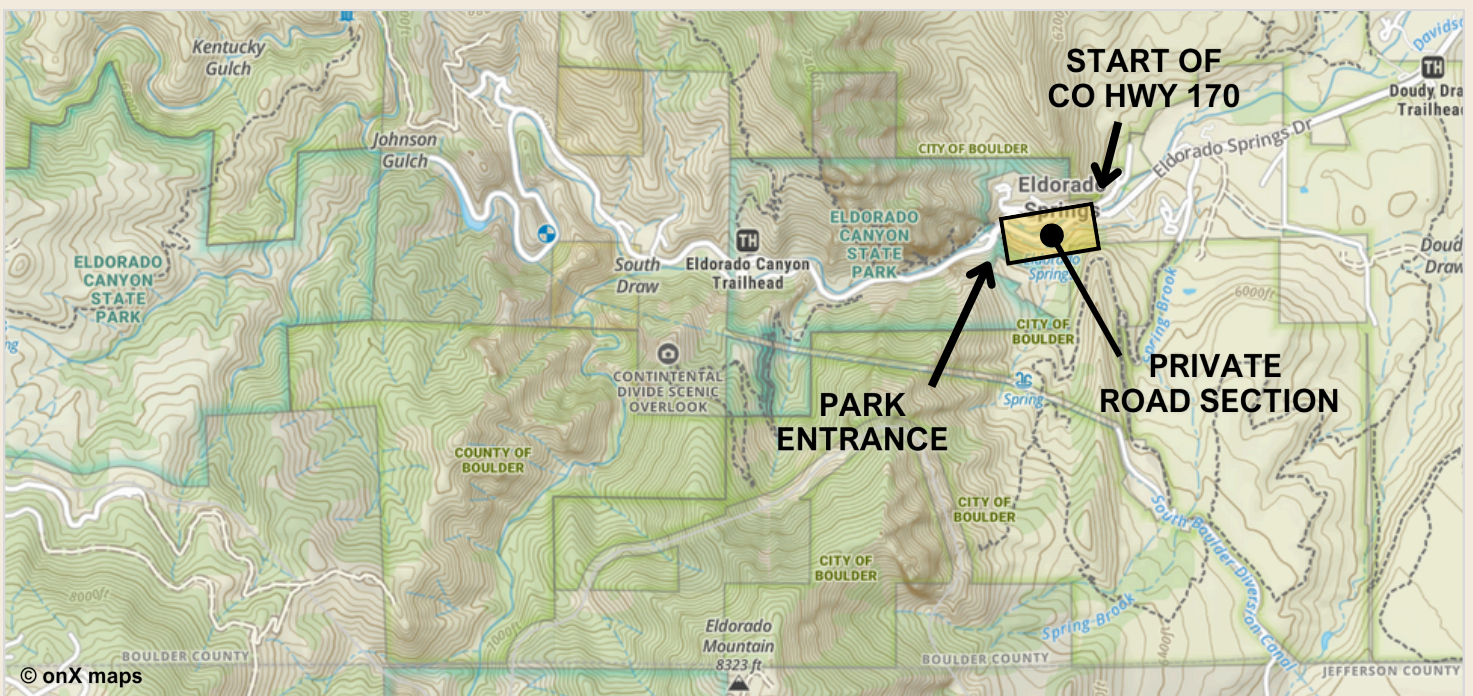
506K

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

\$32,800

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

Boulder County





Eldorado Canyon State Park Visitor Residency

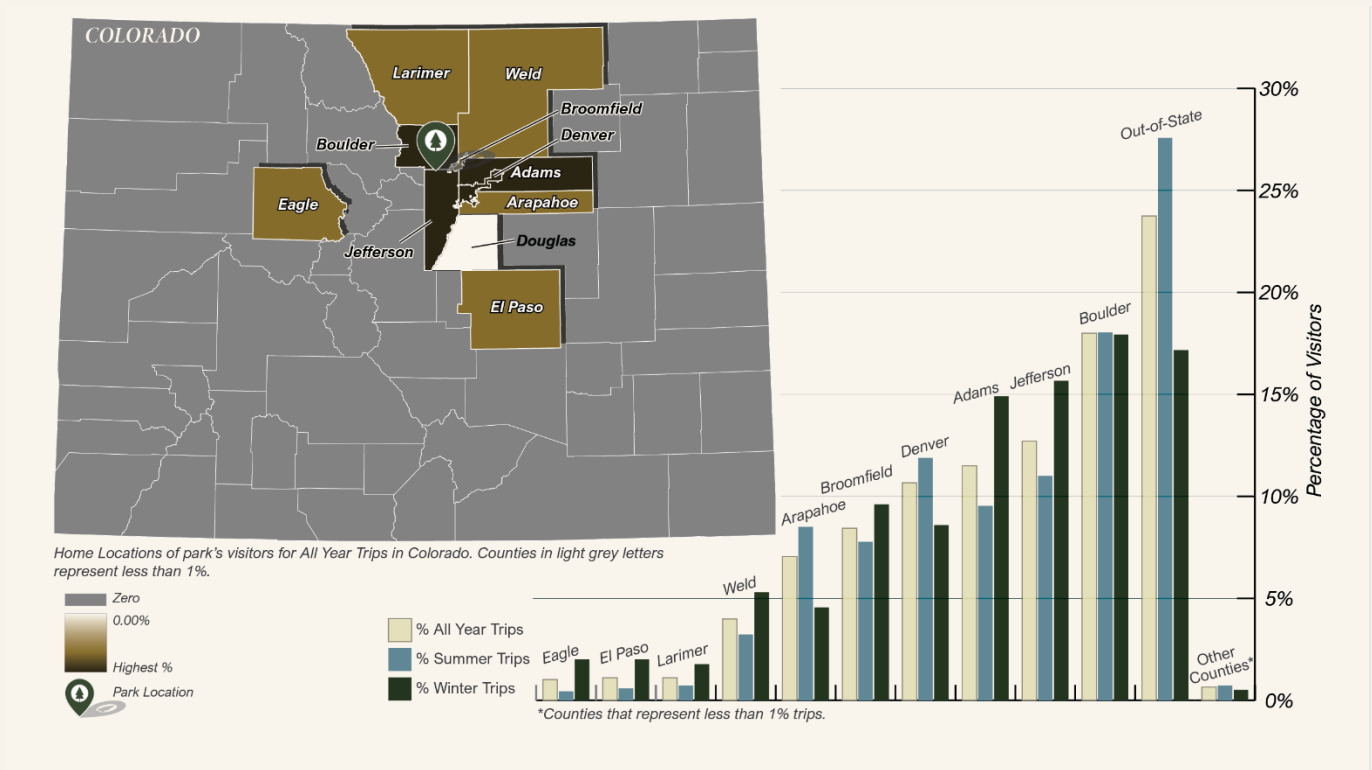


Figure 6. Home Locations of Visitors to Eldorado Canyon State Park

As shown in Figure 6, Eldorado Canyon State Park attracts a diverse group of visitors. Out-of-state visitors account for the largest share, at 24% of year-round trips, increasing to 27% during the summer, and dropping to about 17% during the winter. Boulder County, where the park is located, consistently contributes a steady stream of visitors throughout the year, about 18%.

Seasonal variations are evident for other counties: residents of Arapahoe and Denver counties contribute a higher share of total summer visits to the park than winter visits, while visitors from Jefferson, Adams, Broomfield, Weld, Larimer, El Paso, and Eagle counties contribute higher shares of winter visits than summer visits.

ELEVEN MILE



Eleven Mile State Park's 3,400-acre high elevation reservoir makes it a popular destination for motorized and nonmotorized boating and fishing and offers ice fishing and ice skating in winter. An additional 4,000 acres of land surrounding the reservoir provide opportunities for hiking, biking, wildlife watching and birding, hunting, geocaching, year-round camping, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

The park is accessible via several Park County roads, with most of the traffic utilizing CR 59, CR 90 and CR 92. The roads used to access and navigate between Eleven Mile and nearby Spinney Mountain State Park, also in Park County, see a large traffic volume as compared to other roads in the county. Though they are used by local residents in addition to park visitors, visitors have a significant impact due to heavy camper/RV and boat trailer use. These roads were paved and had major potholes and damage leading to extreme safety concerns but were transitioned back into dirt roads in the summer of 2024 which alleviated much of these issues. That said, Eleven Mile State Park has been one of the focal points for SB23-059 as it has had challenges on roadways leading towards the park. The park's access routes are mostly owned and maintained by Park County, and local government officials have been concerned about the impacts of park use and complaints from locals and visitors alike about the state of the access roads. Further concern was shared following the introduction of the Keep Colorado Wild pass, due to speculation that this may lead to increased visitation. As one of the key advocates of the bill's development, Park County is likely to apply for funding under SB23-059's fee mechanism at Eleven Mile State Park in the future. More details are available in the Eleven Mile State Park case study to follow.

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

204K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

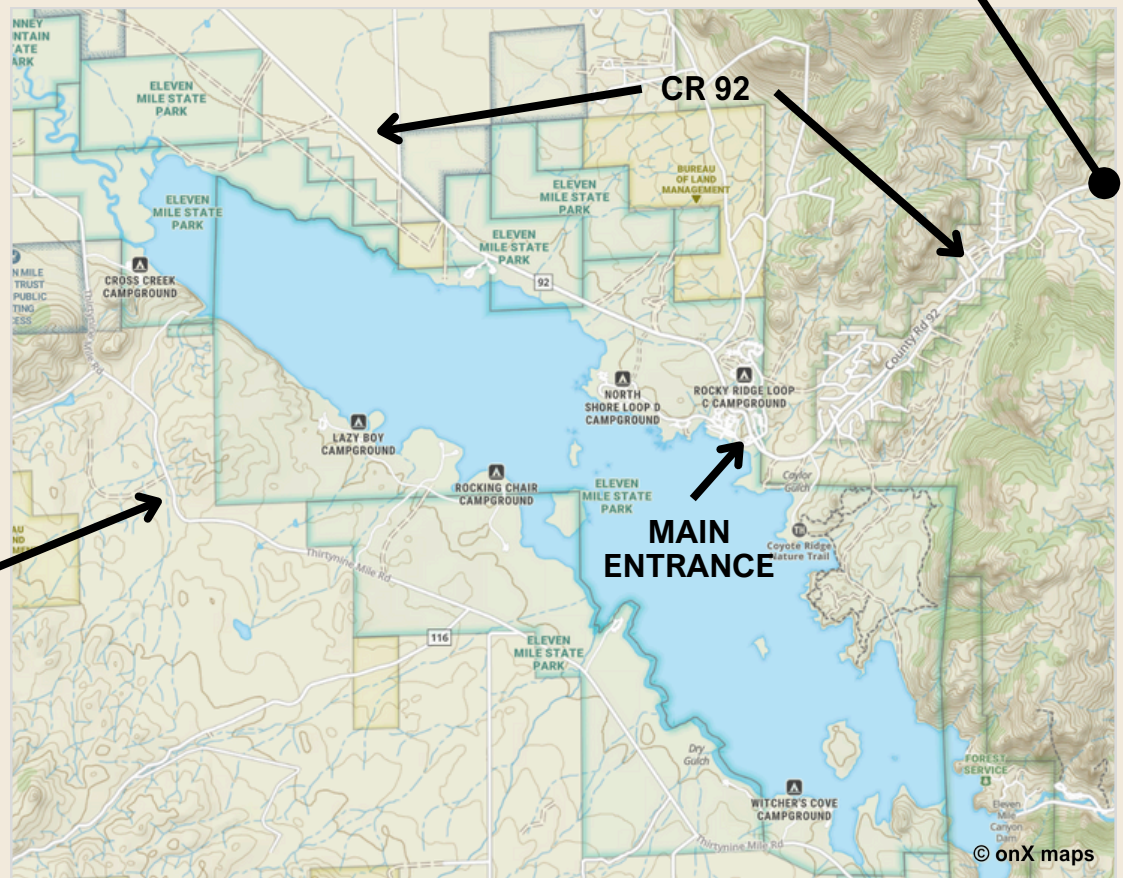
\$24,300

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Park County

JUNCTION OF CR 92 & CR 90

CR 90 is about 2.5 miles from the map's edge. CR 92 connects to CR 90 and provides access to the park from US Highway 24.



CR 59 runs the length of the south side of the park, connecting with CR 92 three miles north of Cross Creek Campground and providing access to facilities on the south side of the reservoir.



Eleven Mile State Park Visitor Residency

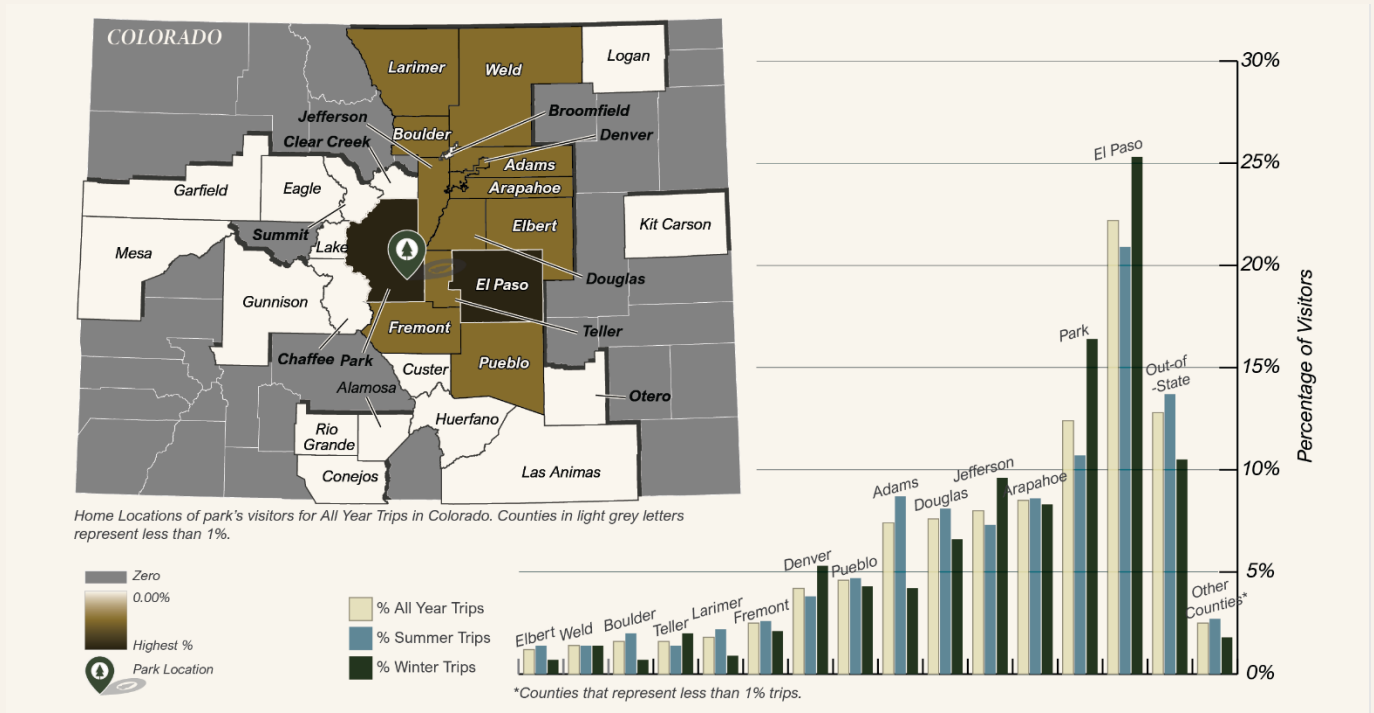


Figure 7. Home Locations of Visitors to Eleven Mile State Park

As shown in Figure 7, residents of El Paso County account for the largest share of visits to Eleven Mile State Park, making up approximately 22% of year-round trips. This share rises to 25% during the winter and hovers around 21% in the summer.

Residents of Park County and out-of-state visitors each contribute around 13% of year-round trips, with Park County's contribution increasing notably to 16% in winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



GOLDEN GATE CANYON

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

1.5 million

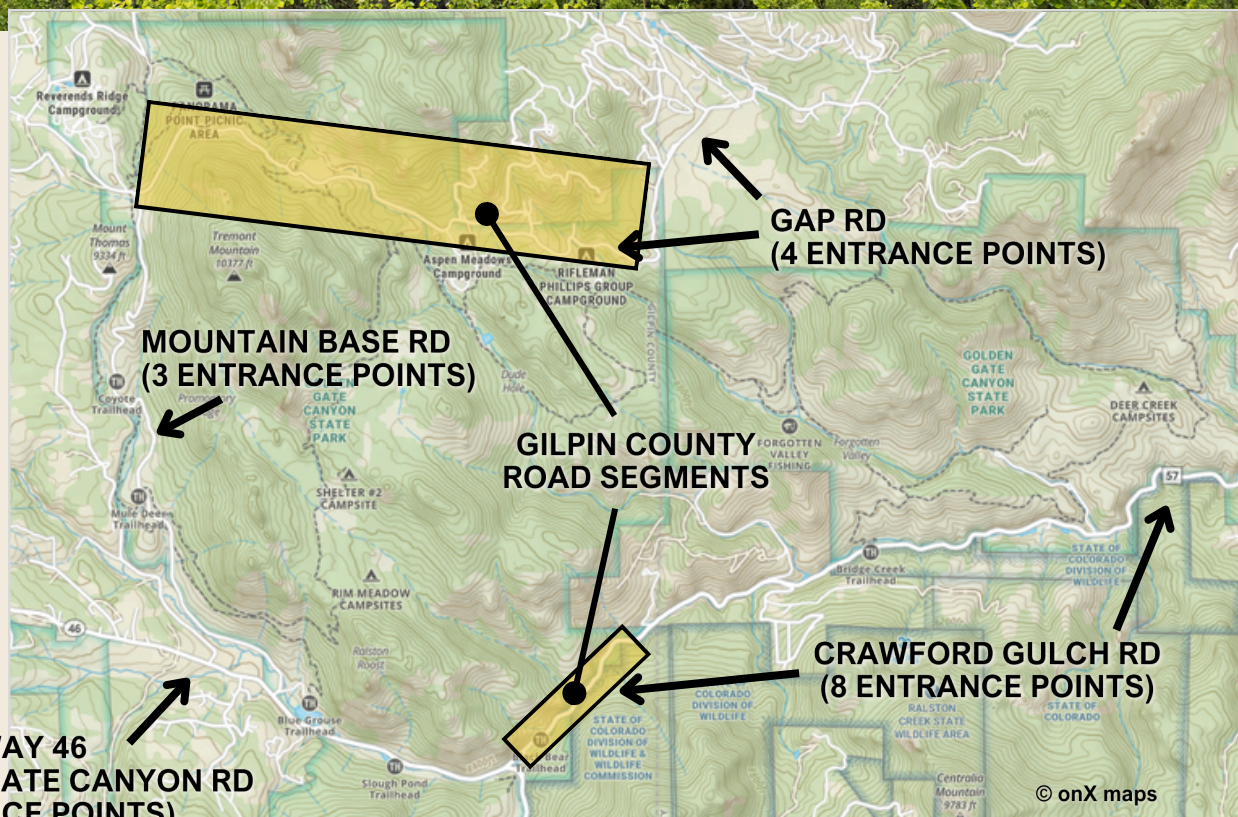
2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$33,200

FEE
APPLICANT:

**Gilpin
County**

CO HIGHWAY 46
GOLDEN GATE CANYON RD
(2 ENTRANCE POINTS)



Covering a sprawling 12,000 acres just 30 miles west of Denver, Golden Gate Canyon State Park is one of Colorado's largest and busiest state parks, seeing the 4th-highest estimated visitation in 2023. "Leaf peeping" season is particularly popular, during which visitation demand greatly exceeds the park's capacity of 400 parking spots. The park offers opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, geocaching, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowtubing/sledding, ice fishing, and ice skating. There are options for overnight stay within the park year-round, including campgrounds, backcountry camping, five cabins, two yurts, and a guest house.

Use of the park's six different access routes is typically determined by where a visitor is traveling from, and the recreational activities they seek. The south entrance from Golden, via Golden Gate Canyon Road (a CO State Highway) sees the highest volume of visitor traffic. However, most visitors coming from Colorado's Northern Front Range enter the park through Jefferson County, using Twin Spruce Road (a Jefferson CR), which turns into Gap Road (a Gilpin CR) just prior to the park boundary. Most RVs also utilize this entrance, as it is closest to the park's campgrounds. Golden Gate Canyon's access routes that are eligible for funding under SB23-059 include two roads maintained by Gilpin County and two roads maintained by Jefferson County. Jefferson County's roads are generally well maintained, and the county is not seen as likely to apply for this funding mechanism in the near future. Gilpin County, with limited resources to address the impact of park visitors on their roads, was one of the two applicants for SB23-059 funding in the 2024 application period. More information about the park's access routes under the jurisdiction of Gilpin County is provided in the Golden Gate Canyon State Park case study to follow.



Golden Gate Canyon State Park Visitor Residency

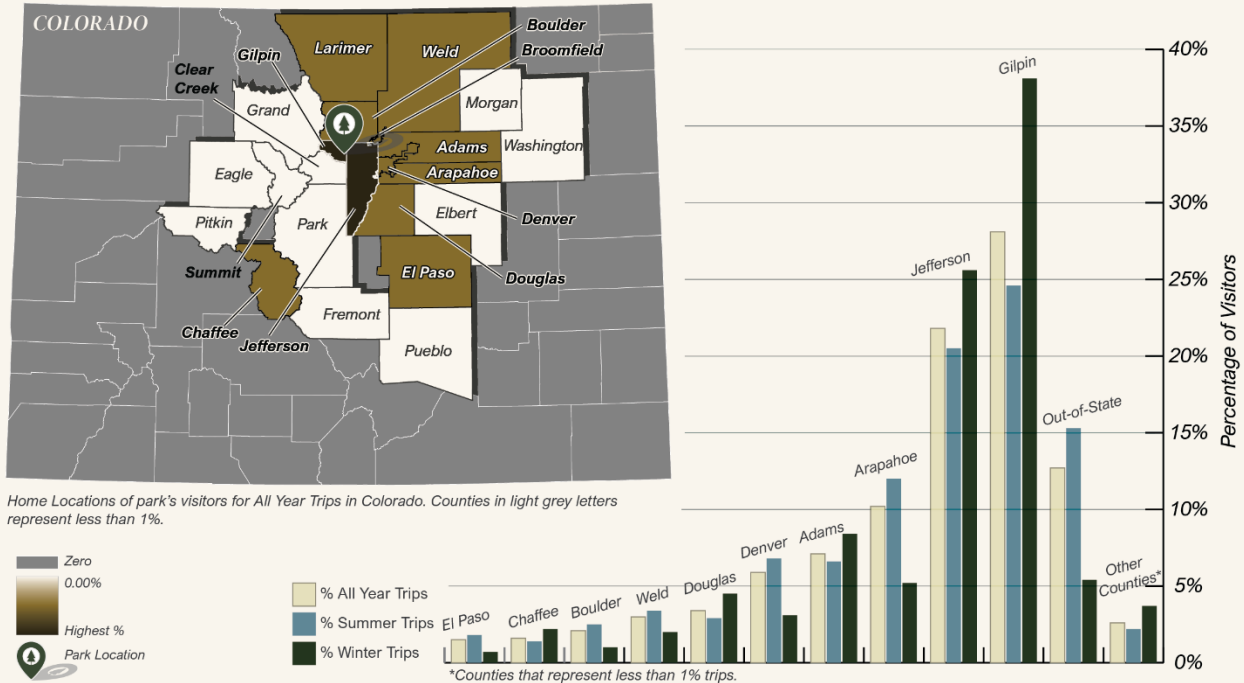


Figure 8. Home Locations of Visitors to Golden Gate Canyon State Park

As shown in Figure 8, residents of Gilpin County account for the largest share of visits to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, making up approximately 28% of annual visits. This share rises significantly to nearly 40% during the winter, reflecting a strong local presence when fewer visitors travel from further locations. In contrast, during the summer, the share of visits from Gilpin County residents drops to about 25% as the park attracts a higher share of its visitors from outside the local area.

Similarly, Jefferson County contributes around 22% of annual visits, with a higher share in winter (25%) compared to summer. Residents of Arapahoe County make up about 10% of annual visits, with their share rising to 12% in the summer and dropping to 5% in the winter.

Additionally, around 12% of annual visits come from out-of-state, including 15% of summer visits and only 5% in winter, illustrating the influx of non-local visitors during the peak summer season. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.

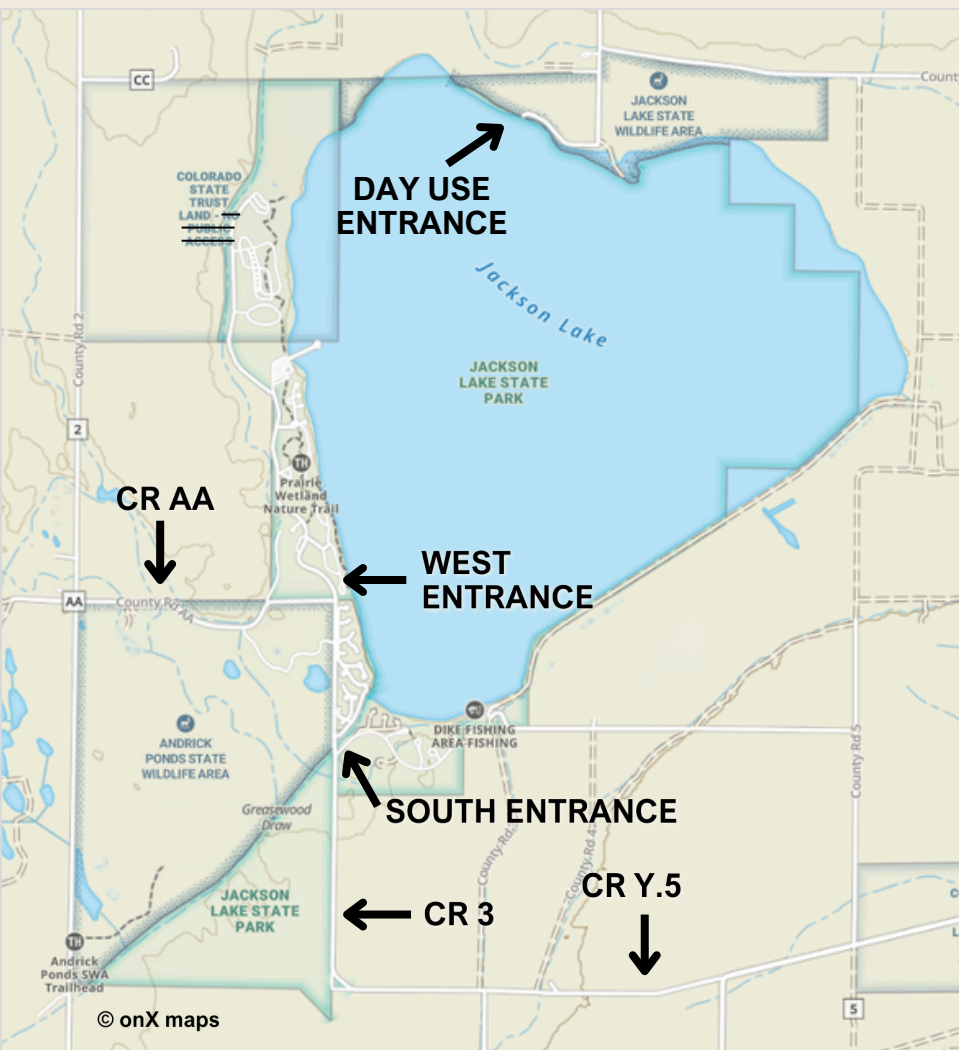


JACKSON LAKE

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **213K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$16,400**

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: **Morgan County**



While waterfowl hunting used to be its main attraction, Jackson Lake State Park is now perhaps best known for the waterfront campsites on the shores of its 2,500 surface-acre lake. The lake also offers sandy swim beaches and is open for fishing, motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, ice fishing, and ice skating. The 5,295-acre park provides additional recreation – hiking, biking, wildlife watching and birding, an OHV track, and year-round camping. The park is also CPW’s first International Dark Skies Park. Due to limited parking capacity for day users, the park experiences congestion during the summer months, but is hoping to transition an old campground into a day use area to help address this. Park staff indicates significant levels of out-of-state visitation, especially Midwesterners on trips to and from Utah.

Local access to Jackson Lake State Park is via Morgan County’s CR 3, which services the main entrance to the park. A seasonal mobile home community makes up the road’s only resident traffic, and the consensus is that park users make up the majority of traffic on CR 3. The road is in generally adequate condition, with one section that is noticeably degraded. Park staff indicates they have received no complaints regarding the state of the road, but notes that striping would be a positive addition, and that the road will likely need maintenance in the future. Given these factors, the park feels that Morgan County would likely be interested in applying for funding under SB23-059’s fee mechanism in the coming year once they become more informed about the process. Other county roads that provide access to Jackson Lake State Park are less-trafficked dirt roads providing minimal and specific use access to the park and are unlikely to be considered in need of funding support.



Jackson Lake State Park Visitor Residency

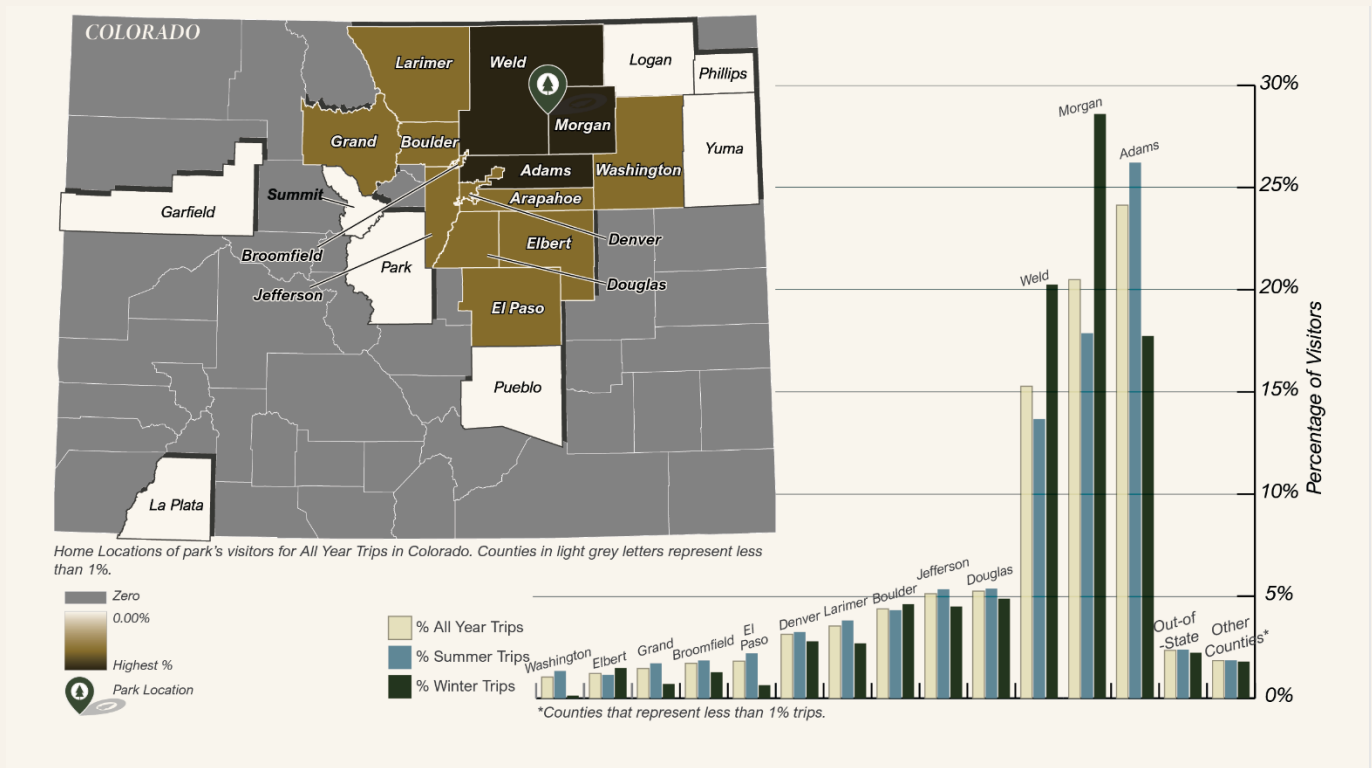


Figure 9. Home Locations of Visitors to Jackson Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 9, Adams County is the most common home location for visitors to Jackson Lake State Park during both the year-round and summer periods, accounting for around 25% of visitors. In winter, the share of visits attributed to residents of Adams County drops to 17%, as Morgan County becomes the largest contributor (accounting for nearly 30% of winter visitors). Annually, Morgan County contributes about 20% of the park’s visitors.

Weld County also shows a seasonal shift, representing approximately 15% of visitors annually, but increasing to nearly 20% in the winter. Jefferson and Douglas counties account for around 5% of visits year-round, with little seasonal variation. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 5% of trips year-round and seasonally.

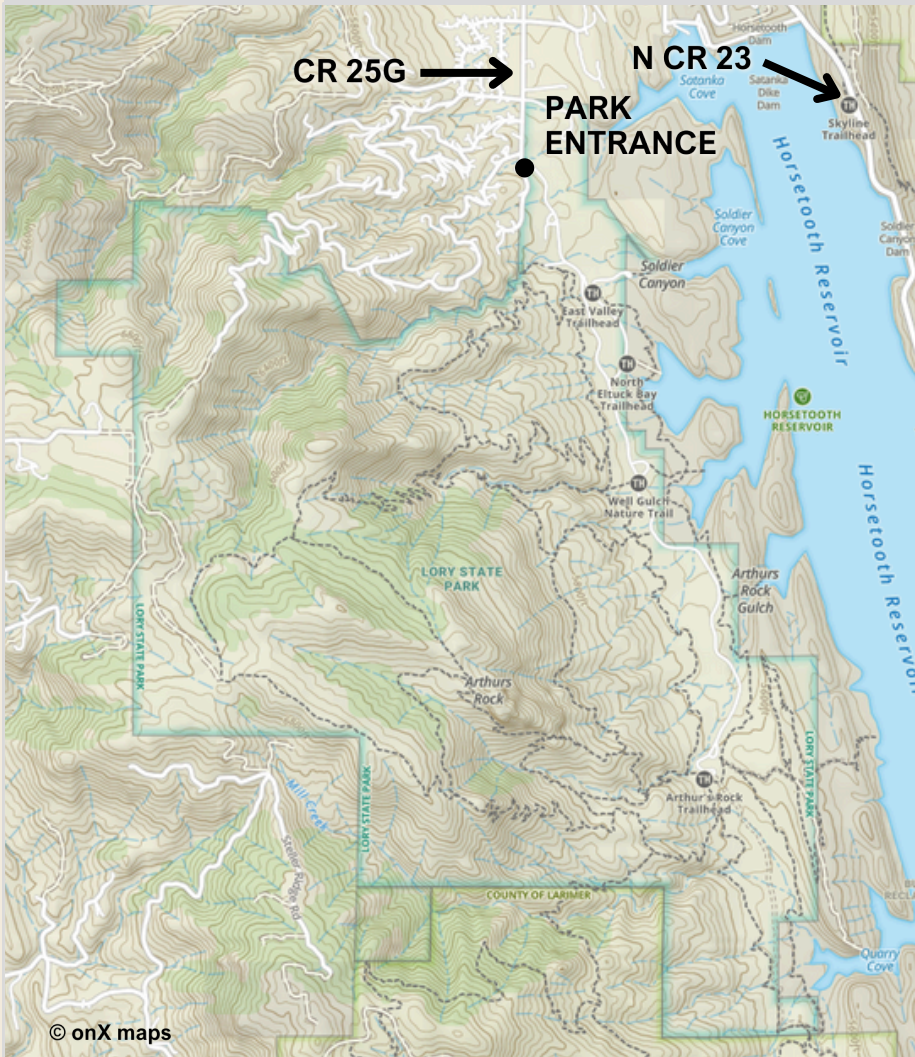


LORY

Lory State Park, located in the foothills west of Fort Collins in Larimer County, Colorado, is a 2,596-acre park renowned for its mountain biking – featuring trails for all skill levels and a bike park with dirt jumping, a pump track, and a skills area. The park also provides plenty of opportunity for other types of outdoor recreation, including hiking, horseback riding, bouldering and rock climbing, fishing, hunting, geocaching, year-round backcountry camping, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Like many parks in the Front Range of Colorado, Lory State Park has experienced dramatic growth in visitation in recent years, which makes balancing recreation and natural resource management an ongoing challenge for park staff.

Lory State Park is accessible via North CR 23, with CR 25G providing direct entry into the park’s single entry and exit point. Park staff reports that Larimer County does an excellent job maintaining these access roads, ensuring they are in good condition. Given the current state of the roads and the effective maintenance by the

county, additional funding resources for road maintenance are not anticipated to be necessary at this time. Despite the park’s increasing popularity, the existing infrastructure and road conditions have thus far been sufficient to handle the visitor traffic, and it is currently unlikely that local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059.



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:

230K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:

\$29,800

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Larimer County



Lory State Park Visitor Residency

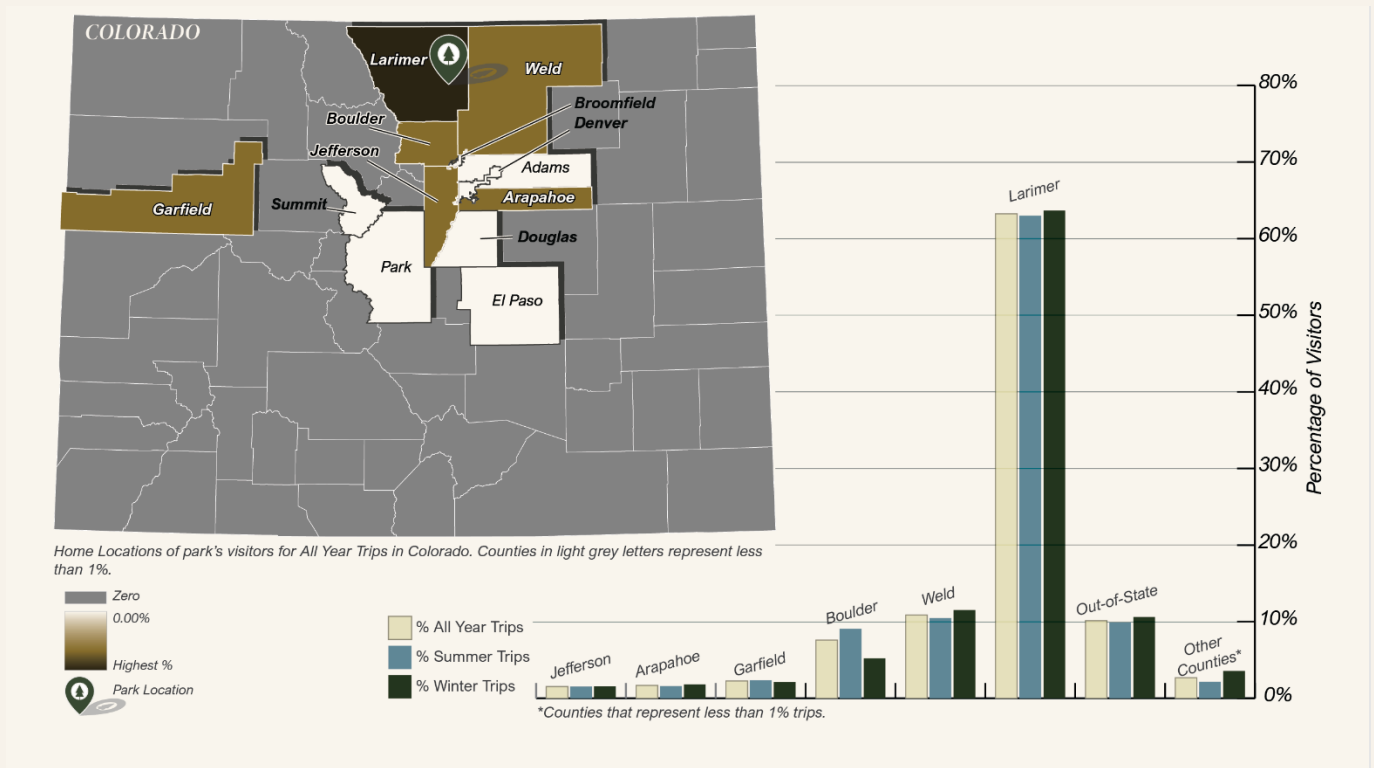


Figure 10. Home Locations of Visitors to Lory State Park

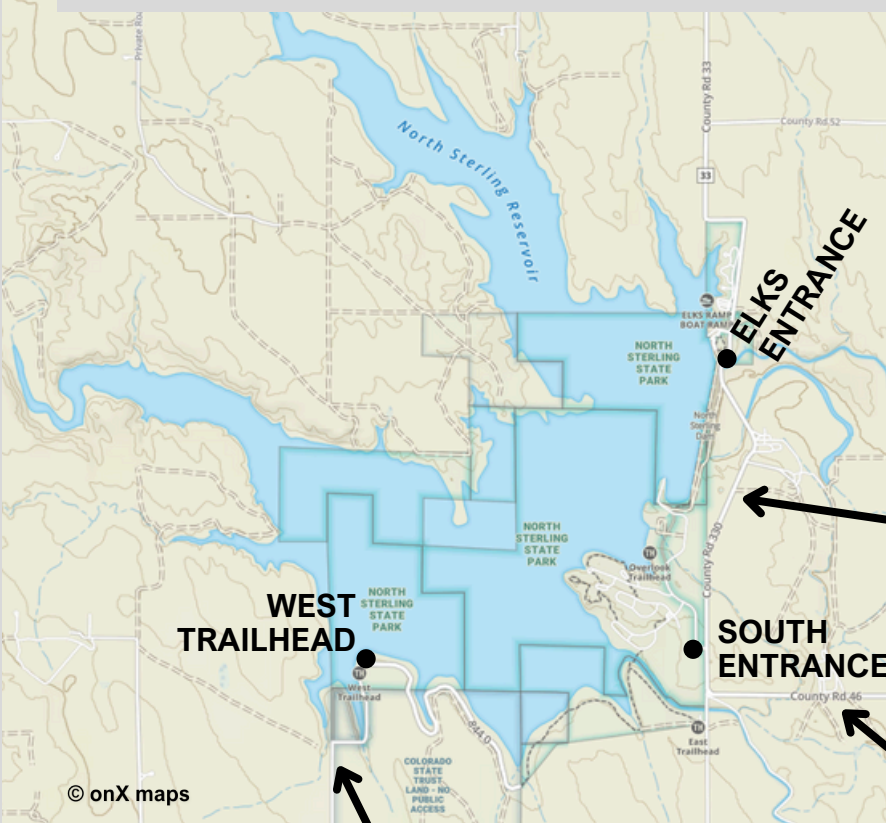
As shown in Figure 10, nearly 65% of Lory State Park’s visitors are local – residing in Larimer County – which remains consistent across year-round, summer, and winter visits. Weld County and out-of-state visitors each account for approximately 10% of visitors annually. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



NORTH STERLING

Situated in the eastern plains just south of the Nebraska/Colorado border, North Sterling State Park is the most northeastern park in the CPW system. The park features a 3000-acre irrigation reservoir offering ample water recreation opportunities – motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing and a swim beach – as well as land-based recreation including hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, wildlife watching and birding, year-round camping, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. The park’s proximity to the state line means that out of state visitors – who are not eligible to purchase a Keep Colorado Wild pass and must continue to utilize other pass products – comprise a fair share of visits.

There are ten Logan County roadways within a three-mile radius of the park which may be eligible for funding under SB23-059. The primary roads used for park access are CR 33, CR 46, and CR 37; additionally, CR 44 and CR 29 are used by a smaller subset of visitors accessing the park’s West Trailhead. However, these roads also see a high level of agricultural traffic; these combines, tractors, and loaded semi-trailers are seen to have a higher impact on local paved roads than park users, even those towing boats and campers, and for this reason the routes may not meet the criteria for funding under SB23-059. Additionally, the park reports receiving few to no complaints on the state of its access routes, and the majority of CR 37 was paved by Logan County in 2023. No current interest in pursuing funding under SB23-059 has been found; a price increase on daily passes was perceived negatively, as it is thought that this would primarily impact local residents, who already fund local transportation routes through taxes.



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **190K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$6,000**

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: **Logan County**

COUNTY ROAD 33

Visitors access the main South and Elks entrances by using CR 46 to CR 33. Access to 46 depends on the visitor origin, with those travelling from Sterling using CR 37 which intersects CR 46 within 3 miles of the South entrance, while visitors from the north use CO State Highway 113, which is not applicable for funding.

COUNTY ROAD 29

CR 29 connects with CR 33 via CR 44 which lies south of the map edge.

COUNTY ROAD 46 (MAIN ACCESS)



North Sterling State Park Visitor Residency

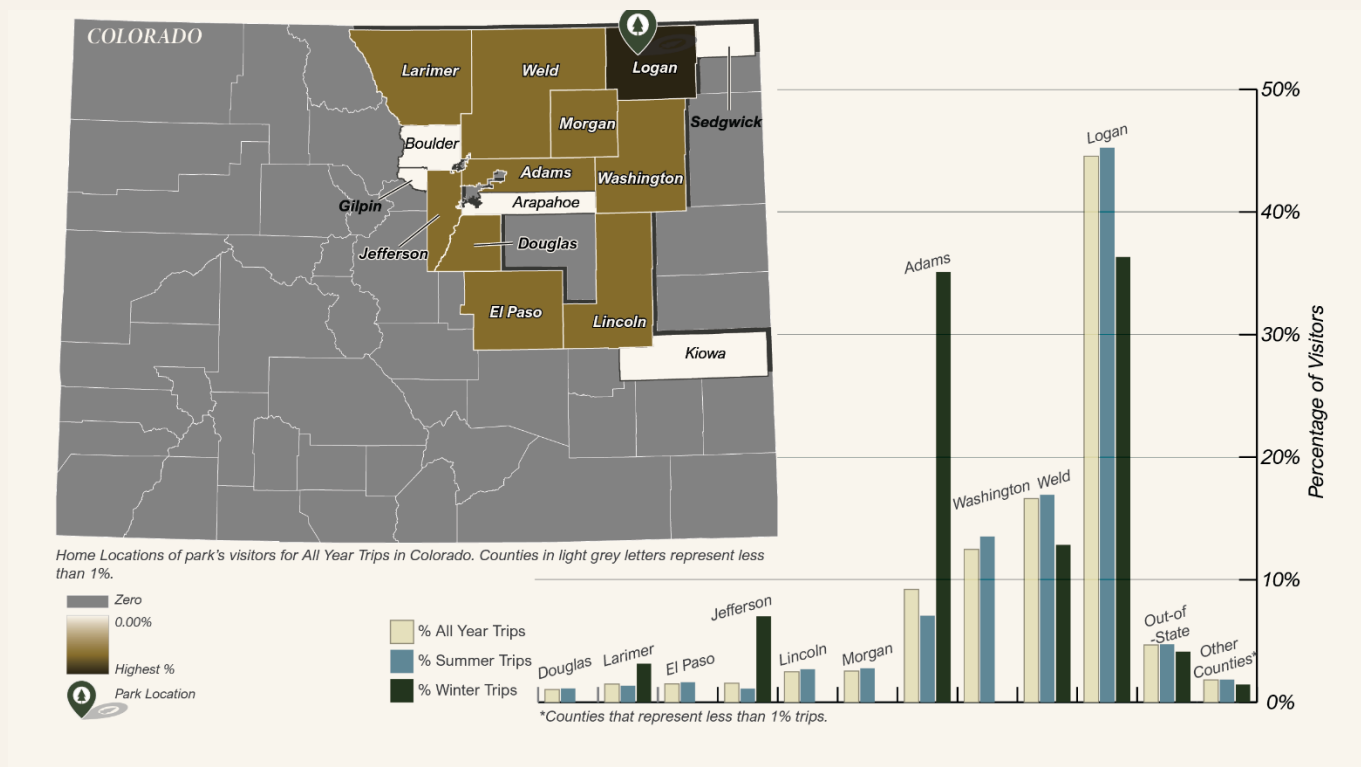


Figure 11. Home Locations of Visitors to North Sterling State Park

As shown in Figure 11, nearly 45% of North Sterling State Park visitors reside in Logan County, although this share drops to about 35% during winter. Adams County, which accounts for fewer than 10% of visitors year-round, rises to 35% during winter. In contrast, Washington County contributes just over 10% of visitors annually but contributes no visitors in winter. Weld County accounts for around 15% of year-round visits. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



ROXBOROUGH

Located a short drive southwest of Denver, Roxborough State Park was established to protect 3,328 acres of the area's scenery and resources while providing opportunities for hiking and learning about Colorado's natural heritage. To this end, the day-use only park does not allow pets, horseback riding, mountain biking, rock climbing or camping. As a Colorado Natural Area, National Natural Landmark, Audubon Society Important Bird Area, and a Leave No Trace Gold Standard Site, the park offers a diverse ecosystem, with opportunities for wildlife watching and birding, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. With only 100 parking spaces, the park hits capacity on busy days and frequently operates on a one-in, one-out basis.



The park has a single entrance station, accessed by Roxborough Park Road and N Rampart Range Road, both of which are in good condition. A new housing development near the entrance has led to ongoing discussions between the park and the HOA regarding easements and road maintenance. The park also regularly coordinates with Douglas County regarding grading on Ironbark Drive, a county road that routes through the park and Douglas County Open Space/Nelson Ranch and serves as an emergency road for the private Arrowhead Golf community. Based on evaluations of the road system and knowledge of the local residential development, it is currently unlikely that the local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

173K

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

\$21,400

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

Douglas County



Roxborough State Park Visitor Residency

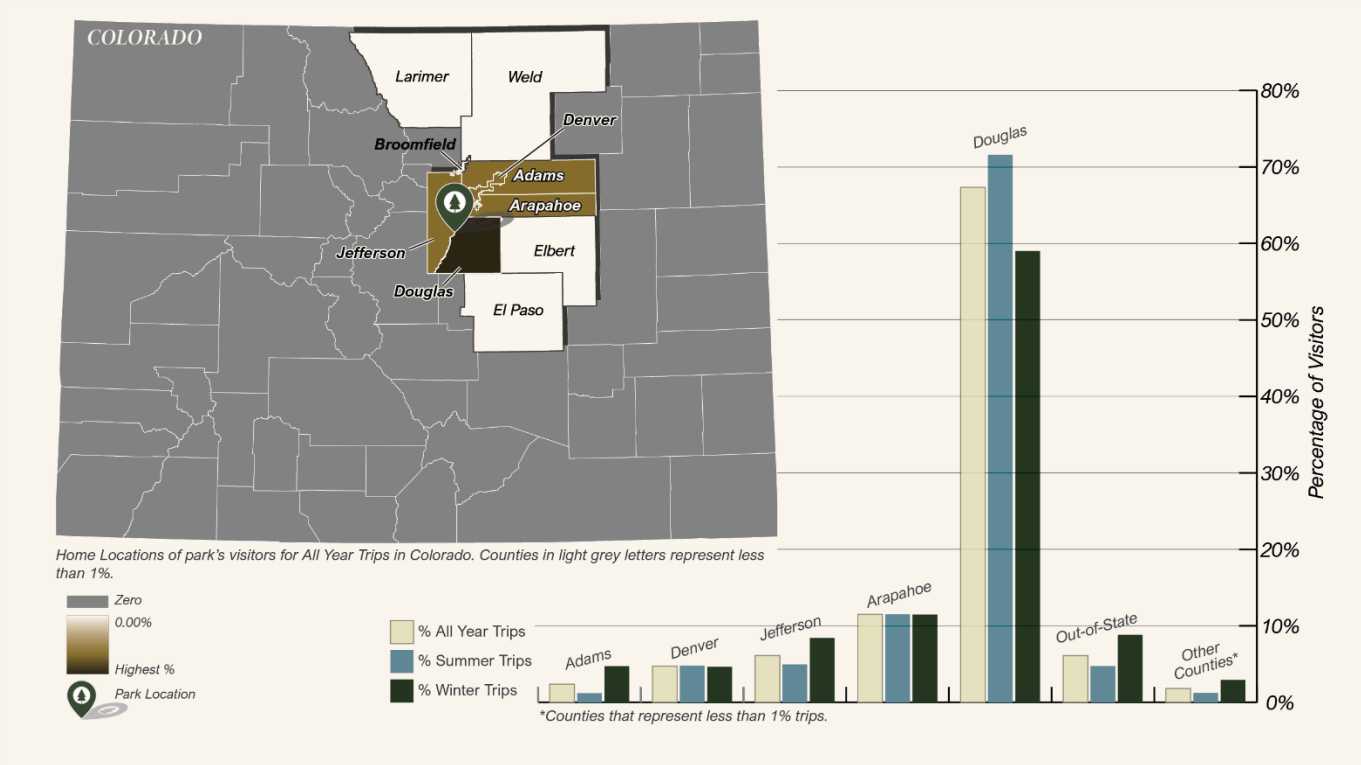


Figure 12. Home Locations of Visitors to Roxborough State Park

As shown in Figure 12, the majority of visitors to Roxborough State Park, approximately 68%, are residents of Douglas County, where the park is located. Other visitors primarily come from nearby counties, including Arapahoe, Jefferson, Denver, and Adams, with smaller contributions from other Colorado counties and out-of-state locations.



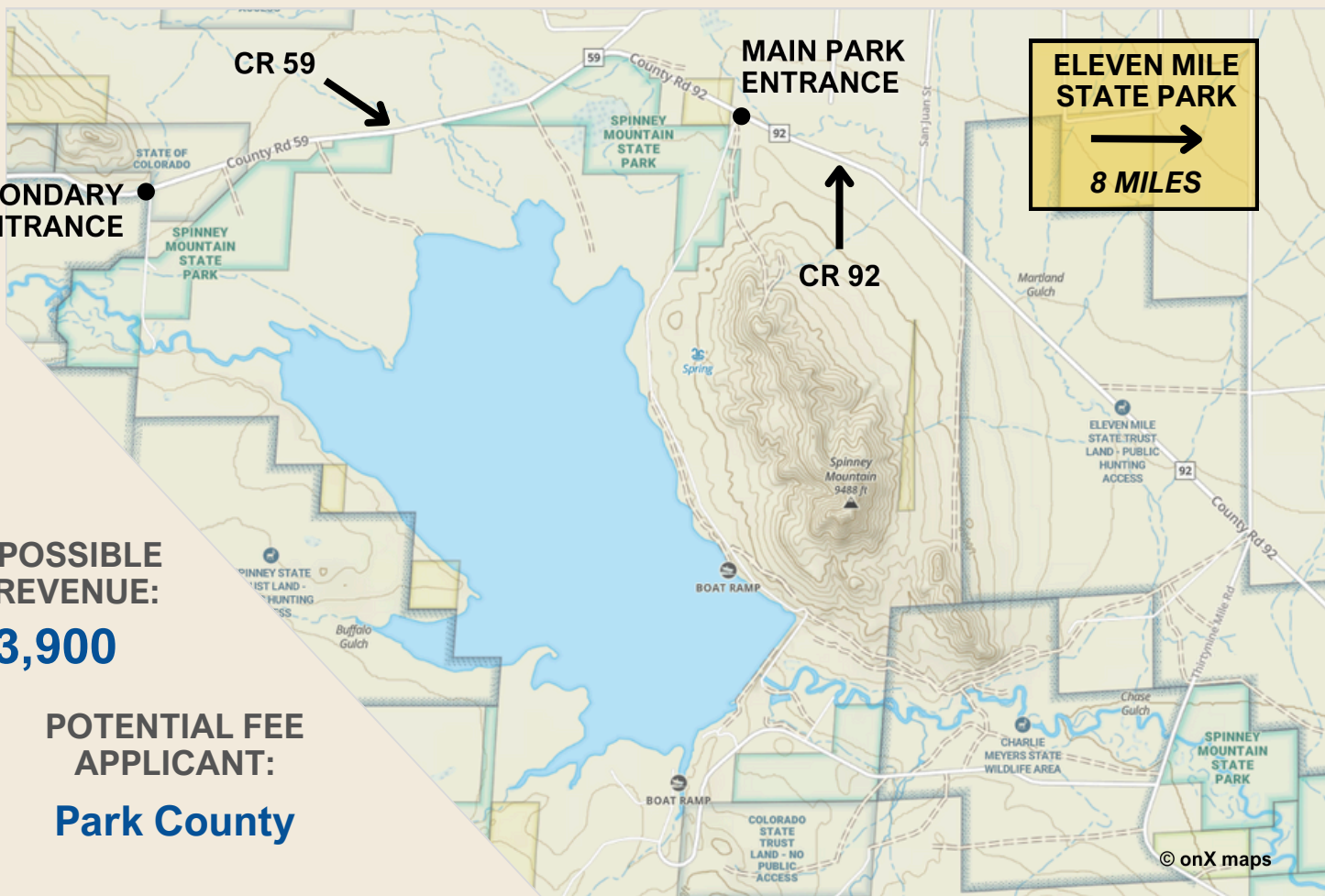
SPINNEY MOUNTAIN

Spinney Mountain State Park is a day use area located fewer than 10 miles from Eleven Mile State Park in Park County. Featuring a 2,500 surface-acre reservoir and a stretch of the South Platte River, the main attraction of the park is its Gold Medal fishing waters and opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, and paddle sports. Other recreational activities at the 6,105-acre park include wildlife watching, birding, and hunting; the park is not open for winter recreation and is closed when the reservoir is iced over.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

70K

Spinney Mountain State Park is accessed by CR 59 and CR 92, two of the same Park County roads used to access Eleven Mile State Park, though Spinney Mountain users make up a much smaller traffic volume, due to the reduced facilities at this park. As one of the key advocates of the bill's development, Park County is likely to apply for funding under SB23-059's fee mechanism for at least one of the state parks under its jurisdiction. However, the low projected revenue for this fee at Spinney Mountain State Park may make it an unlikely candidate.



**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

\$3,900

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

Park County



Spinney Mountain State Park Visitor Residency

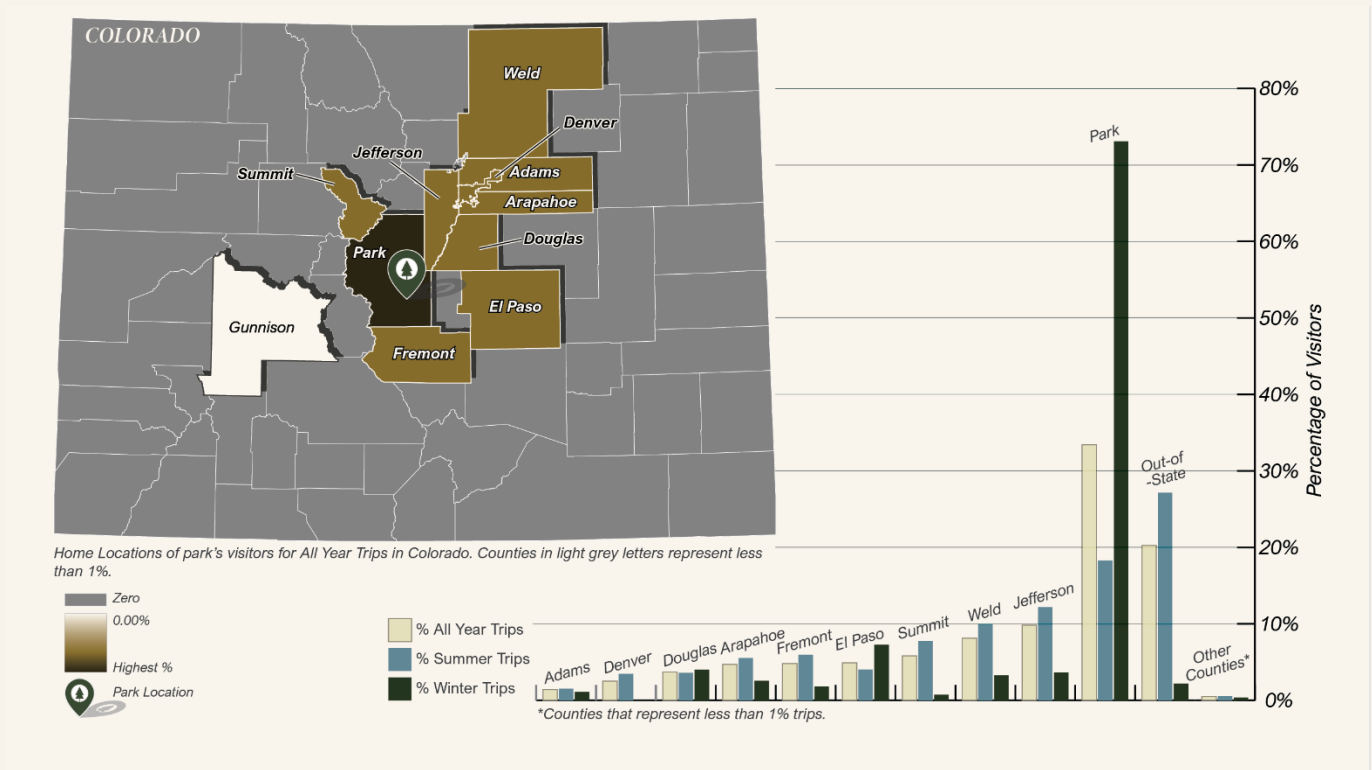


Figure 13. Home Locations of Visitors to Spinney Mountain State Park

As shown in Figure 13, most visitors to Spinney Mountain State Park reside in Park County, accounting for about 33% of year-round visits. During the summer months, Park County residents make up 19% of visitors, while out-of-state visitors contribute a higher share, approximately 28%. In the winter, however, Park County's share of visitors increases dramatically to over 70%.

Residents of Jefferson, Weld, Summit, Fremont, Arapahoe, Denver, and Adams counties all make up a higher share of summer visits than their corresponding winter visit shares. It's important to note that Spinney Mountain State Park is only open from April 1st to November 15th each year, limiting winter visits and impacting the available data.



ST. VRAIN

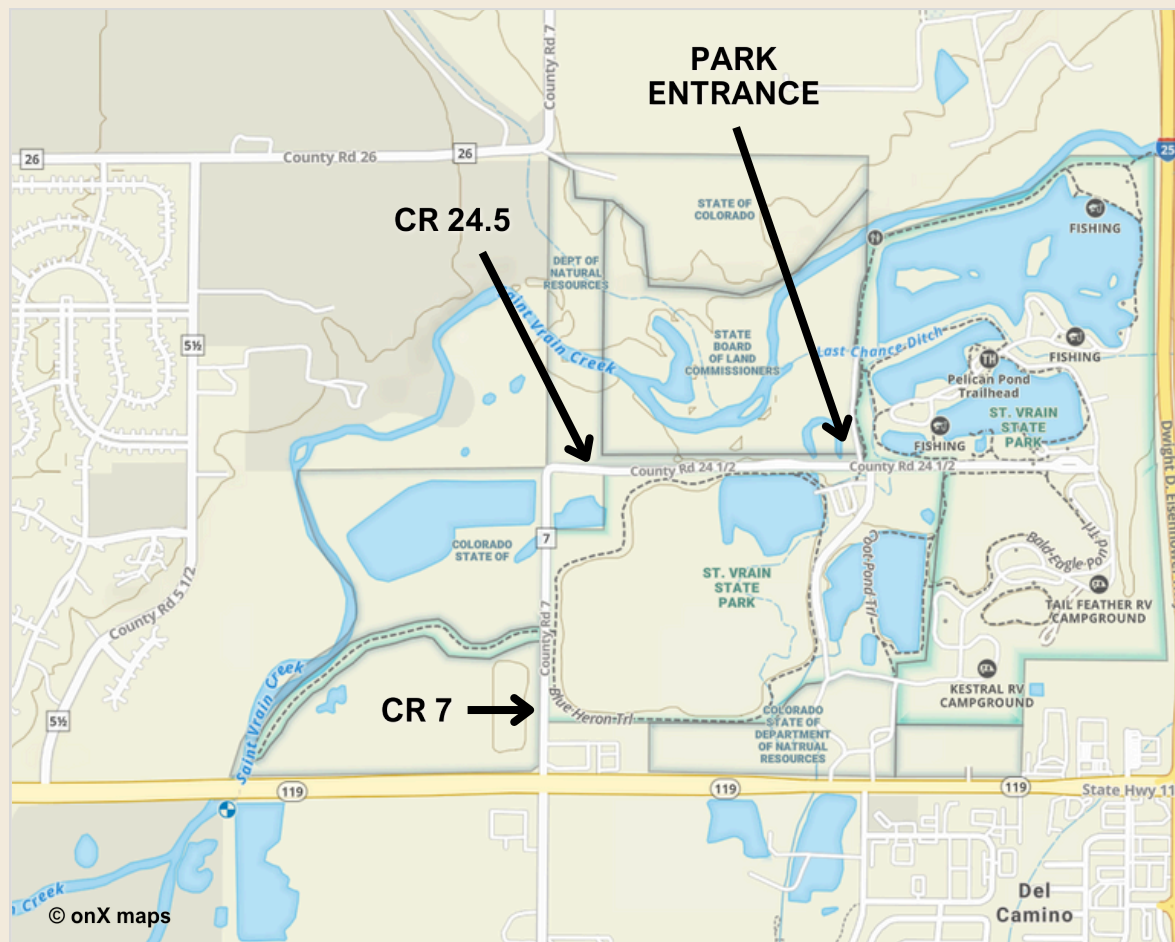
St. Vrain State Park, located just off I-25 between Denver and Fort Collins, is a family-friendly destination for wildlife watching and birding, fishing, and year-round camping. With 689 acres of land and wetlands and 228 acres of water across 11 ponds, the park also provides opportunities for nonmotorized boating, hiking, biking, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and ice skating.

The main roads leading to St. Vrain State Park are CO State Highway 119 and Interstate-25, routes which are ineligible for funding under SB23-059. The park's single entrance station is located on Weld County CR 7, which turns into CR 24.5. There has been some ambiguity regarding the maintenance responsibilities of this road since the park was annexed into the Town of Firestone. While CR 24.5 was incorporated into the park and is currently managed by CPW, park staff indicates that there is no official road maintenance agreement, and to their knowledge, no maintenance and repairs have been done in the past decade, indicating that this access point may be unlikely to meet criteria for funding under SB23-059. While it is currently unlikely that the local jurisdiction will pursue such funding, it is possible that there may be interest in the future to aid in the management of these county roads, should the situation regarding maintenance change.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:
250K**

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:
\$18,000**

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:
Town of
Firestone**



© onX maps



St. Vrain State Park Visitor Residency

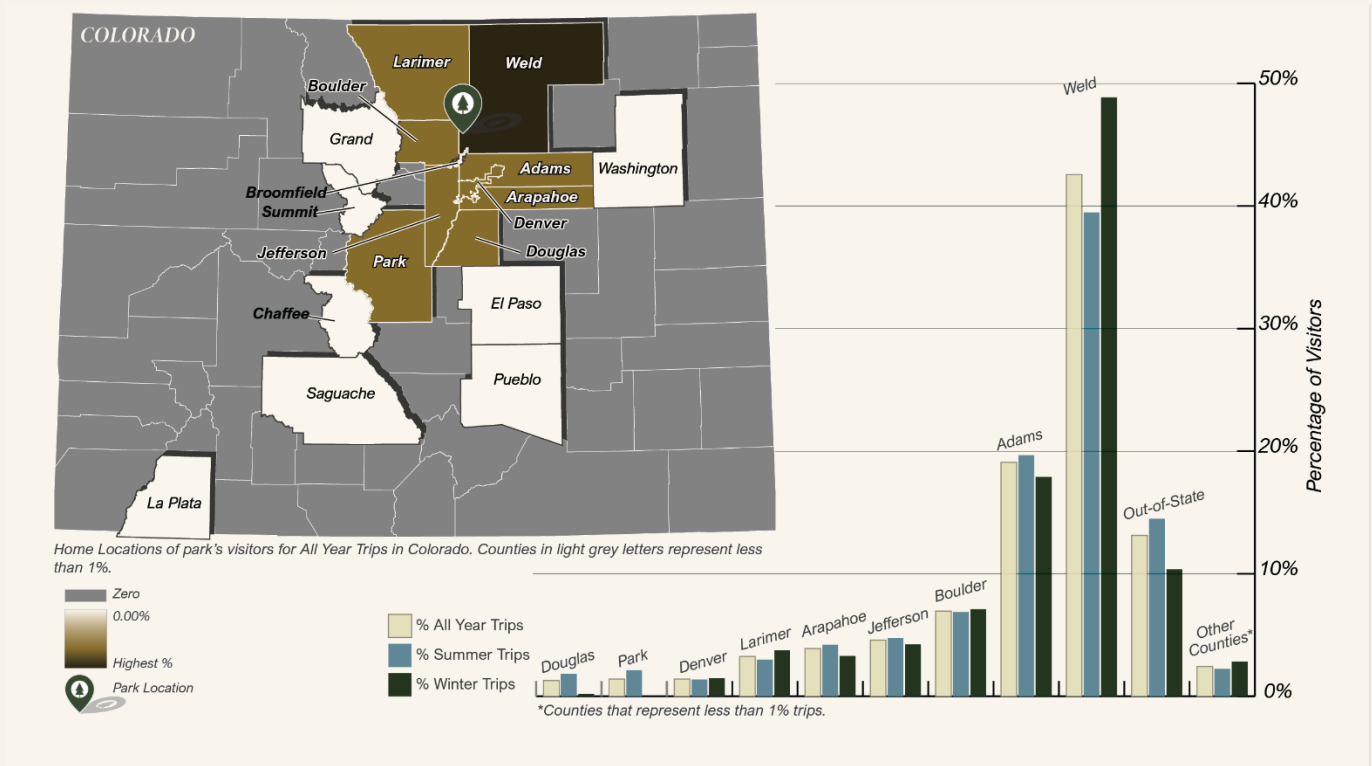


Figure 14. Home Locations of Visitors to St. Vrain State Park

As shown in Figure 14, approximately 43% of year-round visits to St. Vrain State Park are made by residents of Weld County, where the park is located. Weld County contributes a larger share of visitors during the winter compared to its share of summer visitors.

Adams County accounts for 19% of the park's year-round visitors, while about 13% of visitors live out of state; residents of both locations account for a higher proportion of summer visitors than their corresponding winter visitor shares. The remaining 25% of visitors come from counties such as Boulder, Jefferson, Arapahoe, Larimer, Park, and Douglas, as well as other areas across Colorado.



STAUNTON

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **300K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$21,500**

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: **Jefferson County**

Located an easy 40-mile drive from Denver, Staunton State Park offers 3,918 acres of natural wilderness featuring walk-in backcountry campsites and year-round recreation opportunities for all ages. The park has nearly 30 miles of trails hiking, biking, and horseback riding, and is also a great spot for wildlife watching and birding, fishing in ponds and streams, rock climbing, geocaching, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Despite rising visitation, the park's staff notes that its 490 parking spots generally have good turnover rates, and the park only saw two days at capacity in 2023. Traffic counters installed in October 2023 aim to provide better data on vehicle occupancy and visitor counts.

Park staff notes that transportation access was a consideration even prior to the establishment of Staunton State Park, and that CDOT and the local county administration both improved their respective access routes in advance of its opening. While the park itself is split across counties, a single jurisdiction – Jefferson County – is responsible for maintenance of the primary visitor access route, CR 83, directly off U.S. Route 285. CR 83 is in good condition but lacks striping, which has led to complaints by both locals – who do comprise a significant share of traffic – and park visitors, though data collected by Jefferson County indicate that the road does not meet the thresholds required for striping. In addition to recent conversations regarding striping and roadside maintenance on CR 83, the park is involved in ongoing discussions with the US Forest Service regarding fuel load management and local emergency access/evacuation routes. Park staff report that they maintain good relationships and engagement with both local counties and the nearby Elk Falls Ranch neighborhood. At this time, it is thought to be unlikely that any local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059.



CR 83
US Highway 285 is 1.5 miles south of the park.



Staunton State Park Visitor Residency

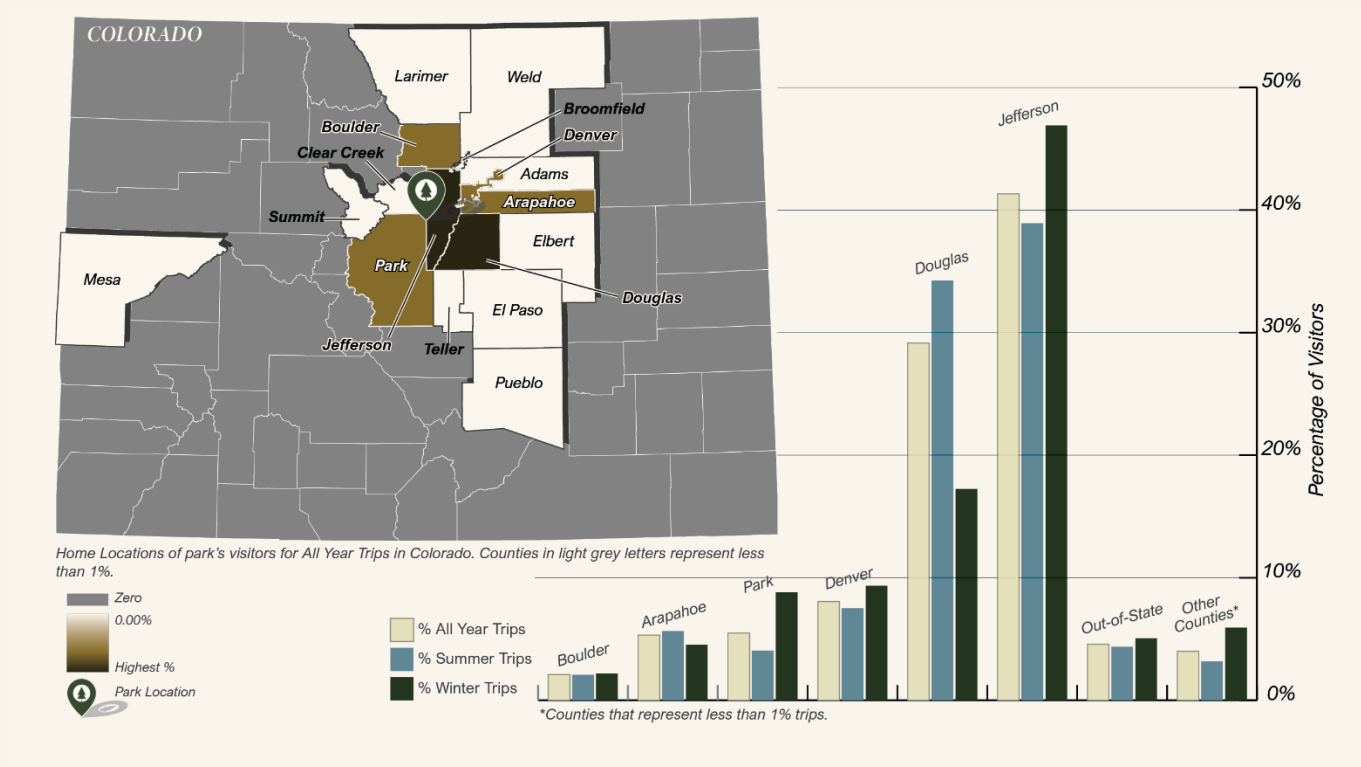


Figure 15. Home Locations of Visitors to Staunton State Park

As shown in Figure 15, most visitors to Staunton State Park come from Jefferson County (over 40%) and Douglas County (nearly 30%). Notably, residents of Jefferson County contribute a higher proportion of winter visits than summer visits, while the opposite is true of residents from Douglas County, who contribute a higher share of summer visits than winter visits. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



ELKHEAD RESERVOIR

Located in the Yampa Valley of northwest Colorado, Elkhead Reservoir State Park offers 900 surface-acres of water for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. The 2,105-acre park also offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and birding, hunting, year-round camping, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing.

Both Moffat County and Routt County maintain access routes into Elkhead Reservoir State Park. Most visitors come from Craig via Moffat County CR 28. Those accessing the park from east of Hayden use Routt County CR 78. Moffat County and Routt County both grade their respective access roads once per year with two treatments of dust suppressant. The park reports that they occasionally contract with Moffat County for further magnesium chloride treatment, since the park's main entrance and multiple other access points stem from Moffat County's roadways. Based on discussions with park staff, this maintenance has largely withstood the demand from visitor use and local traffic in the area and its likely these roads would be maintained to a similar level even without the presence of the state park. At this time, it is thought to be unlikely that any local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059.

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:
220K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:
\$2,800

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:
Moffat & Routt Counties

MOFFAT COUNTY ENTRANCE POINTS

- 1 Greenwood Cove
- 2 Main Entrance
- 3 Bears Ears Campground
- 4 East Beach

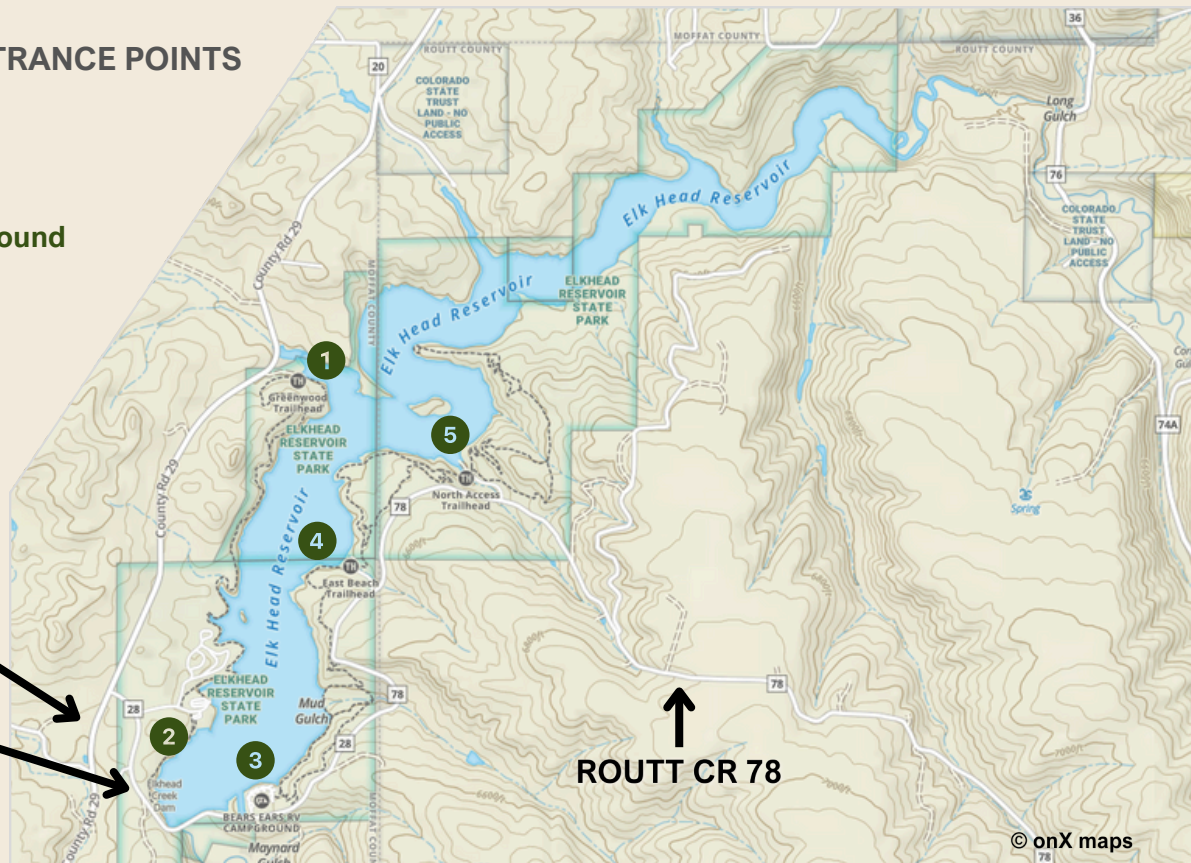
ROUTT COUNTY ENTRANCE POINTS

- 5 Northeast Access

MOFFAT CR 29

MOFFAT CR 28

ROUTT CR 78





Elkhead Reservoir State Park Visitor Residency

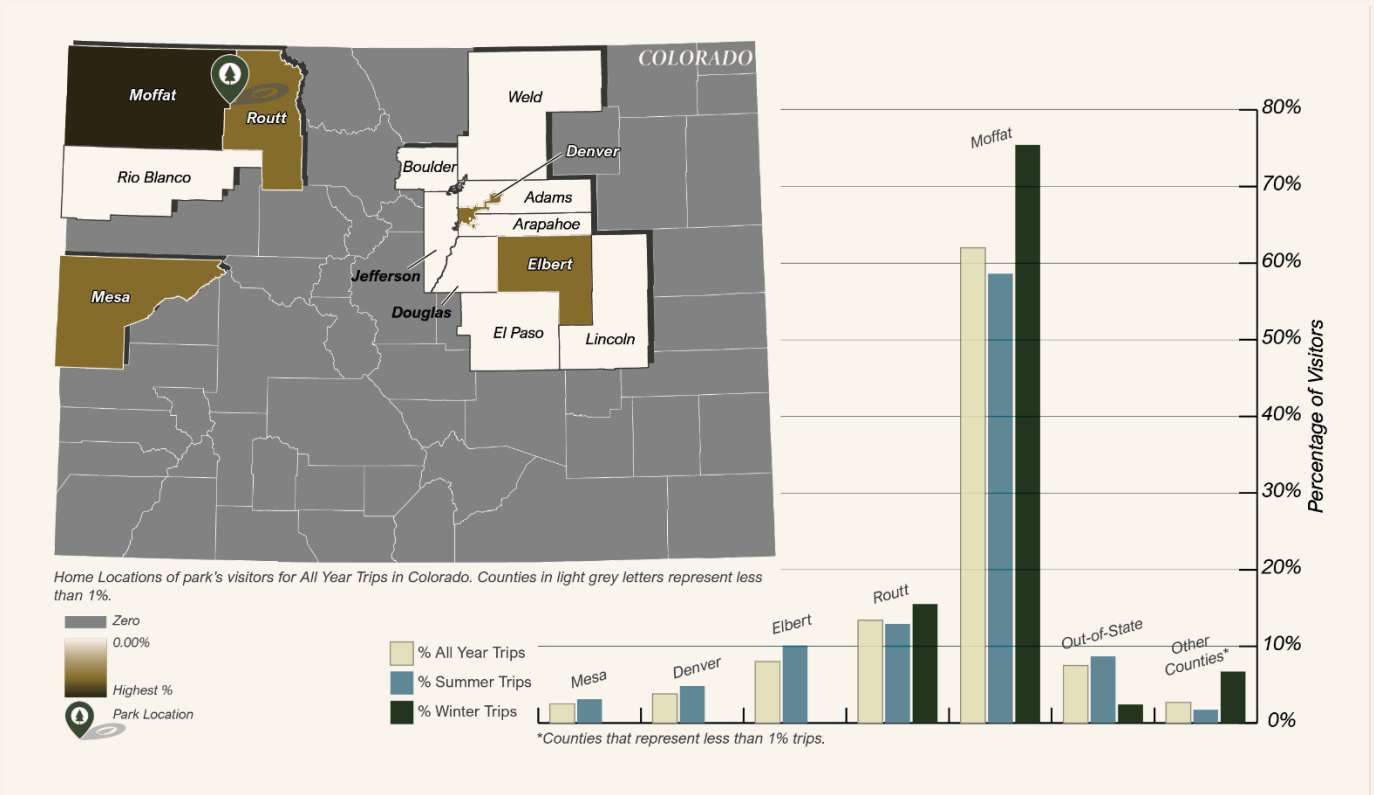


Figure 16. Home Locations of Visitors to Elkhead Reservoir State Park

As shown in Figure 16, approximately 61% of Elkhead Reservoir State Park visitors are residents of Moffat County, with this proportion increasing significantly to around 75% in the winter. Visitors from Routt County make up about 15% of year-round visits. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round, though residents of Elbert County account for about 10% of summer visits.



HARVEY GAP

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

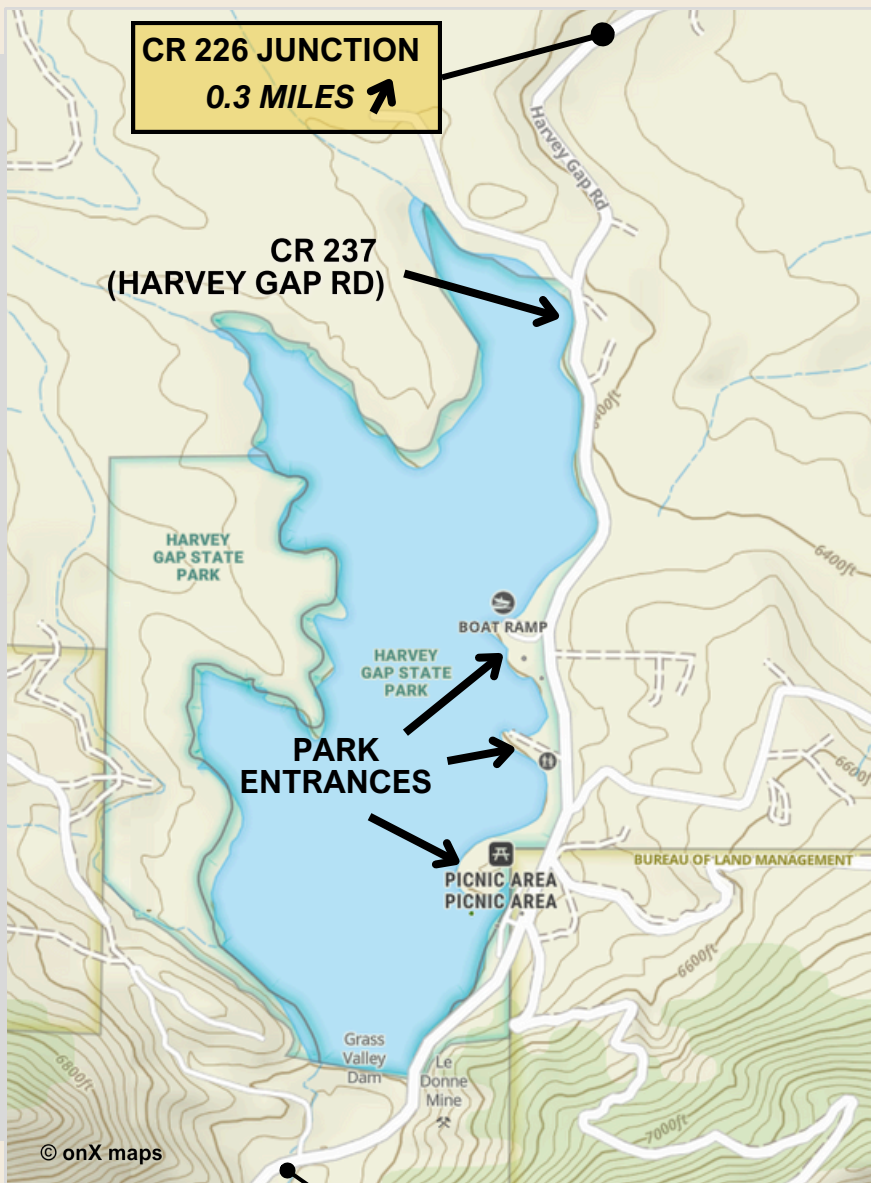
70K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$5,800

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Garfield County



Harvey Gap State Park is a popular, 304-acre day-use area in northwest Colorado, known for its 160-acre mountain lake, which provides opportunities for boating and motorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, swimming, birding, and hunting waterfowl. Fishing is the main draw at Harvey Gap; the park is especially favored by anglers for its abundant species, including rainbow trout and northern pike. In winter, the park offers opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, ice skating, and snowtubing/sledding. The park's proximity to Rifle Falls Fish Hatchery, Rifle Gap, and Rifle Falls State Parks, along with popular rock-climbing sites like Rifle Mountain Park, adds to its appeal. The park has seen a significant increase in visitation over the past few years, leading to parking shortages, particularly on weekends.

The park is accessed by two Garfield County roads: CR 237 (Harvey Gap Road) and CR 226 (Grass Valley Road). Both roads are narrow two-lane routes without shoulders, used by both park visitors towing watercraft and large agricultural trucks. While the roads are generally in good condition and regularly maintained, they could benefit from widening to improve safety and traffic flow. No significant issues have been noted by local jurisdictions, and there is currently no indication that they will seek funding under SB23-059 for these routes.

Most traffic to the park comes from the south via CR 237 (Harvey Gap Road) as Silt and Interstate 70 lie about 6 miles to the south of the park.



Harvey Gap State Park Visitor Residency

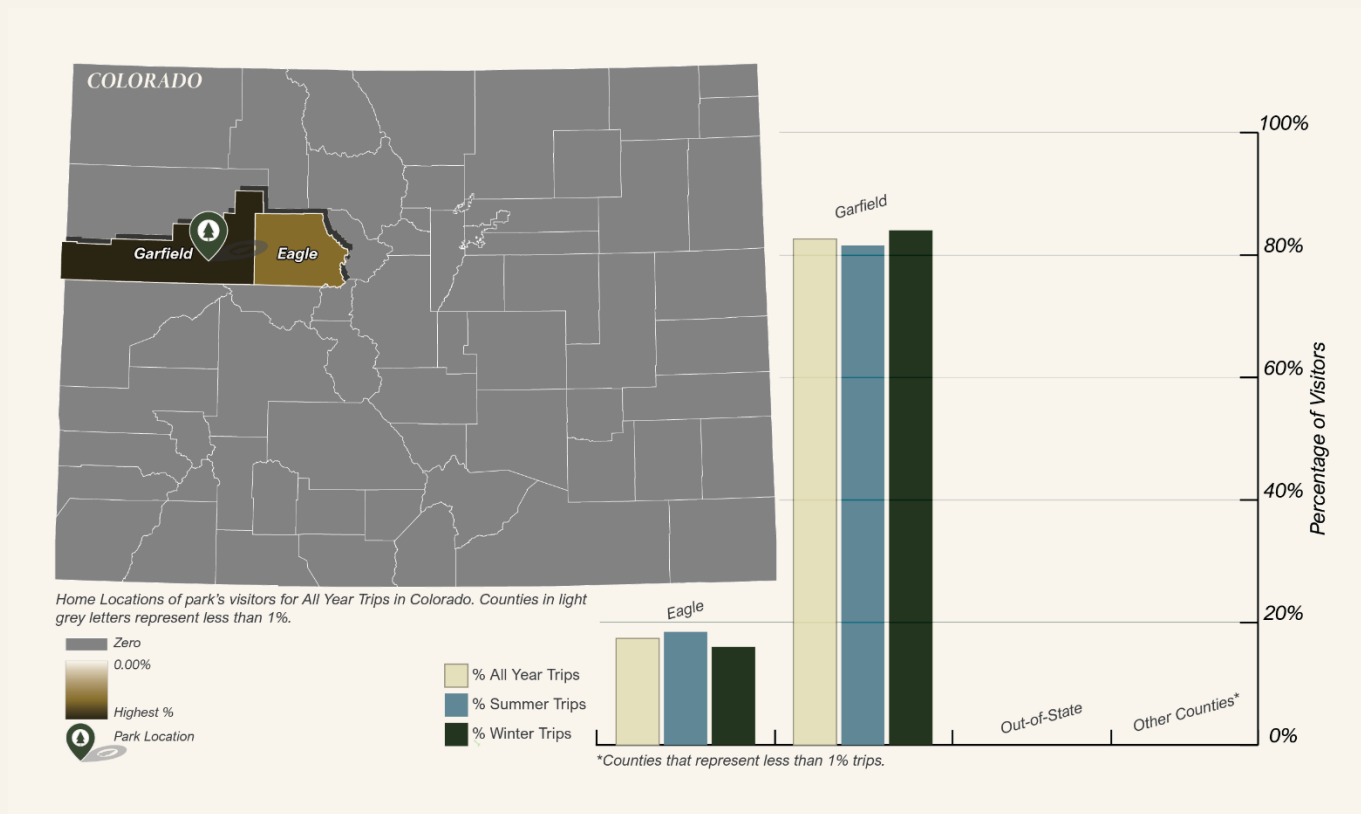


Figure 17. Home Locations of Visitors to Harvey Gap State Park

As shown in Figure 17, more than 80% of Harvey Gap State Park’s visitors reside in Garfield County, where the park is located. Eagle County accounts for the remainder of the park’s visits, nearly 20% of annual visitation. In the available dataset, no visitation is attributed to residents of other Colorado counties or out-of-state locations.



HIGHLINE LAKE

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

255K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

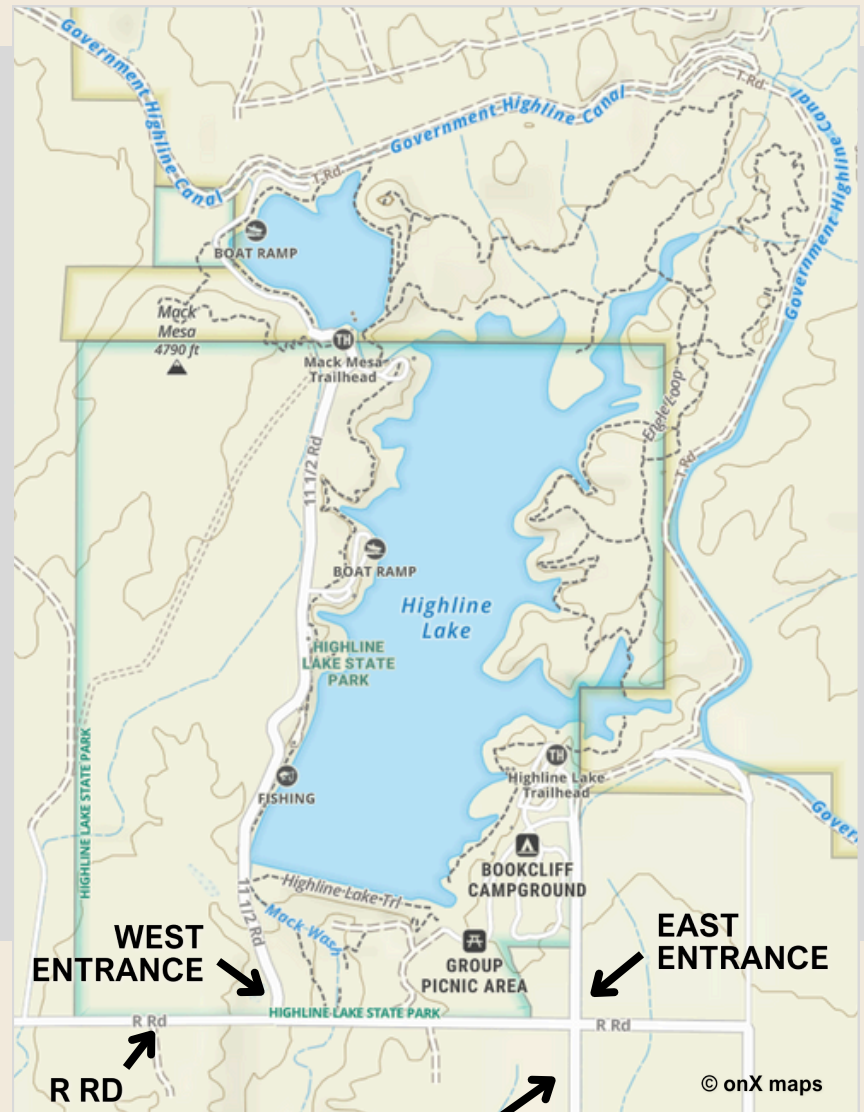
\$17,800

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Mesa County

Highline Lake State Park, located in Mesa County's Grand Valley, spans 740 acres and offers a wide range of water-based recreational activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. It is particularly popular for boating, often reaching boat capacity on summer weekends. Additional park activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and birding, geocaching, hunting small game and waterfowl, year-round camping and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and ice skating.

The park is accessed via two Mesa County roads: the west entrance is off R Road, and the east entrance is off 11 8/10 Road. Park staff believe that the positive economic impact from visitor spending in the county outweighs any potential burden on local transportation infrastructure. There have been no reported concerns from local jurisdictions regarding these access routes, making it unlikely that funding under SB23-059 will be pursued at this time.



11 8/10 RD serves as the primary access route for the park. Visitors access this road via Q RD 1.3 miles south of the park entrance, prior to using Q RD visitors access the park via CO Highway 139.



Highline Lake State Park Visitor Residency

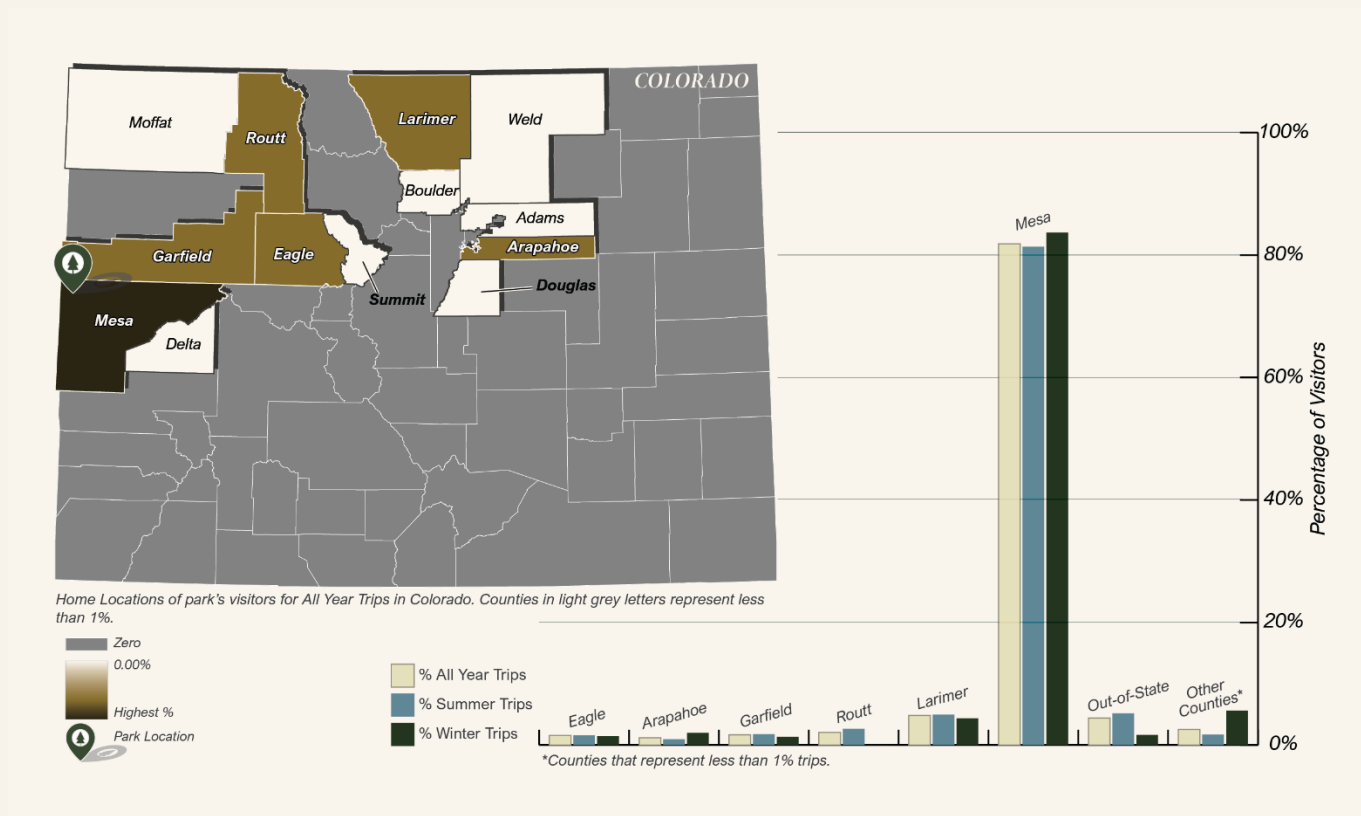


Figure 18. Home Locations of Visitors to Highline Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 18, nearly 80% of year-round visitors to Highline Lake State Park reside in Mesa County, where the park is located. The remaining visitors are distributed across several counties, including Larimer, Routt, Garfield, Arapahoe, and Eagle, each contributing a small proportion, while about 5% come from out-of-state. These visitation patterns remains consistent across all seasons.



James M. Robb

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:
542K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:
\$28,100

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:
**Mesa County &
City of Grand Junction**

James M. Robb—Colorado River State Park, comprising five sections along 35 miles of the Colorado River, offers a range of water-based recreational opportunities such as boating, sailing, paddle sports, swimming, and fishing. The park, spanning 819 acres, features extensive trail networks for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, as well as opportunities for wildlife watching and birding, geocaching, hunting, and winter recreation including ice fishing and ice skating. Year-round camping is available in two of the five sections of the park.

Local access to the park is facilitated by partnerships with several local and regional entities, including the Grand Junction Visitor and Convention Bureau, the City of Grand Junction, the Town of Palisade, the City of Fruita, Mesa County, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Of the five sections that make up James M. Robb—Colorado River State Park, just two have access roads which would meet SB23-059 criteria: the Connected Lakes section and the Colorado River Wildlife Area section. At the Connected Lakes, Dike Road is used to access the park and falls within both Mesa County and City of Grand Junction municipal boundaries. Additionally, the paved Audubon trail provides park access to walkers and bicyclists. The Colorado River Wildlife Area section is accessed from D Road, which is within the City of Grand Junction. Both Dike Road and D Road are paved. The remaining sections are accessed either through ineligible access routes: Interstate 70, CO State Highway 141, or CO State Highway 340. Overall, James M. Robb's access routes are well-maintained, benefiting from the proximity to Grand Junction. It is currently unlikely that local jurisdictions will pursue funding under SB23-059, with existing community partnerships providing sufficient funding for transportation access on eligible routes, and other challenges such as habitat restoration and invasive plant management providing more pressing concerns.

CONNECTED LAKES



WILDLIFE AREA





James M. Robb – Colorado River State Park Visitor Residency

The sample size of the available 2023 Azira data is too small to provide meaningful analysis results that can portray home locations of visitors to James M. Robb – Colorado River State Park with confidence.

PEARL LAKE



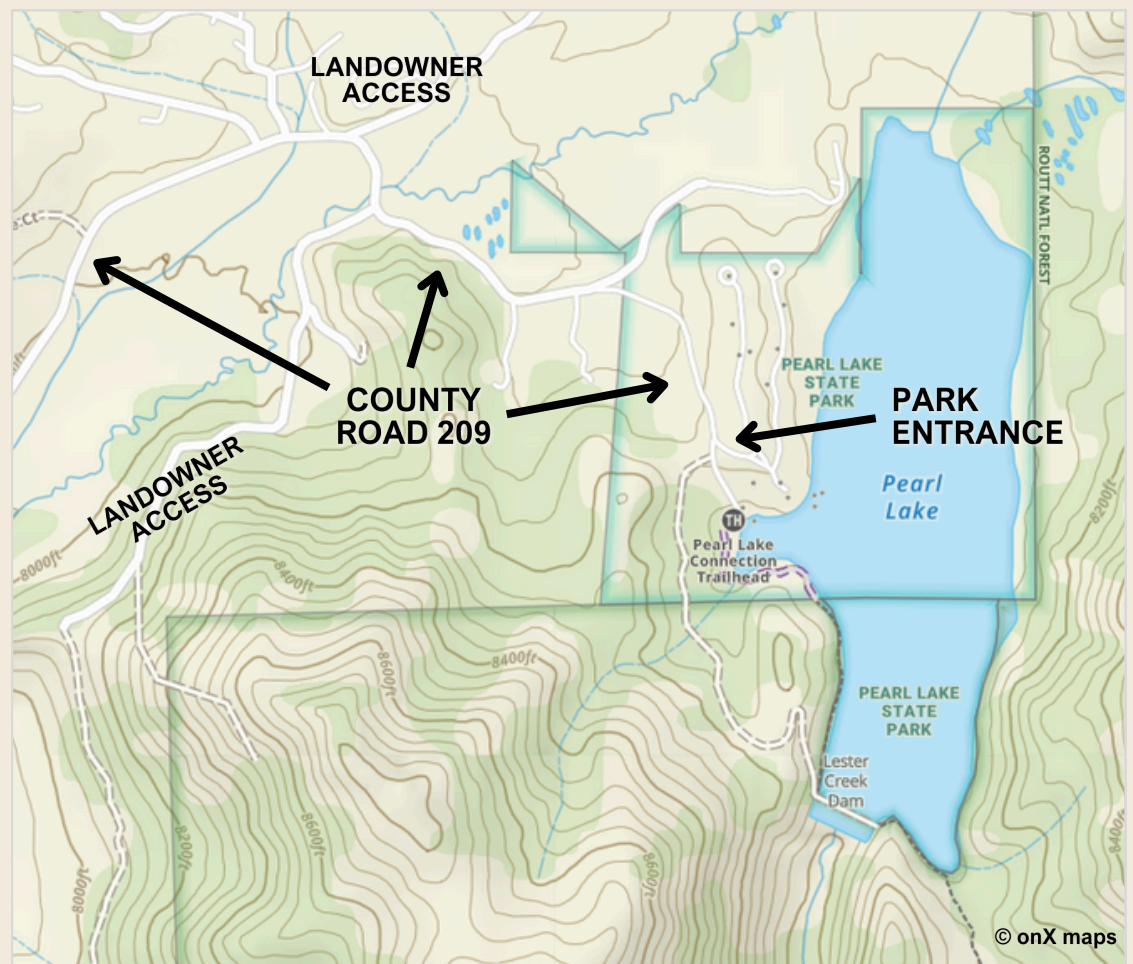
Pearl Lake State Park is a smaller, quieter companion to Steamboat Lake State Park, which is located just five miles to its northwest. Spanning 298 acres, Pearl Lake offers a more adventurous experience with activities such as motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, and fishing. The park features a short trail suitable for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, as well as opportunities for geocaching, hunting, wildlife watching, and birding. Winter activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and snowmobiling. Overnight options include camping and two year-round yurts, each of which are highly sought after due to the park's increasing visitation.

Access to Pearl Lake is via a two-mile stretch of dirt road along Routt County's CR 209. This road, with few landowners along its length, primarily serves park visitors. Its clay base makes it susceptible to deterioration, particularly during wet conditions in spring or after heavy precipitation. Park staff have responded to feedback from surrounding landowners regarding the road's condition by coordinating maintenance schedules with the county. Although there is concern that implementing a fee might be negatively received by park visitors, the road's condition and its high park-related traffic make it a potential candidate for funding under SB23-059 in the future.

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:
30K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:
\$4,100

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:
Routt County





Pearl Lake State Park Visitor Residency

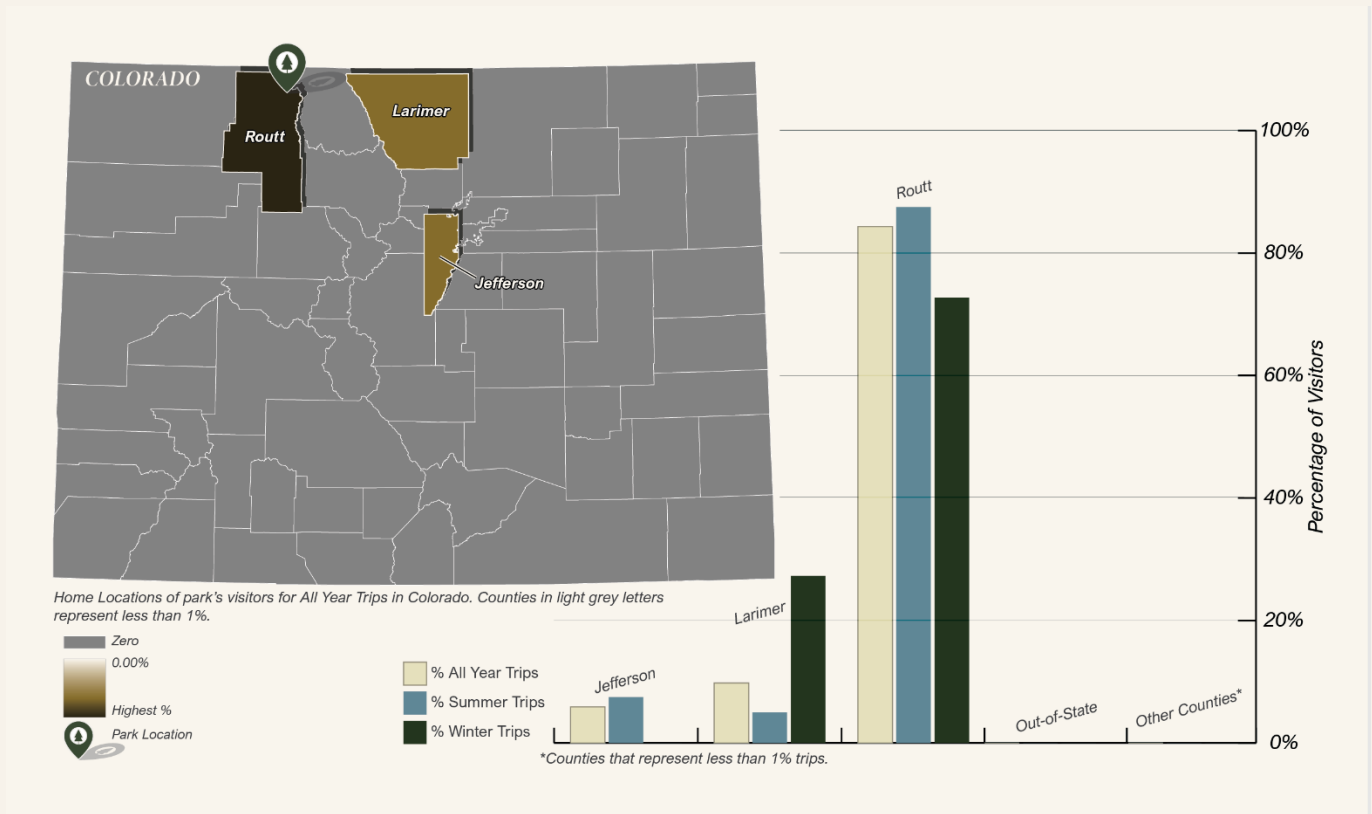


Figure 19. Home Locations of Visitors to Pearl Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 19, most visitors to Pearl Lake State Park live in Routt County, which consistently contributes the highest share of visitors of any home location, year-round and seasonally. Local visitation is proportionally strongest in the summer, when over 80% of trips are made by residents of Routt County.

In the winter, the Routt County share decreases slightly, as Larimer County (accounting for 25% of winter visits) contributes a much higher share of visitors than in summer. Jefferson County contributes a small portion of visitors in the summer, but no winter visitors. In the available dataset, no visitation is attributed to residents of other Colorado counties or out-of-state locations.



RIFLE FALLS

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

155K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

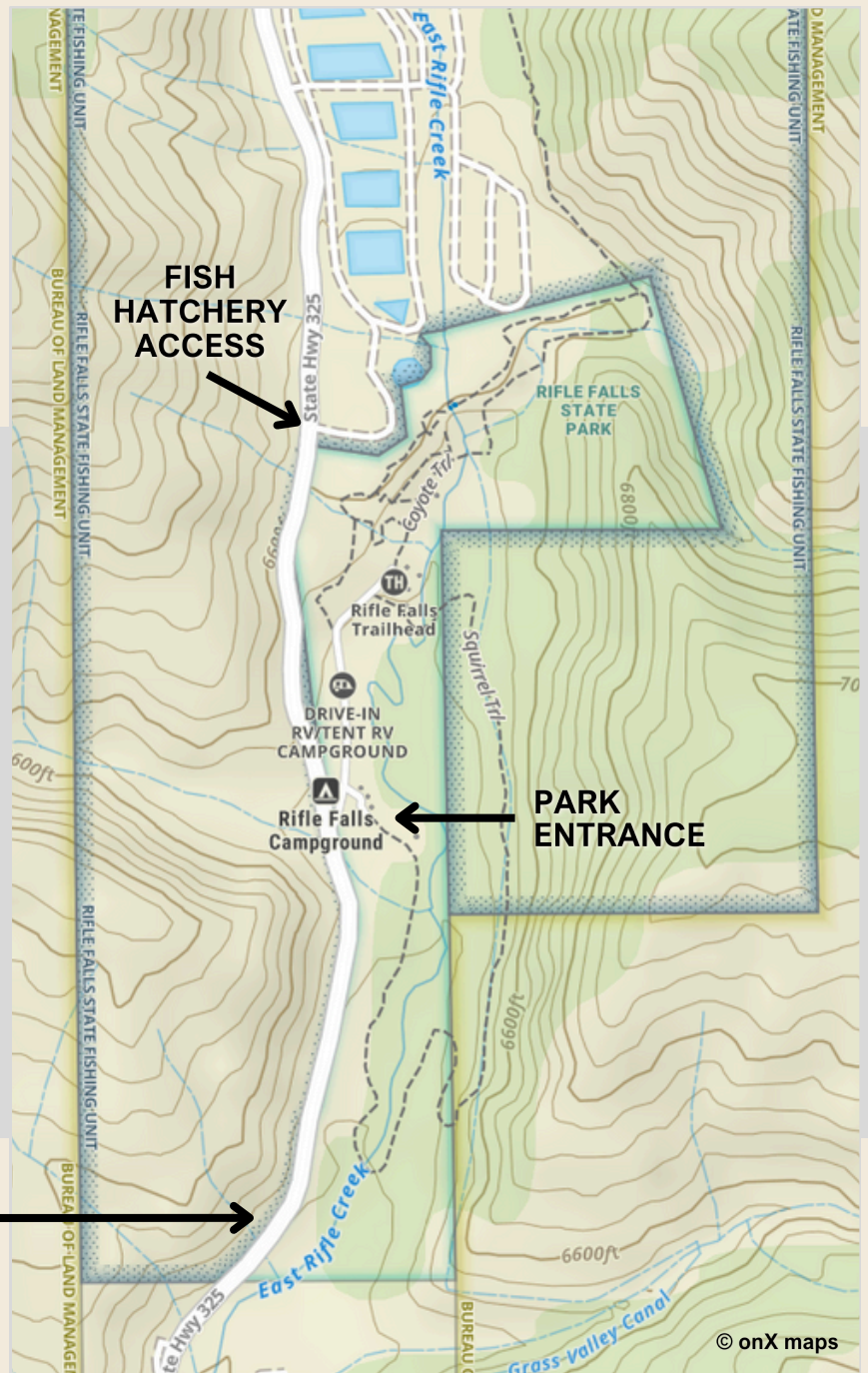
\$19,400

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

None

Rifle Falls State Park, a small 48-acre park located in Garfield County in Northwest Colorado, is renowned for its captivating trio of 60-foot waterfalls and intriguing limestone caves. These features attract photographers, hikers, and nature enthusiasts. The park offers 1.5 miles of trails for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing, as well as opportunities for OHV-riding, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Year-round camping is available, and the park's natural beauty has led to steadily increasing visitation numbers.

Due to the park's small size and unique geological features, it often faces capacity challenges, especially during busy summer weekends when parking areas fill up and visitors may be turned away. Access to the park is via CO State Highway 325. There are currently no local access routes eligible for funding under SB23-059.



**CO STATE
HIGHWAY 325**

The sole entrance to Rifle Falls is accessed via CO Highway 325, leaving no eligible access routes available for SB23-059 funding.



Rifle Falls State Park Visitor Residency

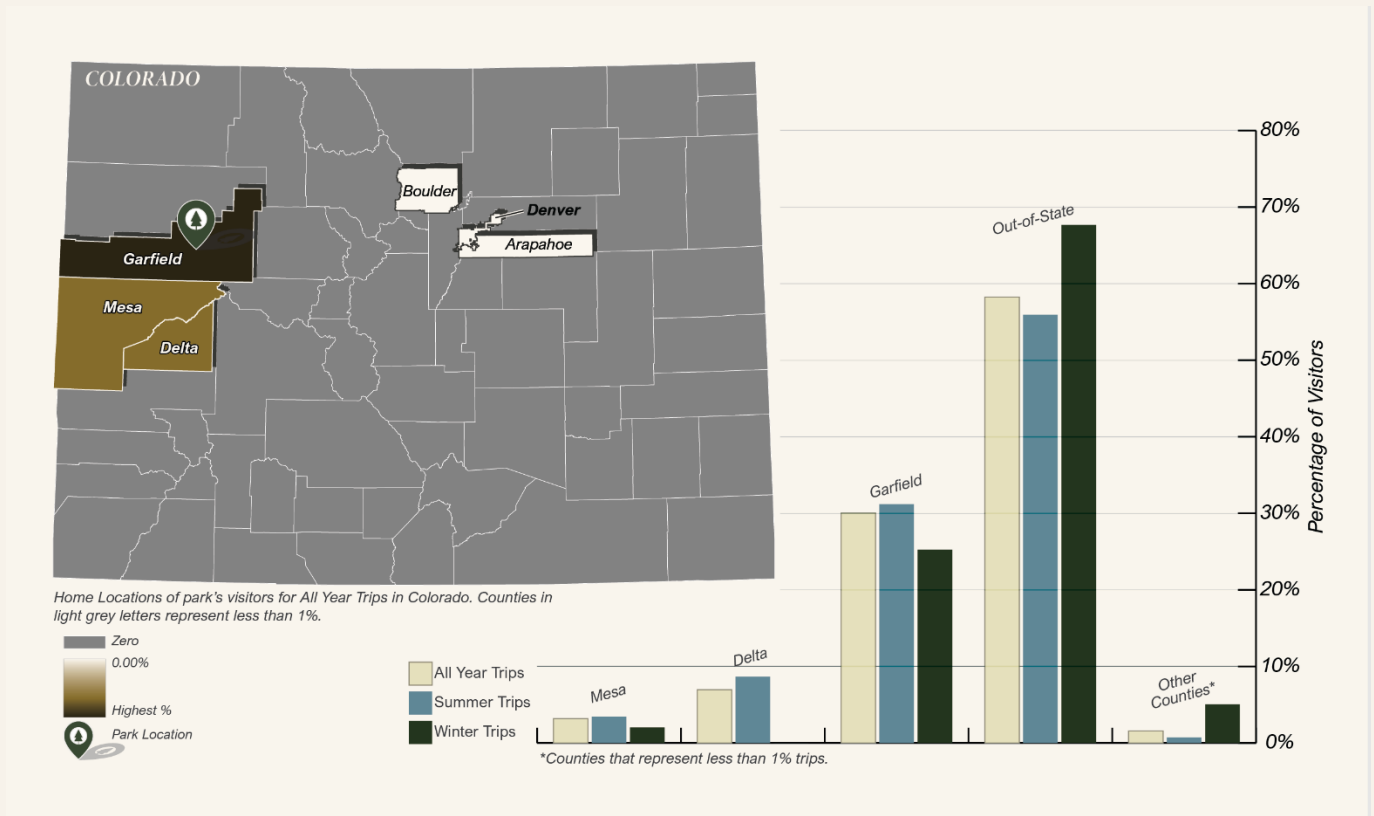


Figure 20. Home Locations of Visitors to Rifle Falls State Park

As shown in Figure 20, nearly 60% of year-round visitors to Rifle Falls State Park come from out-of-state, with this share slightly lower in the summer (around 55%) and rising to almost 70% in the winter. Among Colorado residents, the majority of visitors are from Garfield County, contributing around 30% of year-round and summer visits and just under 25% in the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.

RIFLE GAP

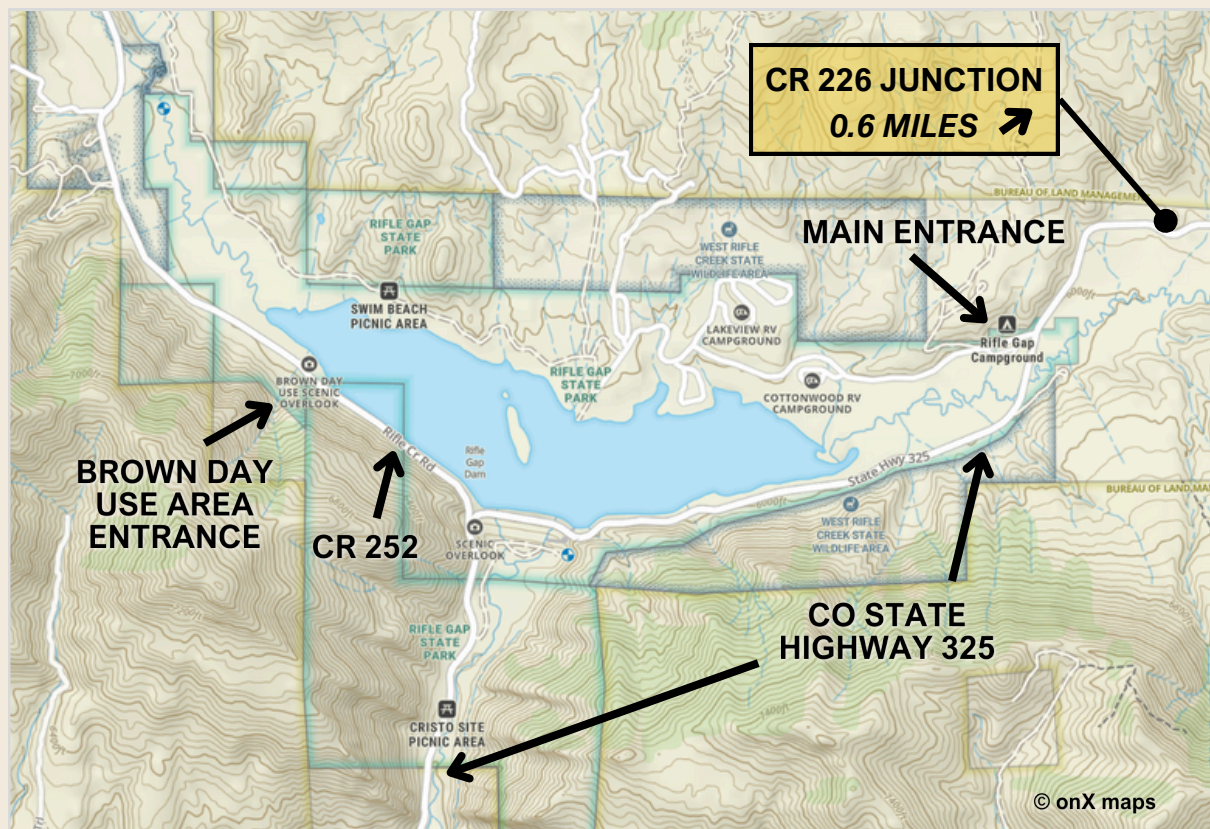


Garfield County Road 252 & 266 are the only access routes meeting SB23-059 criteria. CR 252 services the Brown Day Use Area and may be the most utilized of the two eligible roadways.

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:
270K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:
\$11,500

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:
**Garfield
County**



Rifle Gap State Park, encompassing 1,333 acres in Garfield County in Northwest Colorado, is celebrated for its pristine 360-acre reservoir. The park is renowned for offering some of the best boating, fishing, swimming, and water skiing in the region, while the unique "Gap" in the surrounding mountains creates ideal wind conditions for windsurfing. The park provides opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. While the park is water-oriented and lacks trails, it offers hunting opportunities and year-round camping. Winter activities include ice fishing, ice skating, and snowtubing/sledding.

Access to the park is primarily via CO State Highway 325, which connects visitors to the visitor center, camping areas, and access points along Rifle Gap Road. This highway is also the main route for travelers between Rifle Gap and Harvey Gap State Parks through the Town of Rifle. Garfield County's CR 252 provides access to a small fishing area with limited park traffic, and CR 226 (Grass Valley Road) is used by both park visitors towing watercraft and large agricultural trucks. Although generally in good condition and regularly maintained, CR 226 could benefit from widening to enhance safety and traffic flow. However, since the primary access route via SH 325 is not eligible for funding, there is currently no indication that the local jurisdiction will seek funding under SB23-059 to support access to Rifle Gap State Park.



Rifle Gap State Park Visitor Residency

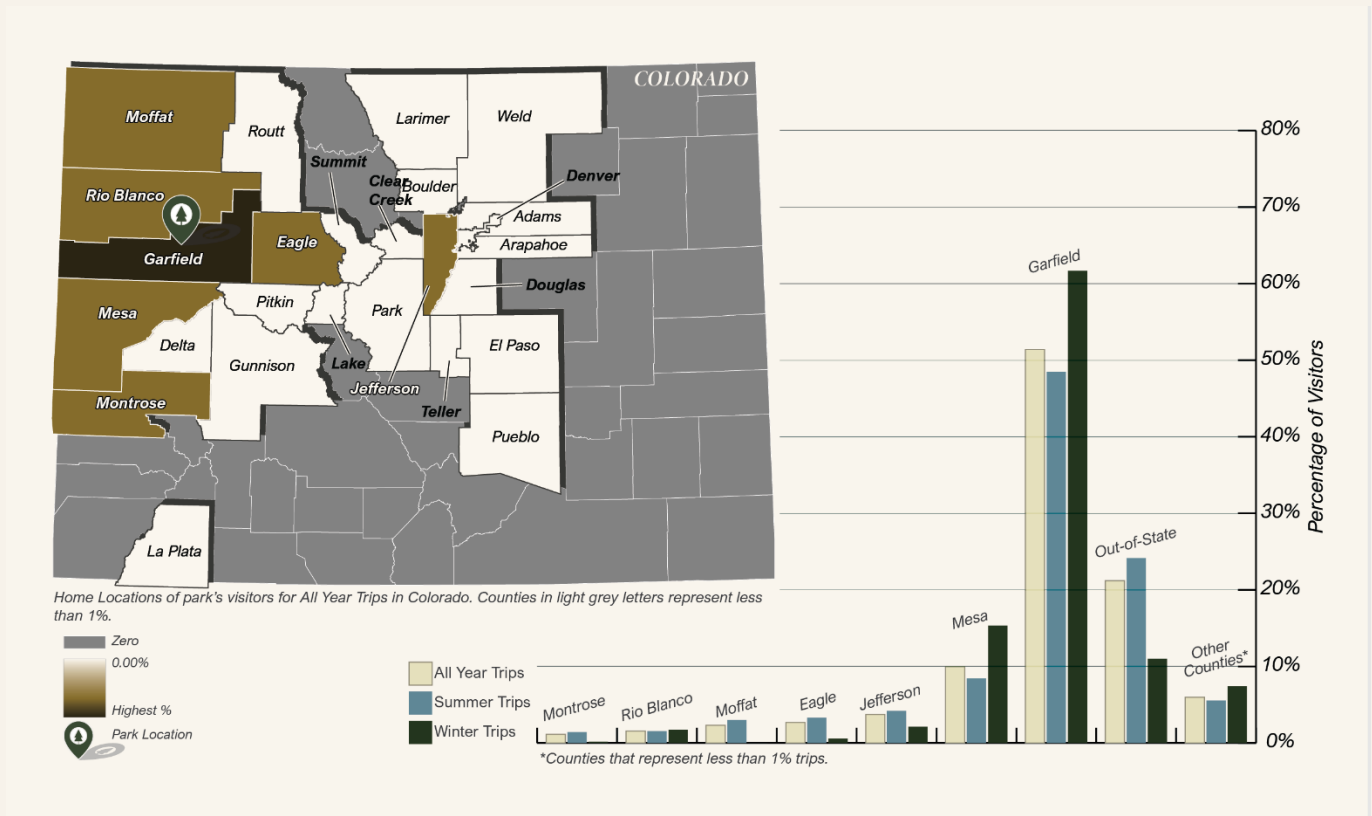
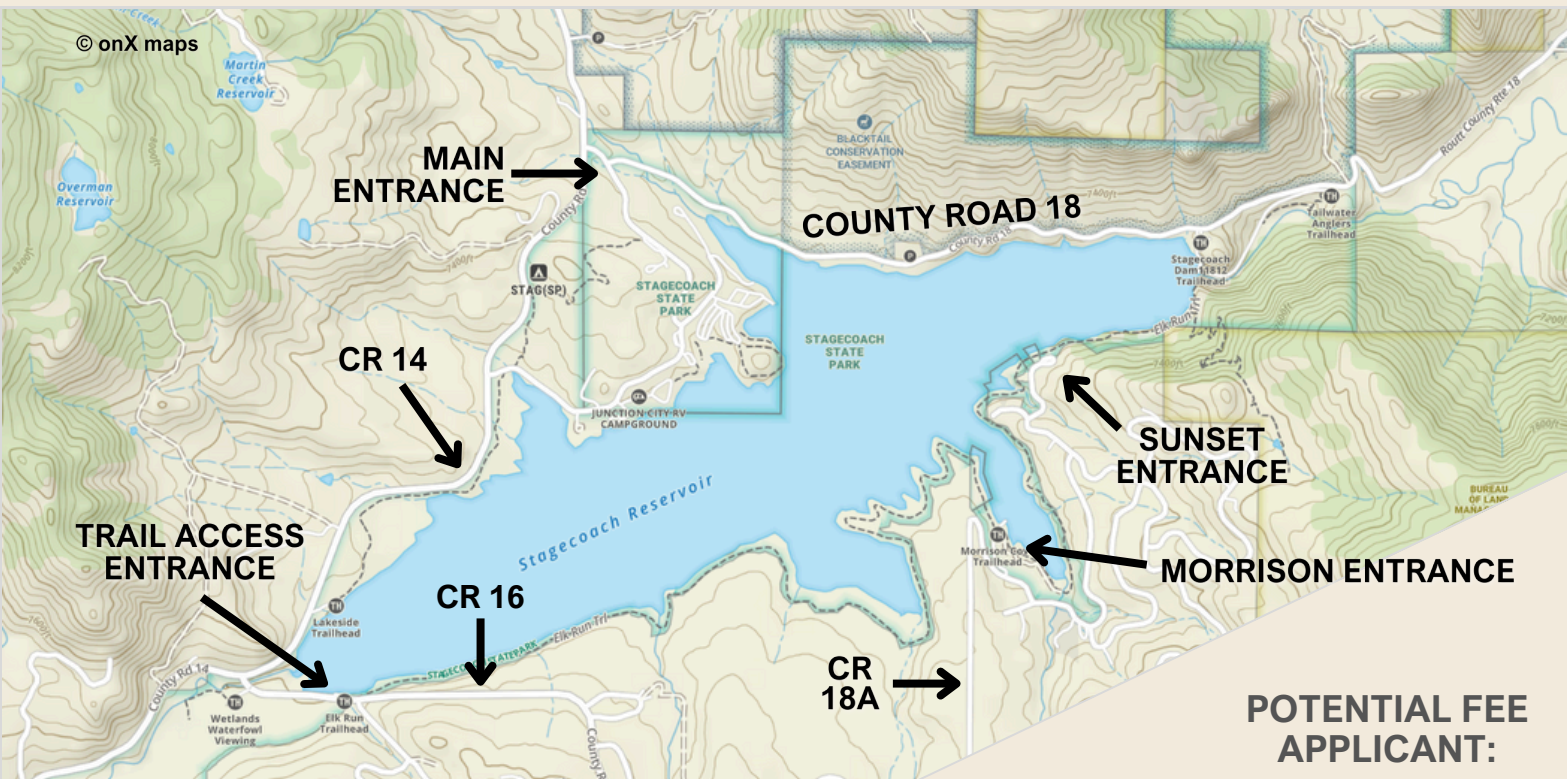


Figure 21. Home Locations of Visitors to Rifle Gap State Park

As shown in Figure 21, most visitors to Rifle Gap State Park live in Garfield County, accounting for around 50% of year-round and summer visits, and over 60% in the winter. Out-of-state visitors comprise approximately 20% of annual visits, increasing to 25% during the summer and dropping to 10% in the winter. Visitors from Mesa County make up about 10% of year-round and summer trips, rising to 15% during the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



STAGECOACH



POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Routt County

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **273K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$9,900**

Stagecoach State Park, located in the Yampa Valley, spans 1,630 acres and features a 3-mile-long reservoir. The park offers a variety of water activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. In addition to water-based recreation, the park provides opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, birding, hunting, and year-round camping. Winter activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and snowtubing/sledding.

Access to the park is primarily via Routt County CR 14, a paved road leading to the park's main entrance station and marina. This road also serves a growing community, with many residents commuting to and from Steamboat Springs, resulting in significant daily non-park traffic on this primary access route. Park staff note that while Stagecoach State Park does contribute to local road traffic, the impact is minimal compared to the volume of commuter use. Additional park access is provided by CR 16 and CR 18A, with CR 16 being paved near the park and offering limited access, while CR 18A is unpaved and leads to the more developed Morrison and Sunset areas. North of the park, CR 18 provides access to the dam and below-dam fishing areas. Discussions with park staff suggest that these roads would likely be maintained to a similar standard regardless of the park's presence, and they have not received interest in the bill from local officials. Given this, and the predominant non-park use of the main access route, it is currently unlikely that the local jurisdiction will seek funding under SB23-059.



Stagecoach State Park Visitor Residency

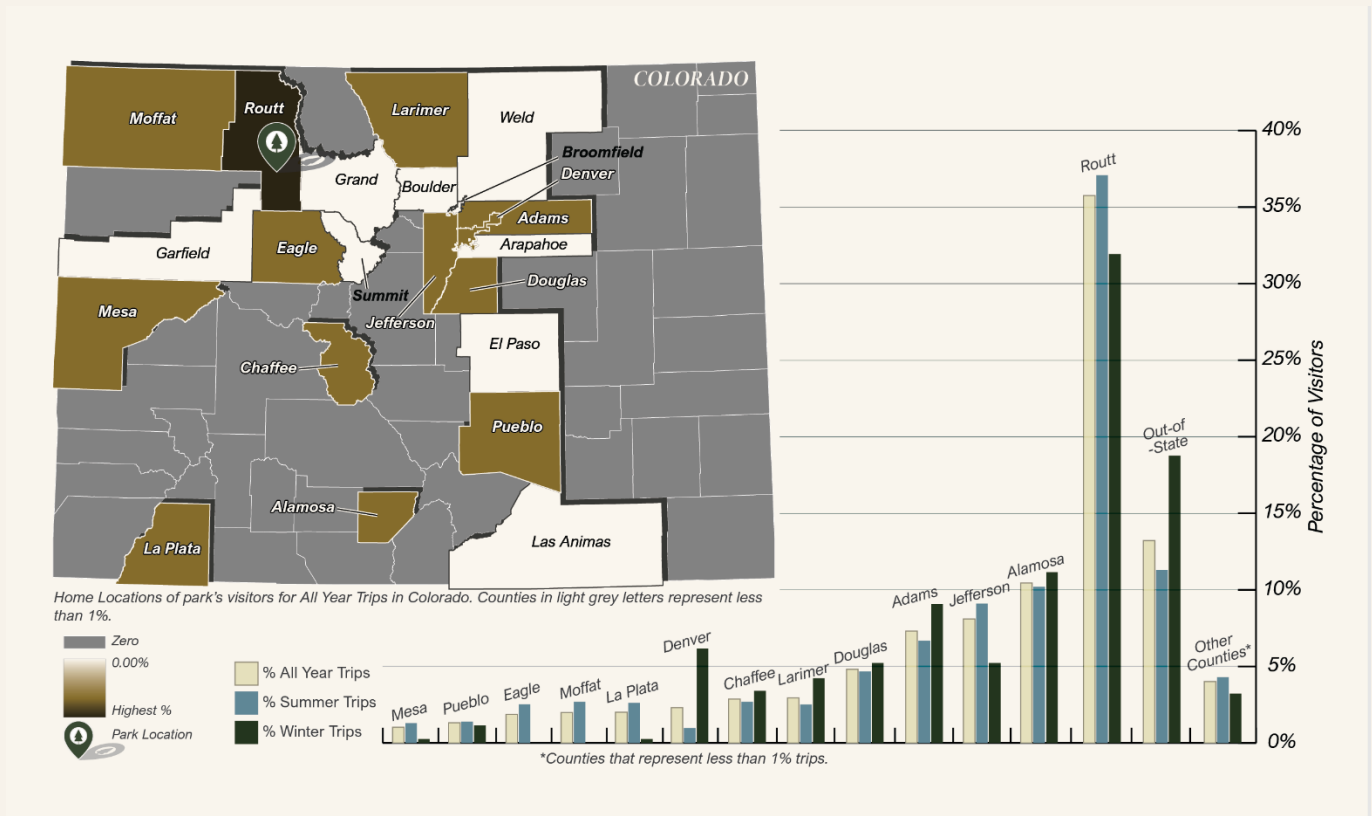


Figure 22: Home Locations of Visitors to Stagecoach State Park

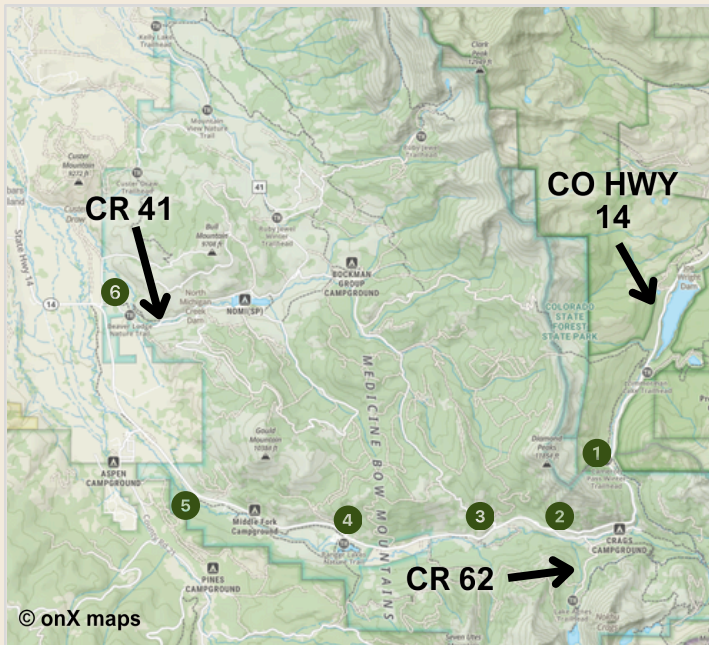
As shown in Figure 22, the highest share of visitors to Stagecoach State Park live in Routt County, representing 35% of year-round visits, 37% in the summer, and 32% in the winter. The park also sees 13% of its visitors come from out-of-state, with this share increasing to nearly 20% in the winter.

Other notable contributors include Alamosa (10%), Jefferson (8%), and Adams (7%) counties. While Denver County accounts for about 2% of year-round visits, this rises to around 7% during the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 5% of trips year-round.



STATE FOREST

SOUTHERN PARK AREA



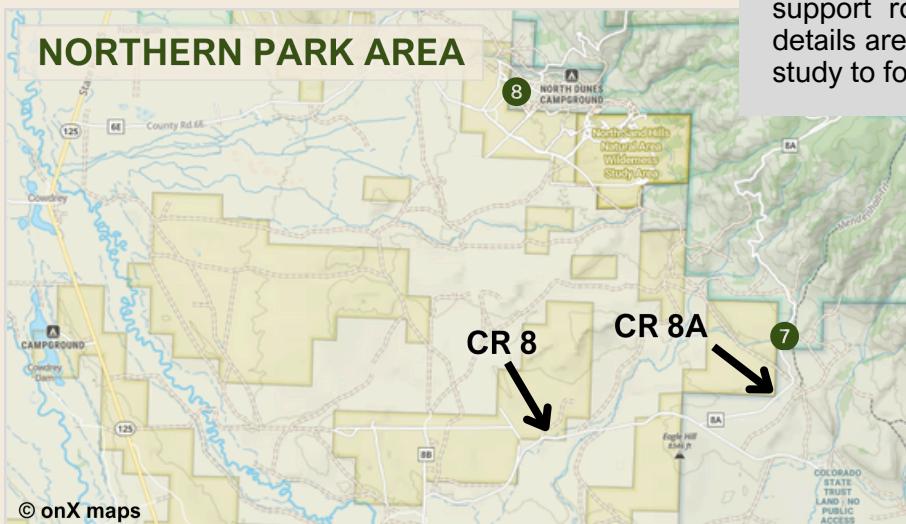
MAPPED ENTRANCE POINTS

- 1 Michigan Ditch
- 2 Crags
- 3 Brockman
- 4 Ranger Lakes
- 5 Moose Visitor Center
- 6 North Michigan
- 7 Mendenhall
- 8 North Sand Hills

State Forest State Park, spanning nearly 40 miles along the western side of the Continental Divide in Jackson County, covers over 70,000 acres. It offers a wide range of recreational activities and overnight accommodations year-round, including backcountry camping, campgrounds, 15 cabins, and 8 yurts. The park features over 100 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, and 80 miles for OHV-riding. Additional activities include geocaching, hunting, rock climbing, wildlife watching—highlighted by a population of 600 moose—and birding. The park's waterways, including two rivers, a reservoir, and numerous alpine lakes, provide opportunities for boating, sailing, paddle sports, and fishing. In winter, visitors can enjoy cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, ice skating, snowmobiling, and snowtubing/sledding.

Access throughout the park is facilitated by several Jackson County roads. CR 41 serves as a major thoroughfare, designed primarily to provide access to the park and maintained by the county. The road runs about 10 miles into the park, encompassing key areas such as the entrance booth, maintenance office, and numerous cabins and campsites. During peak visitation from June to October, CR 41 often deteriorates significantly, particularly with wash-boarding, despite regular maintenance efforts. Additional access routes include CR 8 and CR 8A, which enter the north side of the park, and CR 62, which is entirely within the park and serves as the sole access to the American Lakes Campground. Given the park's extensive use and funding challenges, Jackson County was one of two applicants for funding under SB23-059 in the 2024 application period, hoping to utilize fee revenue to support road maintenance and improvements. More details are available in the State Forest State Park case study to follow.

NORTHERN PARK AREA



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **344K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$10,300**

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: **Jackson County**



State Forest State Park Visitor Residency

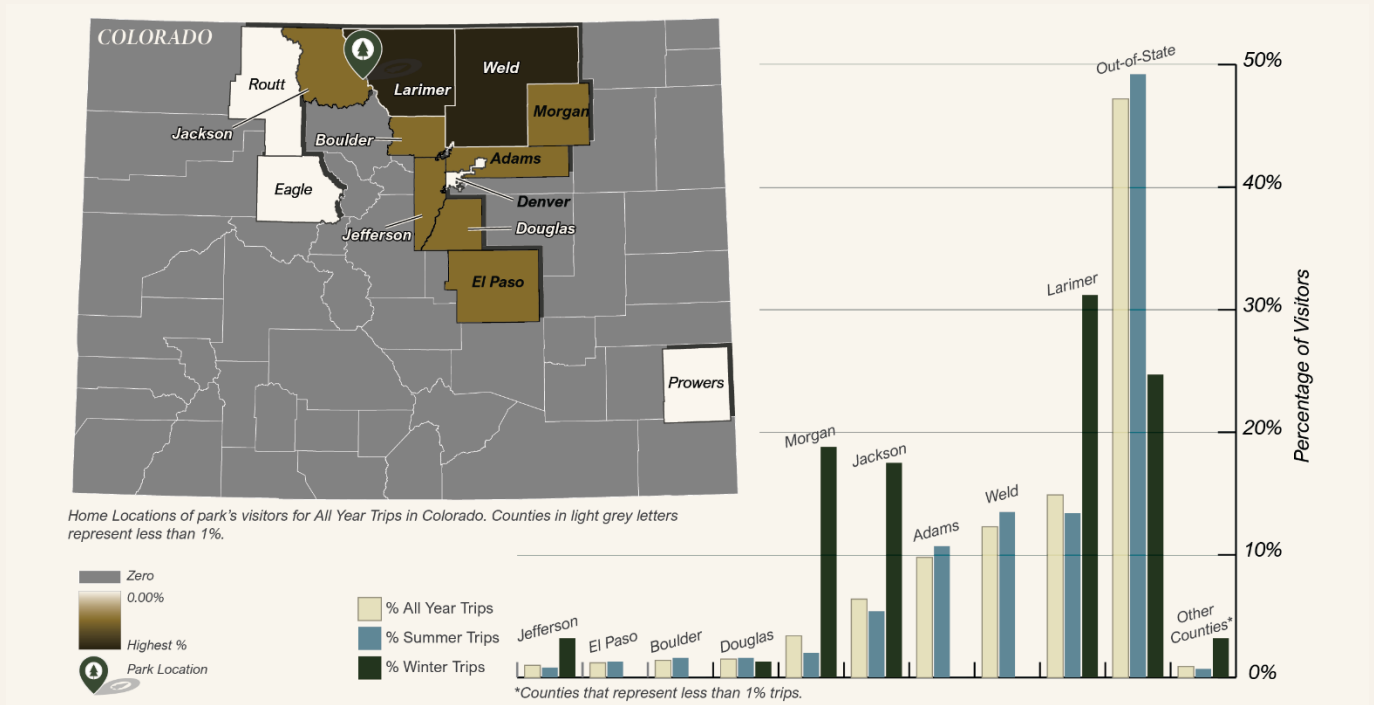


Figure 23. Home Locations of Visitors to State Forest State Park

As shown in Figure 23, the highest share of visits to State Forest State Park come from out-of-state residents, accounting for approximately 47% of annual visits. However, this share drops significantly during the winter, to about 25%.

Larimer County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing around 15% of annual visits. Notably, the share of visits from Larimer County increases significantly to more than 30% during the winter, surpassing out-of-state visits during this season.

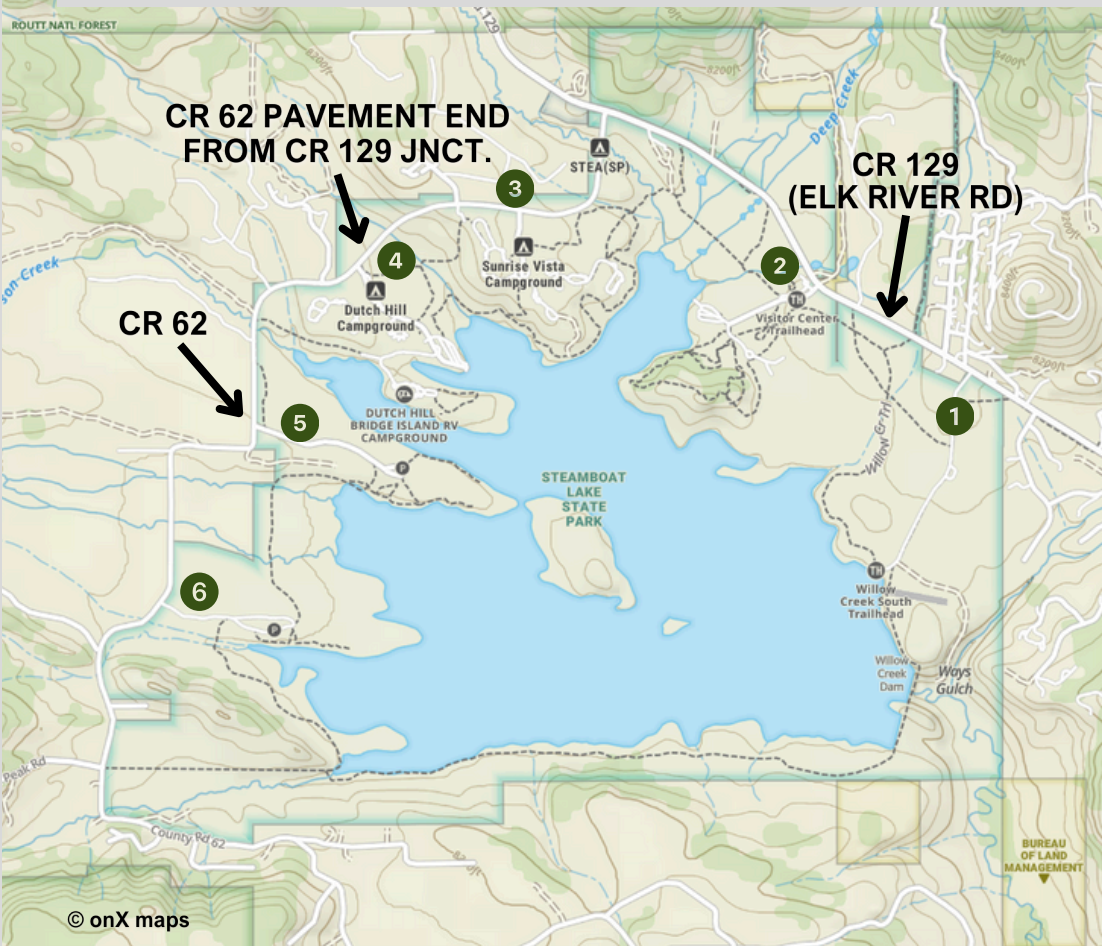
Adams and Weld counties contribute between 10% and 15% of summer visits but do not account for any winter visits. Conversely, Morgan and Jackson counties see a rise in winter visits, representing 15% to 20% of trips, while contributing fewer than 10% of visits during the summer. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 5% of trips year-round.



STEAMBOAT LAKE

Steamboat Lake State Park features a 1,100-acre lake that offers various water activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. The park also provides opportunities for hiking, biking, wildlife watching, birding, hunting, and geocaching. With over 300 inches of snow annually and a Nordic touring center with groomed trails, it is a popular winter destination for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing. Overnight accommodations include 10 cabins and year-round camping.

Access to the park is primarily via Routt County's County Road 129 (Elk River Road) and CR 62. Despite high visitation, no significant access issues have been reported. Elk River Road, a paved route, serves both of the county's state parks and additional recreational areas and communities in north Routt County. CR 62, which is partially paved and gravel, provides key access to the park's marina, campgrounds, and west side, and also serves many local residents. The paved section of CR 62 sees heavy use and is maintained on a seven-year cycle of chip seal, with a fresh overlay every twenty-one years. Park staff highlight that while park visitors contribute significantly to road usage, they also bring over \$50 million annually to the local economy. This economic benefit suggests that county tax revenues from visitor spending could offset additional road maintenance costs. Although there are concerns about the potential negative reception of a new fee among park visitors, Routt County might consider seeking funding under SB23-059 to support current maintenance efforts and potential improvements like road striping.



ENTRANCE POINTS

- 1 Sage Flats
- 2 Placer Cove
- 3 Sunrise Vista
- 4 Dutch Hill
- 5 Rainbow Ridge
- 6 Meadow Point

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:

457K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:

\$10,400

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Routt County



Steamboat Lake State Park Visitor Residency

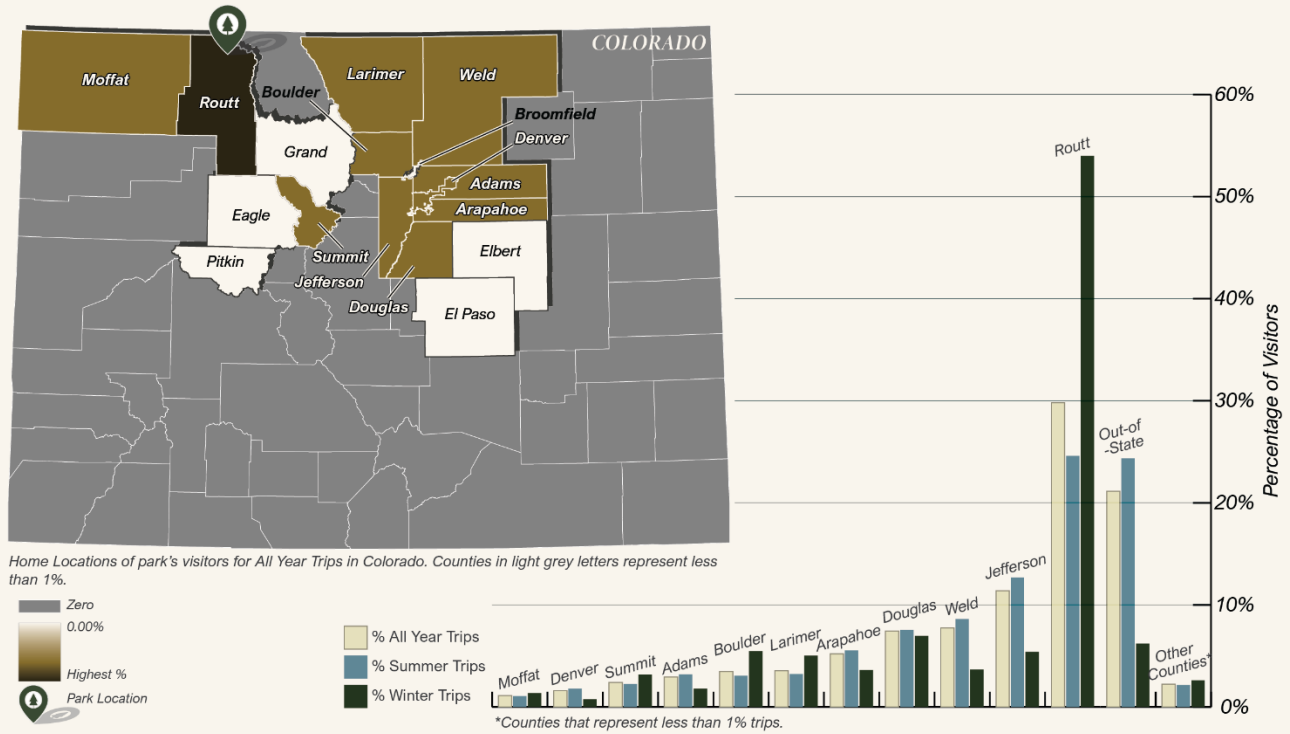


Figure 24: Home Locations of Visitors to Steamboat Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 24, Steamboat Lake State Park primarily draws visitors from Routt County, particularly during the winter months. Routt County accounts for 30% of year-round visits, rising to 55% in the winter and dropping to 25% during the summer.

Out-of-state visitors make up about 20% of annual visits, though this share decreases to 5% in the winter. Jefferson County contributes 11% of year-round visitors, with 12% in the summer and 5% in the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.

SYLVAN LAKE

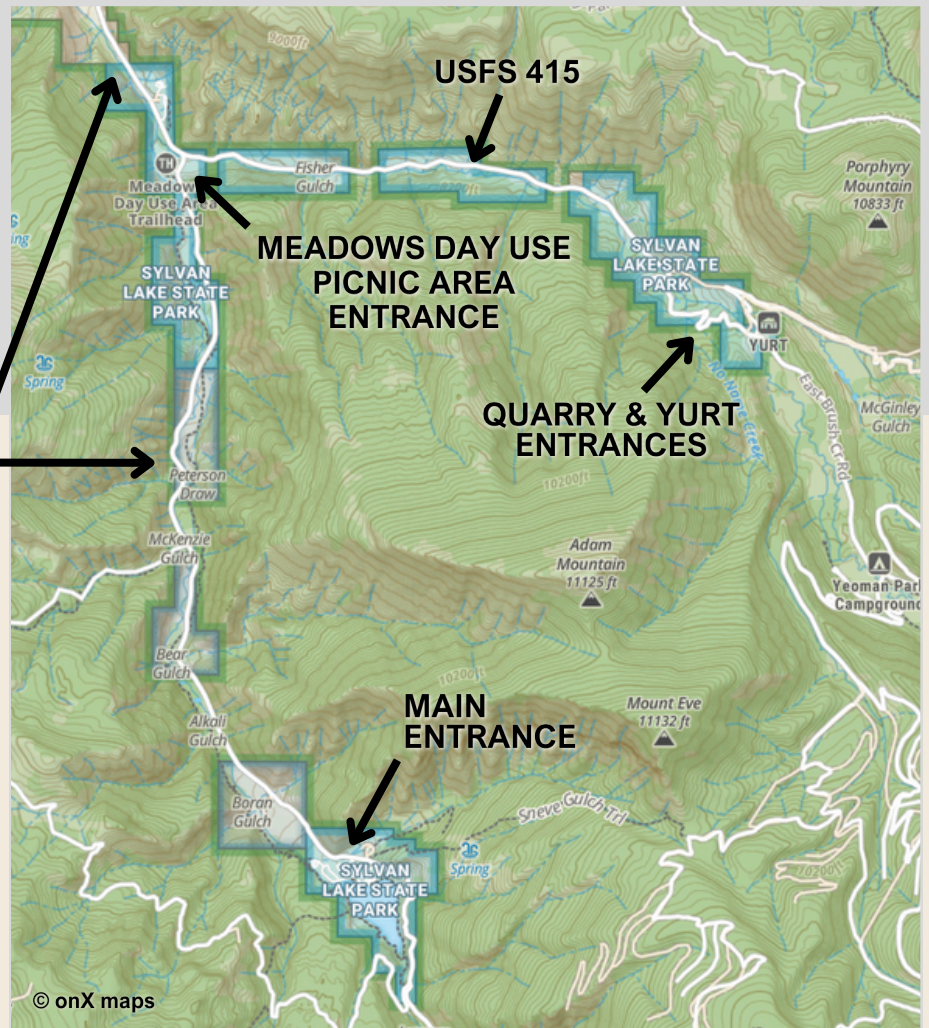


Sylvan Lake State Park, spanning 1,552 acres south of the I-70 corridor in Eagle County, offers a range of outdoor activities, including non-motorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, fishing, and swimming on the lake, as well as hiking, biking, horseback riding, geocaching, hunting, and OHV-riding. Winter activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, ice skating, snowmobiling, and snowtubing/sledding. Overnight accommodations feature 9 cabins, 3 yurts, and year-round camping. The park frequently reaches its vehicle capacity of 160 on busy weekends, but a new overflow parking lot opening this year is expected to help alleviate these issues.

Access to Sylvan Lake State Park is primarily via Eagle County's Brush Creek Road, which becomes US Forest Service (USFS) Road 400. Traffic entering the park then either continues on USFS 400 to reach Sylvan Lake and the West side of the park or takes USFS 415 to the East side. Both USFS roads providing access to the park primarily serve recreational traffic for Sylvan Lake State Park and nearby USFS trailheads. They are maintained by Eagle County, which performs annual grading and magnesium chloride treatment, the latter of which the park pays for.

USFS 415 is less trafficked and in good condition, but USFS 400 is in critical condition, even causing the recent retirement of a park-owned plow truck. Recent logging activities have worsened road conditions, necessitating significant repairs. There is strong interest from Eagle County in pursuing funding under SB23-059 to help purchase the road base materials necessary to repair USFS 400.

Between the Meadows Day Use Picnic Area and the Main Entrance at Sylvan Lake, there are multiple non-fee state park areas.



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: 109K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: \$6,200

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: Eagle County



Sylvan Lake State Park Visitor Residency

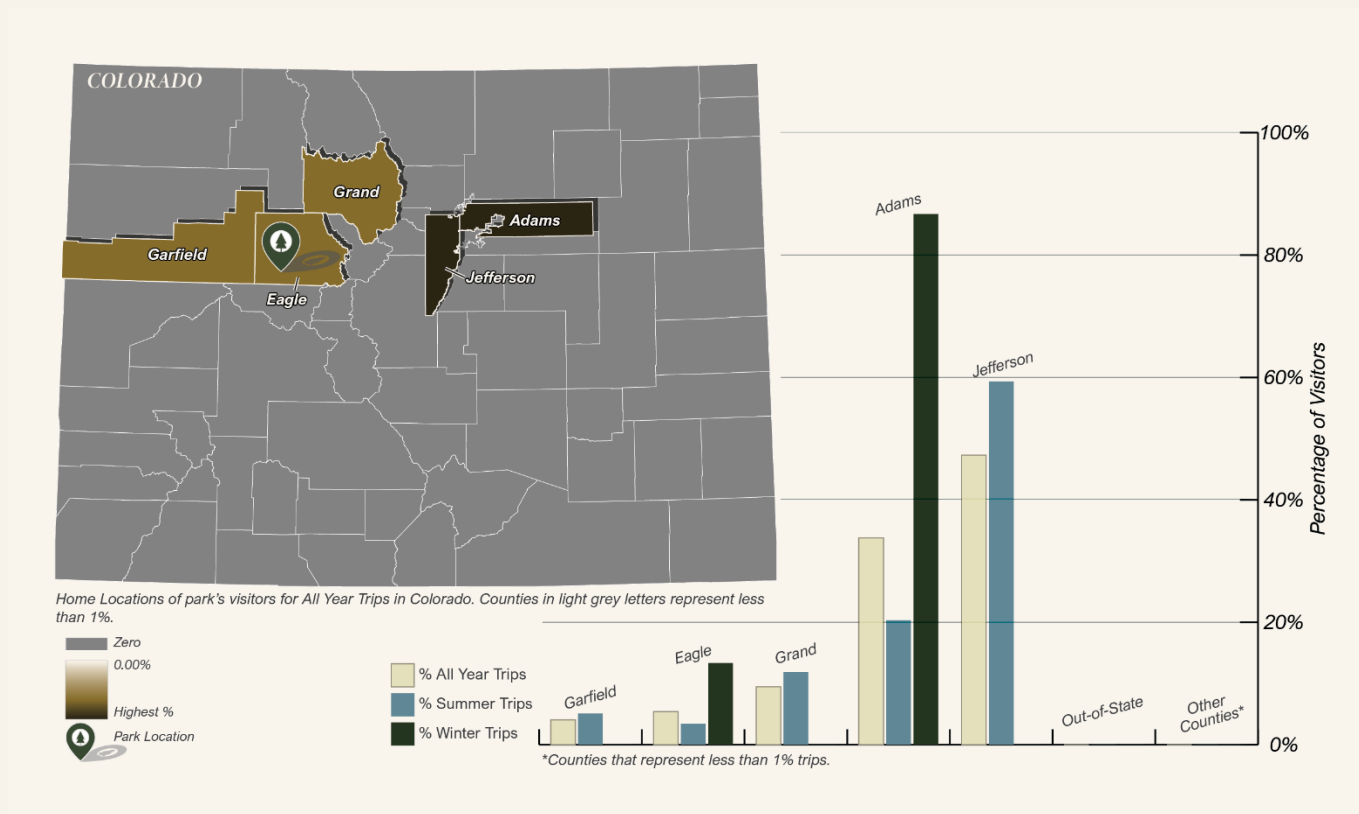
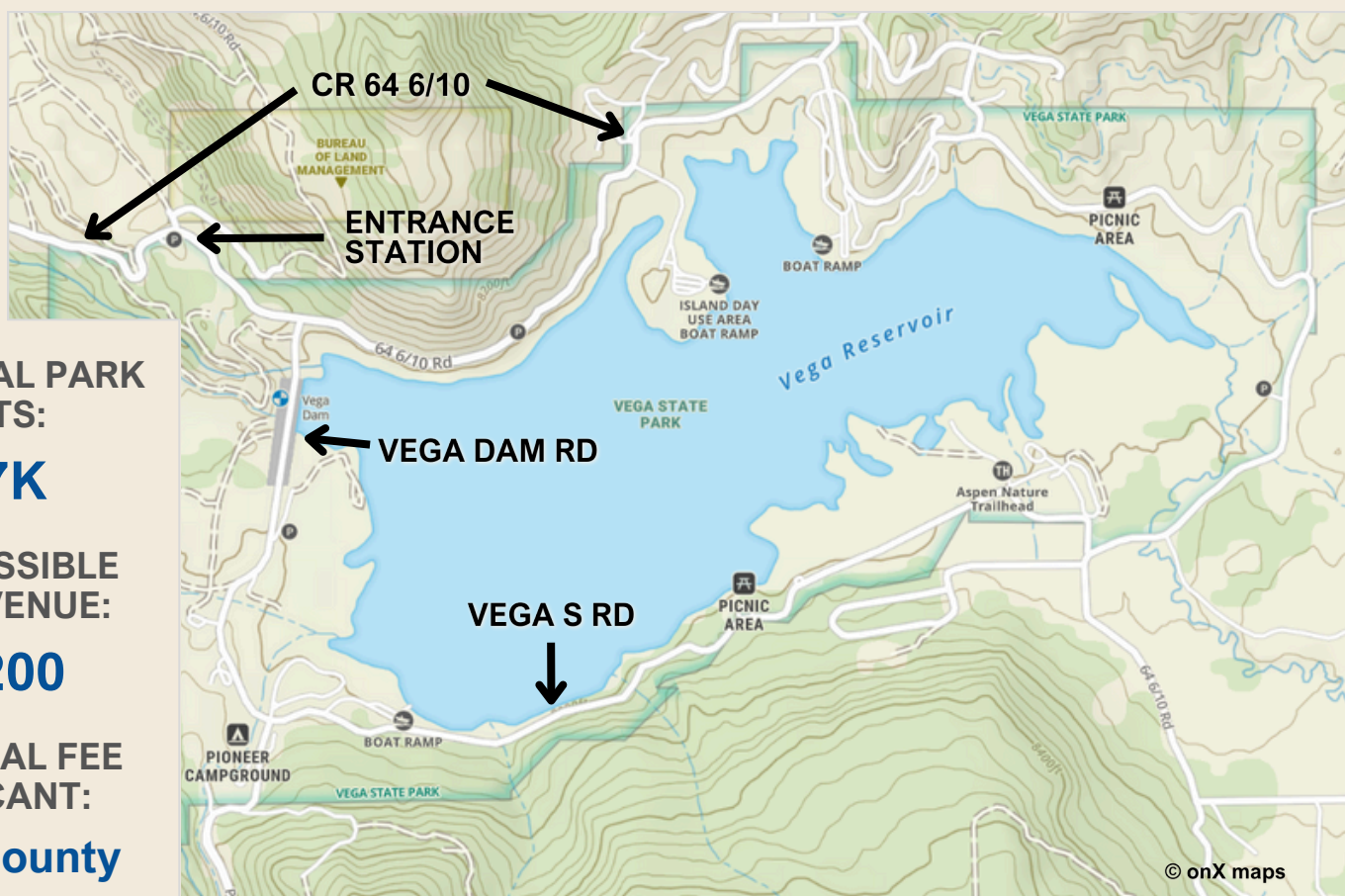


Figure 25. Home Locations of Visitors to Sylvan Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 25, although Sylvan Lake State Park is located in Eagle County, visitors from Eagle County account for only 5% of year-round visits and 16% of winter visits. The majority of visitors come from Jefferson and Adams counties, with Jefferson County contributing more summer visitors and Adams County seeing more visitors in the winter. Nearby counties such as Grand and Garfield also show some visitation, while visitors from other counties and out-of-state make up a minimal share of visits.



VEGA



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:

217K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:

\$4,200

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Mesa County

Vega State Park spans 1,842 acres of a remote area on the edge of Grand Mesa. The park features a 900-acre reservoir offering opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. Additional activities include hiking, hunting, and OHV-riding. The park is also popular for its winter recreation options, including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, ice skating, snowmobiling, and snowtubing/sledding. Opportunities for overnight stay include five cabins and year-round camping, and park staff report that the campgrounds are consistently full during summer and fall seasons.

Access to the park is primarily via Mesa County Road 64 6/10, which branches off CO State Highway 330 from the Town of Collbran. This narrow, one-lane road features a steep drop-off and soft dirt shoulder, presenting challenges for both cyclists and drivers. The northbound lane's hillside is unstable, causing road damage, potholes, and debris from rockfalls. The road also serves other residences and oil and gas infrastructure, and park staff report that therefore the impact of park visitors on road conditions is minimal. While the park maintains a good relationship with Mesa County, engaging in occasional exchanges of services and road materials, there is limited attention to road maintenance. There has been little discussion or awareness about SB23-059 and its potential benefits for Vega State Park among park staff or with local jurisdictions, making it unlikely that funding under this will be pursued at this time.



Vega State Park Visitor Residency

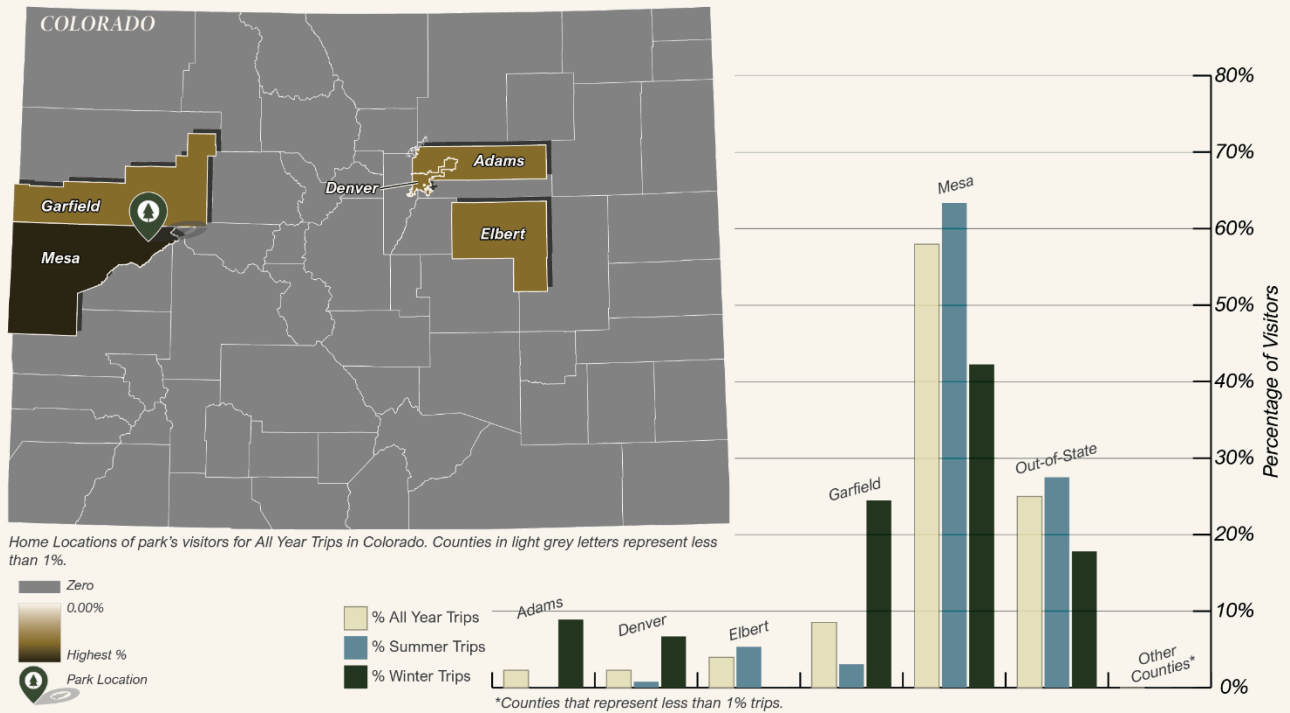


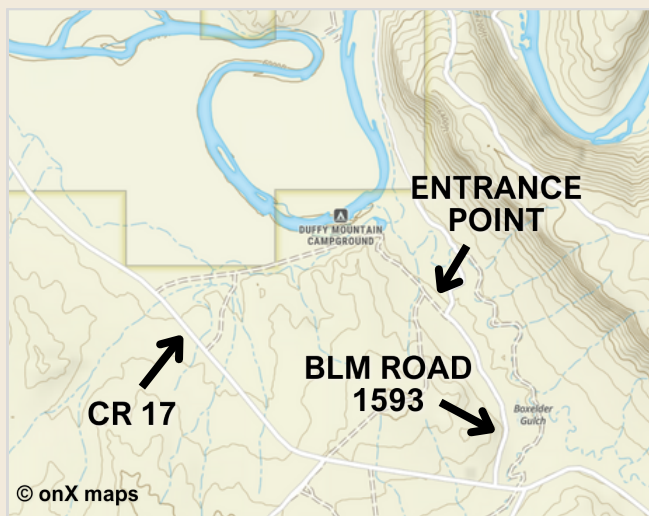
Figure 26. Home Locations of Visitors to Vega State Park

As shown in Figure 26, approximately 59% of visitors to Vega State Park reside in Mesa County. Residents of Mesa County have a larger proportional presence during the summer than they do in the winter. Year-round, the next largest share of visitors comes from out of state, followed by Garfield, Elbert, Denver, and Adams counties. Notably, the share of out-of-state visitors is higher during the summer than in the winter, while the share of visitors from Garfield, Denver, and Adams counties is greater in the winter than in the summer.



YAMPA RIVER

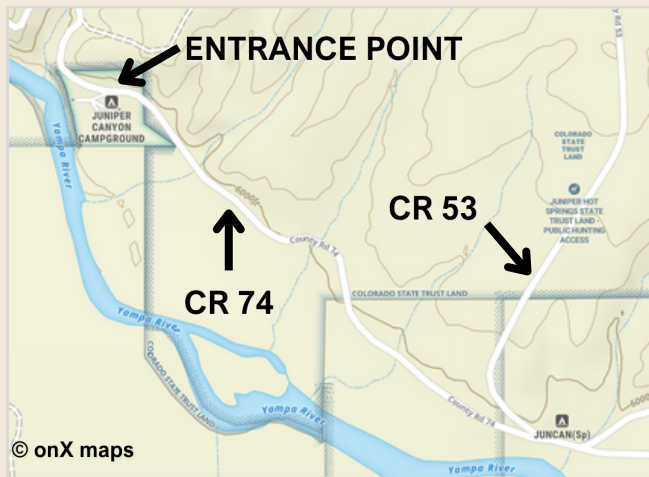
DUFFY MOUNTAIN ACCESS



Yampa River State Park spans 134 miles of the Yampa River, accessed via the park’s headquarters west of Hayden as well as 13 other access points spread across Routt and Moffat County. The park is popular among rafters, canoeists, and kayakers, and offers excellent fishing. On land, visitors have further opportunities include hiking, biking, wildlife watching and birding, geocaching, hunting, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and snowtubing/sledding. Options for overnight stay include year-round camping and two tipis.

Despite the number of access points and length, only a few Moffat County roadways would qualify for funding under SB23-059 as U.S. Highway 40 provides access to all Routt County locations, and Bureau of Land Management roads provide access to the more western access points of the park. The list of applicable roadways determined by the SB23-059 criteria at the time of this study are Moffat CRs 17, 23, 53, 74, and 85 which provide access to the park’s Duffy Mountain, Juniper Canyon, and East Cross Mountain locations. The access routes are dirt roads generally in good condition which receive comparatively little traffic. Because of the remoteness of these locations and comparatively small use, park staff feel these roads would be maintained to a similar level even without the presence of the state park. At this time, it is thought to be unlikely that Moffat County would pursue funding under SB23-059 for Yampa River State Park.

JUNIPER CANYON ACCESS



EAST CROSS MOUNTAIN ACCESS



2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS: **156K**

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE: **\$2,000**

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT: **Moffat County**



Yampa River State Park Visitor Residency

The sample size of the available 2023 Azira data is too small to provide meaningful analysis results that can portray home locations of visitors to Yampa River State Park with confidence. This may be attributable to the highly spread-out geographic nature of the park.



ARKANSAS HEADWATERS

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (ARHA), jointly operated by the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and CPW, spans 152 miles of the Arkansas River across four counties, from Leadville to Lake Pueblo. It is a popular whitewater rafting and kayaking destination and offers renowned fishing opportunities and eight campgrounds, as well as hiking, biking, horseback riding, hunting, OHV riding, rock climbing, geocaching, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing/snowshoeing, ice fishing and skating, and winter camping. Although ARHA is operated by multiple agencies, management agreements designate CPW as the primary decision maker, meaning CPW is often deferred to for maintenance and operational decisions. Monitoring visitor use and tracking daily vehicle pass sales at CPW sites within ARHA is difficult given its open access points and reliance on self-service fee stations.

Local access routes for ARHA encompass a spread of geographies across Chaffee, Lake, Fremont, and Pueblo counties. In general, access points that are not on highways (i.e., U.S. 24, 285, and 50; and CO 306 and 291) are eligible for funding via SB23-059 through the respective local jurisdiction. ARHA staff identified Chaffee County as the most likely candidate to pursue this funding source, citing several access points of interest in Chaffee County: County Road 194, a major access point for Browns Canyon that often receives maintenance complaints; CR 300; and CR 301. These access routes are generally well-maintained but face challenges during busy seasons. Although Chaffee County showed interest in SB23-059 during its development, there has not been recent vocalized interest from the county in pursuing this funding avenue at this time.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

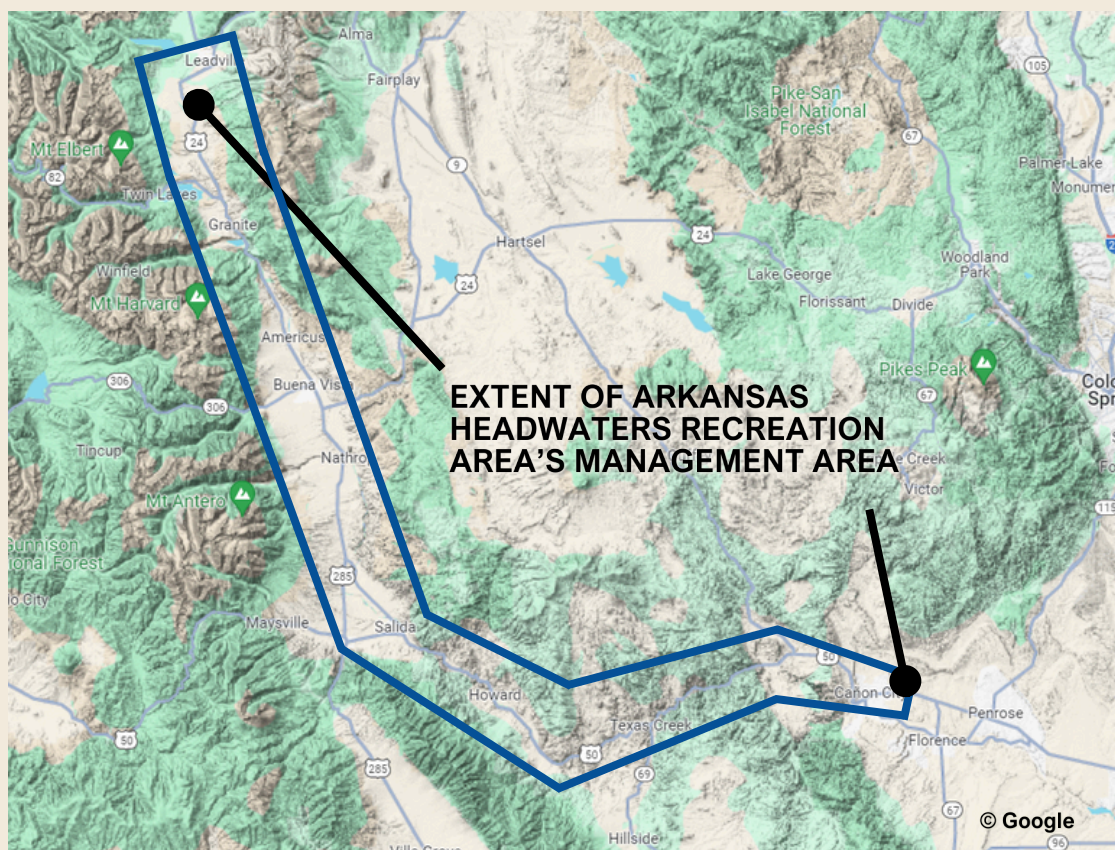
1.1 million

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

\$16,900

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

Multiple





Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Visitor Origins

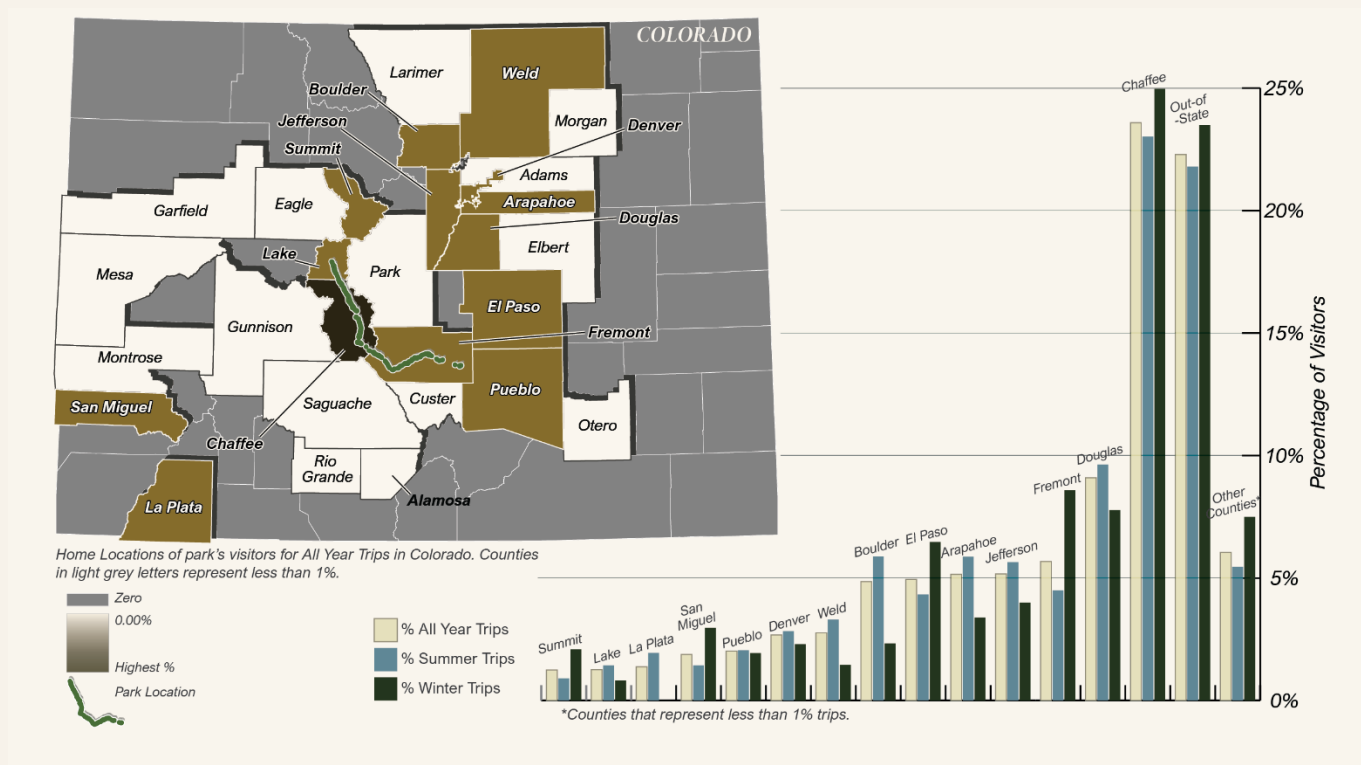


Figure 27. Home Locations of Visitors to Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

Because the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area has numerous access points spread throughout the river valley, the data collected is limited to designated fee sites, which may not capture all visitors to the entire area. However, the area's unique boundaries likely contribute to the diverse range of visitor home locations from across Colorado, as shown in Figure 27. Approximately 23% of visitors reside in Chaffee County, where many access points are located. A similar portion of visitors come from out of state. The remaining visitors (around 50%) are distributed across various counties in Colorado.



CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

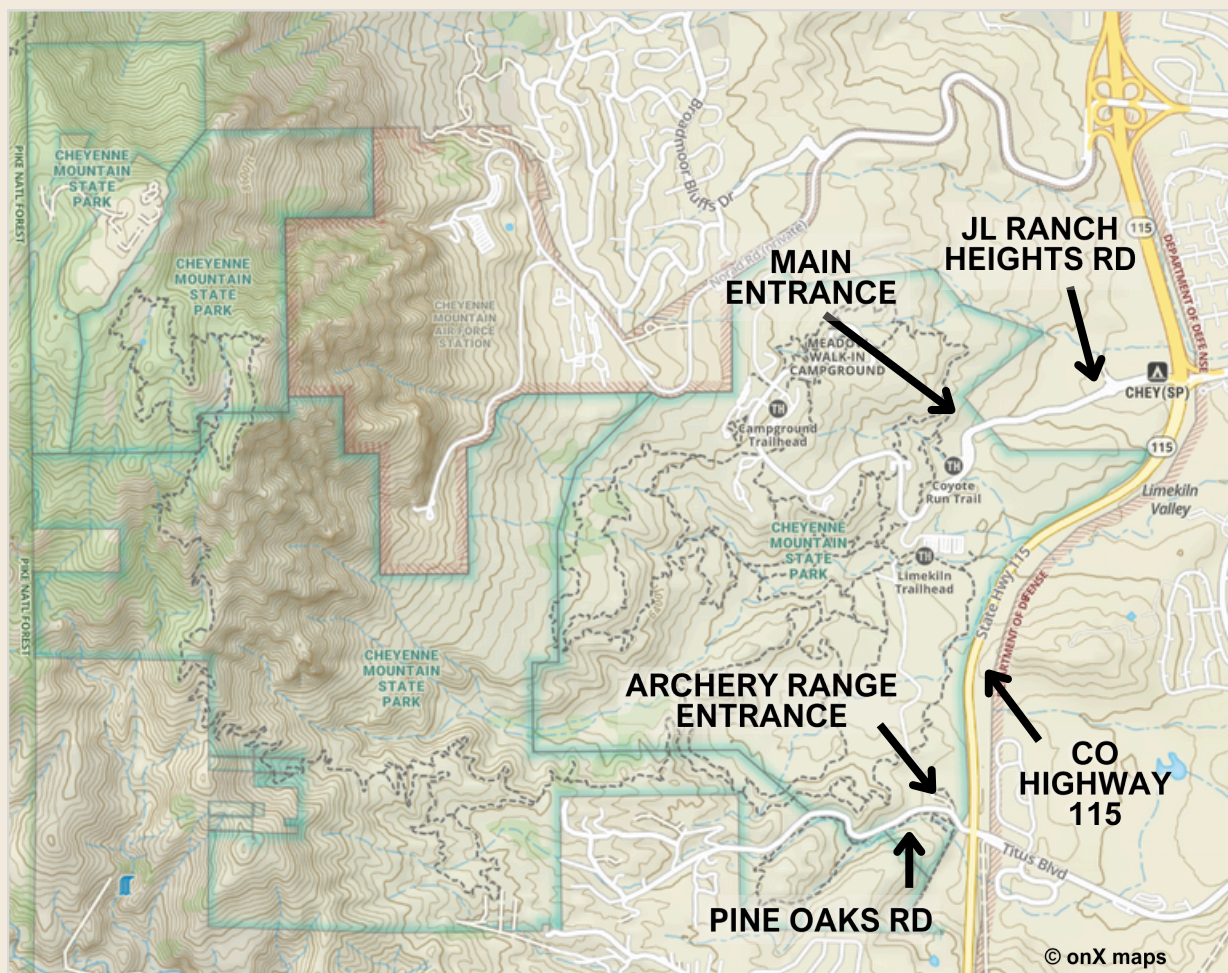
193K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$16,200

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

**City of
Colorado
Springs**



Cheyenne Mountain State Park, located just south of Colorado Springs, spans over 2,700 acres of former ranch land and offers a wide variety of outdoor activities, including hiking its expansive trail system, mountain biking, horseback riding, birding and wildlife viewing, disc golf, archery, geocaching, camping and cabins, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing/snowshoeing and winter camping. The park's existence is the result of strong partnerships between the City of Colorado Springs, CPW, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado Lottery, El Paso County and other local private organization.

Cheyenne Mountain State Park primarily receives visitors via CO State Highway 115 from Colorado Springs. The park is accessed through two main roads, both of which are maintained by the City of Colorado Springs. The main entrance is via JL Ranch Heights, a paved road, while Pine Oaks Road, a gravel road, provides access to a self-fee area for the Archery Range. The park manager reports no engagement from local governments regarding concern for road maintenance or desire to seek improvement grants. As such, Cheyenne Mountain State Park is not a likely candidate to apply for funding under SB23-059 at this time.



Cheyenne Mountain State Park Visitor Residency

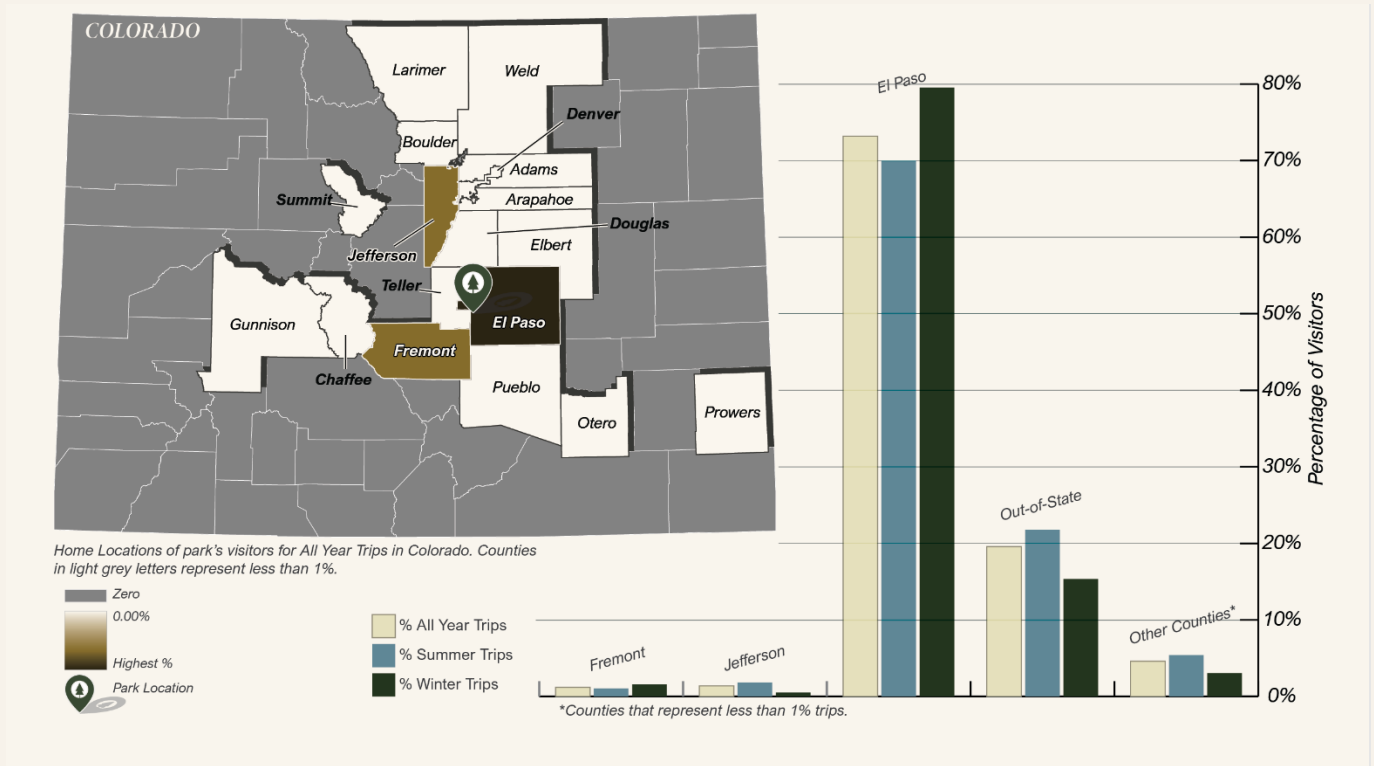


Figure 28. Home Locations of Visitors to Cheyenne Mountain State Park

As shown in Figure 28, the majority of visitors to Cheyenne Mountain State Park reside in El Paso County, accounting for approximately 72% of year-round visits. Out-of-state visitors make up 20% of the park's visitors annually. The remaining 8% of visitors come from Jefferson, Fremont, and other Colorado counties.



FISHERS PEAK

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

14K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

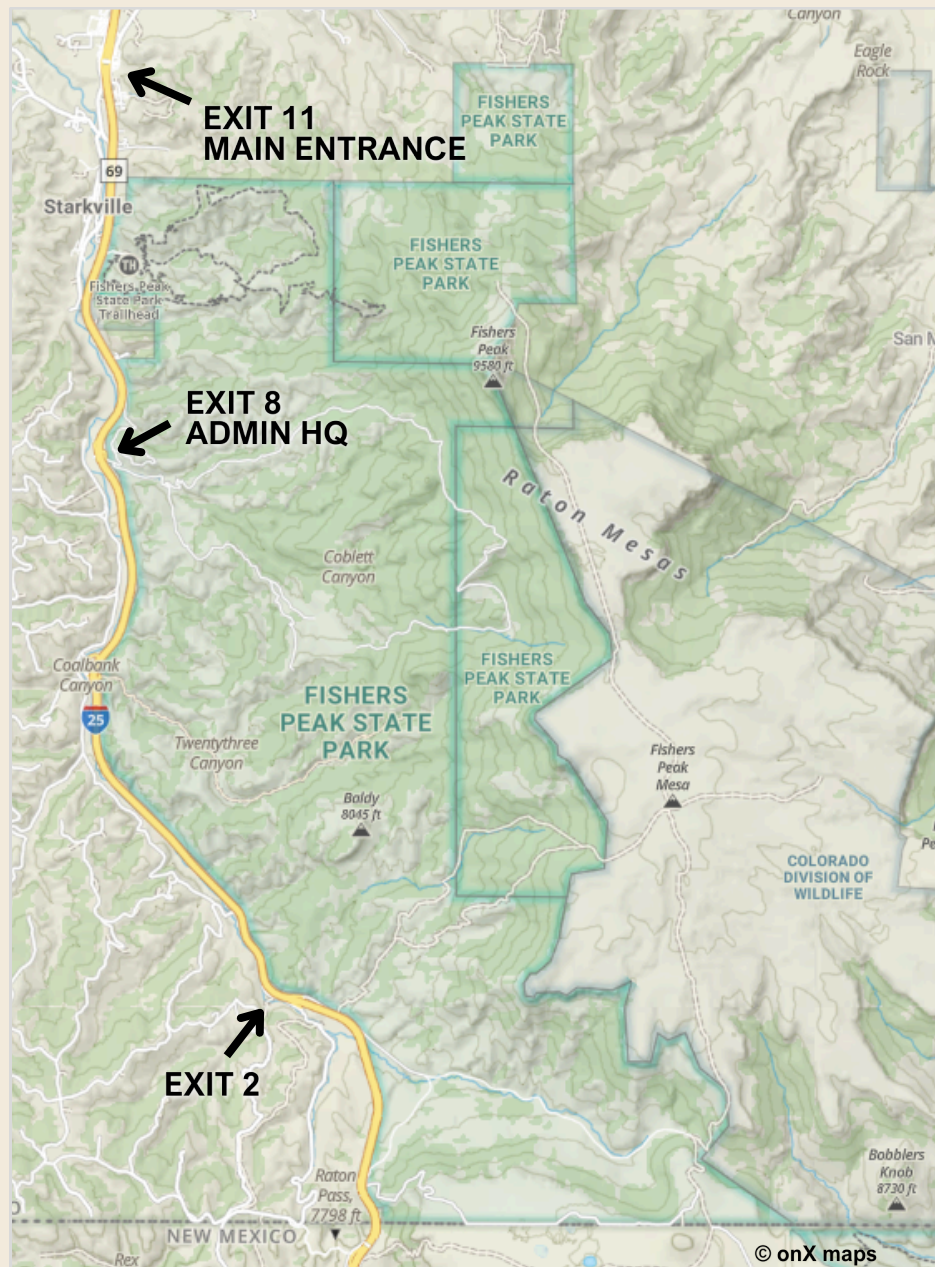
\$1,000

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

None

Fishers Peak State Park, Colorado's newest and 2nd-largest state park, is still in the planning and development stage; currently, only about 1,000 of its 19,200 acres are open to the public. The park's development is a collaborative effort involving multiple partners, including the City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). Current recreational opportunities at Fishers Peak include 13 miles of trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing, as well as limited hunting permits available through a lottery system.

Fishers Peak State Park is accessed directly from Interstate 25 at three exit points: Exit 2, planned for future equestrian use without vehicular access; Exit 8, where the administrative headquarters are located but not intended for public access due to inadequate ramp conditions; and Exit 11, the primary developed area and main access point to the park. Although technically a Las Animas County Road, the frontage road leading into the park at Exit 11 is managed by CDOT, so this access route would not be eligible for funding under SB23-059. While the park currently does not have any eligible access routes, future plans include providing access from downtown Trinidad through Main Street and Santa Fe Trail to Exit 11, enhancing connectivity for visitors. As such, the City of Trinidad may be an eligible jurisdiction to apply for this funding source in the future.





Fishers Peak State Park Visitor Residency

The sample size of the available 2023 Azira data is too small to provide meaningful analysis results that can portray home locations of visitors to Fishers Peak State Park with confidence. Fishers Peak State Park is a new park, and currently has a relatively low visitation rate.



JOHN MARTIN RESERVOIR

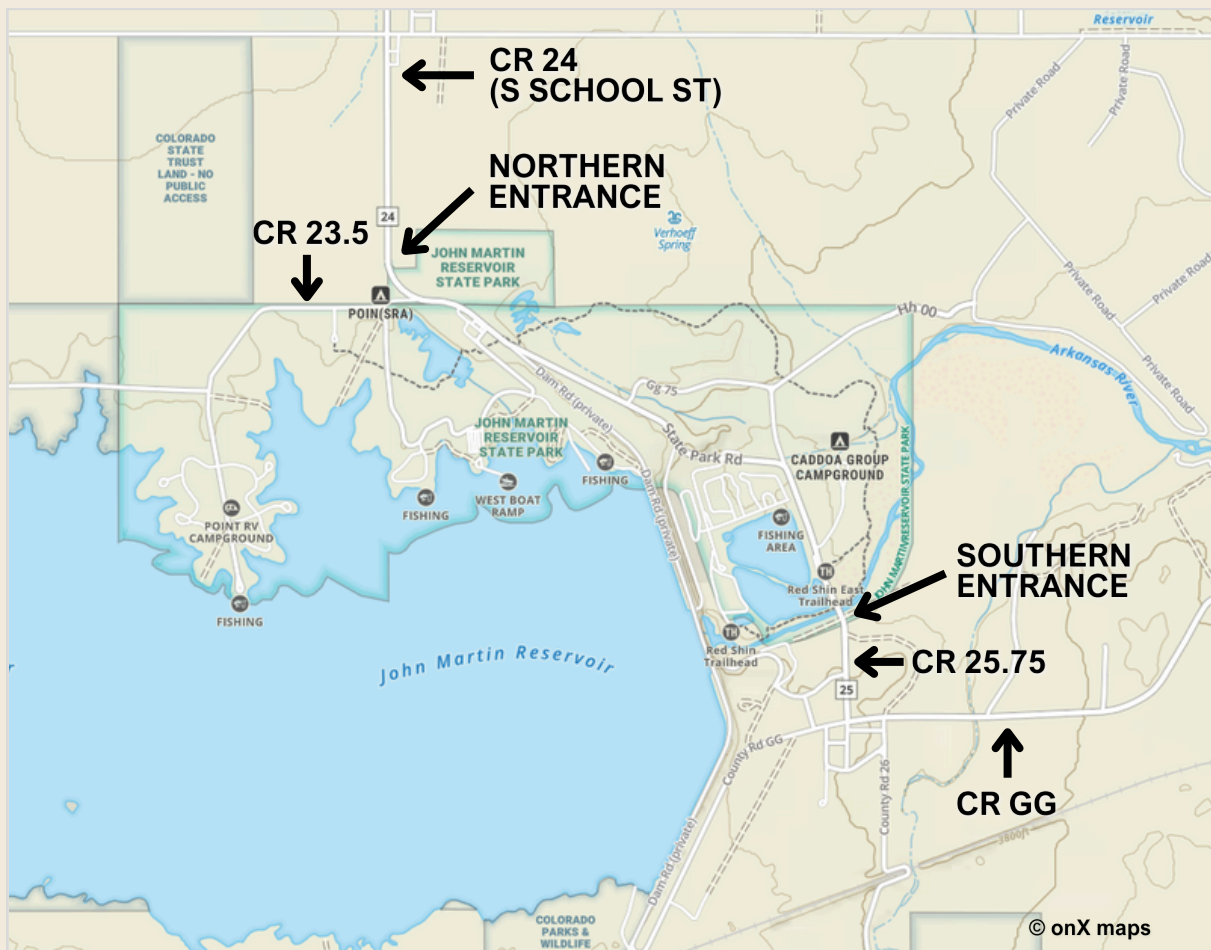
John Martin Reservoir State Park, located in the Eastern Plains, covers 12,286 acres and features a large reservoir on the Arkansas River. The reservoir supports a variety of water activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, swimming, and fishing. The park is a notable site along the Colorado Birding Trail, attracting many bird species. It also offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, geocaching, year-round camping, and winter activities such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, and ice skating.

The park is accessed via four Bent County roads, two of which are maintained by the County and two by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). These roads experience significant traffic from farming and industrial vehicles traveling through the park to reach U.S. Highway 50. The northern entrance via County Road 24 (S School Street) serves the majority of visitor traffic, especially those coming from the Denver metro area, Colorado Springs, and neighboring states like Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. CR 23.5 provides access to the Point Overlook area and CR 25.75 and CR GG provide access to the southern entrance. Maintenance is done by the USACE for CR 23.5 and CR GG CR 25.75 while Bent County maintains CR 25.75. The park reports that it maintains a strong relationship with Bent County, ensuring effective collaboration in managing access routes. Currently, it is unlikely that the local jurisdiction will pursue funding under SB23-059 for these routes.

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:
218K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:
\$7,100

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:
Bent County





John Martin Reservoir State Park Visitor Residency

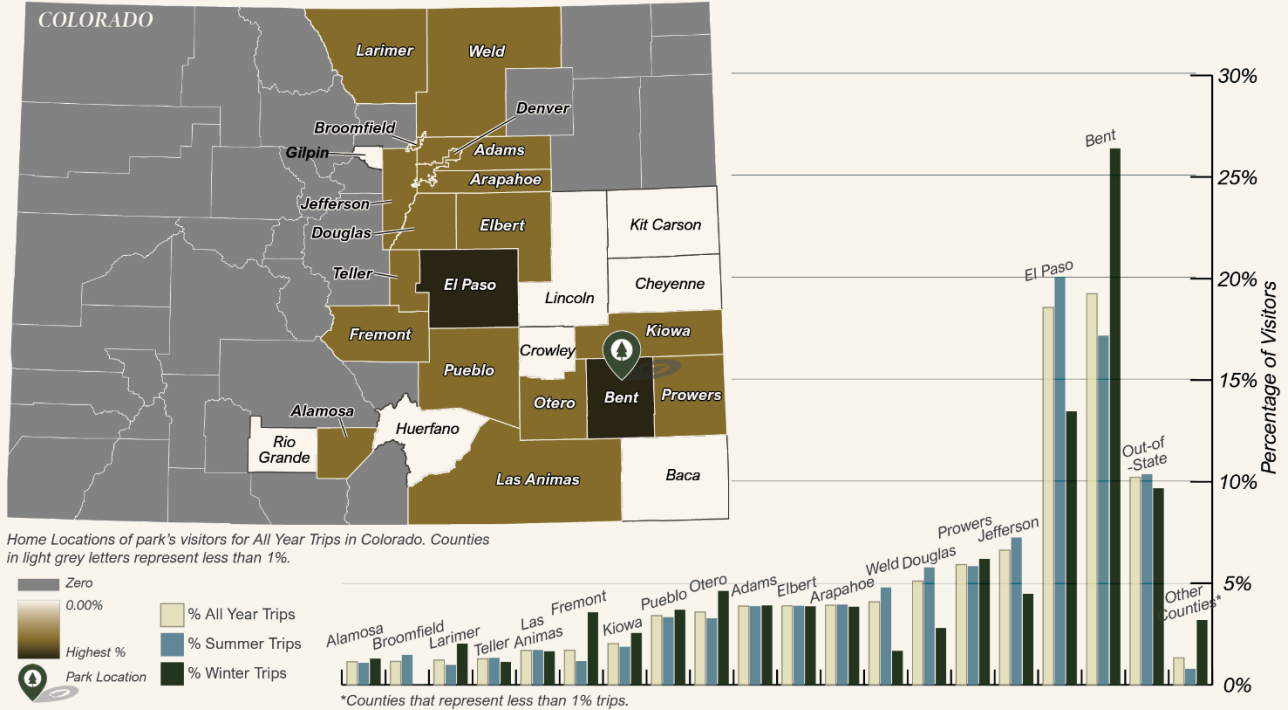


Figure 29. Home Locations of Visitors to John Martin Reservoir State Park

As shown in Figure 29, visitors to John Martin Reservoir State Park, located in Bent County in southeastern Colorado, come from a wide range of counties across the state and beyond. Annually, Bent County and El Paso County contribute the largest shares of visits, with each accounting for approximately 19%. During the winter, Bent County residents make up over 25% of visits, while El Paso County residents contribute the highest share of summer visits, at 20%.

Out-of-state visitors represent around 10% of annual visits, while residents of Jefferson, Prowers, and Douglas counties each account for 5-10%. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 5% of trips year-round and seasonally.



LAKE PUEBLO

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

3.1 million

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

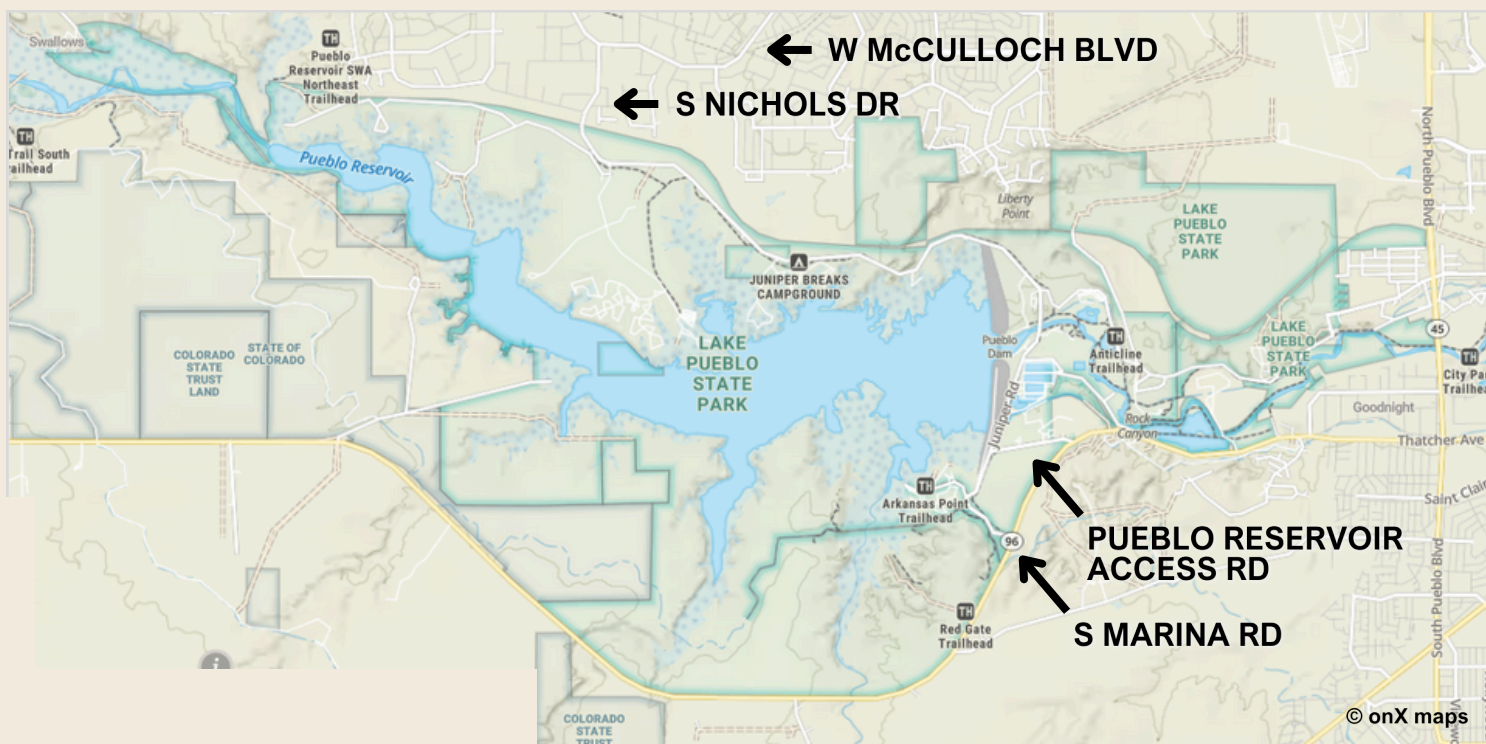
\$77,400

**POTENTIAL
FEE APPLICANT:**

**Pueblo County &
City of Pueblo**

Lake Pueblo State Park, the most-visited state park in Colorado, features a vast 4,600-acre reservoir offering motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. The park is surrounded by 12,000 acres of land providing opportunities for hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching and birding, year-round camping, and hunting.

The park has two main vehicle access points, on the north and southeast sides of the lake. On weekdays, significant commuter traffic flows through the park between these two access points. The roads serving the northern entrance, W McCulloch Boulevard and S Nichols Drive, were managed by the City of Pueblo West until late 2023 and are now maintained by Pueblo County. S Nichols Drive, the most-trafficked park entrance, was recently repaved and widened using COFLAP grant funds to enhance connectivity to local communities. The southeast entrance is accessible via South Marina Road and Pueblo Reservoir Access Road, both directly off CO State Highway 96 from Denver and Colorado Springs and managed by the City of Pueblo. Park staff and the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce both recognize the economic benefits of the park, and park staff believe that the economic contributions from park visitors outweigh the associated costs. The park also reports bearing considerable maintenance costs due to heavy use of park roads by local commuters, highlighting a shared impact on both local and park infrastructure. Due to this interdependency between the park and local community, it is currently unlikely that the access routes would meet the criteria for funding under SB23-059.





Lake Pueblo State Park Visitor Residency

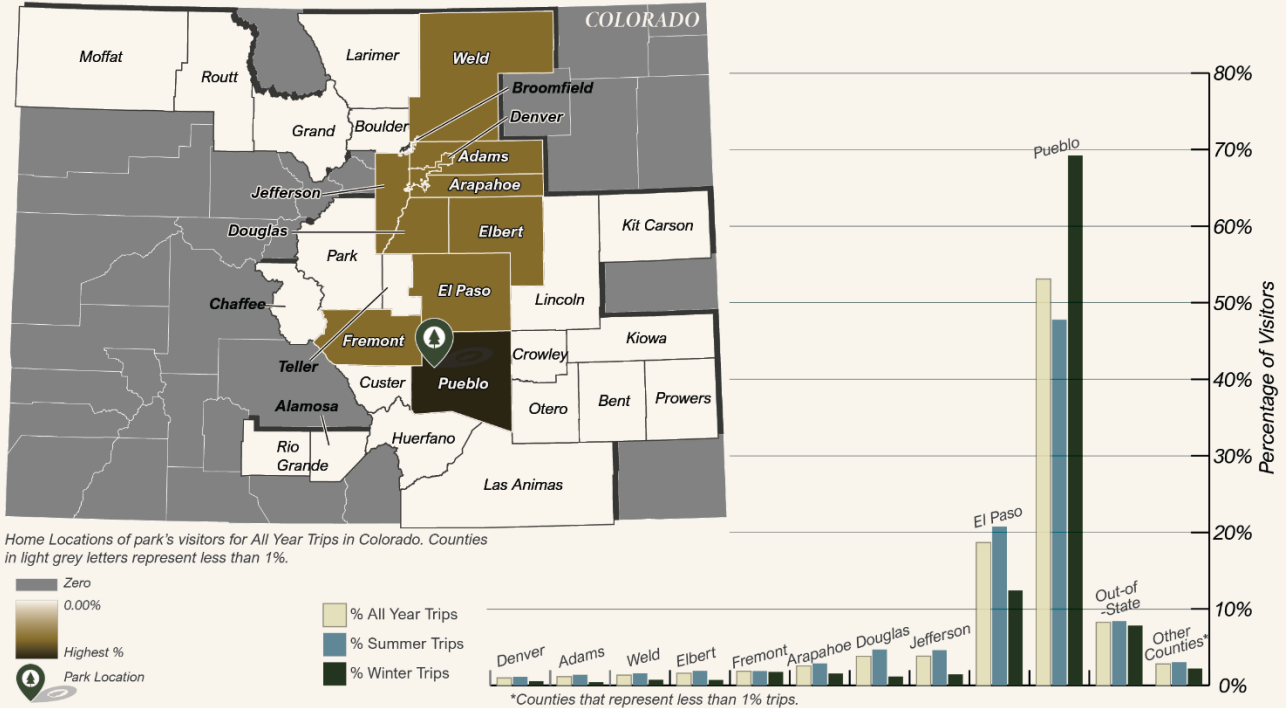


Figure 30. Home Locations of Visitors to Lake Pueblo State Park

As shown in Figure 30, approximately 52% of year-round visits to Lake Pueblo State Park are made by residents of Pueblo County, where the park is located. In addition, nearly 20% of the park's annual visitors reside in El Paso County, while close to 10% come from out-of-state. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 5% of trips year-round and seasonally.



LATHROP

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

117K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

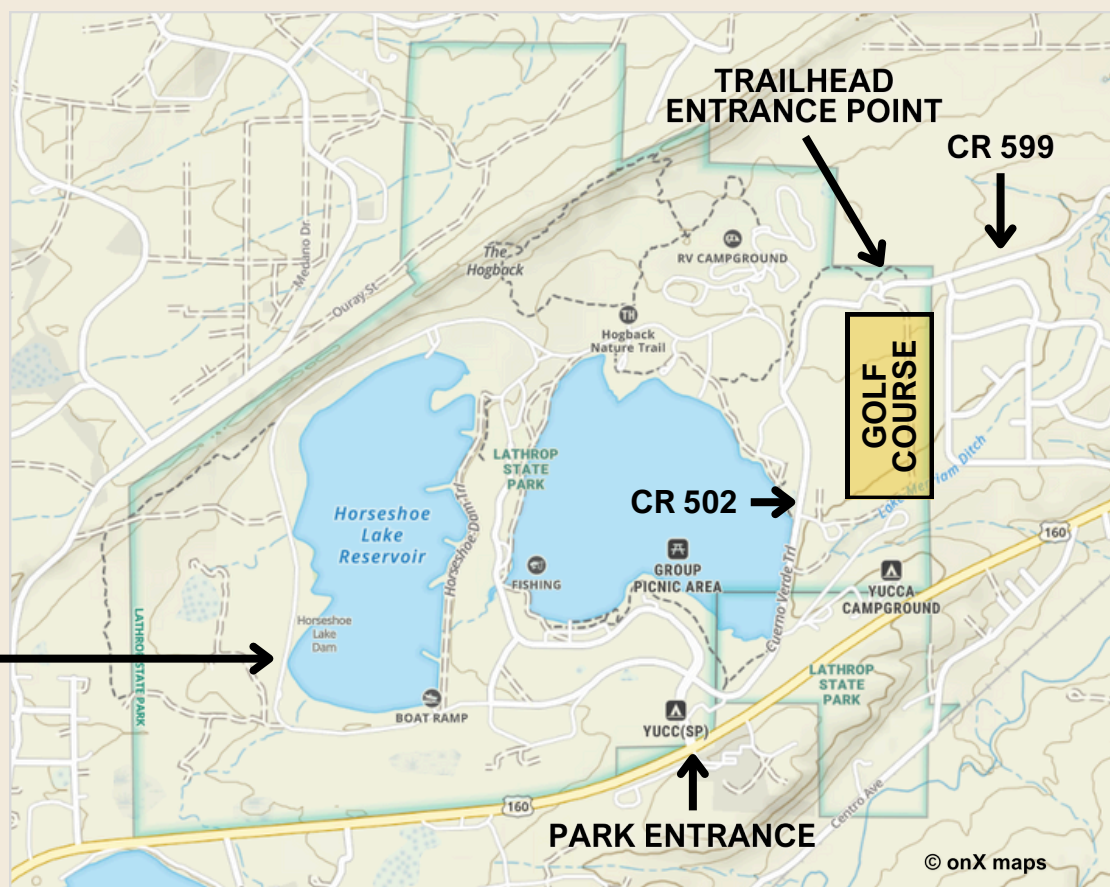
\$10,900

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Huerfano County

HORSESHOE LAKE RD

CPW, Huerfano County, and the City of Walsenburg have a joint agreement allocating the road maintenance of CR 502 to CPW while Huerfano County maintains the gravel road around Horseshoe Lake.



Lathrop State Park, Colorado's first state park, is located in Huerfano County near the town of Walsenburg. Spanning 1,585 acres, the park features two lakes, several ponds, year-round camping, an equestrian trail, geocaching, and an archery practice range. The park's diverse trails support hiking, biking, wildlife watching, birding, and dog walking. Hunting for small waterfowl and game is permitted in designated areas. Lathrop's lakes cater to various water activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. The park also houses a 9-hole golf course managed by the City of Walsenburg, making it the only state park in Colorado with a golf course.

Lathrop State Park is easily accessible from U.S. Highway 160, with the main entrance directly off the highway onto park property. A secondary unpaved access point via CR 599, which starts as 2nd Street in downtown Walsenburg, leads to the back entrance of the Golf Course and a park trailhead. Within the park, Huerfano County Road 502, managed by an intergovernmental agreement between Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the City of Walsenburg and Huerfano County, facilitates visitor movement. CPW handles the maintenance, repair, and snowplowing of the paved sections of CR 502, while the county manages the gravel portion around Horseshoe Lake. Given the existing maintenance agreement for CR 502, likely no jurisdiction is currently eligible for funding under SB23-059. More details are available in the Lathrop State Park case study to follow.



Lathrop State Park Visitor Residency

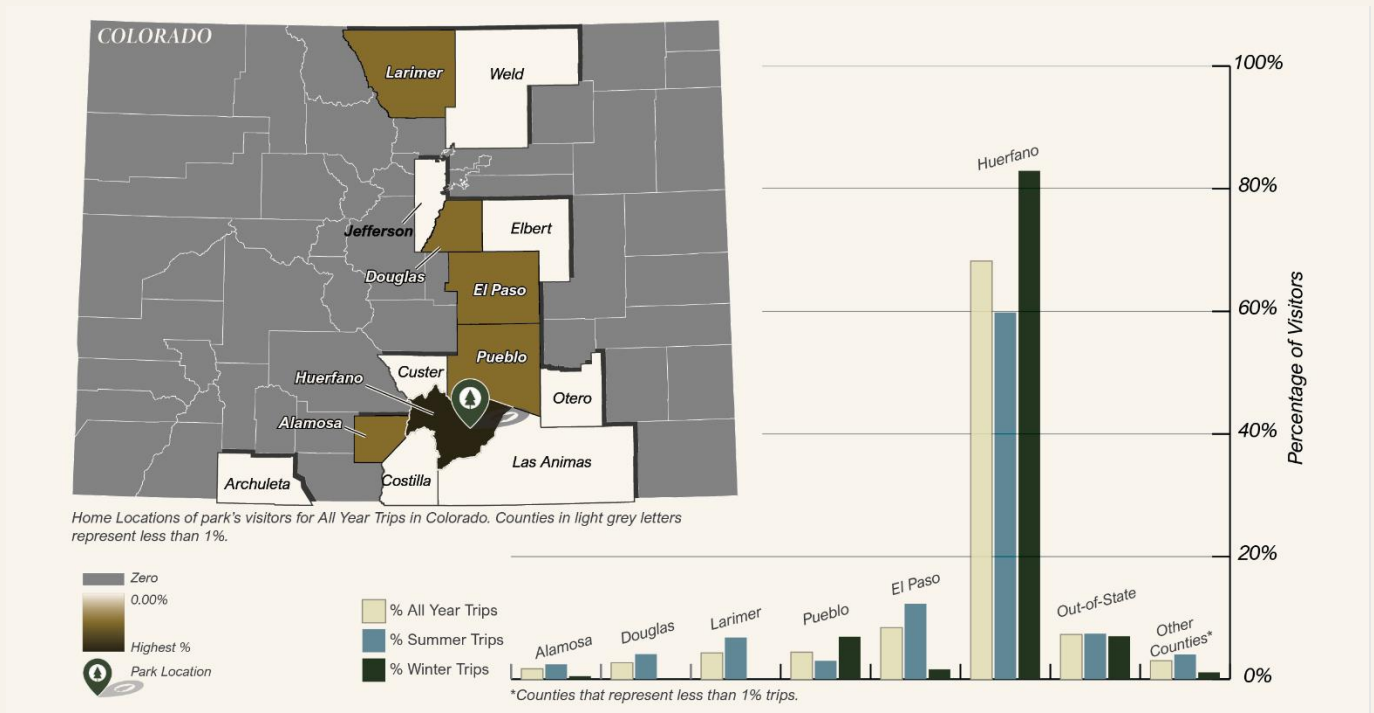


Figure 31. Home Locations of Visitors to Lathrop State Park

As shown in Figure 31, residents of Huerfano County account for the majority of visits to Lathrop State Park, making up approximately 70% of annual visits. This share rises significantly during the winter, reaching around 85%, reflecting a strong local presence when fewer visitors come from further locations.

Jefferson County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing about 10% of annual visits. All other counties, along with out-of-state home locations, each account for fewer than 10% of visitors throughout the year.



MUELLER

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

121K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

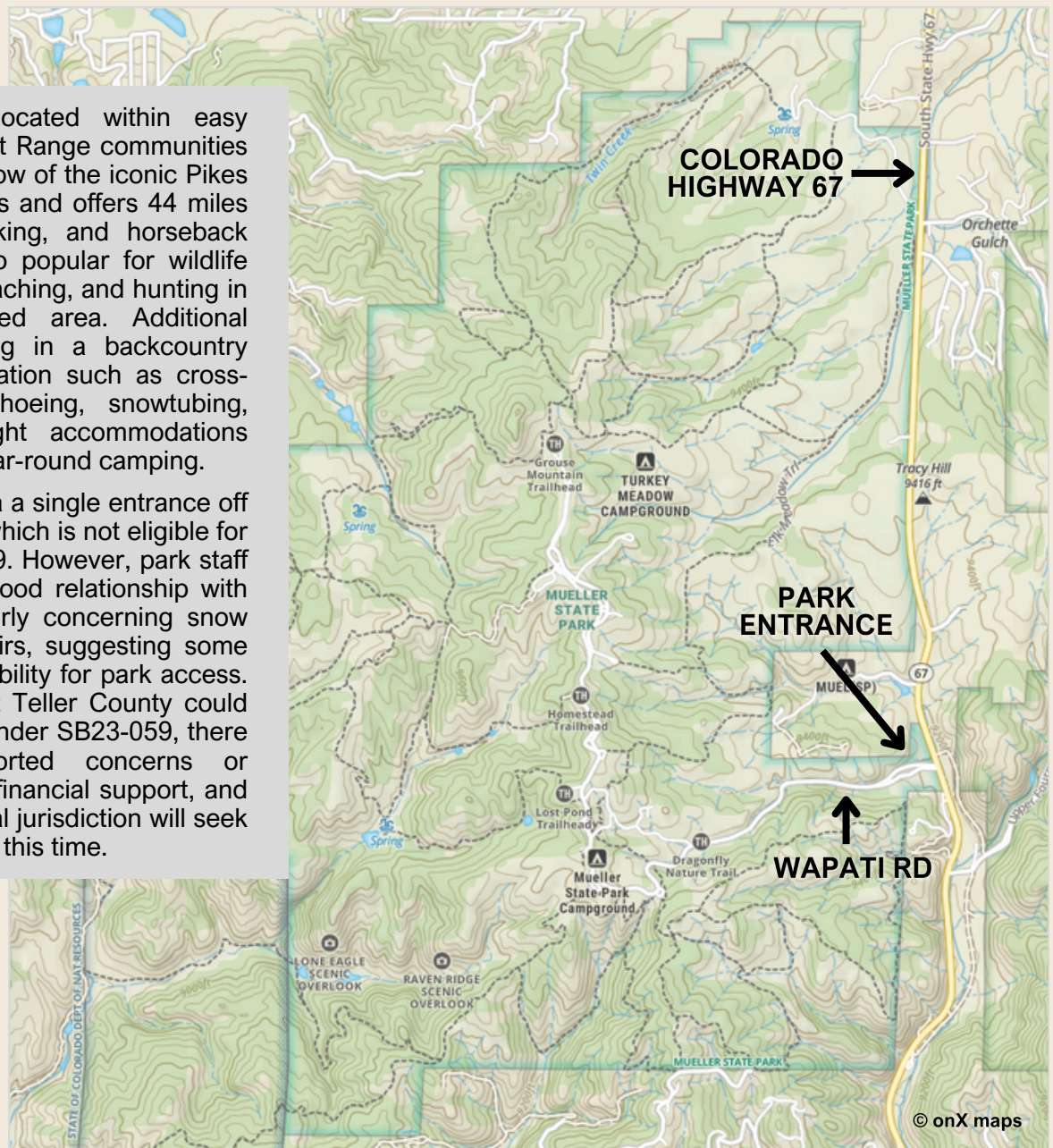
\$13,900

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Teller County

Mueller State Park, located within easy driving distance of Front Range communities and nestled in the shadow of the iconic Pikes Peak, spans 5,100 acres and offers 44 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. The park is also popular for wildlife watching, birding, geocaching, and hunting in an 800-acre designated area. Additional activities include fishing in a backcountry pond and winter recreation such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowtubing, and sledding. Overnight accommodations include 3 cabins and year-round camping.

Access to the park is via a single entrance off CO State Highway 67, which is not eligible for funding under SB23-059. However, park staff reports maintaining a good relationship with Teller County, particularly concerning snow removal and road repairs, suggesting some level of county responsibility for park access. While it is possible that Teller County could be eligible for funding under SB23-059, there have been no reported concerns or engagement regarding financial support, and it is unlikely that the local jurisdiction will seek funding under this bill at this time.





Mueller State Park Visitor Residency

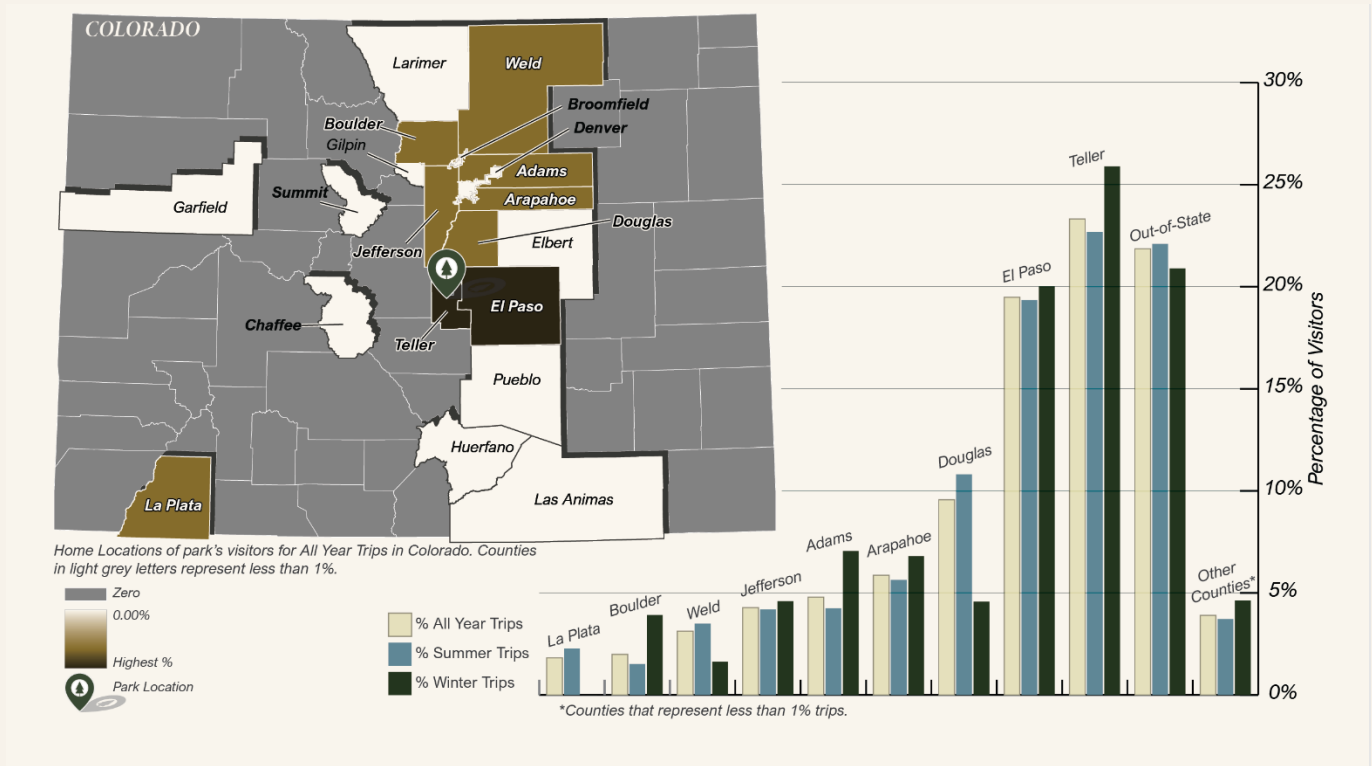
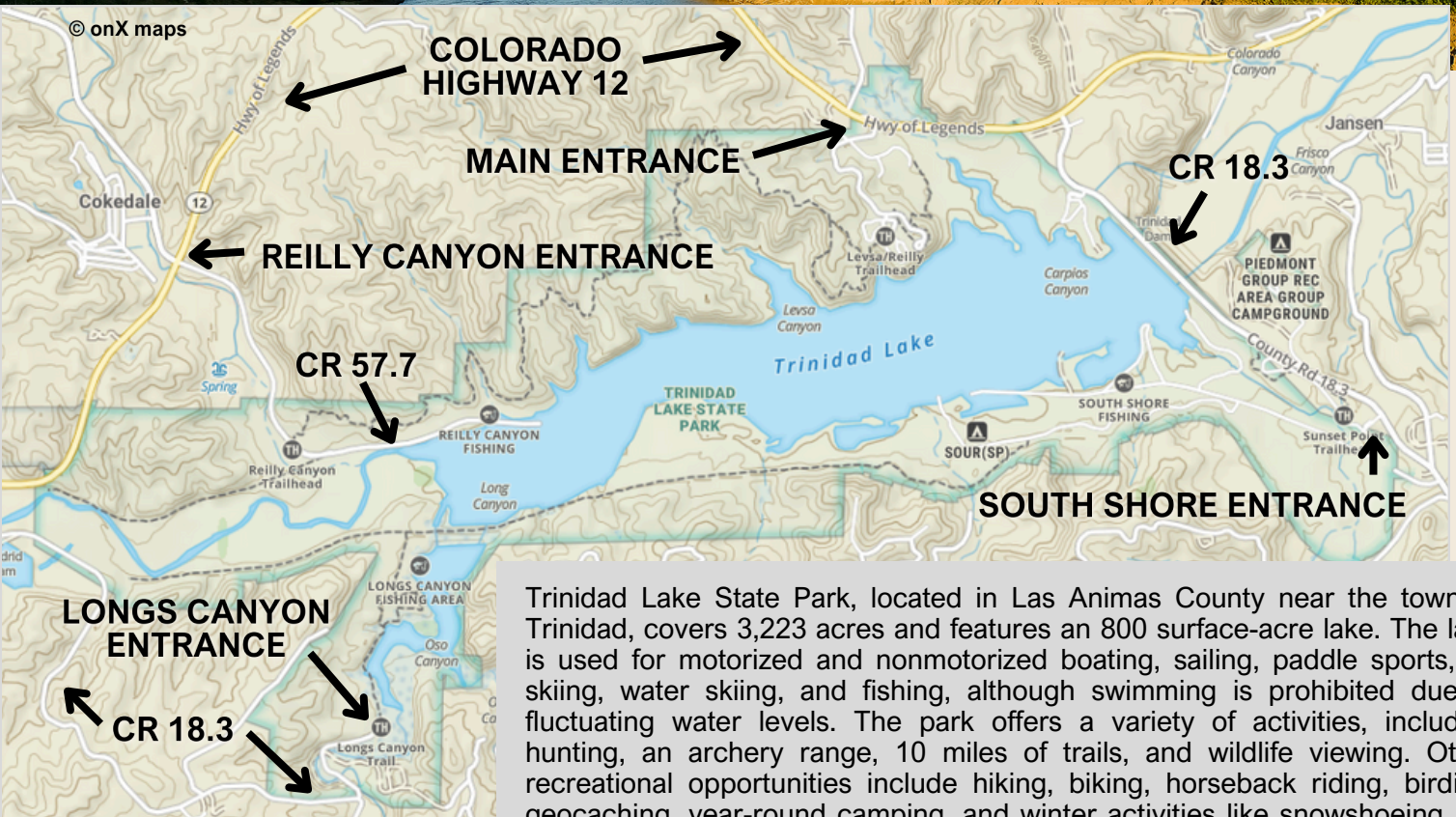


Figure 32. Home Locations of Visitors to Mueller State Park

As shown in Figure 32, the majority of Mueller State Park visitors come from Teller County, El Paso County, and out-of-state locations. Teller County contributes the highest share of visits year-round, accounting for around 23% of all-year and summer visits, and increasing to nearly 26% during the winter. Out-of-state visitors make up approximately 22% of visits, while nearly 20% of visitors come from El Paso County.

Visitors from Douglas County account for around 10% of annual and summer visits, but this share drops to fewer than 5% during the winter. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.

TRINIDAD LAKE



Trinidad Lake State Park, located in Las Animas County near the town of Trinidad, covers 3,223 acres and features an 800 surface-acre lake. The lake is used for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, and fishing, although swimming is prohibited due to fluctuating water levels. The park offers a variety of activities, including hunting, an archery range, 10 miles of trails, and wildlife viewing. Other recreational opportunities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, birding, geocaching, year-round camping, and winter activities like snowshoeing, ice fishing, and ice skating. The park's management is a collaborative effort between county, state, and federal agencies, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) overseeing the dam that creates the lake.

Access to Trinidad Lake State Park is provided through multiple entry points, each with distinct maintenance responsibilities. The main developed area, Carpios Ridge, which hosts a large campground, camper services, visitor center, and retail store, is accessed via CO State Highway 12, managed by CDOT and not eligible for SB23-059 funding. The South Shore Entrance, serving the boat ramp, is accessible via Las Animas County Road 18.3, with the dam bridge maintained by the USACE. The Reilly Canyon Entrance, accessed by CR 57.7, starts with about 300 feet of unmaintained asphalt laid by CDOT in poor condition, transitioning to a county-maintained dirt road. This section of the road is a low priority for county maintenance, as it only serves the park, and no businesses or residences. Longs Canyon is accessed via CR 18.3, which serves local subdivisions, ranches, and oil and gas traffic. While generally well-maintained, the park access portion has been closed due to flood damage for the past three years, with unresolved discussions about repair responsibilities. Park staff report no significant concerns from the county regarding access funding, making it unlikely that local jurisdictions will seek SB23-059 funding at this time. Further details are available in the Trinidad Lake State Park case study to follow.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

222K

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

\$9,900

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

**Las Animas
County**



Trinidad Lake State Park Visitor Residency

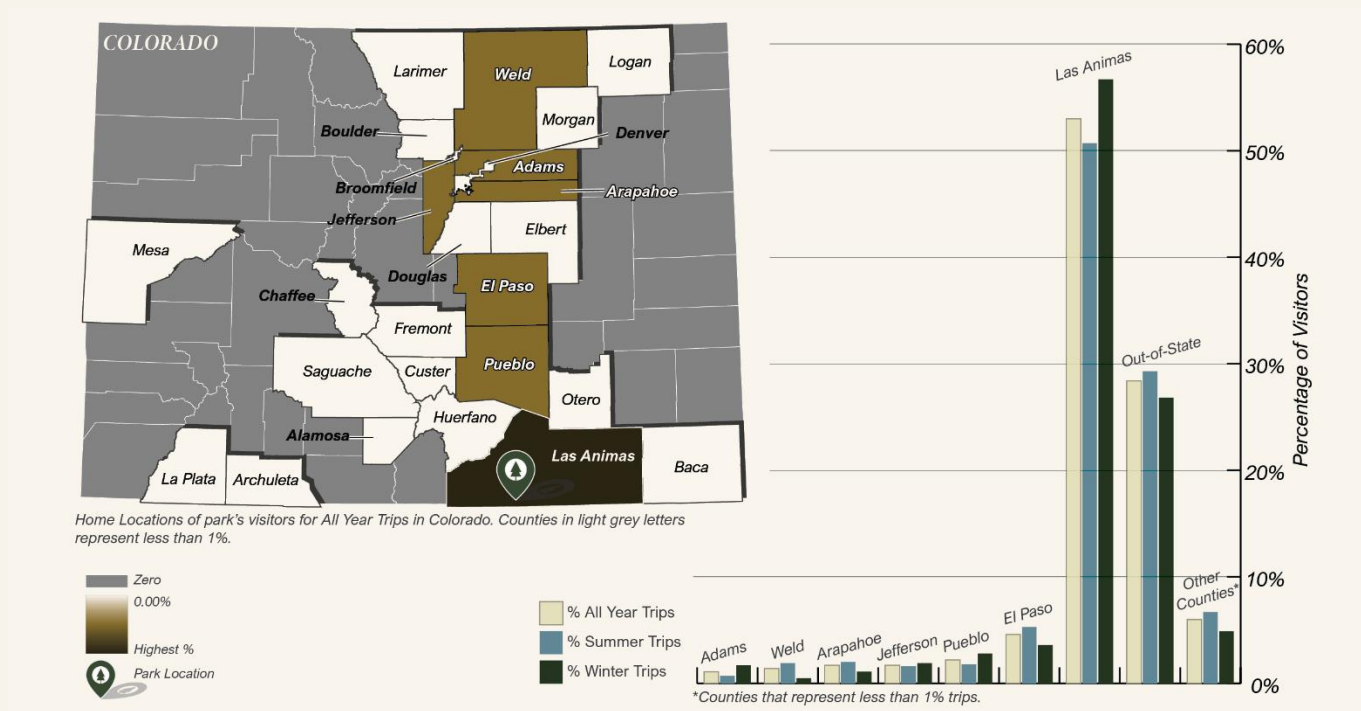


Figure 33. Home Locations of Visitors to Trinidad Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 33, the majority of visits to Trinidad Lake State Park originate from residents of Las Animas County, accounting for over 50% of annual trips. This share increases to 57% during the winter, reflecting a strong local presence during the colder months. Visitors from out-of-state contribute nearly 30% of annual trips, while residents of other Colorado counties each account for fewer than 10% of visits annually and seasonally.



CRAWFORD

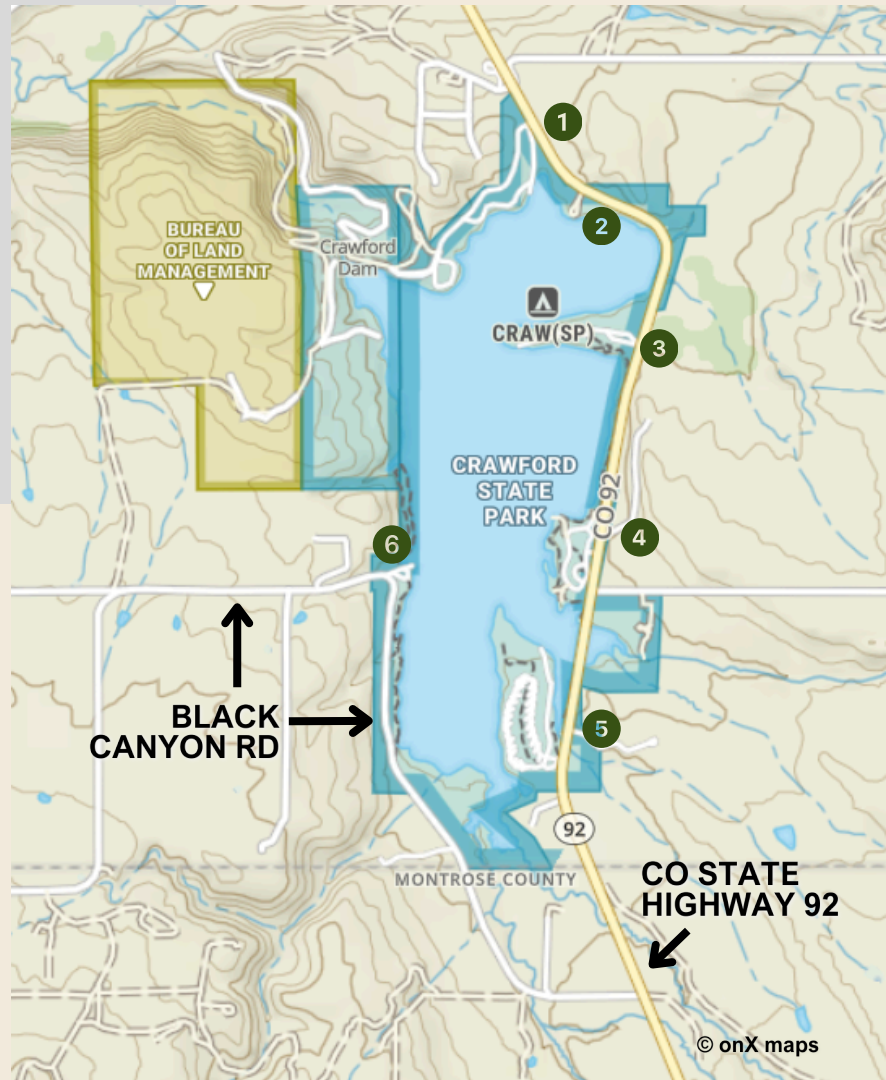
Located on the western slope near Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Crawford State Park is comprised of 337 land acres and a 400 surface-acre reservoir, making it a popular destination for watersports like jet skiing, water skiing, motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, and paddle sports, along with fishing and swimming. The park also offers opportunities for hiking, biking, camping, wildlife watching and birding, hunting, and winter recreation including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowtubing, sledding, ice fishing, and winter camping.

Access to Crawford State Park's main areas is via CO Highway 92, which is not eligible for funding under SB23-059. Black Canyon Road, which lies in both Montrose and Delta Counties, provides access to a day use area of the park. In addition to park visitors, this road receives ample use from commuters and local residents as well as farmers and semi-trucks. The section of road servicing this day use area is in good condition. Given the good road condition, significant use by non-park users, and low potential for fee revenue to be split between two jurisdictions, this park is not a likely candidate for funding under SB23-059.

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**
264K

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**
\$3,500

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:
Delta & Montrose County



CRAWFORD ACCESS POINTS

- ① Day Use Area
- ② Day Use Area
- ③ Peninsula Day Use Area
- ④ Clear Fork Campground
- ⑤ Iron Creek Campground
- ⑥ Day Use Area



Crawford State Park Visitor Residency

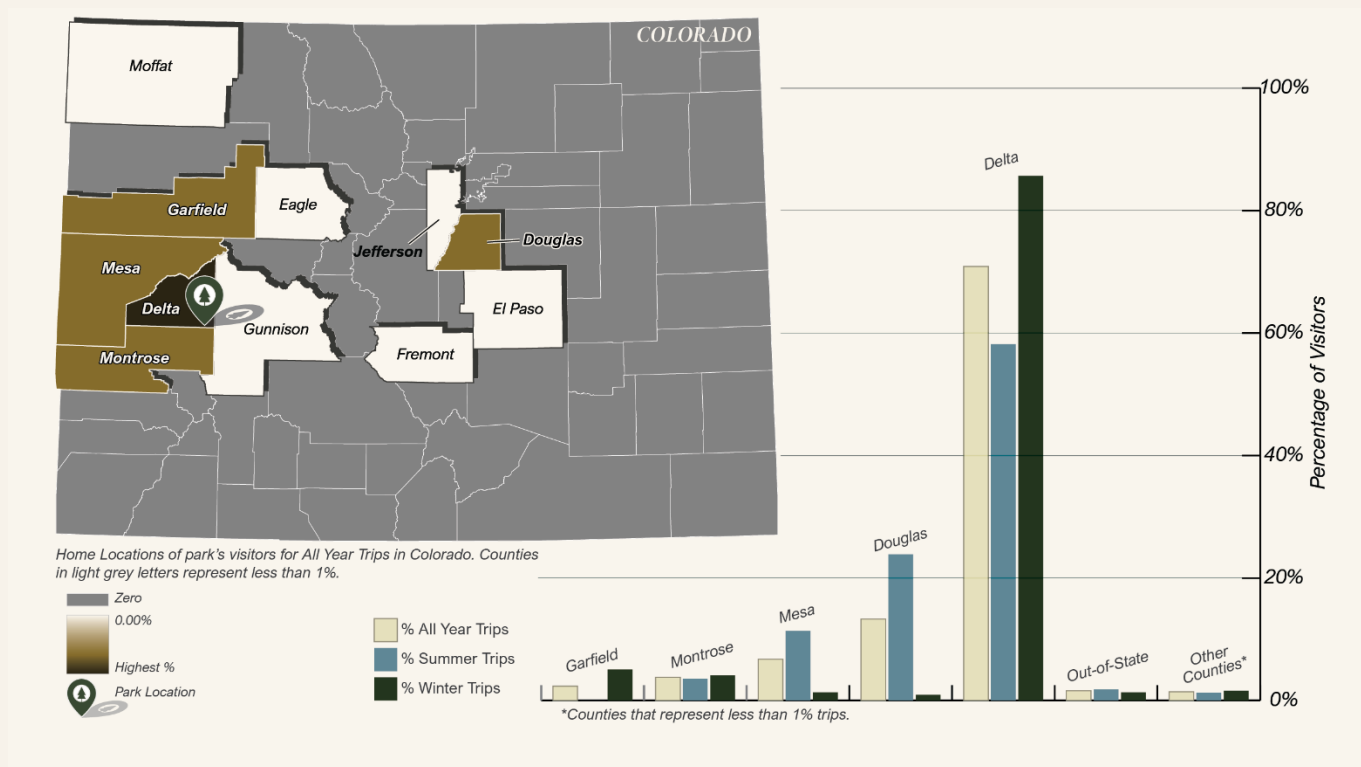


Figure 34. Home Locations of Visitors to Crawford State Park

As shown in Figure 34, the majority of visitors to Crawford State Park reside in Delta County, which accounts for approximately 75% of year-round visits. This share rises significantly during the winter months, with nearly all winter visitation coming from Delta County, highlighting its strong local visitor base.

Other counties such as Mesa, Montrose, and Garfield contribute a smaller share of visitors throughout the year, with each accounting for fewer than 10% of visits annually. Notably, Douglas County contributes the second largest share of visits overall, at around 10%, though this is primarily during the summer months. Out-of-state visitors and other Colorado counties represent only a small fraction of the park's total visitation.



MANCOS

Mancos State Park, located on the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway in southwest Colorado, encompasses the 200 surface-acre Jackson Gulch Reservoir and 553 land acres. The park is primarily popular during spring, summer, and fall, offering activities such as non-motorized boating, fishing, geocaching, and 5.2 miles of trails for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. It remains open year-round, providing winter activities like ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. Situated just 12 miles from Mesa Verde National Park, the park's campsites and two yurts often serve as a base camp for visitors exploring the Durango/Four Corners area.

Access to Mancos State Park is via Montezuma County Road 42 followed by CR N, with additional trail access points connecting to nearby National Forest Service land. The park features a small entrance station and Visitor Center, with plans for future expansion to support growth and enhance visitor experiences, including new park offices, trails, volleyball courts, and more campsites. Given the current state of its access points, it is unlikely that the local jurisdiction will seek funding under SB23-059. However, this option may be considered in the future if infrastructure improvements result in increased usage.

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:

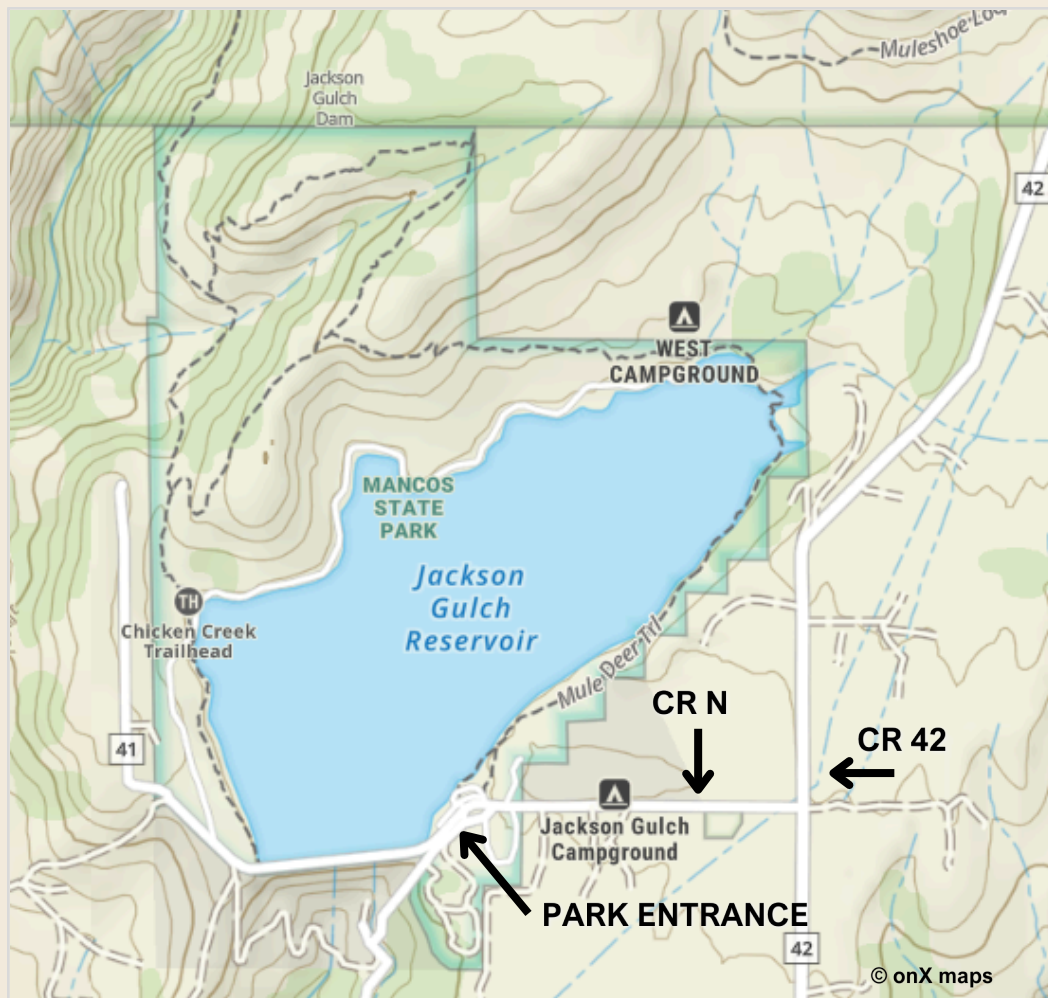
25K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:

\$3,500

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

Montezuma County





Mancos State Park Visitor Residency

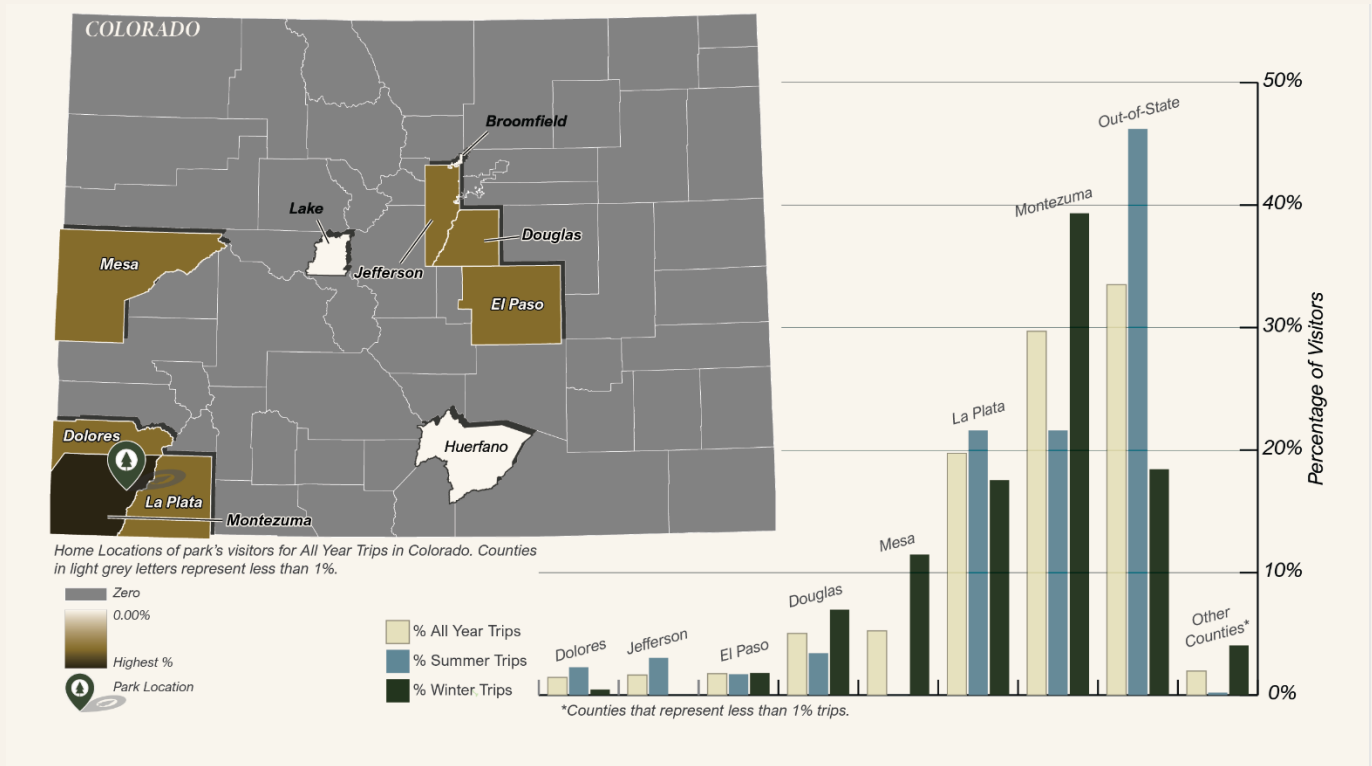


Figure 35. Home Locations of Visitors to Mancos State Park

As shown in Figure 35, most visitors to Mancos State Park – located in the Four Corners region – reside out-of-state, accounting for approximately 33% of year-round visitation. This share increases significantly during the summer, rising to nearly 45%, but drops to fewer than 20% in the winter.

In contrast, visitors from Montezuma County, where the park is located, make up almost 30% of year-round visits. Their share decreases to around 20% in the summer, but rises to nearly 40% during the winter, indicating a strong local presence in the colder months. Neighboring La Plata County also contributes a consistent proportion of visitors across all seasons, remaining close to 20% year-round.

Mesa County, though representing over 10% of visitors during the winter, contributes fewer than 5% during both the summer and year-round periods. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



NAVAJO

**2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:**

278K

**2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:**

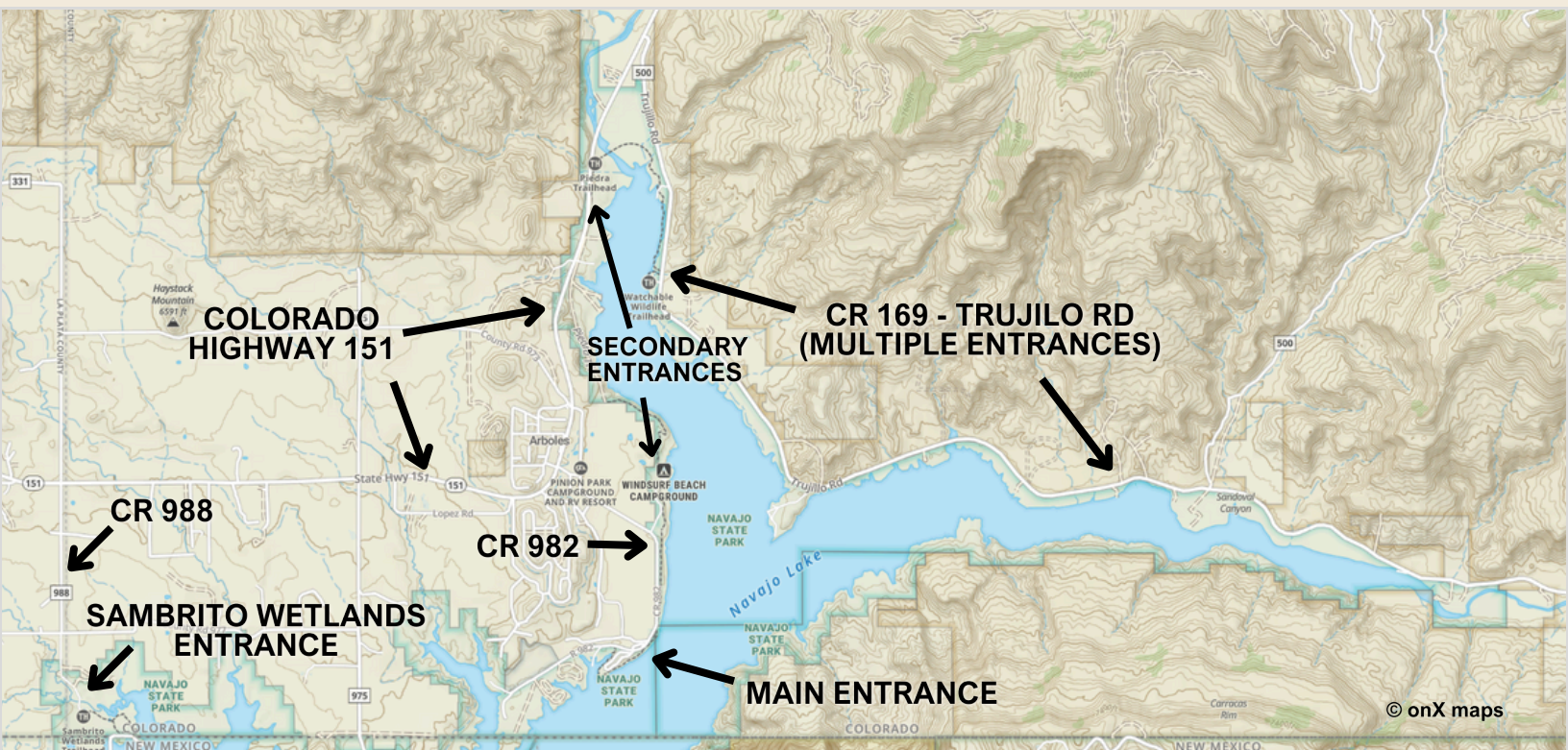
\$5,100

**POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:**

**Archuleta
County**

Navajo State Park, known as "Colorado's answer to Lake Powell," is a major recreational destination located in southwest Colorado on the Colorado/New Mexico border. Spanning 2,100 acres, the park features one of the few boat ramps within Colorado that provides access to the entire 15,600-acre Navajo Reservoir. The park is a popular destination for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. It also offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, birding, hunting, and winter activities like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Accommodations include year-round camping and three cabins.

The primary access to Navajo State Park is via CR 982, a paved road maintained by Archuleta County, which leads to key areas such as the headquarters, campground, marina, and boat ramp. In 2023, Archuleta County completed a \$1.3 million improvement project on this 1.6-mile stretch of road, addressing previous safety concerns and visitor frustrations. The majority of the traffic on CR 982 is park-related, with heavy vehicles such as campers and boat trailers contributing to road wear. Both park staff and local officials acknowledge the road's importance, and Archuleta County government officials, involved in the bill's development, have shown strong interest in pursuing funding under SB23-059's fee mechanism for Navajo State Park in the future. Further details are available in the Navajo State Park case study to follow.





Navajo State Park Visitor Residency

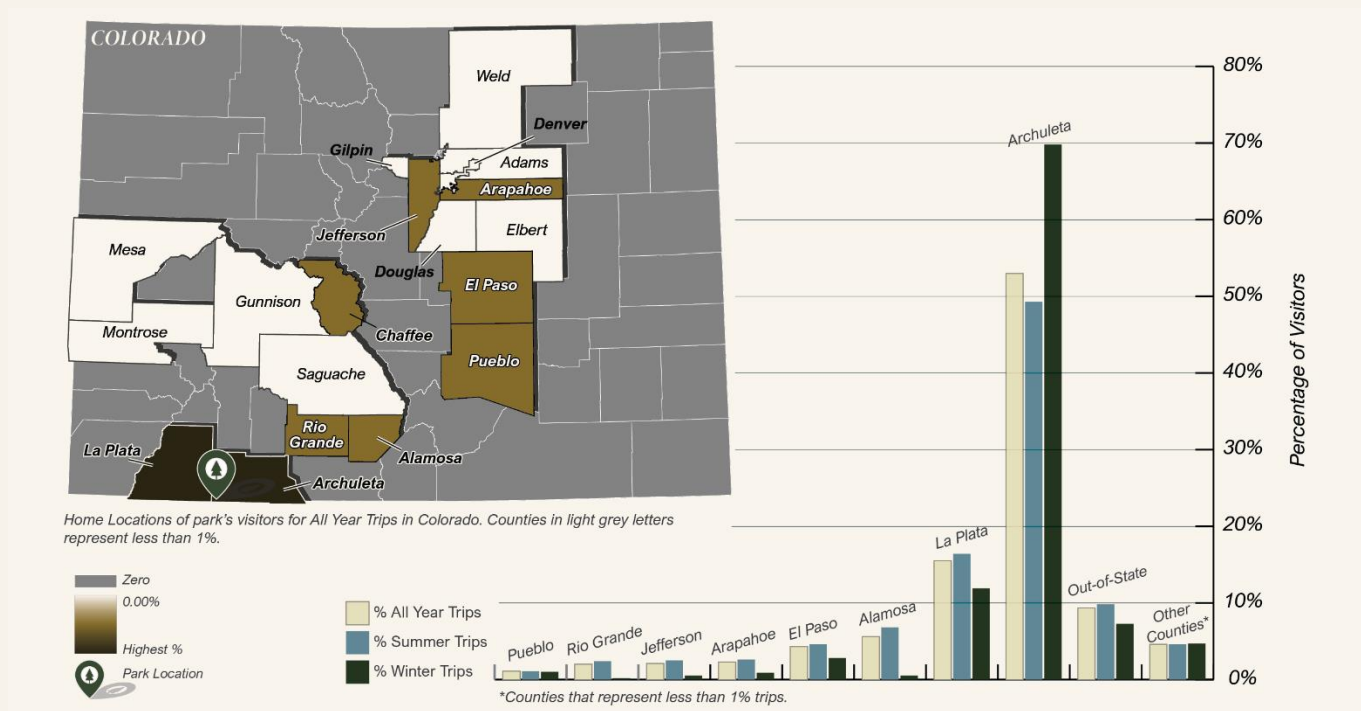


Figure 36. Home Locations of Visitors to Navajo State Park

As shown in Figure 36, Navajo State Park is highly used by residents of the local area. Residents of Archuleta County account for the majority of visits to Navajo State Park, making up approximately 53% of annual visits. This share rises significantly during the winter, reaching around 70%, indicating a stronger local presence when fewer visitors come from further locations.

Neighboring La Plata County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing about 25% of annual visits. Visitors from all other counties and out-of-state locations each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



PAONIA

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

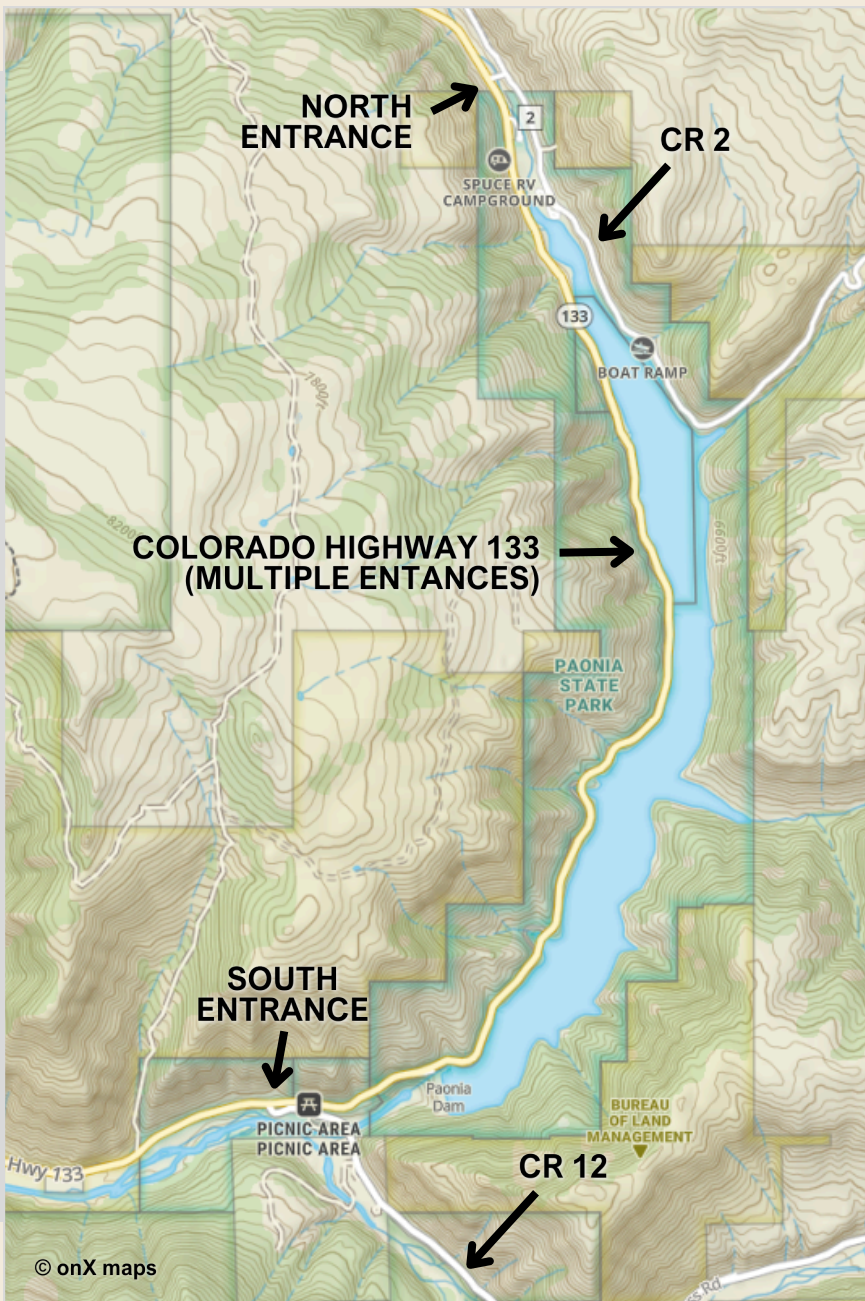
15K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$500

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

**Gunnison
County**



Paonia State Park is a quiet 1,875-acre park located on the western slope on CO State Highway 133. The park features a 334-acre lake along the North Fork of the Gunnison River, offering motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, and fishing. It provides primitive camping and hunting opportunities but lacks designated trails. The park's visitation peaks in the summer, following the reservoir's water levels, and declines during the off-season. While no services are available from early October to May, visitors can still explore and enjoy cross-country skiing or snowshoeing during the winter.

Access to Paonia State Park is provided by two Gunnison County roads: CR 2 and CR 12 (Kebler Pass). CR 2 primarily serves park visitors, including those using the boat ramp and accessing seven of the park's campsites. This road is in poor condition, with inconsistent maintenance by the county likely due to its remote location and lack of permanent residents. CR 12 is less relevant to park traffic, serving seven park campsites located just a short distance down the road, while all other traffic on CR 12 is unrelated to the park. If Gunnison County were to pursue funding under SB23-059, CR 2 would likely be the focus. However, the potential fee revenue based on current daily pass sales is estimated at \$500 or less, making it an unlikely candidate for an application for this funding mechanism.



Paonia State Park Visitor Residency

The sample size of the available 2023 Azira data is too small to provide meaningful analysis results that can portray home locations of visitors to Paonia State Park with confidence. This is likely due to winter closure of the park.



RIDGWAY

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

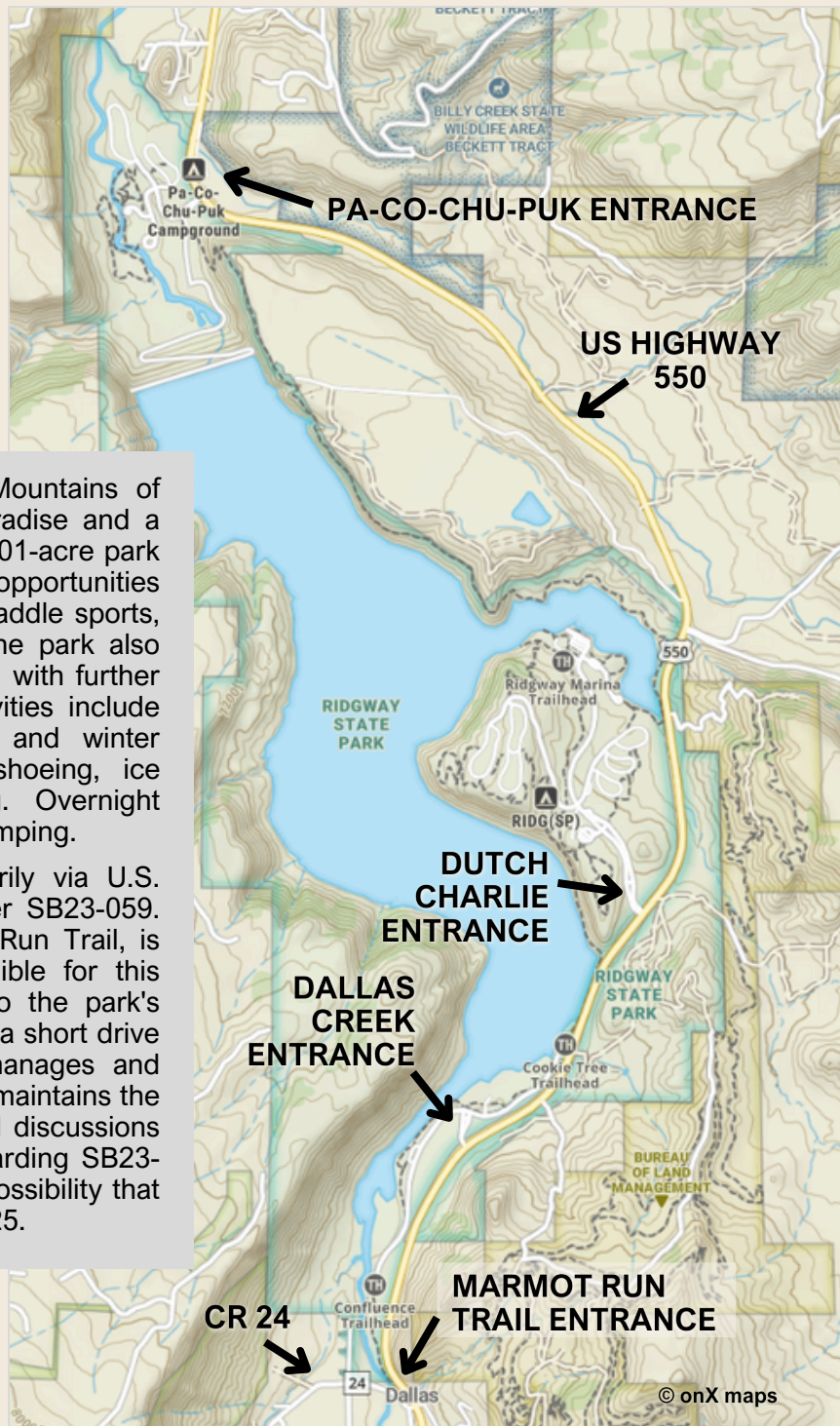
966K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$29,400

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:

**Ouray County &
Town of Ridgway**



Ridgway State Park, located in the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado, is an outdoor recreation paradise and a popular destination for boating and fishing. The 3,201-acre park features a 1,000 surface-acre reservoir that offers opportunities for motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. The park also boasts over 15 miles of trails for hiking and biking, with further connections to nearby area trails. Additional activities include wildlife watching, birding, geocaching, hunting, and winter recreation such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, ice skating, snowtubing, and sledding. Overnight accommodations include 3 yurts and year-round camping.

Vehicle access to Ridgway State Park is primarily via U.S. Highway 550, which is ineligible for funding under SB23-059. However, one specific access point, the Marmot Run Trail, is managed by local jurisdictions and may be eligible for this funding source. The trail provides foot access to the park's Dallas Creek area, with the trailhead accessible via a short drive down Ouray County Road 24. Ouray County manages and maintains the trailhead, while the Town of Ridgway maintains the paved Marmot Run Trail itself. Park staff have had discussions with Ouray County and the Town of Ridgway regarding SB23-059 as a potential funding source, and there is a possibility that these local jurisdictions may apply for funding in 2025.



Ridgway State Park Visitor Residency

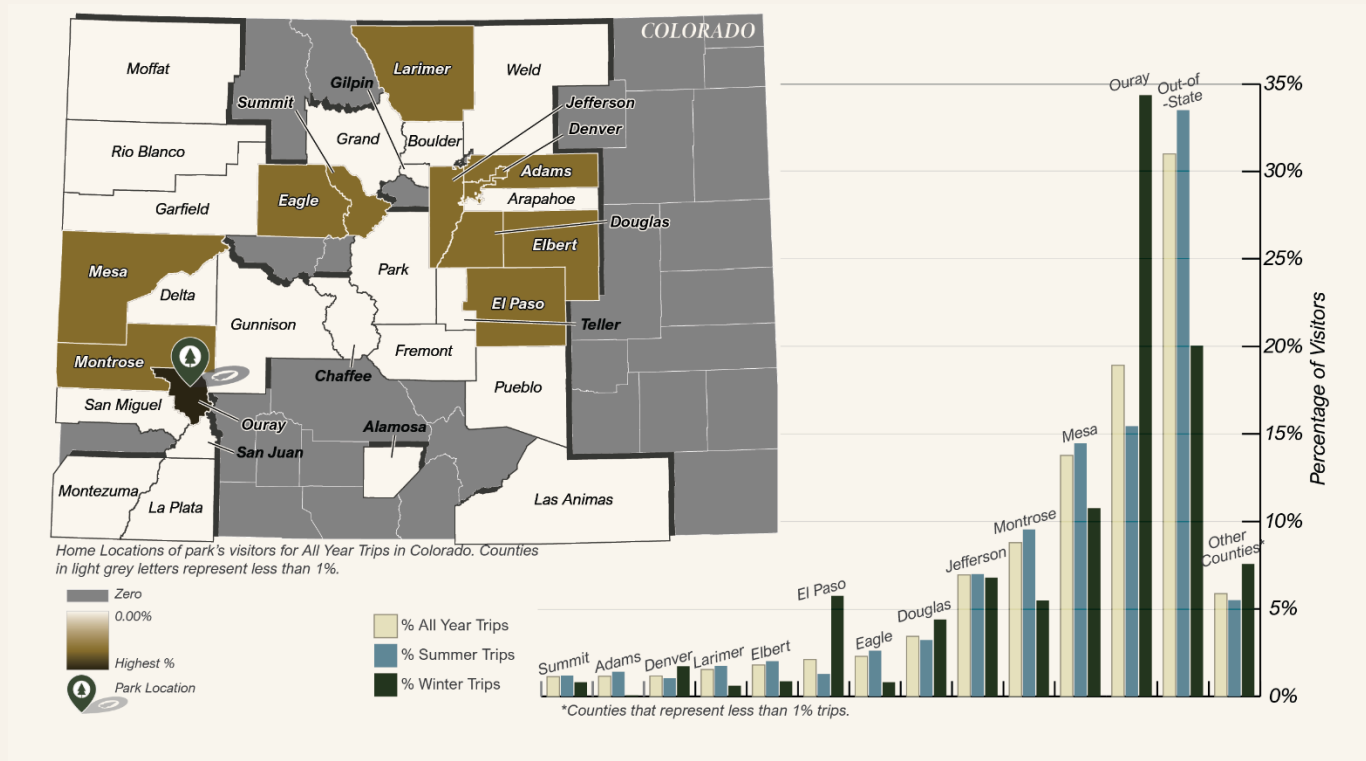


Figure 37. Home Locations of Visitors to Ridgway State Park

As shown in Figure 37, Ridgway State Park attracts a diverse range of visitors from various counties in Colorado, with the highest in-state visitation coming from Ouray, Mesa, and Montrose counties. Notably, visitors from Ouray County, where the park is located, contribute a larger share of winter visits compared to other counties.

In contrast, the largest overall percentage of year-round visitors to the park comes from out-of-state, making up approximately 33% of visits. This share remains relatively consistent throughout the year, with a slight increase during the summer months. Visitors from Mesa County account for about 15% of year-round visits, while Montrose County residents contribute nearly 10%. Visitors from all other counties each account for fewer than 10% of trips year-round and seasonally.



SWEITZER LAKE

2023 TOTAL
PARK VISITS:

43K

2024 POSSIBLE
FEE REVENUE:

\$4,600

POTENTIAL FEE
APPLICANT:

Delta County



Sweitzer Lake State Park is unique among Colorado's state parks, as its lake was specifically created for recreational purposes, unlike many others that feature irrigation reservoirs. The day-use-only park spans 211 acres and is entirely owned and maintained by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), one of only three parks in the system where CPW wholly owns the land and infrastructure. The lake supports a variety of water activities, including motorized and nonmotorized boating, sailing, paddle sports, jet skiing, water skiing, fishing, and swimming. Additionally, the park offers 3 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, as well as opportunities for wildlife watching, birding, and hunting. Due to its small size, the park can reach capacity during the busy season. However, Sweitzer Lake is currently undergoing master planning for future investments, including potential property acquisitions, as part of a Colorado governor's initiative to enhance park access.

The park's entrance connects to U.S. Highway 50 via a short segment (approximately 1,100 feet) of Delta County's E Road. Although this road is technically managed by the county, park staff indicate that CPW currently handles its maintenance, as it exclusively serves the park. For Delta County to qualify for funding under SB23-059, it would likely need to demonstrate that it bears the maintenance costs of this road. The park enjoys strong local support, with users generally appreciating the value and use of their fee dollars, although they are sensitive to price increases, which could make an additional fee on the daily vehicle pass challenging for locals. Future development plans include altering the park's access route to be entirely on CPW property, which would eliminate the current ambiguity over road maintenance responsibility. While the park could technically be eligible for SB23-059 funding at this time, an application may not be successful unless Delta County assumes full maintenance responsibilities. Moreover, the need for such funding may become irrelevant with the proposed access changes, making Sweitzer Lake State Park an unlikely candidate for this funding mechanism.



Sweitzer Lake State Park Visitor Residency

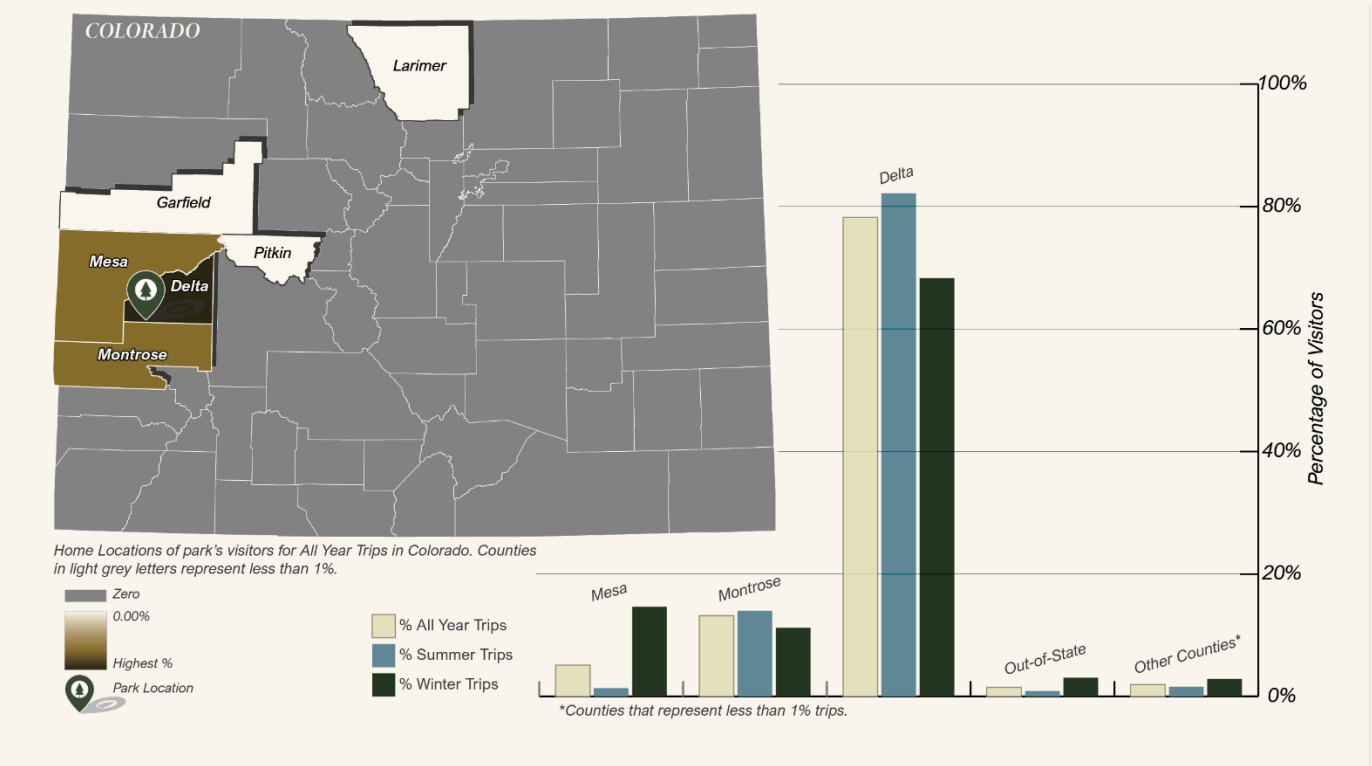


Figure 38. Home Locations of Visitors to Sweitzer Lake State Park

As shown in Figure 38, Sweitzer Lake State Park receives the majority of its visitors from Delta County, where the park is located, accounting for nearly 80% of year-round visits. This share increases slightly during the winter months, while remaining relatively stable throughout the year.

The remaining visitors are primarily from the adjacent counties of Montrose and Mesa. Montrose County contributes approximately 10% of year-round visits, with a slight increase in summer. Mesa County accounts for around 5% of year-round visits, with its share peaking during the winter months. Visitation from other counties and out-of-state locations is minimal, each contributing fewer than 5% of visitors annually and seasonally.



NOTABLE STATE PARK ACCESS & INFRASTRUCTURE CASE STUDIES

Introduction

The Consultant Team identified six state parks that warranted deeper analysis due to their unique challenges. These parks were selected based on a variety of factors, including strong interest in SB23-059, complex access routes, previous discussions about park access issues, and engagement with local governments during the study.

Each case study provides an in-depth exploration of the specific access issues faced by these parks, including detailed descriptions of the relevant access routes, local government involvement, and economic impacts. The analysis also includes transportation assessments, road and bridge budget considerations, and analysis of mobile location data to understand visitor patterns and origins. These case studies highlight the diverse challenges and opportunities associated with maintaining park infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where resources are often limited.

While the case studies reveal unique challenges for each park, common themes emerge, such as the need for collaborative approaches to infrastructure management, the financial constraints faced by local governments, and the importance of clear agreements between state and local entities. The discussions surrounding the potential use of SB23-059 funds underscore the critical role of additional funding mechanisms in addressing these challenges.

Taken together, these case studies illustrate the complexities of managing access to Colorado's state parks. They offer valuable insights into how strategic funding from a variety of sources, cooperative efforts, and well-defined responsibilities can support the long-term sustainability of park infrastructure, ensuring that these valuable public spaces remain accessible and enjoyable for future generations.

The six case parks examined in this section are:

- 1) **Eleven Mile State Park**
- 2) **Golden Gate Canyon State Park**
- 3) **Lathrop State Park**
- 4) **Navajo State Park**
- 5) **State Forest State Park**
- 6) **Trinidad Lake State Park**

Additional Mobile Location Data Analysis

In addition to the home location data provided for all Colorado state parks in the previous section, more in-depth analysis was conducted for the six case study parks, including the trip origin location of park visitors, roadways used to access the park, and the passthrough vs. park trip percentages. These analyses used a second Azira Pinnacle raw dataset, the Pathing X report, to define and analyze trips to parks.

The Pathing X report offers detailed information about the travel patterns of individual devices before and after they are detected at a state park. This report includes the location of each device, along with the timing of these observations relative to the park visit. This data helps in understanding travel behavior and analyzing traffic patterns.



Trip Defining

The raw data from Azira provides sample pinpoints (pings) in the form of time-stamped latitude-longitude coordinates. To define individual trips from this data, the following assumptions were made:

- A trip ends if a device is not detected for 15 minutes (i.e., more than 15 minutes between pings).
- A trip ends if the device does not move more than 200 feet within 15 minutes.
- Trips where the start and end points are less than 250 feet apart are excluded from the analysis.

Trip Origins Methodology

State Park visitors may not travel directly from their home on the day they visit the park; they might travel from a nearby hotel or campsite or make stops along the way. To analyze the true origin of a visitor's day, the first recorded location of the device on the day of the park visit was identified. This approach provides insight into where visitors begin their day's activities, rather than just where their trip to the park started.

Roadways Accessing Parks Analysis Methodology

To understand which roads visitors used to access each state park, the path data from trips that started outside and ended inside the park were matched with the roadways on a map of the park's surrounding area. The number of unique trips on each road was then summed to determine the most utilized access routes.

Park Trips vs Passthrough Trips Analysis Methodology

The analysis of park trips versus passthrough trips involved examining the trajectory of each trip. Trips were categorized based on whether the device owner interacted with the park:

1) Passthrough trips

These trips passed through the park without starting or ending within its boundaries.

2) Park visitor trips

These trips either started or ended within the park, indicating that the visitor spent time there.

The analysis focused on comparing the number of trips that ended in the park with those that simply passed through.



Case Study: Eleven Mile State Park

Background and Context

Eleven Mile State Park, located in Park County, Colorado, is a popular destination for outdoor recreation, featuring a 3,405-acre reservoir that spans 5.5 miles. The park offers a range of activities, including fishing, camping, and wildlife watching, and attracted just over 200,000 visitors in 2023, primarily from the nearby Colorado Springs area. Park County, a rural region with a population of approximately 18,000, faces unique challenges in managing the infrastructure that supports both local residents and the influx of visitors to Eleven Mile State Park.

Access Points and Maintenance Responsibilities

Access to Eleven Mile State Park is primarily via County Roads 59, 90, and 92, which are maintained by Park County. These roads not only serve as the main routes for park visitors but also provide access to rural homes and smaller developments along the way. Some of these homes are seasonal, while others have year-round residents, resulting in a mix of park-specific and local traffic on the same road system, with the mobility data (analyzed in more detail below) indicating about a 60/40 split of park visits vs. passthrough traffic.

The condition of these county roads has been a significant concern for both residents and visitors. In the past, deteriorating conditions on the paved roads – which had not been resurfaced in over two decades – were responsible for vehicle damage, such as popped tires and bent axles. The road edges had disintegrated, narrowing the roadway, while the integrity of multilayer patching had failed, leading to the formation of large, dangerous potholes. These conditions underscored the urgent



Figure 39. Road conditions at Eleven Mile State Park prior to the 2024 improvement project.

These conditions underscored the urgent need for substantial repairs, which Park County was responsible for addressing. A collaborative process to identify external funding sources was initiated to support these efforts.

Funding Challenges and Collaborative Solutions

According to public records, Park County's total road maintenance budget for 2022 was approximately \$2.1 million, with the proposed 2024 road maintenance budget substantially larger, at \$5.6 million. These annual budgets cover about 3,700 lane miles of roads across the county, and county officials indicate that the roads providing access to Eleven Mile State Park comprise a substantial share of the county's total paved lane mileage. Given the scale of the required repairs, the potential funds that could be generated through SB23-059's fee system, which was considered as a potential source of support to supplement existing county road budgets, would have been insufficient to cover the full cost of improving the roadways. Therefore, a broader, more collaborative approach to funding and maintaining these essential access routes was necessary.



In 2024, Park County secured grant funding through money provided to the State of Colorado for emergency route maintenance to improve the county roadways leading to Eleven Mile State Park and the nearby Spinney Mountain State Park. The project, completed in the fall of 2024 at a cost of \$1,490,320, involved removing all asphalt surfaces, installation of two inches of new road base, and the application of a magnesium chloride topcoat to ensure road stabilization.

This project marked a critical improvement in road safety and access to the park. However, given the nature of dirt roads and the heavy traffic from park visitors and local residents, additional funding and ongoing maintenance will be necessary to ensure these roads remain safe and accessible in the future.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to Eleven Mile State Park was estimated to generate \$20.8 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$15.7 million by non-local visitors. While this 50-mile radius extends nearly to Colorado Springs, it is a valuable metric for understanding the park's economic impact on its surrounding area. This \$20.8 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately \$212 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$312 per vehicle and an estimated \$30.6 million in total expenditures.

These updated estimates provide a useful baseline for understanding the economic contributions of state parks to local economies. However, it is important to recognize that these estimates are based on 2009 data, and several factors could affect their accuracy today. In addition to rising costs of goods and services, visitation levels have changed significantly due to factors such as population growth and the global pandemic, and potentially may be affected by the introduction of the Keep Colorado Wild Pass. While adjusting for inflation provides a clearer picture of the economic impact in today's terms, it does not fully account for other changes over the past 15 years. Therefore, while these numbers offer valuable insights, they should be interpreted with these potential shifts in mind.

Mobility Data Analysis

Visitor Residency

As shown in Eleven Mile State Park's access summary (Figure 7), residents of El Paso County account for the largest share of visits to Eleven Mile State Park, making up 22% of year-round visits. Park County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing approximately 12% of visits throughout the year, with a notable increase to 16% during winter. Residents of Arapahoe, Jefferson, Douglas, and Adams counties each account for 5% to 10% of year-round visits, while about 10% of park visits come from out of state.

Trip Origins

As shown in Figure 40, most trips to Eleven Mile State Park originate in El Paso and Park counties. El Paso County is the starting location of approximately 27% of year-round trips, while Park County similarly contributes 27%. Teller County follows, as the starting point for about 7% of trips, with all other counties each contributing fewer than 5%. Additionally, 5% of year-round trips originate from out-of-state.

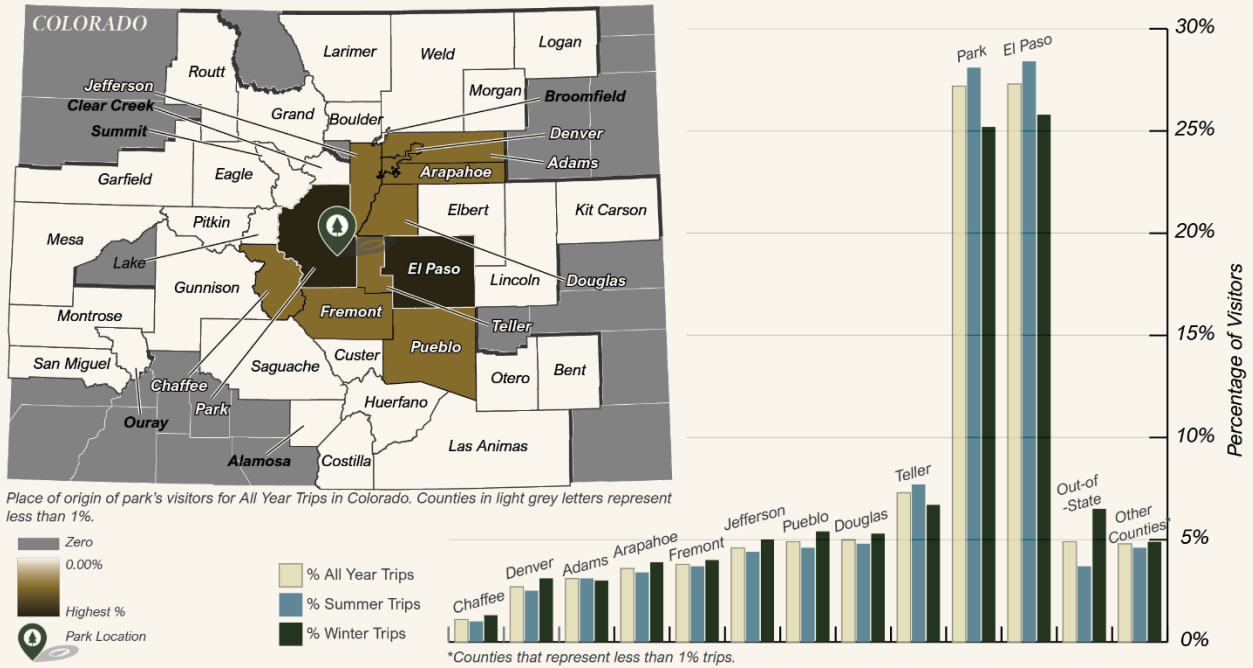


Figure 40. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for Eleven Mile State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

As shown in Figure 41, 59% of trips to Eleven Mile State Park are specifically destined for the park, while the remaining 41% are passthrough trips. Figure 42 illustrates that access to the park is primarily via Route 92, which handles 63% of year-round trips. Route 59 handles the remaining 37% of trips annually, with a slight increase in usage during the winter.

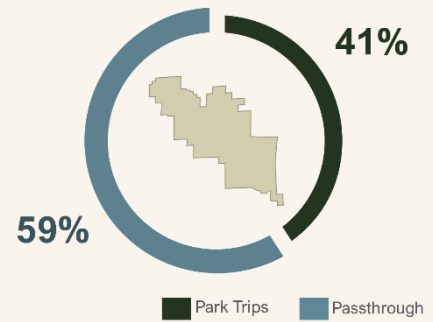


Figure 41. Eleven Mile State Park Trips vs. Passthrough

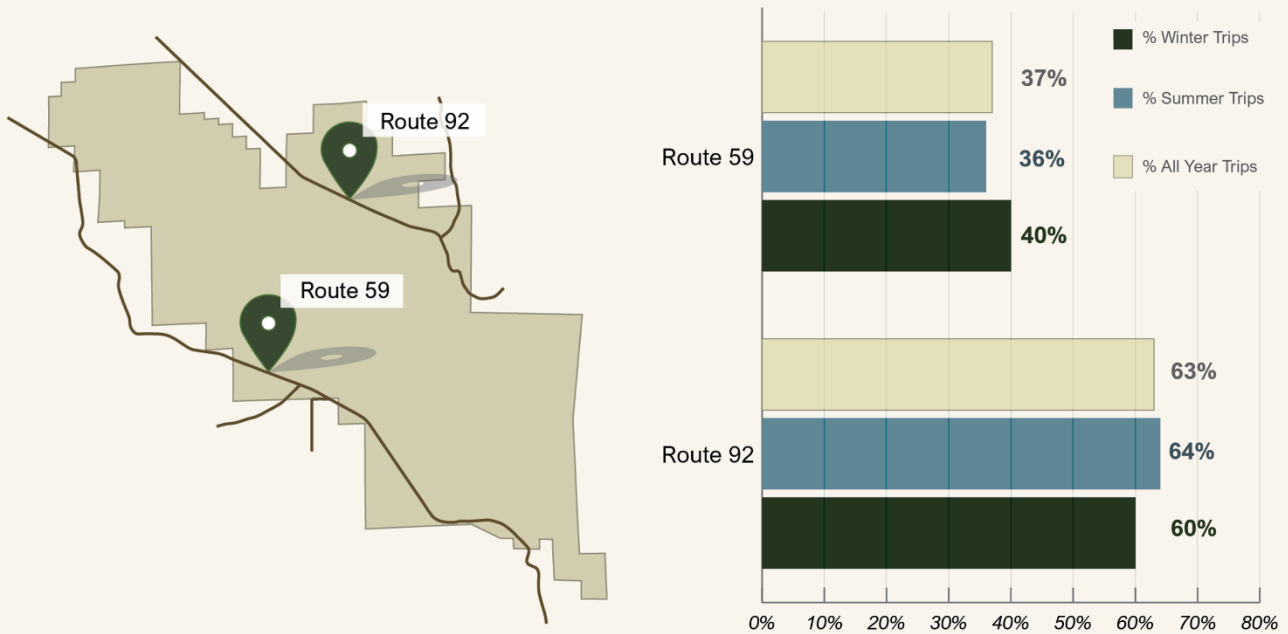


Figure 42. Use of Eleven Mile State Park Access Routes

Conclusions

The infrastructure challenges faced by Eleven Mile State Park and Park County underscore the complex interplay between local resource limitations and the high demand generated by both residents and visitors. The park's popularity, particularly among residents of El Paso and Park counties, places significant strain on Park County's roadways, which are crucial not only for park access but also for the daily needs of local residents. The mobility data highlights that while a majority of trips are specifically destined for the park, a substantial portion of traffic also consists of passthrough trips, further complicating the management and maintenance of these essential routes.

Successfully securing national grant funding for road improvements is a critical step forward in addressing these issues, but it is clear that this alone will not be sufficient to meet the ongoing and future needs of the park and its surrounding community. The case of Eleven Mile State Park illustrates the importance of a collaborative approach that leverages multiple funding sources and engages all stakeholders—local, state, and potentially federal. By sharing the financial responsibilities and working together, these entities can ensure that the infrastructure supporting Eleven Mile State Park is adequately maintained, providing safe and reliable access for both local residents and visitors.

Eleven Mile State Park serves as a powerful example of the broader challenges that rural communities face in managing infrastructure that supports significant tourism while meeting the needs of the local population. The lessons learned here emphasize the need for continuous collaboration and innovative funding solutions to sustain both the park's natural beauty and the community's quality of life.





Case Study: Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Background and Context

Golden Gate Canyon State Park, located just 30 miles west of Denver in the Front Range, spans over 12,000 acres and ranks as the fourth most visited state park in Colorado. Its proximity to major urban areas makes it a popular destination, particularly during the fall "leaf peeping" season, when visitation peaks and demand for the park's limited 400 parking spots far exceeds capacity. The park offers a wide array of recreational activities, including hiking, biking, horseback riding, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, and winter sports. It also provides various overnight accommodations, including campgrounds, backcountry camping, cabins, and yurts, attracting visitors year-round.

Access to Golden Gate Canyon State Park is more complex than many other state parks due to its six different access points via state highways or county roads and the absence of a controlled entrance. These various entry points serve different visitor populations and cater to diverse recreational activities. The busiest entrance is from the south via Golden Gate Canyon Road, a state highway maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), which sees the highest volume of visitor traffic. However, visitors coming from Colorado's Northern Front Range typically enter the park via the northeast entrance through Jefferson County, using Twin Spruce Road. Most RVs access the park through its northwest entrance, utilizing Gilpin County's Gap Road, as this entrance is closest to the park's campgrounds.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park's access routes that are eligible for funding under SB23-059 include two roads maintained by Gilpin County and two roads maintained by Jefferson County. While Jefferson County's roads are generally well-maintained and the county is not expected to apply for SB23-059 funding in the near future, Gilpin County, with its limited resources, was one of two applicants during the 2024 application period. This case study focuses on the challenges faced by Gilpin County in maintaining the park's access routes and their rationale for seeking additional support through SB23-059.

Key Access Routes and Maintenance Challenges

1) Gap Road (Gilpin County Road 2)

Gap Road is an unpaved route that serves as a critical access point to the park's interior, connecting visitors to trailheads and campgrounds. It also handles significant commuter traffic. In 2023, the road received a new lift and grading, along with biannual magnesium chloride treatments to manage dust and improve driving conditions. Despite these efforts, the road already requires further maintenance in 2024, highlighting the ongoing challenges Gilpin County faces in keeping this heavily used road in good condition. Gap Road is considered a high-priority route for the county due to its dual role in serving both local commuters and park visitors.

2) Crawford Gulch Road

Gilpin County is responsible for maintaining a one mile stretch of Crawford Gulch Road, which is the only paved road under the county's jurisdiction. This section of the road is primarily used by state park visitors, with minimal local residential traffic. Gilpin County lacks the equipment necessary for paving, and the road is in urgent need of significant repairs, including roto-milling and the application of four inches of new asphalt, at an estimated cost of \$1.1 million. Park staff occasionally assist the county with small repairs on this road in exchange for grading work within the park, exemplifying the "horse-trading" arrangements that have become necessary due to the county's limited resources.

Gilpin County's Funding Constraints and SB23-059 Application

Gilpin County faces significant financial constraints that impact its ability to maintain the access routes to Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Unlike larger counties, Gilpin does not have a diverse revenue portfolio and relies heavily on limited sources of income, primarily from the gaming industry. The county does not benefit significantly from property taxes, and its revenue is often insufficient to cover extensive infrastructure projects.



Maintaining Crawford Gulch Road, the only paved road under the county's care, is particularly challenging without the necessary equipment. The estimated \$1.1 million needed for repairs far exceeds the county's budget capabilities. Additionally, the annual cost of maintaining Gap Road and Crawford Gulch Road is estimated by the county to be about \$22,000 per mile, with a total annual maintenance cost of \$328,500 for these key routes.

Given these financial limitations, Gilpin County applied for SB23-059 funding to help alleviate the burden of maintaining these critical access routes. The additional revenue from the proposed daily vehicle fee would provide essential financial support, allowing the county to improve the condition of Gap Road and Crawford Gulch Road, enhancing access for park visitors and local residents alike.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to Golden Gate Canyon State Park was estimated to generate \$28.7 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$17.4 million by non-local visitors. This \$28.7 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately \$127 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$187 per vehicle and an estimated \$42.2 million in total expenditures.

Mobility Data Analysis

Home Locations

As shown in Golden Gate Canyon State Park's access summary (Figure 8), residents of Gilpin County account for the largest share of trips, making up approximately 28% of annual visits. This share rises significantly to nearly 40% during the winter, reflecting a strong local presence when fewer visitors travel from further locations. In contrast, during the summer, the share of visits from Gilpin County residents drops to about 25% as the park attracts more visitors from outside the local area. Similarly, Jefferson County contributes around 22% of annual visits, with a higher share in winter (25%) compared to summer, further indicating that local residents comprise a larger proportion of park visits during the colder months. Meanwhile, residents of Arapahoe County make up about 10% of annual visits, with their share rising to 12% in the summer and dropping to 5% in the winter. Additionally, around 12% of annual visits come from out-of-state, including 15% of summer visits and only 5% in winter, illustrating the influx of non-local visitors during the peak summer season.

Trip Origins

Figure 43 indicates that most trips to Golden Gate Canyon State Park begin in Gilpin County, contributing roughly 42% of annual trips. This share rises to 45% in the winter and decreases to 38% in the summer, reflecting a moderate seasonal shift in trip origins. Jefferson County is the second most common trip origin, accounting for about 20% of annual trips. All other counties are the starting point for 10% or fewer of total annual trips, and fewer than 5% of trips begin out of state.

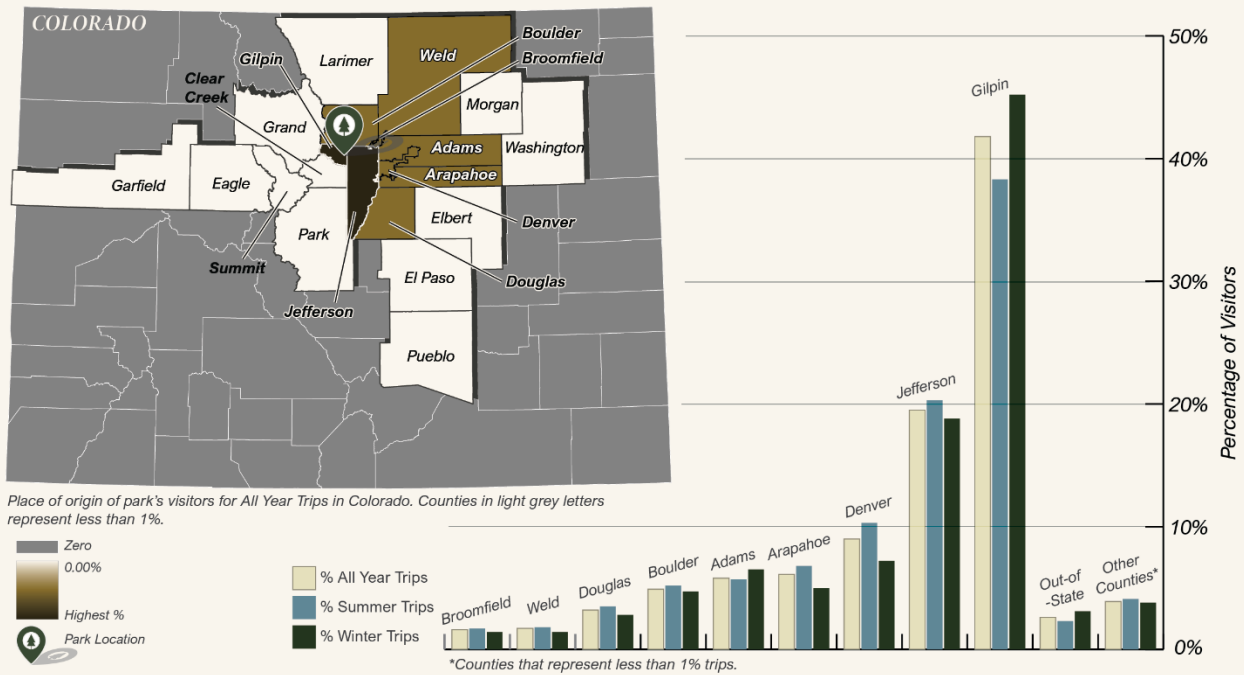


Figure 43. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

As shown in Figure 44, 36% of trips accessing Golden Gate Canyon State Park are specifically destined for the park, while the remaining 64% are passthrough trips. As shown in 5, the primary access route to the park is Gap Road East, which is used for 42% of year-round trips. Gap Road West handles 26% of trips, and Golden Gate Canyon Road South accounts for 15%. Each of the other roadways is used by 10% or fewer of the visitors accessing the park.

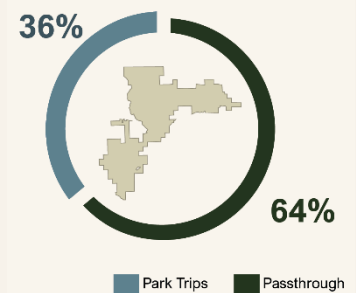


Figure 44. Golden Gate Canyon State Park Trips vs. Passthrough

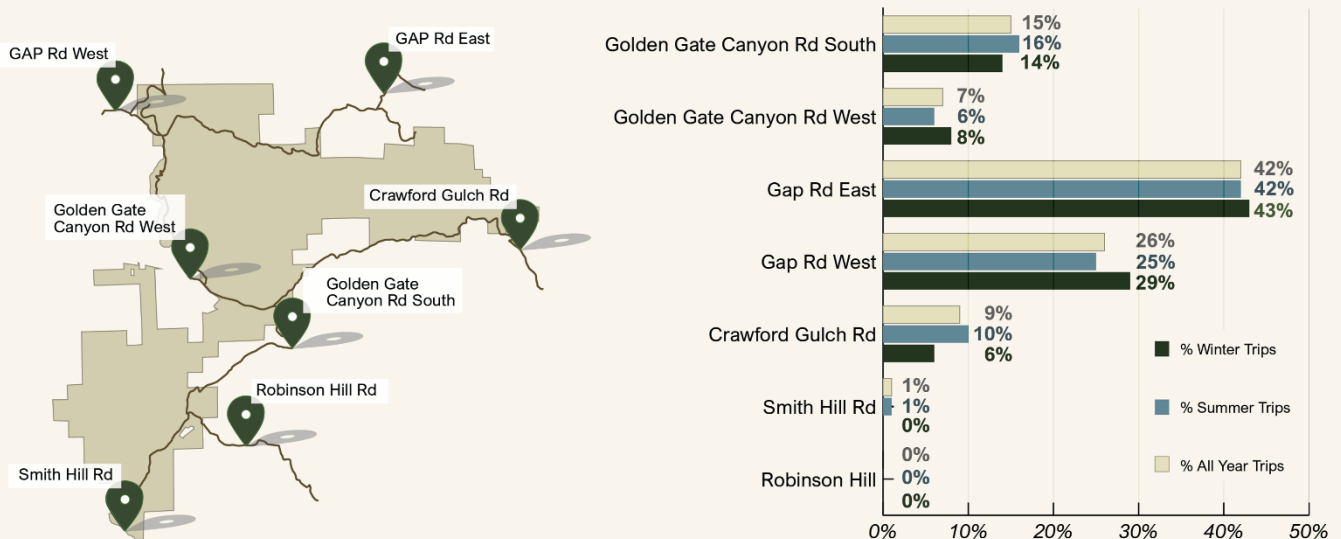


Figure 45. Use of Golden Gate Canyon State Park Access Routes

Conclusions

The Golden Gate Canyon State Park case study illustrates the intricate balance required to manage high visitation levels at a state park situated near a major urban center, while relying on the infrastructure of rural counties with limited financial resources. The park's popularity, driven by its proximity to Denver and the Front Range, coupled with its broad array of recreational offerings, leads to substantial wear and tear on the access routes that serve both local residents and visitors.

The analysis of mobility data reveals that a significant portion of visits to the park originate from local counties, with Gilpin residents contributing the highest share, especially during the winter months. This seasonal pattern indicates that local residents rely on the park year-round, while out-of-state and non-local visitors surge during the summer, exacerbating the demand on the park's infrastructure.

The challenges faced by Gilpin County in maintaining Gap Road and Crawford Gulch Road underscore the importance of additional funding mechanisms like SB23-059. The park's high visitation rates, coupled with the county's constrained budget, make it clear that support from the Local Access Route Funding legislation could play a vital role in sustaining the park's infrastructure and ensuring a positive visitor experience. The case of Golden Gate Canyon State Park demonstrates the importance of targeted funding mechanisms like SB23-059 in supporting rural counties tasked with maintaining critical access routes to popular state parks, underscoring the need for collaborative solutions to ensure that the park remains accessible and well-maintained for visitors and locals alike.



Case Study: Lathrop State Park

Background and Context

Established over 60 years ago in Huerfano County, Lathrop State Park has a unique land tenure history that highlights the intricate relationships between state parks and local governments. In spring 2024, the Consultant Team visited Lathrop State Park to meet with state park staff and visit the site. The County Administrator and the County Commissioners were invited to join the meeting but were unable to attend.

According to current park staff, at its inception, a significant portion of the park – including a campground, part of one of its two lakes, the golf course, and surrounding land – was owned by the City of Walsenburg. CPW initially leased this land from the city under a 50-year agreement. Upon the expiration of the lease in 2015, CPW purchased the property, but the complexities of land ownership and maintenance responsibilities continued to influence the park's operations.



The Intergovernmental Agreement: A Formalized Collaboration

A notable example of collaboration between CPW and local jurisdictions is the intergovernmental agreement established in 2020 between the State of Colorado (acting through the Department of Natural Resources for the benefit of CPW), the City of Walsenburg, and Huerfano County. This agreement was necessary due to the shared responsibilities for County Road 502 (CR 502), the primary access route running through Lathrop State Park. The agreement outlines the distinct roles and responsibilities of each party:

1) CPW's Responsibilities

CPW is tasked with the maintenance, repair, and snowplowing of CR 502 within the boundaries of Lathrop State Park. This ensures that the road remains accessible year-round for park visitors.

2) Huerfano County's Responsibilities

The county is responsible for graveling and maintaining the gravel portion of road within Lathrop State Park around Horseshoe Lake, excluding snowplowing duties. Additionally, the county permits CPW to use portions of the CR 502 right-of-way for park facilities and improvements, such as aquatic nuisance species stations, provided these do not compromise vehicular safety.

3) Access and Fee Structure

A unique aspect of this agreement is the arrangement concerning park entry fees. Visitors entering Lathrop State Park through the main entrance to access the Golf Course are exempt from paying the State Park fee, provided they do not use any other park facilities or amenities. This exception is part of the collaborative effort to balance access to both the park and the golf course, which is a key recreational asset for the City of Walsenburg.

Significance of the Lathrop State Park Agreement

This case study of Lathrop State Park illustrates the diverse and collaborative approaches to park management across Colorado's state park system. One of the key findings from this study is that while many state parks and local governments may engage in informal 'horse trading' arrangements for services like road maintenance, formal agreements such as the one at Lathrop State Park are less common. The



intergovernmental agreement serves as a model for formalizing roles and responsibilities between state parks and local governments when both parties share resources and infrastructure. The structured collaboration at Lathrop State Park not only clarifies the financial and operational duties of each party but also ensures that the park remains accessible to the public while respecting the interests of the local community.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to Lathrop State Park was estimated to generate \$7.6 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$7.0 million by non-local visitors. This \$7.6 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately \$194 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$286 per vehicle and an estimated \$11.2 million in total expenditures.

Mobility Data Analysis

Home Locations

As shown in Lathrop State Park’s access summary (Figure 31), residents of Huerfano County account for the majority of visits to Lathrop State Park, making up approximately 70% of annual visits. This share rises significantly during the winter, reaching around 85%, reflecting a strong local presence when fewer visitors come from further locations. Jefferson County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing about 10% of annual visits. All other counties, along with out-of-state home locations, each account for fewer than 10% of visitors throughout the year.

Figure 46 indicates that the majority of trips to Lathrop State Park originate in Huerfano County, contributing to over 50% of annual trips, a pattern that remains consistent across both summer and winter seasons. Pueblo and El Paso counties also serve as significant trip origin locations, accounting for approximately 11% and 15% of annual trips, respectively. All other counties, along with out-of-state origins, each contribute fewer than 10% of trips throughout the year.

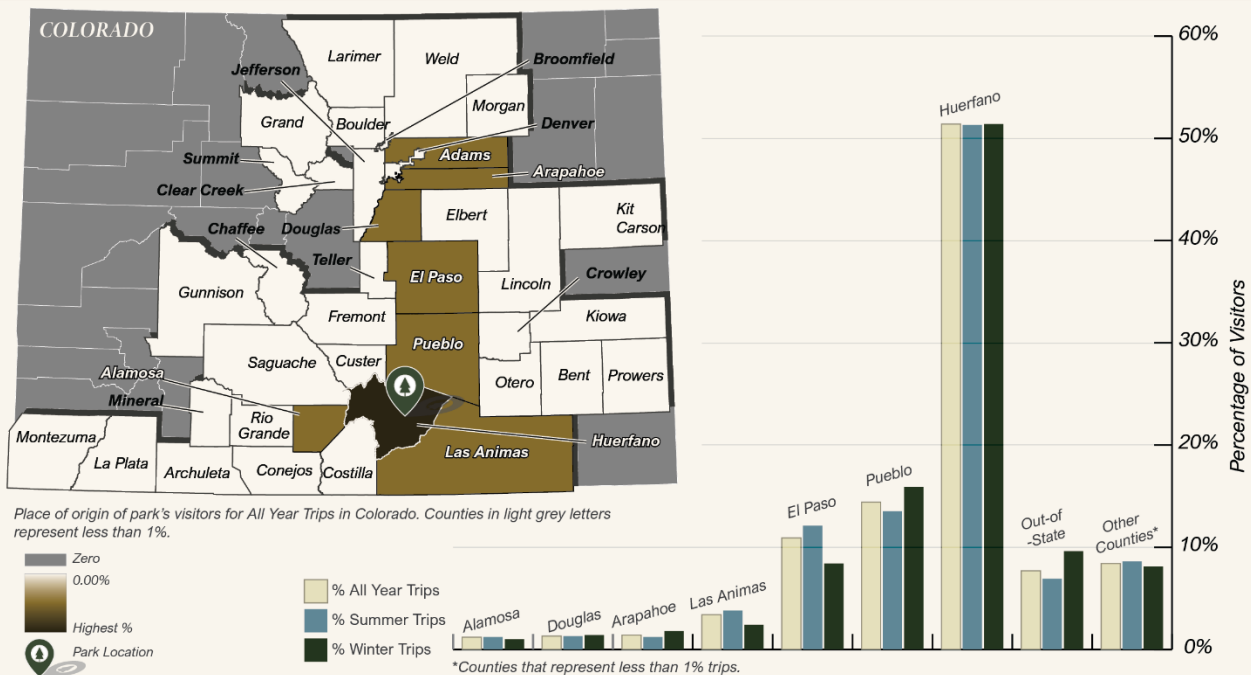


Figure 46. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for Lathrop State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

Since Lathrop State Park is accessed via a single entrance on US Highway 160, passthrough analysis and roadway usage was not done for this park.

Conclusions

The intergovernmental agreement established for Lathrop State Park in 2020 exemplifies the effectiveness of formalized partnerships between state parks and local governments. This agreement, which clearly delineates the responsibilities of each party, ensures the maintenance of essential infrastructure like County Road 502 and facilitates ongoing public access to Lathrop State Park. The park's unique history and its collaborative management approach underscore the importance of structured agreements in preserving the accessibility and functionality of state parks, particularly when multiple jurisdictions are involved. As CPW looks to strengthen its relationships with local governments across the state and ensure adequate support for state park access routes, the Lathrop model offers a compelling example of how formalized agreements can lead to more efficient and sustainable park management practices.



Case Study: Navajo State Park

Background and Context

Navajo State Park, located on the Colorado/New Mexico border, is a major recreational destination in southwest Colorado. The park provides access to the expansive Navajo Reservoir, drawing nearly 300,000 visitors annually for activities such as boating, fishing, camping, and wildlife viewing. The primary access to the park's facilities is via County Road 982 (CR 982), a 1.6-mile paved road maintained by Archuleta County.

Infrastructure and Maintenance Challenges

CR 982 is essential for park visitors, serving as the main route to the park's headquarters, campground, marina, and boat ramp. In 2023, Archuleta County undertook a significant road improvement project on this stretch, investing \$1.3 million to address safety concerns and visitor frustrations. This project was particularly noteworthy, as the road had not been fully resurfaced since its construction in the 1960s. The high volume of traffic, especially from large and heavy vehicles such as campers and boat trailers, had contributed to the road's deterioration. Navajo State Park staff acknowledged the road's condition and expressed gratitude to Archuleta County for undertaking the necessary repairs, noting that the park itself could not maintain the road since it is a county responsibility.



Figure 47. Recently paved CR 982 at the main entrance to Navajo State Park.

Financial Considerations and Local Priorities

Archuleta County is responsible for maintaining a total of 1,303 lane miles, including 1,131 unpaved and 172 paved lane miles. The 2023 project on CR 982 accounted for just 1.9% of the county's paved roads (3.2 of 172 paved lane miles) but required a substantial portion of the county's road maintenance budget. In 2022, the county's Road and Bridge department operated with a total budget of \$8.3 million, including \$3.4 million dedicated to road maintenance. The \$1.3 million spent on CR 982 represents a significant investment, particularly when compared to the county's average 2022 per-mile maintenance budget of approximately \$2,610.

County officials highlighted that while CR 982 is crucial for park access, it primarily serves visitors from outside the county rather than local residents. In contrast, other roads within the county, which support more local and higher-speed traffic, are considered higher priorities for maintenance and improvements. This discrepancy raises concerns about the sustainability of funding infrastructure that mainly benefits state park visitors, especially when local resources are limited.

Funding Opportunities and Challenges

While the need for additional financial support is evident, Archuleta County reported that they did not seek any grant funding for the CR 982 project. County officials indicated that the county lacked the time and resources to navigate the bureaucratic processes involved in applying for grants, which often require extensive planning and preparation to make projects "shovel ready." This decision highlights an important aspect of the broader discussion on infrastructure funding.

Although SB23-059 could provide a valuable source of financial support, it is not the only option available to counties like Archuleta. State and federal grants, as well as partnerships with regional or private entities, could offer additional avenues for securing the necessary funds to maintain critical infrastructure. However,



the complexities of the grant application process, including the time and money required, present significant barriers. Providing additional support to help local communities navigate the grant landscape could be an important part of the solution.

Park Perspective and Collaborative Efforts

From the perspective of the park staff, the condition of CR 982 prior to its repair was a significant concern for visitor safety and satisfaction. Visitor complaints about the road were frequent, and there was a clear need for improvement. Park staff expressed their appreciation for the county's efforts to repair the road, recognizing that it was outside the park's jurisdiction to maintain. This collaborative spirit between the park and the county is essential for ensuring that the infrastructure meets the needs of both visitors and local residents.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to Navajo State Park was estimated to generate \$26.0 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$18.3 million by non-local visitors. This \$26.0 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately \$260 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$382 per vehicle and an estimated \$38.2 million in total expenditures.

Mobility Data Analysis

Home Locations

As shown in Navajo State Park's access summary (Figure 36), Navajo State Park is highly used by residents of the local area. Residents of Archuleta County account for the majority of visits to Navajo State Park, making up approximately 53% of annual visits. This share rises significantly during the winter, reaching around 70%, indicating a stronger local presence when fewer visitors come from further locations. La Plata County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing about 25% of annual visits. All other counties and out-of-state home locations each account for fewer than 10% of visitors throughout the year.

Trip Origins

Figure 48 indicates that the highest share of trips to Navajo State Park originate in Archuleta County, contributing around 45% of annual trips. La Plata County is the starting point for about 28% of annual trips. All other Colorado counties each account for fewer than 10% of trip origins, while nearly 15% of all trips originate out of state.

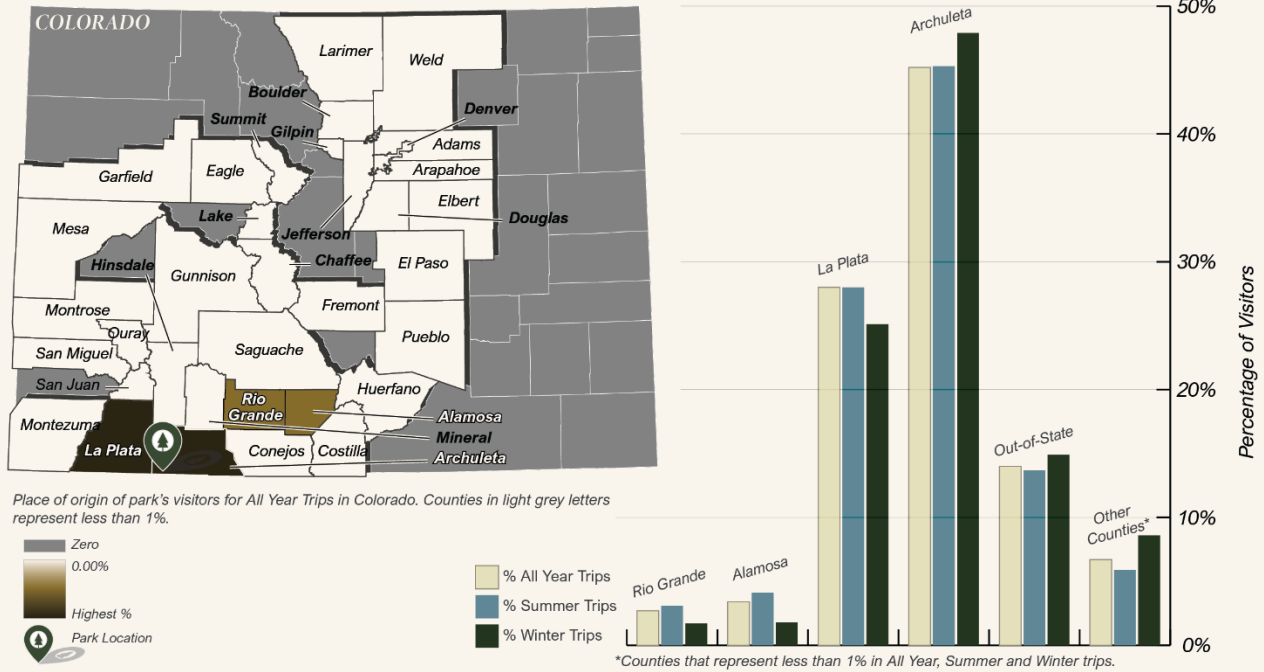


Figure 48. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for Navajo State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

As shown in Figure 49, 43% of trips accessing Navajo State Park are specifically destined for the park, while the remaining 57% are passthrough trips. Figure 50 illustrates that County Road 982 is the primary access route, used by 77% of trips annually, with similar usage during both summer and winter. CO-151 handles 12% of annual trips, while County Road 500 accounts for 10%. The remaining roadways are used by fewer than 2% of visitors accessing the park.

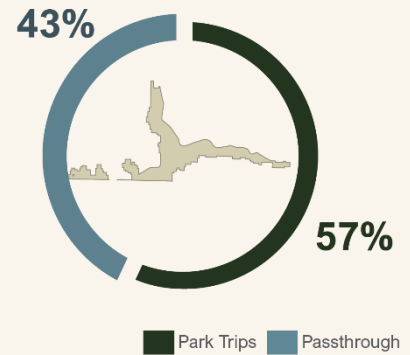


Figure 49. Navajo State Park Trips vs. Passthrough

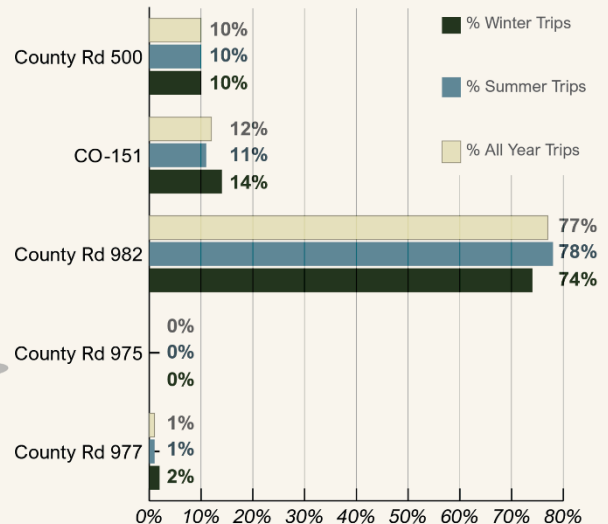
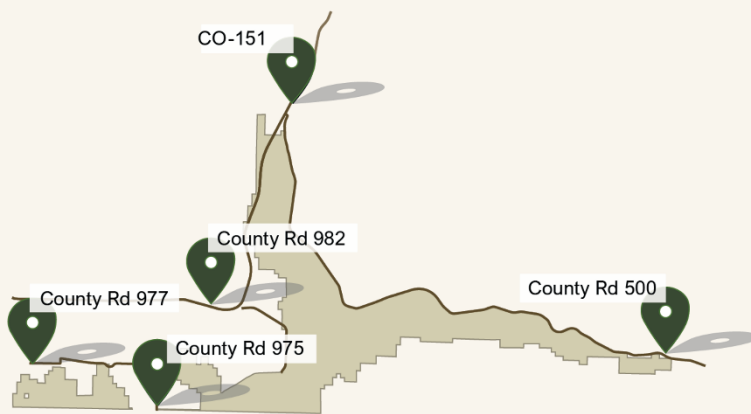


Figure 50. Use of Navajo State Park Access Routes

Conclusions

The case of Navajo State Park underscores the intricate challenges of managing infrastructure that serves both state park visitors and the local community. The necessary investment in CR 982 to maintain safe access to the park placed a substantial financial strain on Archuleta County, revealing the limitations of local resources in sustaining critical infrastructure. The county's decision not to seek grant funding for this project highlights the difficulties local governments face in navigating the complex grant application process, which often requires significant time and resources.

As counties like Archuleta look ahead, it is essential to explore a variety of funding avenues, including those provided by SB23-059, to ensure that vital infrastructure can be maintained without overburdening local budgets. Additionally, the park's perspective emphasizes the critical role these improvements play in ensuring visitor safety and satisfaction. Moving forward, sustained collaboration between state and local entities will be key to effectively addressing these ongoing infrastructure challenges, ensuring that Navajo State Park continues to be a valuable resource for both visitors and the local community.





Case Study: State Forest State Park

Background and Context

State Forest State Park, located on the western slopes of the Continental Divide in north-central Colorado, is the largest park in the CPW State Parks system, offering extensive recreational opportunities to visitors. The park stretches from the southeastern corner of Jackson County and continues north along the county's eastern range for nearly 40 miles. As one of only two parks for which a local jurisdiction applied for funding under SB23-059 during the initial application period in 2024, State Forest State Park serves as a compelling case study for understanding the application of this legislation.

Maintenance Challenges and Key Access Routes

High levels of visitation to the park have placed a strain on Jackson County, a rural county with a population of just 1,400. The county's Road and Bridge Department is tasked with maintaining over 1,000 lane miles of roadways, a challenging responsibility compounded by the unique allowance of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) on county roads, adding an additional layer of road use uncommon in other parts of Colorado.

In discussions with county and park staff, several roadways were highlighted as critical for maintenance and improvement. These include Jackson County Roads 41, 8, 8A, and 62, which were also identified in the county's funding application under SB23-059. While other roads, such as CR 6 and 21, were noted as potentially eligible for future funding, they were not included in the initial application, as the county determined that the limited funding available would be best utilized to enhance visitor experience and safety on CRs 41, 8, 8A, and 62. Although portions of the park extend into Larimer County, no access routes from Larimer County were identified that would meet the SB23-059 criteria.

The access routes included in Jackson County's application align with the intent of SB23-059. They primarily serve state park visitors, with negligible local, non-park-related traffic, and are maintained by a large rural county with limited financial resources. This situation made the Local Access Route Funding legislation, which could provide an additional \$10,000 in funding, particularly appealing.

Key Jackson County Roadways Targeted for Funding

1) County Road 41

County Road 41 is the primary access route for all of State Forest State Park. The entrance station, maintenance office, and many of the developed cabins and campsites are located directly off this road. Less than 1,000 feet of this 10.3-mile, two-lane gravel road lies outside the park, with only two part-time residences along the route. During peak visitation from June to October, the road often develops washboards, which are difficult to smooth due to the dry conditions. Despite discussions between CPW and the county about a cost-sharing agreement for maintenance, no formal arrangement has materialized. Paving this road has been considered ideal but remains unrealized. Currently, CR 41 is maintained at the same frequency as other county roads but is challenging to prioritize because it does not serve permanent residents. It is generally rated as being in "fair" condition.

2) County Roads 8 & 8A

The northern area of State Forest State Park is primarily accessed via CR 8 and 8A. CR 8A branches off CR 8 after six miles, extending north for about five miles to the Mendenhall Trail area and several campsites. Approximately 3.5 miles of CR 8A are maintained by the county within the park, and this section is considered to be in "poor" condition, while CR 8 is in "fair" condition. Both are gravel roads, with CR 8A requiring higher-clearance vehicles for travel. The county grades CR 8A twice a year due to its limited local traffic.



3) County Road 62

CR 62 is located entirely within State Forest State Park and provides access to several trailheads and a campground along its 1.5-mile length. This road is classified as being in “mediocre” condition.

Funding Challenges and Opportunities

Local officials highlighted Jackson County’s limited financial resources as the primary obstacle to improving state park access routes. The county’s Road & Bridge Department, while equipped with the necessary tools and manpower, relies heavily on the state’s Highway User Tax Fund (HUTF) for its budget. According to the county, \$1.5 million of the \$1.6 million 2024 Road & Bridge budget comes from HUTF funds. This reliance on HUTF funds is concerning to the county, as this funding has been inconsistent. The 2024 allocation remains below 2019 levels, while the cost of road maintenance has risen over those five years, coinciding with increased park visitation. Excluding personnel costs, the county’s expenses per HUTF lane mile approved for 2024 are approximately \$1,800. Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), which are paid by CPW to the county and are another common funding source for counties with extensive public lands, are not used for road maintenance in Jackson County; instead, they support the county’s schools, sheriff’s office, and general fund.

Although Jackson County officials mentioned that they sometimes pursue grants to support road and bridge projects, other funding sources may also be available to the county – as explored in other case studies and the Grant Roadmap section of this report. Nonetheless, the additional revenue from SB23-059 would be a valuable addition to the county’s road budget, enabling measurable improvements to the selected access routes. In their application, Jackson County estimated that the projected revenue from this fee would support 92 hours of additional grading (at an assumed cost of \$112 per hour), primarily for CR 41, with some additional grading allocated to CR 8A and 62. If the funding request is successful, it would align with the goals of SB23-059 by enhancing county-maintained roadways primarily used by state park visitors and supported by projected daily pass sales.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to State Forest State Park was estimated to generate \$21.9 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$20.3 million by non-local visitors. This \$21.9 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately \$199 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$293 per vehicle and an estimated \$32.2 million in total expenditures.

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process, it became clear that both park staff and local governments view State Forest State Park as a valuable asset to Jackson County. According to county officials, sales tax revenues for the town of Walden, the county seat, have increased, a trend they attribute to the influx of recreational visitors. However, the broader tax revenues for Jackson County do not reflect the same impact, as they are more heavily influenced by industries such as oil and gas development and timber sales. This highlights a common challenge: even when a state park positively impacts the local economy, the financial benefits may not directly translate to the budgets of those specific local jurisdictions which are responsible for funding the infrastructure that supports increased visitation.

Mobility Data Analysis

Home Locations

As shown in State Forest State Park’s access summary (Figure 23), the highest share of visits to State Forest State Park come from out-of-state residents, accounting for approximately 47% of annual visits. However, this share drops significantly during the winter, to about 25%. Larimer County follows as the second most common home location for visitors, contributing around 15% of annual visits. Notably, the share of visits from Larimer County increases significantly to more than 30% during the winter, surpassing out-of-state visits during this season. Adams and Weld counties contribute between 10% and 15% of



summer visits but do not account for any winter visits. Conversely, Morgan and Jackson counties see a rise in winter visits, representing 15% to 20% of trips, while contributing fewer than 10% of visits during the summer. Visitors from other counties each account for fewer than 5% of annual visits.

Trip Origins

While the highest share of visits to State Forest State Park is made by out-of-state residents, Figure 51 shows that a significant portion of trips to the park originate in Jackson County, contributing around 30% of annual trips. This suggests that out-of-state visitors are likely passing through Jackson County, whether stopping to stay overnight, shop, purchase gas, or dine, thereby contributing to the local economy. Larimer County is the starting point for approximately 26% of annual trips, with a rise to almost 30% during the winter, surpassing trips originating in Jackson County during this season. Although Routt County represents fewer than 10% of annual trip origins, it sees an increase during the winter to about 14%. All other counties and out-of-state origins each account for fewer than 10% of annual trips.

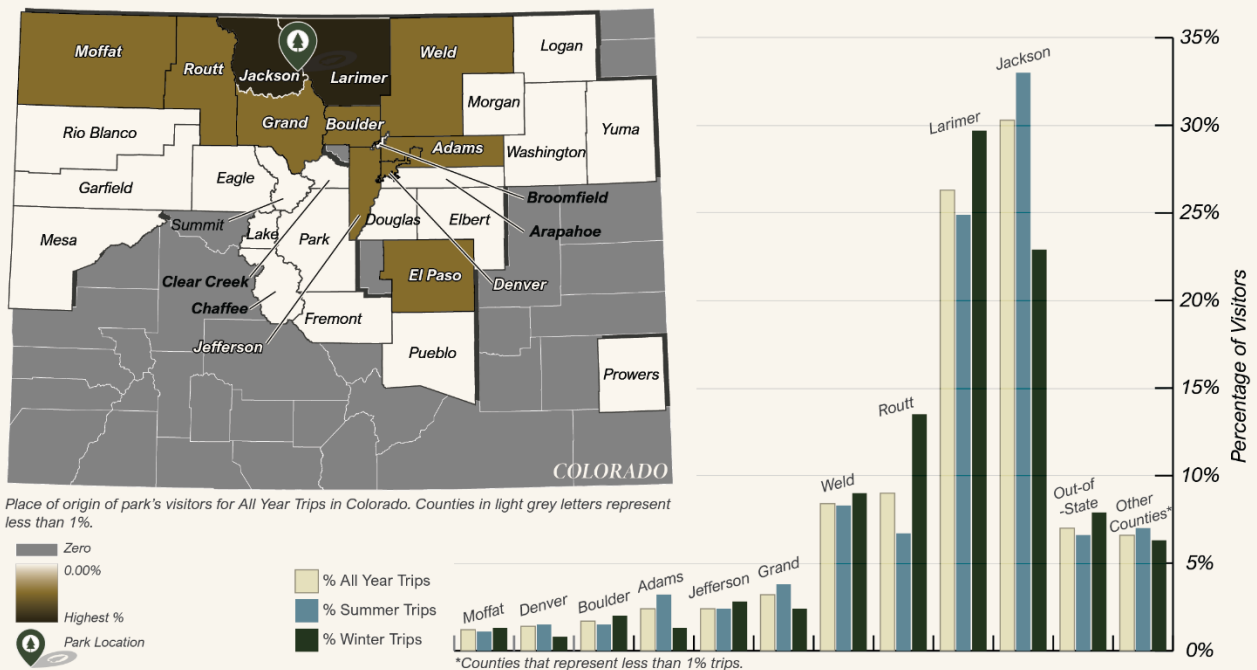


Figure 51. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for State Forest State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

As shown in Figure 52, 44% of trips accessing State Forest State Park are specifically destined for the park, while the remaining 56% are passthrough trips. Figure 53 indicates that the primary access route to the park is CO-14, used by 91% of trips annually. County Road 8 handles the remaining 9% of annual trips.

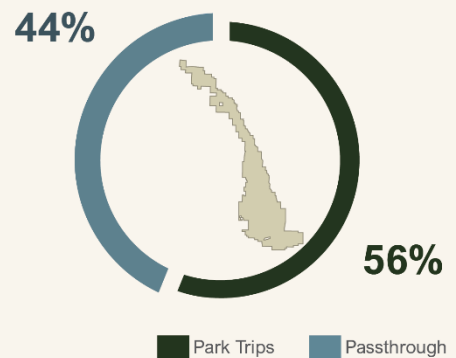


Figure 52. State Forest State Park Trips vs. Passthrough

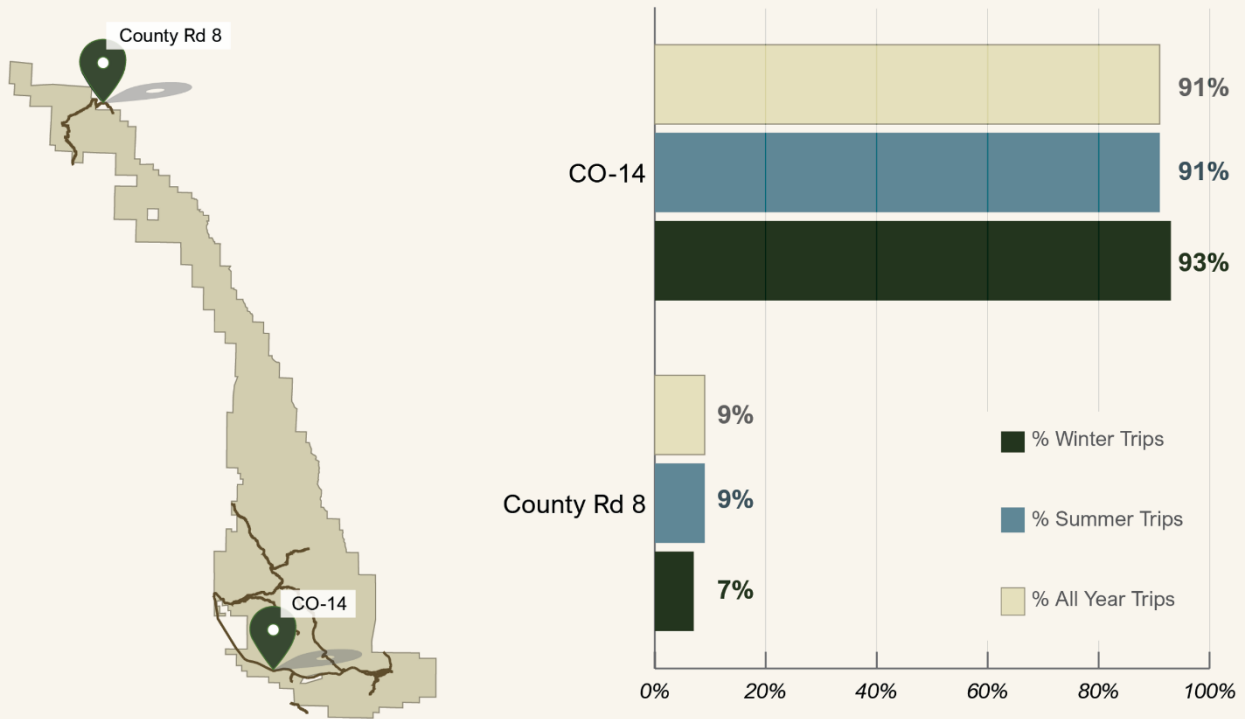


Figure 53. Use of State Forest State Park Access Routes

Conclusions

State Forest State Park exemplifies the complexities of managing access and infrastructure in a large, rural park that attracts a significant number of visitors from outside the local area. The park is a valuable asset to Jackson County, contributing to the local economy through increased sales tax revenues, particularly in the town of Walden. However, the broader economic impact on the county's budget is less direct, as local tax revenues are more heavily influenced by industries like oil and gas.

The park's popularity places considerable strain on the county's limited resources, particularly in maintaining the extensive road network that serves both visitors and residents. Jackson County's application for SB23-059 funding highlights the need for additional financial support to maintain these critical access routes. The Local Access Funding legislation offers a promising method to help sustain the park's infrastructure, ensuring that it remains accessible and safe for visitors while alleviating some of the financial burdens on the county.

The relationship between park management and the local government is characterized as strong by both parties, and the Consultant Team's meetings with staff and local officials underscored this positive dynamic. The Local Access Funding Legislation was seen as a promising fit for Jackson County, which hosts the state's largest state park, providing potential benefits to the county, the park, and its visitors. This strong relationship between the park and its local community, combined with the targeted use of additional funding, positions State Forest State Park as a model for effective collaboration in managing the challenges of rural park access and infrastructure maintenance.



Case Study: Trinidad Lake State Park

Background and Context

Trinidad Lake State Park offers a wide range of recreational activities, including motorized and non-motorized boating, fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife viewing. Situated near the town of Trinidad in Las Animas County, Colorado, the park features an 800-acre lake created by a dam that is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The park's infrastructure is maintained through a collaborative effort among county, state, and federal agencies, reflecting the complex nature of its management.

Access Points and Maintenance Responsibilities

Trinidad Lake State Park is accessible through several entry points, each with distinct maintenance responsibilities:

1) Carpios Ridge Entrance

This is the main developed area of the park, where visitors can access the campground, camper services, visitor center, and retail store. Access to Carpios Ridge is via CO State Highway 12, which is maintained by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). This road is not eligible for funding under SB23-059, and no local or county road maintenance is required here.

2) South Shore Entrance

This entrance provides access to the boat ramp via a road crossing the dam, maintained by the USACE. The remainder of the access route is on County Road 18.3 (CR 18.3), which is maintained by Las Animas County, including snow plowing, though the road is closed during significant snowstorms.

3) Longs Canyon Entrance

Access to Longs Canyon is via a different section of CR 18.3, which also serves local subdivisions, ranches, and oil and gas traffic. While the road is generally well-maintained, the portion providing access to the park has been closed due to flood damage for the past three years. Park staff reports that they had maintained this section of the road for years and initially planned to repair it after the flood. However, they discovered that it was a county road, which brought additional complications. Because the road is in a wetland area, any repairs would require special permits and would need to be done within the existing footprint of the road. Additionally, state funds cannot be used to repair a county road, and the necessary permits couldn't be obtained since the park does not own the road.

Park staff have indicated that if the road remains under county jurisdiction, it needs to be repaired and reopened to the public. However, they also see the possibility of the county abandoning the road after it crosses into park property, which would allow either CPW or the USACE to assume responsibility for repairs. The closure has continued in part because of indecision during transitions in park management, with neither the county nor the state willing to take full responsibility for the repair and reopening of the road.



Figure 54. CR 18.3 near the Longs Canyon entrance. A major washout at this location has resulted in road closure since spring 2021 (photo taken spring 2024).

4) Reilly Canyon Entrance

Accessed via CR 57.7, the Reilly Canyon entrance presents its own unique challenges. The first 300 feet of this road consist of poorly maintained asphalt, which was reportedly initially laid down by CDOT using leftover materials from a nearby project. Since it is on a county road, CDOT has not maintained it, and there is uncertainty about who is responsible for its upkeep. Beyond this stretch of pavement, the road transitions to dirt, which is maintained by the county, but at a low priority. Park management has expressed frustration with the poor condition of this road, as visitors often blame the park for its state, despite it being outside the park's jurisdiction. This road sees regular use throughout the year, primarily by park visitors, and former park management suggested that it might be simpler for the park to take over maintenance responsibilities.



Figure 55. Unmaintained asphalt on CR 57.7 at the Reilly Canyon entrance.

former park management suggested that it might be simpler for the park to take over maintenance responsibilities.

Ongoing Issues and Potential Solutions

The challenges at Trinidad Lake State Park, particularly regarding access and road maintenance, underscore the complexities of managing a park that relies on multiple entities for infrastructure support. The situation with the unmaintained asphalt at Reilly Canyon is emblematic of broader issues where the lack of clarity over maintenance responsibilities has led to frustration among park staff and visitors alike. A former park employee familiar with the situation suggested that for roads primarily serving park visitors, it might be more effective for the CPW to assume responsibility for maintenance – even if the roads are outside the park – to avoid dependency on county resources that prioritize other needs.

The Longs Canyon entrance presents a different challenge, where flood damage has left the road closed for an extended period. The ongoing closure has resulted in unresolved discussions about repair responsibilities, with park management expressing a desire for the county to either repair the road and reopen it for public access or formally transfer responsibility to Trinidad Lake State Park or USACE to facilitate the necessary repairs. The impasse reflected by this situation highlights the need for clear agreements and decisive action when managing shared infrastructure.

Funding Considerations

Despite the challenges faced, there have been no significant concerns from the county regarding funding for access improvements at Trinidad Lake State Park. The county has not sought funding through SB23-059 or other grant programs, potentially due to the administrative burdens associated with applying for such funds. Former park staff pointed out that existing funding sources, such as the Conservation Trust Fund Distribution from the Department of Local Affairs, could be tapped into for infrastructure improvements.

The situation at Trinidad Lake State Park suggests that while SB23-059 could provide a useful funding mechanism, it is not the only option available to address the park's infrastructure needs. A more proactive approach to exploring and securing a variety of funding sources could be beneficial. Additionally, funding aside, clear agreements on maintenance responsibilities are crucial for resolving ongoing issues and ensuring that the park remains accessible and well-maintained.

Economic Impact

According to the 2009 economic impact study described above, visitation to Trinidad Lake State Park was estimated to generate \$6.6 million in total direct spending within a 50-mile radius of the park, including \$5.4 million by non-local visitors. This \$6.6 million in 2009 spending was based on spending of approximately



\$145 per vehicle. When adjusting these figures to 2024 dollars, this represents approximately \$213 per vehicle and an estimated \$9.7 million in total expenditures.

Mobility Data Analysis

Home Locations

As shown in Trinidad Lake State Park’s access summary (Figure 33), the majority of visits to Trinidad Lake State Park originate from residents of Las Animas County, accounting for over 50% of annual trips. This share increases to 57% during the winter, reflecting a strong local presence during the colder months. Visitors from out of state contribute nearly 30% of annual trips, while residents of other counties each account for fewer than 10% of visits.

Trip Origins

As shown in Figure 56, most trips to Trinidad Lake State Park begin in Las Animas County, making up approximately 75% of annual trips. Trips originating from outside Colorado correspond to about 15% of annual trips, with all other counties each contributing fewer than 10%.

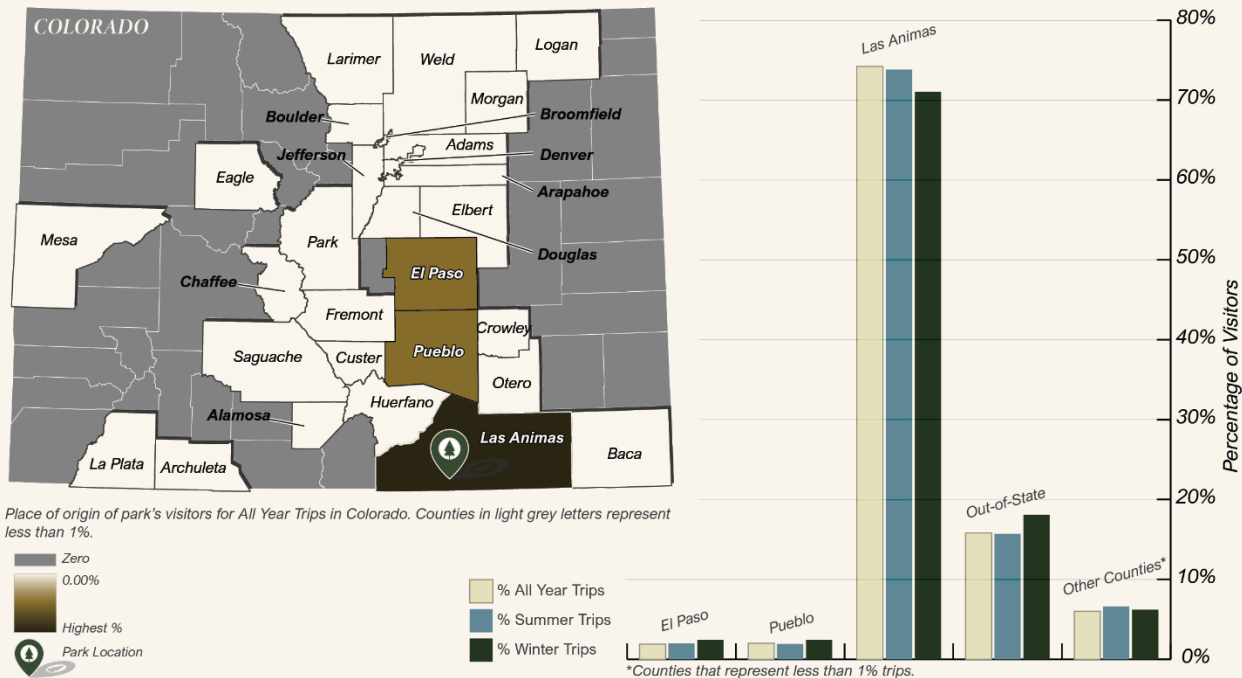


Figure 56. Counties of Origin of Trips Destined for Trinidad Lake State Park

Park Trips vs. Passthrough Trips and Roadway Usage

As shown in Figure 57, only 12% of trips to Trinidad Lake State Park are specifically destined for the park, while the remaining 88% are passthrough trips. Furthermore, data displayed in Figure 58 indicates that access to the park is primarily via CO-12 and Route 18.3, which are the preferred routes throughout the year, accounting for 48% and 49% of trips, respectively. The distribution of trips across these routes remains consistent between summer and winter. Other roadways each account for fewer than 2% of trips.

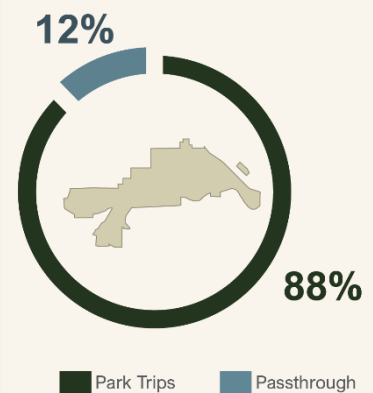


Figure 57. Trinidad Lake State Park Trips vs. Passthrough

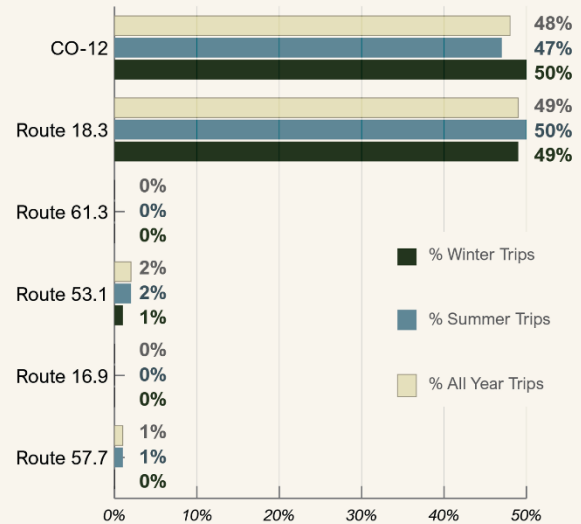
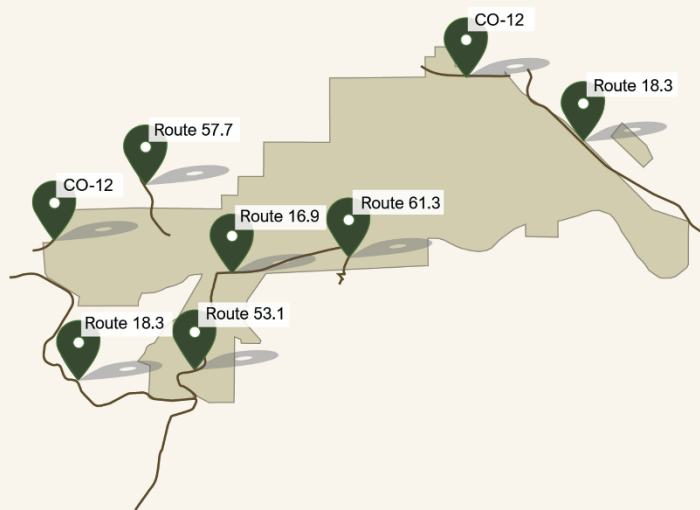


Figure 58. Use of Local Access Routes at Trinidad Lake State Park

Conclusions

Trinidad Lake State Park exemplifies the complexities involved in managing access and infrastructure in a multi-jurisdictional environment. The park’s reliance on roads maintained by county, state, and federal entities creates challenges, particularly when it comes to maintenance responsibilities and responding to unexpected issues such as flood damage. The ongoing closure of the Longs Canyon entrance and the deteriorating condition of Reilly Canyon Road underscore the need for clear agreements and decisive action to address these challenges.

While the park has not faced significant funding constraints, the case highlights the importance of proactively exploring a variety of funding sources to ensure that infrastructure needs are met. The relatively low proportion of trips specifically destined for the park further complicates the situation, as the infrastructure must support both park visitors and passthrough traffic.

Moving forward, collaboration between state and local entities, coupled with clear maintenance agreements, will be crucial for resolving these issues. By addressing the complexities of shared infrastructure management and exploring diverse funding options, Trinidad Lake State Park can continue to provide safe and reliable access, enhancing the experience for both visitors and the local community.





Case Study Key Takeaways

The case studies of six state parks in Colorado reveal common themes and challenges that highlight the complexities of managing park access and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas with limited resources. Despite the unique circumstances of each park, several overarching insights emerge:

1) Infrastructure Strain and Local Resource Limitations

Across all the parks studied, high visitation levels place significant strain on local infrastructure, particularly roadways. The case studies of Eleven Mile and State Forest State Parks underscore how rural counties with limited financial resources struggle to maintain the roads that are critical for both park visitors and local residents. This strain is compounded by the dual role these roads play in supporting local communities and facilitating tourism.

2) The Importance of Collaborative Approaches

The success of maintaining park infrastructure often hinges on collaboration between state and local entities. The intergovernmental agreement at Lathrop State Park exemplifies the effectiveness of formalized partnerships, which clearly define maintenance responsibilities and ensure ongoing public access. Similarly, the strong relationship between Jackson County and State Forest State Park demonstrates how effective collaboration can help manage the challenges of maintaining extensive rural infrastructure.

3) Need for Diverse Funding Mechanisms

The financial constraints faced by local governments in maintaining park infrastructure highlight the critical need for additional funding support from a variety of sources. While mechanisms like SB23-059 can provide targeted financial relief, they are not the sole solution. The challenges faced by Gilpin County in maintaining access routes to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, and Archuleta County's decision to fund road improvements for Navajo State Park from their general fund, without seeking grants, underscore the importance of exploring multiple funding avenues. Federal and state grants, local partnerships, and innovative funding strategies should be considered alongside SB23-059 to ensure comprehensive and sustainable infrastructure maintenance. A multi-faceted approach to funding can help bridge the gap between local resource limitations and the demands of high visitation, supporting the long-term accessibility and enjoyment of Colorado's state parks.

4) Economic Impact and Local Benefits

While state parks contribute significantly to local economies, the financial benefits do not always directly translate into support for the infrastructure that sustains them. The case of State Forest State Park illustrates how increased sales tax revenues in local towns do not necessarily alleviate the financial burdens on county budgets. This disconnect emphasizes the need for a more integrated approach to understanding and managing the economic impact of state parks on their surrounding communities.

5) Complexity of Multi-Jurisdictional Management

Parks like Trinidad Lake State Park demonstrate the challenges of managing the infrastructure that falls under the jurisdiction of multiple entities, including county, state, and federal agencies. The ongoing issues with road maintenance and the closure of a key access route highlight the importance of clear agreements and decisive action to ensure that infrastructure responsibilities are effectively managed.

6) Strategic Use of Funding Sources

The case studies collectively emphasize the importance of strategically leveraging a variety of funding sources to address infrastructure challenges. While SB23-059 offers a promising solution, the parks also illustrate the potential of other funding avenues, including federal grants and local partnerships, to support the maintenance of critical access routes.



Collectively, these case studies demonstrate that effectively managing access to Colorado's state parks demands a comprehensive approach that balances visitor needs with the financial realities of rural counties. By fostering collaboration, clearly defining responsibilities, and exploring a broad range of funding sources, stakeholders can ensure the long-term sustainability of park infrastructure, preserving these invaluable public spaces for future generations.

GRANT ROADMAP

A major part of SB23-059 was to help local communities identify other funding sources that could help supplement their needs to continue maintaining roadways that lead to state parks. For some of these eligible roadways, a mix of both resident and non-resident use occurs both in and around the state parks. Thus, Colorado's municipalities and counties face continued challenges of finding the right financial support to maintain their roadway to the highest quality, especially for more rural counties with small populations.

Transportation projects are inherently costly, requiring significant investment to ensure long-term success and sustainability. While SB23-059 provides some additional funding for cities and counties that may qualify, the fee collection is likely not sufficient to meet the thorough needs of local governments across the state.

Recognizing these challenges, particularly for rural or smaller governments that may lack the capacity to navigate the complex world of grants, the Grant Roadmap serves as a resource for looking for additional funding sources beyond SB23-059. This roadmap is designed to simplify the grant-seeking process, making it more accessible and manageable for communities across Colorado. It provides a structured approach to identifying funding opportunities, building capacity, and leveraging partnerships. By offering practical guidance, eligibility checklists, and an interactive regional map, this roadmap not only highlights potential grants but also aligns projects with community needs and regional priorities.

Through this resource, users will find tools to not only secure funding but also to foster collaboration, engage stakeholders, and plan proactively for sustainable infrastructure that supports both local residents and the influx of visitors drawn to Colorado's natural beauty. Ultimately, this Grant Roadmap aims to empower communities to support their own roadway maintenance and also provide a better experience for accessing these important natural and cultural resources.

Due to the size and completeness of the roadmap, it is provided as a separate document outside of this report. The full Grant Roadmap can be downloaded [on the CPW website](#).





CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a higher-level synopsis of the project's findings and the expected impacts of SB23-059, the project team's closing thoughts and recommendations on how best to move forward with SB23-059 are shared here.

Conclusions

The implementation of SB23-059 marks a transitional step in determining how local governments can work with CPW and other partners to best serve the visiting public. As this has highlighted, maintaining and improving access to these natural assets is vital for both the enjoyment of visitors and the economic vitality of local communities. However, maintenance of these access routes requires careful planning, sustainable funding, and collaborative partnerships. In most cases, it's necessary to look at multiple funding options to truly meet the needs of access management. Below are key conclusions found throughout the study:

1) For many parks, the up-to-\$2 fee on daily vehicle passes should be considered for annual maintenance and not for large-scale improvements/redesigns.

Transportation projects, especially those aimed at enhancing safety, connectivity, and sustainability, are capital-intensive. For most state parks, the fee revenue generated can be used for small improvements where necessary, but larger-scale projects will need to look beyond CPW to support them as other grant options are necessary.

2) Traffic on most park access routes that qualify have a mix of both non-park and park use.

Using the case studies as examples, most access routes to state parks have many different kinds of use. Not all traffic on these roads is due to park visitation. Therefore, it's important to balance the different kinds of funding sources needed to maintain the roadways in most places.

For some roadways, park access is legitimately the main/only use. Partnerships between CPW and the local governments can help offset some of these costs and SB23-059 may be more viable in these areas.

3) Low-population areas may need more support to maintain infrastructure if their parks are heavily visited.

Smaller cities/counties have a harder time keeping up with the infrastructure needs of high-visitation parks. For example, Park County, CO, has a population of approximately 18,000, but Eleven Mile and Spinney State Park see ~275,000 visits in total each year. For a county with a small population, it can be challenging to maintain popular sites while also covering the needs of all other residents. This is where further partnerships and support from places like DOLA, CDOT, and other state agencies could be beneficial.

4) Economic benefits from state parks should be considered when discussing the impact that parks have on local communities.

Spending from visitation to state parks has a direct benefit to local communities and should be kept in mind as governments consider the impact parks have. While increasing visitation does place more pressure on local infrastructure, the spending that occurs in the local communities from visitation is meaningful. For some places, there may not be ample locations to spend money near the park, which lowers the economic contribution, but parks do play a positive economic role in local economies.

5) Advanced partnerships and coordination between the park and local communities benefit the management of Colorado's public lands.

During local government engagement, the research team noted several unique and interesting partnerships between parks and their government partners. In some cases, these relationships had official agreements that could be used as templates for similar relationships across the state. Having park managers interact and plan with their local government officials can be beneficial for solving problems before they arise and creating meaningful relationships that benefit the area. That said, there



may need to be more outreach in areas that historically have not had strong coordination between jurisdictions.

6) Local governments should consider the impact on the visitor when considering if they want to apply for SB23-059's daily vehicle fee.

Some visitors are not able to afford many fee increases for their recreational experiences. Even with a modest two-dollar increase, some visitors may think twice about visiting a state park vs. other activities that are not paid. Any time a public land agency needs to raise fees, it comes with a discussion from the users on the need for the fee and whether it may impact certain users more than others. If the fee collection would not be a significant amount for a potentially interested local government, they may want to consider whether the tradeoff of increased fees for the public is worth the potential collection each year.

Recommendations

Below are a number of opportunities identified by the research team to help address the local access challenges discussed in this report. These are meant to be used to help improve local access across the state and also monitor SB23-059 into the future.

1) Conduct an Updated Economic Impact Study

Building on the findings from the 2008-2009 Economic Impact Study, an updated study to understand the current and localized economic contributions of state parks to surrounding communities may enhance current and future collaboration on infrastructure needs. Park use and outdoor recreation have changed significantly since 2008/2009. This study could refine the geographic scope by individually defining local areas around each park, rather than using a uniform 50-mile radius. For instance, 50 miles away from a park like Eleven Mile State Park includes much of Colorado Springs. It would be hard to say that spending in Colorado Springs benefits the "local community" of Eleven Mile, which is much more rural and remote. Most visitors to the park come from the Colorado Springs area.

2) Estimate Traffic and Visitation to Parks More Thoroughly

Measuring park visitation is a delicate balance between an art and a science. However, it can prove vital to obtaining accurate numbers that can be monitored and trusted over time. As CPW continues to evolve its pass products like the Keep Colorado Wild pass, a more sophisticated and dedicated visitation monitoring process would help CPW better understand park use across the state.

3) Enhance Communication and Transparency

Clear and effective communication with local governments, stakeholders, and the public is critical. CPW should continue to provide transparent updates on the implementation of the fee program, grant opportunities, and project progress. Establishing open lines of communication will foster trust and cooperation, which are vital for successful collaboration. Furthermore, local governments should embrace the ability to work with their local state parks and view them as a partner with shared interests.

4) Monitor and Refine Qualifications and Evaluation Criteria if Needed

As SB23-059's fee collection program evolves, it is important to assess and adjust the qualifications and criteria used to evaluate funding applications as needed. This ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and that projects align with both state and local priorities. CPW should engage stakeholders in this refinement process to incorporate feedback and lessons learned.

5) Document and Share Learning Experiences

The implementation of SB23-059 provides valuable learning experiences that can benefit future initiatives. Documenting these lessons can serve as a guide for other regions facing similar challenges.



6) Encourage Local Government Partners to use the Grant Roadmap to Look for Additional Funding

SB23-059's fee collection is not going to be a large enough amount for almost any park to fully rebuild roadways, and the Consultant team does not think that this fee is the most appropriate funding source for such a large-scale improvement. Instead, local governments should consider using SB23-059 for smaller, annual improvements if desired. Road grating, magnesium chloride application, and road striping are some examples.

7) Promote Regional Collaboration

Encourage regional partnerships among municipalities, counties, and transportation planning organizations to maximize resources and expertise. Collaborative efforts can help in developing projects with broader regional benefits, making them more attractive for funding opportunities and enhancing their chances of success.

8) Develop a Sustainable Funding Strategy

Beyond the vehicle pass fee, local governments should explore additional funding mechanisms. These could include special local taxes, bonds, or contributions from businesses that benefit from park tourism. A mixed funding strategy will help ensure a stable and adequate financial base for ongoing infrastructure improvements.

9) Plan for Resilient Infrastructure

Given the increasing visitation and the impacts of natural events such as wildfires and extreme weather, it is essential to invest in resilient infrastructure. Projects should incorporate sustainable design principles and materials that can withstand these challenges, ensuring the safety and longevity of the transportation networks.

10) Perform Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the fee program and funded projects. Regular assessments will help measure effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that the objectives of SB23-059 are being met. This will also provide valuable data to support future legislative recommendations.

The above conclusions and recommendations are a high-level overview of what was learned about the implementation of SB23-059 across Colorado. This study provided more than just assessing the local access routes to state parks and possible application methods by local governments; many park managers and local government officials noted the importance of being able to work together and talk about a topic that may be of interest and beneficial to the area. Overall, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the process from SB23-059, the challenges and opportunities across the state, and a means forward for successfully monitoring the fee collection.



APPENDIX

County Roadway & Maintenance Budget Comparisons

COUNTY NAME	ACTUAL TOTAL BUDGET	PROPOSED TOTAL BUDGET	ACTUAL ROAD MAINTENANCE BUDGET	PROPOSED ROAD MAINTENANCE BUDGET	SUM OF ACTUAL ROAD MATERIALS LINE ITEMS	SUM OF PROPOSED ROAD MATERIALS LINE ITEMS
Archuleta	\$8,268,546	\$10,923,052	\$3,397,951	\$4,083,954	\$5,398,998	\$7,540,323
Gilpin	\$3,193,857	\$4,775,302	N/A	N/A	\$166,509	\$849,235
Huerfano	\$2,463,314	\$2,615,971	\$875,167	\$819,650	\$248,856	\$294,000
Jackson	\$2,115,320	\$2,254,545	N/A	N/A	\$261,063	\$155,000
Jefferson	\$48,796,000	\$58,092,900	N/A	N/A	\$19,596,000	\$176,728,000
Las Animas	\$7,253,398	\$8,220,767	N/A	N/A	\$2,466,662	\$4,330,000 ⁵
Park	\$5,359,887	\$11,242,849	\$2,072,306	\$5,577,328	\$384,874	\$3,341,500

Table 8. County Road Budget Overview (Actual numbers based on 2022 and proposed numbers based on 2024)

COUNTY NAME	PAVED LANE MILES	UNPAVED LANE MILES	TOTAL LANE MILES
Archuleta	172.0	1,130.6	1,302.6
Gilpin	5.3	296.6	301.9
Huerfano	49.2	1,270.0	1,319.2
Jackson	114.1	923.2	1,037.3
Jefferson	2,926.9	799.8	3,726.7
Las Animas	225.8	2,995.1	3,220.8
Park	383.4	3,312.4	3,695.9

Table 9. County Road Miles Overview

⁵ Actual county budget numbers based 2023 instead of 2022



COUNTY	ROAD MAINTENANCE LINE ITEMS	ACTUAL BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET
ARCHULETA	Mag Chloride	\$465,086	\$575,000
	Pothole Repair	\$0	\$150,000
	Paint	\$60,414	\$85,000
	Street Maintenance Materials	\$317,603	\$412,000
	Other Repair & Maintenance Sup	\$4,213	\$1,500
	Guardrail Repair	\$0	\$35,000
	Gravel Hauling Service	\$127,683	\$84,600
	Fuel	\$321,227	\$372,989
	Fleet Changes	\$821,141	\$737,234
	Arch/Engineering Fees	\$130,618	\$135,000
	Capital Outlay	\$3,059,500	\$4,700,000
	Piedra DCP	\$0	\$0
	Road Construction	\$82,657	\$0
	Capital Outlay	\$8,856	\$250,000
	Other Professional Services	\$0	\$2,000
GILPIN	Steel (was Iron)	\$0	\$3,000
	Drainage Materials (Culverts)	\$0	\$12,500
	R&M - Asphalt	\$0	\$5,000
	Road Project Materials	\$1,299	\$565,435
	Road Base	\$25,392	\$75,000
	Dust Suppressant	\$113,239	\$135,000
	Geotextiles	\$0	\$13,300
	Contracted Construction (projects over 5k)	\$0	\$10,000
	Snow/Ice Control Material - Ice Slicer	\$26,579	\$30,000
HUERFANO	Gravel/Sand/Salt	\$22,409	\$27,000
	Road Oil & Asphalt	\$4,489	\$8,000
	Culverts and Lumber	\$25,248	\$30,000
	Contracted Repairs	\$49,898	\$90,000
	Grader Blades	\$14,814	\$24,000
	Magnesium Chloride MGCL2	\$128,824	\$100,000
	Cattle Guards	\$3,174	\$15,000
JACKSON	Chip Seal/Overlay	\$174,304	\$100,000
	Patching asphalt	\$0	\$0
	Sand and Gravel	\$23,451	\$8,000
	Culverts	\$50,514	\$40,000
	Wood, Steel, CGs, Bridges	\$11,935	\$6,000
	Supplies	\$859	\$1,000
JEFFERSON	Supplies	\$1,685,000.00	\$4,037,800
	Capital Outlay	\$17,911,000.00	\$13,635,000



COUNTY	ROAD MAINTENANCE LINE ITEMS	ACTUAL BUDGET	PROPOSED BUDGET
LAS ANIMAS	Culverts	\$27,480.00	\$30,000
	Cattle Guards	\$6,037	\$15,000
	Road Maintenance	\$131,379	\$375,000
	Road Construction	\$2,006,099	\$2,800,000
	Gravel Purchase	\$276,105	\$420,000
	Purchase of Equipment	\$19,562	\$20,000
	Capital Outlay	\$0	\$670,000
PARK	Road Base	\$0	\$750,000
	Chip Aggregate	\$0	\$500,000
	Other Road Materials	\$13,166	\$50,000
	Geo-Synthetics	\$4,329	\$5,000
	Erosion Supplies	\$0	\$23,500
	Guard Rail Repair	\$6,483	\$20,000
	Culverts	\$10,462	\$750,000
	Cattle Guards	\$0	\$500,000
	Dust Suppressant	\$107,735	\$300,000
	Pit Fee Expense	\$5,730	\$8,000
	Pit Lease Expense	\$4,840	\$5,000
	Road Oil Supplies Expense	\$164,264	\$230,000
	Asphalt Patch Expense	\$51,013	\$100,000
	Paint Striping Contract	\$16,852	\$100,000

Table 10. Detailed List of Total Road Maintenance Line Items Summed in Table 8