

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 02/09/2022

ISSUE:	Should a Timed Entry Reservation System be implemented at Eldorado Canyon State Park?
DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):	
<p>Since 2001, Eldorado Canyon State Park reaches vehicle capacity almost every Saturday, Sunday and Holiday from April through October. Visitation has increased by 90% over the last 5 years. In 2016, the park had 279,473 visitors, which increased to 529,579 in 2020. Visitation continues to remain high and is not expected to drop off.</p> <p>The park is located at the end of Eldorado Springs Drive in the town of Eldorado Springs, which has a rural road system and limited parking. When the park reaches capacity, vehicles are turned around at the gate and sent back down State Highway 170 with traffic often backing up and hindering local access to the town. The increased visitation has created significant traffic volume and vehicle speed concerns along with public safety and health issues for the community of Eldorado Springs and the visitors of Eldorado Canyon State Park.</p> <p>The increase in visitation is compounded due to recent pandemic restrictions, changes in current weather patterns, increased population growth and the increase in popularity of outdoor recreation in Colorado.</p> <p>Eldorado Canyon State Park staff have performed extensive outreach on the issues at the park regarding capacity, visitor safety, adjacent landowner concerns (Boulder County and Eldorado Springs), and the visitor experience. Boulder County has provided a shuttle service to the park from a nearby parking area on peak weekends, which has helped mitigate but not resolve traffic issues. Park staff have evaluated options for managing visitor numbers and discussed the recently implemented reservation system at Rocky Mountain National Park with their staff. Boulder County and the community of Eldorado Springs support CPW’s efforts to manage visitor numbers at Eldorado Canyon State Park with a reservation system.</p> <p>It is recommended to implement a pilot Timed Entry Reservation System to manage numbers of visitors and vehicles at Eldorado Canyon State Park to reduce impacts to the community of Eldorado Springs, protection of natural resources, and maintain a safe, quality recreational experience. The proposed system will help visitors plan their visit which will help manage their expectations of entry to the park.</p> <p>The proposed Timed Entry Reservation System pilot would run two years from July 1 - Sept 15 for 2022 and May 15 – Sept 15 for 2023. Park staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the Timed Entry Reservation System at the conclusion of the 2023 season. Education and awareness of the Timed Entry Reservation System will begin with signage at the park, on social media, and through contacts with visitors at the park.</p> <p>The proposed Timed Entry Reservation System will be implemented using Aspira and entry permits would be allocated free of charge on CPWshop.com with the option to purchase a daily vehicle pass along with the permit.</p> <p>The Timed Entry Reservation System is proposed as follows:</p> <p>A reservation would be required for each vehicle entering the park from 5:30 am to 5:30 pm on Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays from May 15 - September 15.</p> <p>There would be 85%-90% maximum capacity for reservations issued.</p>	

Initially 10 percent of reservations will be held and available to purchase the day prior at 3 pm through the Aspira reservation system. These are expected to sell out quickly and visitors are encouraged to plan ahead when possible.

Six ADA parking spaces will be available through the reservation system.

Reservations will be limited to one reservation per person each day. Each person will be limited to a maximum of four reservations each month. Persons making the reservation must be in the vehicle and show valid identification before entry. Reservations are non-transferable and cannot be traded, sold or auctioned.

Entry to the park will be allowed without a reservation for those utilizing the shuttle.

Weekend and holiday individual walk-in entry will be restricted. Individuals will be encouraged to access the park by shuttle bus.

Evaluation of strategy success is based on reduction of traffic volume, speed and illegal parking in Eldorado Spring. Reducing health and safety hazards to residents and park visitors. Survey of visitor and resident satisfaction of combined capacity management strategies.

Draft schedule and number of permits for the timed entry reservation system

Hour	Time	Permitted Spaces available	Permits (THEORETICAL)	Permits in Use	Percent of Spaces in Use	Short Length of Stay	Long Length of Stay	TO ISSUE
1	5:30AM	200	73	66	33%	35%	65%	73
2								
3	7:30AM	200	73	132	66%	60%	40%	73
4								
5	9:30AM	200	73	175	88%	70%	30%	73
6								
7	11:30AM	200	73	201	101%	80%	20%	72
8								
9	1:30 PM	200	98	201	101%	85%	15%	97
10								
11	3:30 PM	200	87	201	101%	100%	0%	86
12								
13	5:30 PM	200	53	154	77%	100%	0%	53
14								
TOTAL			530			78%	22%	527

STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:

***IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.**

Eldorado Springs Community, Boulder County Commissioners, CPW Commissioners, CPW NE Regional Leadership Team, Boulder City Parks and Opens Space, Boulder County Open Space and Mountain Parks, Boulder County Transportation, Colorado State Highway Department, CPW State Park Managers, Eldorado Canyon State Park Visitor Use Management Plan Task Force, Boulder

Climbing Community, Action Committee for Eldorado, Access Fund, Flatirons Climbing Council, staff and visitors of Eldorado Canyon State Park.

Comments were received during the Eldorado Canyon Management Plan process.

While annual ECSP visitation has increased significantly in recent years, the number of visitors on the park's busiest days cannot and has not increased significantly due to the ECSP parking capacity. However, the frequency of these peak, busy days has increased. The growth in visitation occurred throughout the year, rather than solely as an increase in summer visitation.

The limited number of parking spaces makes ECSP access challenging and limits the number of visitors to the recreational facilities. However, once visitors are in ECSP, they report a pleasant, relatively uncrowded experience. In a way, the limited parking capacity of ECSP leads to a positive experience for visitors once they enter.

According to public comments received during the draft plan visitors wanted to be able to plan in advance and closer to visit, have entry windows instead of exact times, have permits on peak visitation days only, no guarantee of where you will park and no limits on length of stay. Even climbers against reservations were supportive of these.

On Saturday July 13, 2019, 22% of visitors rated their experience accessing the park as excellent, 53% rated it as good, 15% rated it as fair and 9% rated it as poor.

Of weekend visitors, 5% said crowding at their activity was an issue, 24% said it was crowded but did not detract from their experience, 47% called it moderate crowding and 24% said it was uncrowded.

In a public comment questionnaire regarding timed entry parking limits, 48.18% were supportive or did not oppose and 51.81 % opposed the idea.

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. ***Preferred Alternative*:**

Implement a Timed Entry Reservation System pilot for Eldorado Canyon State Park for Saturday, Sunday and Holidays from July 1 thru September 15, 2022 and May 15 thru September 15, 2023.

Reservations apply to any motorized vehicle entry and does not apply to individual entry in shuttle or on bicycle.

-A valid vehicle pass, as required by regulation #700, shall be required for each motor vehicle for each day of entry.

-No vehicle shall enter, park or use any facilities of Eldorado Canyon State Park unless such use is by authority of a valid Day Use Reservation issued through the approved reservation system issued by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Aspira system.

2. No change in current regulations.

Issue Raised by:	N. E. Region CPW Staff
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	John Carson PMIV Eldorado Canyon State Park
CC:	
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Mark Leslie
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	NE Region
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO