

CPW LOCAL ACCESS FUNDING STUDY

SB-23-059 Final Report

*November 2024 Colorado Parks and
Wildlife Commission Meeting*



FEHR & PEERS

SE GROUP



INTRODUCTIONS

CPW Staff Involvement

- Isabelle Petersen – Policy and Planning Project Manager
- Katie Lanter – Policy and Planning Supervisor
- Gene Potter – Capital Asset and Planning Manager
- Margaret Taylor – Capital Development Program Manager
- Scott Roush – Deputy Regional Manager, NE Region
- Andrea Gess – Licensing Deputy



ABOUT RRC AND CONSULTANT TEAM



RRC

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Project Leads



Jake Jorgenson, Ph.D.
COO, RRC



Lucy Harbor
Director of Outdoor
Recreation Research, RRC



INTRODUCTION

- SB23-059 passed in May 2023.
- Application for funding of transportation infrastructure of local access routes to state parks.
 - Up to \$2 fee on state park daily vehicle passes allocated to local governments who may be impacted.
- Required CPW to evaluate and implement a criteria and process for application for implementation on January 1st, 2025.



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, Frizzell, 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.



IMPLEMENTING SB23-059

- The Division was required to complete a variety of steps through a comprehensive study, prior to the implementation of the fee in January 2025.
- The study must address and identify the following details and more:
 - Potential transportation deficits with local transportation infrastructure regarding access to state parks.
 - Sources of funding/partnerships to address potential deficits.
 - Use of and effect on local transportation infrastructure and services of visitors traveling to state parks.
 - Incurred costs by local governments in supporting the state in managing state parks and the appropriateness of the Division or others to help support infrastructure funding.
 - Many more details (economic effects, financial demands, impacts on visitor experiences)



COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

- In October 2023, the Division contracted with RRC Associates along with a broad team to conduct the comprehensive study outlined in SB23-059.
- Three primary phases:
 - Phase 1: (October-November 2023)
 - ❖ Project kick-off and initial coordination on study management
 - Phase 2: (December 2023 – September 2024)
 - ❖ Draft criteria language for SB23-059 applications
 - ❖ Local government engagement and data collection
 - ❖ Evaluation of all state park local access routes
 - ❖ Draft overall study
 - Phase 3: (October – November 2024)
 - ❖ Finalize study and present to Commission





SITE VISITS AND ENGAGEMENT



- The team met with nearly every State Park either in-person or virtually to discuss SB23-059.
- Attempted to meet with as many local government officials as possible.
 - Some were not interested in the bill due to a variety of factors such as not needing additional funding.
- Some local government officials were much more involved and had an interest in working together with CPW.



ACCESS SUMMARIES

- Access summaries were created for 42 parks.
- Each included:
 - Map with access routes to the state park.
 - Total 2023 park visits.
 - 2024 possible fee revenue from SB23-059.
 - Potential applicant for fee.
 - A write-up of the current access for the park.
- Assessed whether local jurisdictions are likely to apply for the fee program established by SB23-059.

*Several CPW properties were not analyzed due to limited public access at this time.

TRINIDAD LAKE

2023 TOTAL PARK VISITS:
222K

2024 POSSIBLE FEE REVENUE:
\$9,900

POTENTIAL FEE APPLICANT:
Las Animas County

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.



ACCESS ANALYSIS WITH MOBILE DATA

- Mobile location data was used to identify visitation patterns for all parks.
 - Limited only to visitor origin by county.
- Six parks had a more detailed analysis that looked at passthrough vs. stopping patterns by vehicles and comparative use of different access routes.

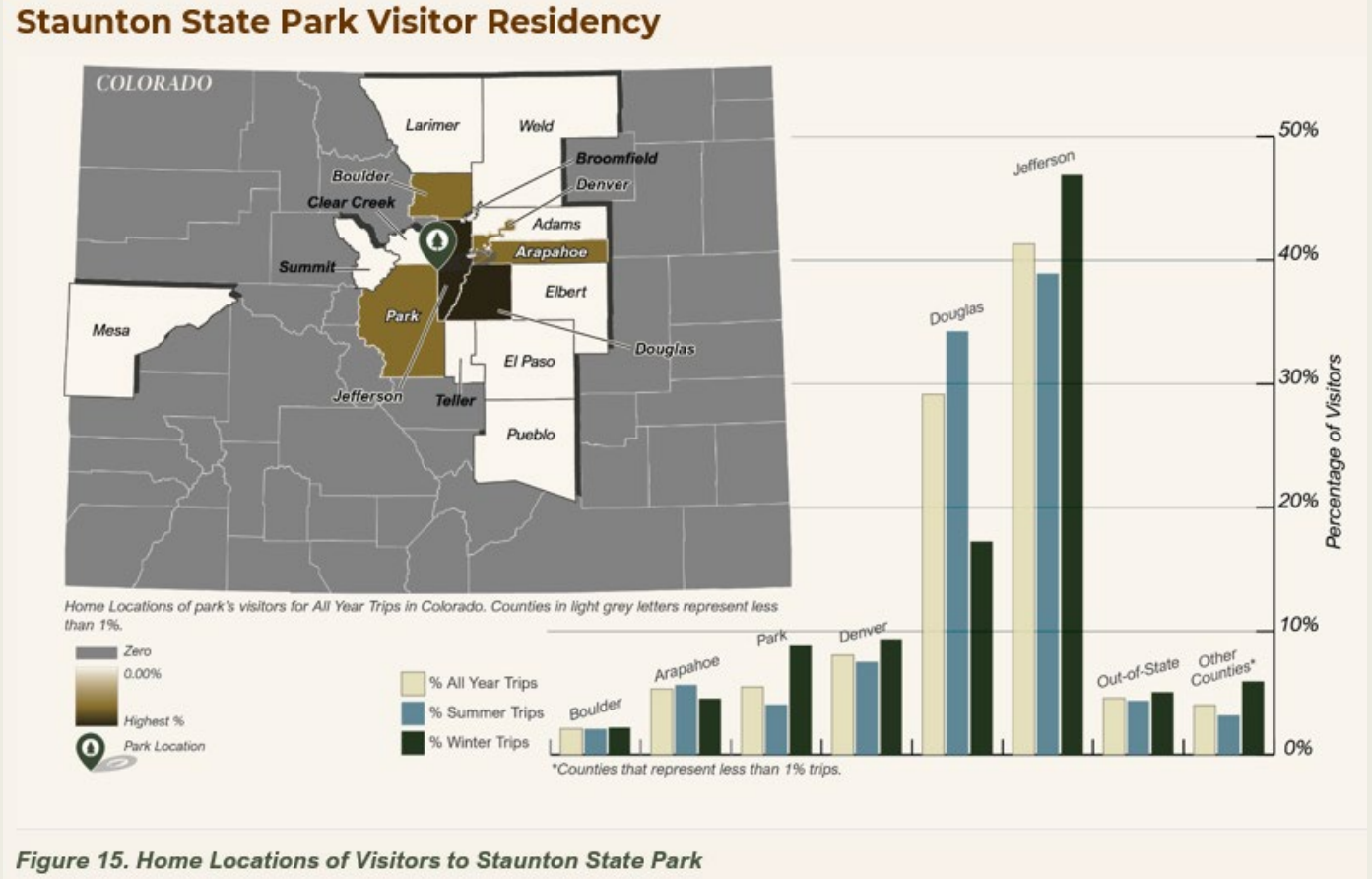


Figure 15. Home Locations of Visitors to Staunton State Park



SIX IN-DEPTH CASE STUDIES

CPW Local Access Funding Study



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 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.



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

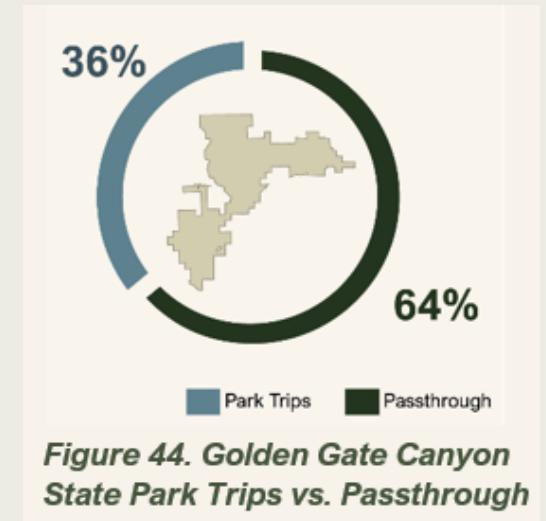
According to public records, Park County's total road maintenance budget for 2022 was approximately \$2.1 million, with the proposed 2024 road maintenance budget substantially larger, at \$5.6 million. These annual budgets cover about 3,700 lane miles of roads across the county, and county officials 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.

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.

- Six parks were chosen for more detailed case studies:

- Eleven Mile State Park
- Golden Gate Canyon State Park
- Lathrop State Park
- Navajo State Park
- State Forest State Park
- Trinidad Lake State Park



- These parks face unique challenges, and were used to illustrate both complex issues and strategic solutions.



GRANT ROADMAP

- A grant roadmap was developed with options for local governments to find additional funding for roadway maintenance options.
- Provides examples of how to apply for specific grants in the transportation arena.
- Realistically, SB23-059 will not cover major roadway replacements. Additional funding would be needed, and is typically needed, for major repairs.



COLORADO TRANSPORTATION GRANT MATCHMAKER:

YOUR GUIDE TO FUNDING
SAFE, CONNECTED, AND
SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS





ADDITIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

- Select county roadway/public works budgets were compared to identify potential areas where funding could be stronger.
- Not all counties report in a similar fashion, which can make comparisons challenging.
- Added as an appendix in the overall report.

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)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





CONCLUSIONS

- 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.
- Traffic on most park access routes that qualify have a mix of both non-park and park use.
- Low-population areas may need more support to maintain infrastructure if their parks are heavily visited.



CONCLUSIONS

- Economic benefits from state parks should be considered when discussing the impact that parks have on local communities.
- Advanced partnerships and coordination between the park and local communities benefit the management of Colorado's public lands.
- Local governments should consider the impact on the visitor when considering if they want to apply for SB23-059's daily vehicle fee.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct a park-specific updated Economic Impact Study
- Estimate traffic and visitation to parks more thoroughly
- Enhance communication and transparency
- Monitor and refine qualifications and evaluation criteria if needed
- Document and share learning experiences
- Encourage local government partners to use the Grant Roadmap to look for additional funding
- Promote regional collaboration
- Develop a sustainable funding strategy
- Plan for resilient infrastructure
- Perform regular monitoring and evaluation

QUESTIONS?



RRC





THANK YOU!



RRC

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