

# CASTLEWOOD CANYON STATE PARK

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024



# Park Overview:

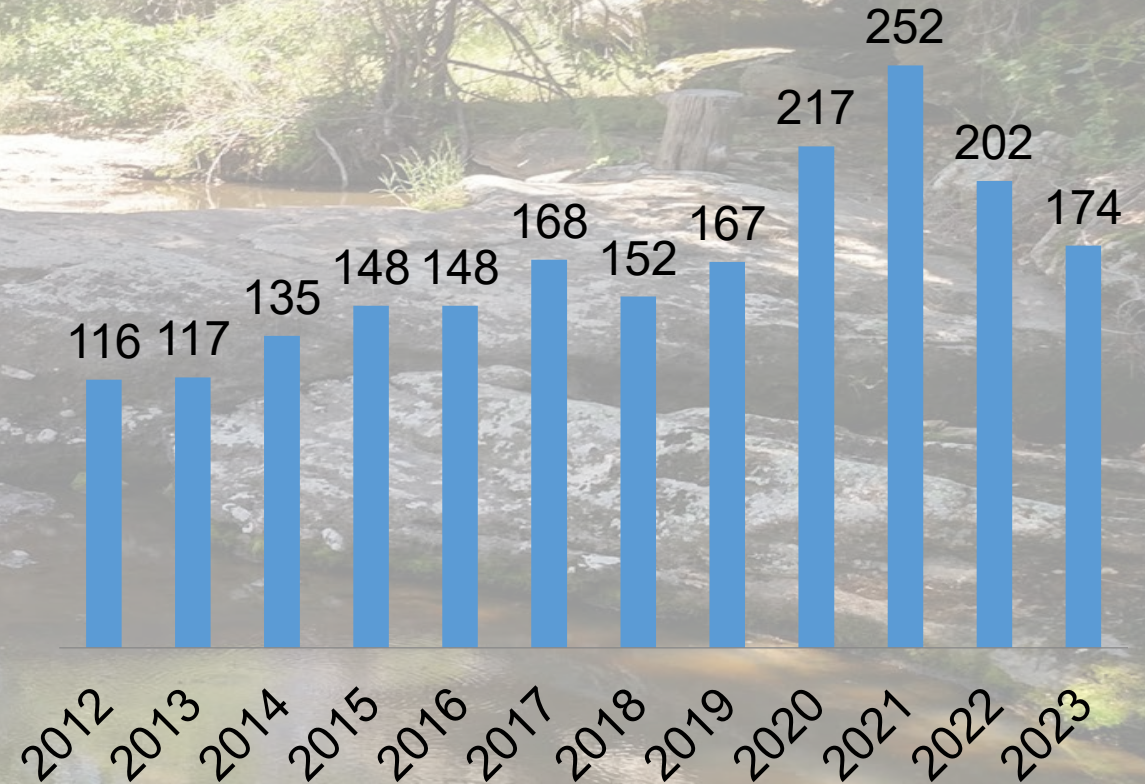
- Acquired in 1979
- 2,628 acres: 500 owned by State Land Board, the rest by CPW
- Human presence for 5,000 years in rock shelters; recent historical sites include the Castlewood Dam (1890-1933), and the Kleinert Homestead (est 1893, Douglas County Historical Landmark)
- Designated Colorado Natural Area, Leave No Trace Gold Standard Site, internationally recognized birding area



# Park Overview

- Operating budget of \$205k
- Staffing:
  - 4 FTE: 2 Rangers, Park Resource Tech (most recent addition in 2008), and Park Manager
  - 6-8 TWP
- 204 volunteers, 7,497 Hours in 2023
- Friends of Castlewood Canyon
  - 501(c)(3) Active in fundraising for projects, political support
- Education programs:
  - 4,500 K-12 students on Naturalist Guided Hikes in 2019
  - Went to zero during pandemic, and has not recovered well due to teacher and bus driver shortages

## Visitation by Fiscal Year in Thousands





In 2023 we were expecting more of this...

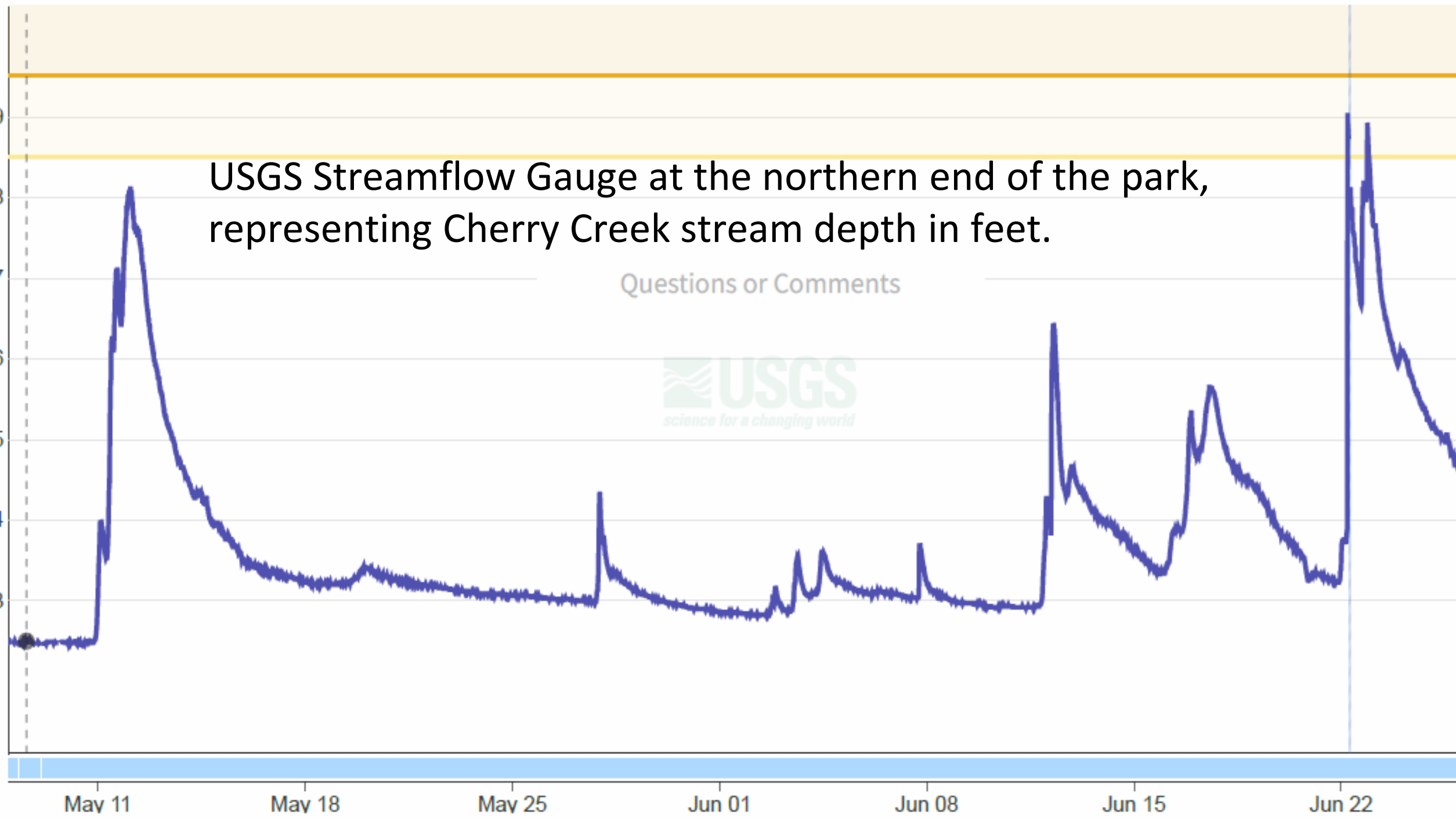


...but instead we got this.

- 2023 had our area's 3<sup>rd</sup> highest precipitation on record at 24.9"
  - Behind 1965 at 30.4", and 1897 at 27.3"
  - Average is 17.05"
- Rainfall was most concentrated in May and June, our busiest months
- Flooding, wet days and muddy trail conditions

USGS Streamflow Gauge at the northern end of the park, representing Cherry Creek stream depth in feet.

Questions or Comments







# Inner Canyon Bridge





## Dam Bridge

- Carried .5 miles downstream and destroyed



# Dam Bridge reconstruction



## Homestead Bridge



- Load-bearing portion is 3' thick of 2x4s
- Had to be disassembled and reassembled in place
- Done with the assistance of the Mile High Youth Corps

# Homestead Bridge disassembly and reassembly





- Repairing, replacing, and re-fabricating our bridges was done in 5 weeks, entirely by hand, and with no additional resources than what were already planned for the summer.
- Kudos to Jordan Boge, Park Resource Technician, and to Michelle O’Lichney, Josh Lester (TiSP), Michael Boden, and Max Dubois (TiSP).
- We would also not have been able to complete the Homestead Bridge without the Mile High Youth Corps.



East Canyon Bridge



Additional projects completed in 2023:

- Installation of 3 new CXT vault restrooms
- Completion and immediate use of a resident volunteer full-hookup campsite
- Connection of our Homestead Parking Lot to the Cherry Creek Regional Trail, making Castlewood accessible all the way from downtown Denver (about 42 miles).





Installation of abutments for 85 ft. pedestrian bridge at our most popular trail junction. Completion is pending, and it will be above the 100 year floodplain.

## The future at Castlewood:

- We would like add a Community Engagement Specialist FTE to our staff. This position would be responsible for public education, outreach, and recruitment, training, and managing of our park volunteers.
- We are in the early concept development phase of a Education Center that will house up to 60 students out of the elements for education and interpretation.
  - Our Friends group has already raised \$150k for this project

**Also coming in 2024 will be the Castlewood Canyon  
State Park Management Plan...**



# Questions?

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