

207-05

GOLDEN GATE CANYON STATE PARK

1988 Management Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is located in Jefferson and Gilpin counties, approximately 15 miles west of Golden, Colorado. The park is noted for its vast expanse of semi-wilderness areas very near the metro Denver population center. The variety of life zones in the park are unusual within such a relatively small area. The unique mix of vegetation types provides habitat for a wide range of wildlife species. Elevation changes, from 7,000 feet in the Crawford Gulch area to over 10,400 feet at Tremont Mountain, make it an excellent study area for students. The park also provides for spectacular views of the Front Range from Panorama Point.

Golden Gate's general management goals are to preserve this unique area as a semi-wilderness while supporting development along park perimeters. It is recommended that a wide variety of recreation activities be permitted with the exception of off-road vehicle usage. Environmental education has been one of the major attractions at Golden Gate and is recommended to be of primary attention in forming goals for the future.

The park has approximately 60 miles of trails open for hiking, skiing, horseback riding, and limited mountain bike riding. Other backcountry activities include camping in one of the 23 backcountry sites open to the public. Hunting is allowed only in the Jefferson County portion of the park. This has eliminated the safety concern for other users of the park during hunting seasons. A limit of 50 hunters per day has helped regulate safety problems in the park. Annual review of the hunting activities in the park are made with the local District Wildlife Manager. No changes will be made concerning hunting during the upcoming season.

A comprehensive forest management plan is being written by the Colorado Forest Service. A tree parasite study has already been completed. Funding for the forest management plan will come from the sale of timber taken from high use areas. Removal of the trees will also decrease the fire hazard that remains from beetle kill and spruce bud worm infestations. Logging in the area will continue as recommended by the Colorado Forest Service; future work programming and reforestation will occur as recommended.

With the addition of land under the inholding acquisition program, additional development will occur on the Green Ranch, thus adding significantly to the park's resources. Along with development of the Green Ranch will be the formation of a trail system linking Jefferson County's Open Space White Ranch and Boulder County's Walker Ranch with Golden Gate and Eldorado. This project will provide increased opportunities for backcountry recreation through the development of three-sided, Appalachian-style overnight trail huts.

A variety of recreation activities will continue to be allowed. A number of improvements and additions will be completed under controlled maintenance and capital construction programs. These include parking areas, roads, picnicking facilities and campgrounds. Future development will be confined mostly to the Green Ranch area.

Environmental education programs will continue to be given; annual themes will guide the structure of new programs designed by employees. The opening of the outdoor education center by Adams County School District 12 will certainly enhance the educational opportunities of the park. The Watchable Wildlife program will be given top priority in the park in the next few years.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Plan

This management plan was developed by the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for Golden Gate Canyon State Park. The plan offers recommendations that allow for a variety of recreation activities to occur while a unique natural environment is preserved and protected. This plan is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Protect and preserve the park's natural resources
2. Identify the significant natural and cultural resources
3. Document current management actions and major issues affecting management
4. Establish and define major recreation activities
5. Provide broad-based recommendations for future activities, development and management of the park.

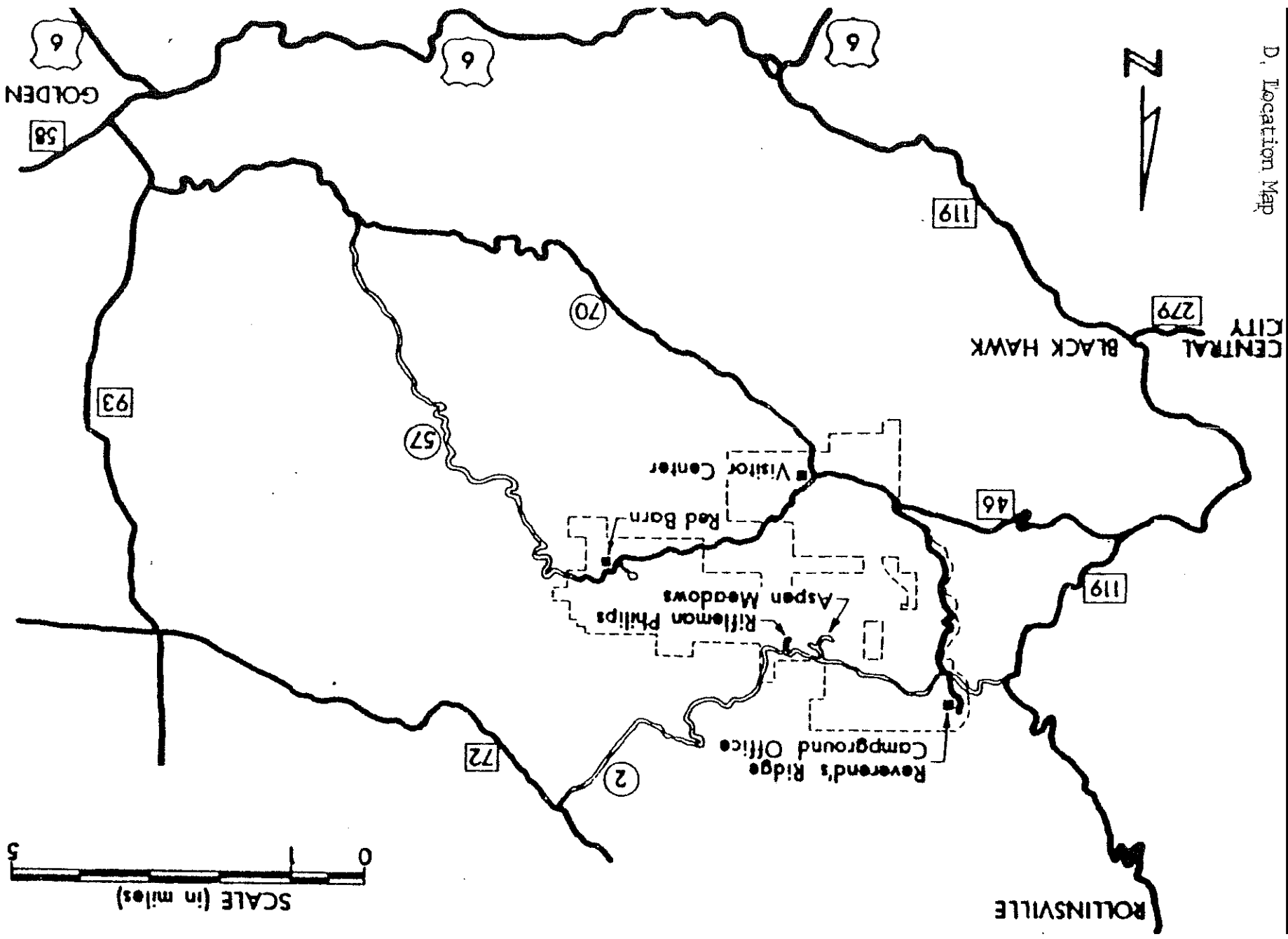
B. Legislative Declaration

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Organic Act states that it is the policy of the State and the Division to protect, preserve, enhance and manage natural scenic, scientific and outdoor recreation areas for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of Colorado. This statute defines a state park as an area having outstanding scenic and natural qualities that make it imperative to be preserved by the Division for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of the residents and visitors of Colorado.

C. Introduction to the Park

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is located approximately 25 miles west of downtown Denver. It is located near the Central City - Black Hawk area just outside the old gold fields. The area is quite diverse, ranging in elevation from 7,000 feet to a high of 10,400 feet at the top of Tremont Mountain. It is characterized by stands of fir, spruce, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine and aspen trees, with open meadows throughout the area. Golden Gate Canyon State Park is 8,969 acres of scenic and unique semi-wilderness. It is located close to major metropolitan areas with major development surrounding its boundaries.

D. Location Map



E. Significance

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is the largest state-owned park in the system. It is set aside to provide a semi-wilderness setting close to a major metropolitan area. Over 1.2 million people live within a 35 minute drive of the park boundaries. Above and beyond providing unique recreational opportunities, the park is significant for its effect on land values in the area, indirect impact on the economy of Gilpin County, and its influence on the quality of life for surrounding residents. Public ownership of this land has and will continue to protect the resources as well as provide present and future generations of visitors access to the geology, history, and superb scenery of the park.

Golden Gate's 500,000 annual visitors find a well-developed mountain park. Park use is facilitated by developed campgrounds and backcountry sites, picnic areas, hiking trails, lakes and streams for fishing, group use areas, a visitor center, an observation area, and large open tracts of undeveloped mountain landscape. The most significant park uses are hiking, fishing, camping, sightseeing, nature study, hunting and picnicking.

Golden Gate is a large, mature, well-developed mountain park that requires diverse management practices. Visitor safety, resource protection and facility maintenance must all be carefully coordinated.

F. General Management Goals

*Provide a safe, quality experience and a wide variety of recreation opportunities for park visitors.

*Provide education and interpretive opportunities to enhance the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the park.

*Identify significant natural and cultural resources.

*Protect the park's unique scenic, scientific and educational values.

*Conduct land management practices that cause minimal impact to park land, vegetation and wildlife.

*Develop and implement programs to monitor the condition of park vegetation and wildlife, and provide forest management where necessary.

*Manage the park to preserve its open space values.

II. NATURAL AND CULTURAL

A. History

The Colorado mountains were an inspiration to awestruck westbound pioneers, just as they are today for many park visitors. Samuel Bowles wrote of the pioneers' first reaction to the sight of Colorado's Rockies: "No vision could be more grand and inspiring, none was more welcome to eyes, weary with the monotony of the plains. The 'grand outline' of the immense mountain wall was cheered with joy and astonishment after 600 miles of 'naked prairie'."

Modern day history of Golden Gate Canyon State Park emerges after the Arapahoe and Cheyenne tribes, trappers and traders vacated the area for the onslaught of miners filling the gold fields in the surrounding areas. Golden Gate Canyon Toll Road was constructed to provide transportation to the gold fields in Central City. In 1871, following completion of the railroad in Clear Creek Canyon, the death of Golden Gate Canyon Toll Road was complete.

However, the Golden Gate Toll Road did continue to furnish access to the mountains for homesteaders and played an integral role in the area's future. Farmers, ranchers, loggers and hunters followed the miners into the hills. Although gold had not been found, other riches were discovered: timber for mines, towns, and railroads; quartz for building and ornamentation; and foodstuffs for hungry miners.

Some homesteaders settled within the current park boundaries, built cabins, tilled the land, and led quiet, peaceful, and productive lives. Most settlers provided for themselves and sold their surplus goods to the nearby cities of Black Hawk and Golden. They grazed dairy cows on the lush mountain meadows. They drank the raw milk and sold the rest to nearby communities, until the government intervened with a law against the sale of raw milk. Most families also raised chickens, finding it profitable to sell eggs. Farming was prevalent: fields of head lettuce and peas were harvested and "put up" for winter storage or sold to markets. Ranchers cut hay and pitched it by hand, selling or storing it for winter use.

Hay rakes and other old farm equipment can be seen in the park, rusting away in the tall grasses. Some of the old log-hewn cabins - relics of these settlers' early days - may also be seen throughout the park.

Logging operations set up camps in the upper part of the park, cutting much-needed lumber for the mines and growing towns. The timber was hauled by oxen to Central City or Golden. "Sawmills were everywhere... steam powered," recalls Jeanne Jacobson who grew up near Dory Lake. Besides the sale of lumber, green trees were burned in large pits until reduced to charcoal which was sold at smelters.

When the Prohibitionist era of the 1920's arrived, a new industry was created within the park boundaries: moonshining, the hottest item on the black market.

Moonshining was pursued with a zeal that matched the craze of the gold miners more than 50 years earlier. The prohibitionist reign didn't last long and the moonshiners found their business falling off. Besides, government men were finding and destroying their stills. This colorful era of history died and life went back to normal.

Evidence remains today in the park of the moonshiners: parts of old stills, barrel hoops and staves, broken crockery, and an old truck that has 'Smith's Breadwagon' painted on it.

Farming and ranching prevailed in Golden Gate Canyon country with some new industries springing up. Quartz was mined from upper Deer Creek; a nudist colony operated near the present site of the Visitor Center; and large-scale cattle ranching replaced some of the smaller family operations as land was bought up in larger parcels.

In June 1960, the first tract of land for Golden Gate Canyon State Park was purchased by the Colorado Parks Board. The 200-acre tract in Gilpin County was the nucleus for the present park. Periodic acquisition of land parcels surrounding this nucleus helped to preserve a fine, multipurpose resource. Land acquisitions of 500 acres or more came from property owned by the Strang, Harmsen, Works, Braecher, and Ellyson families. Other large acquisitions came from the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of the Interior, and the Colorado State Land Board.

Shortly after the initial land acquisitions, the development of Golden Gate Canyon State Park began. A maintenance shop and offices were constructed in the early 1960's. In 1964 work began on Kriley and Slough fishing ponds. The Ranch Ponds in the eastern portion of the park were built in 1967 to enhance fishing prospects in the Crawford Gulch area. 1967 also saw the implementation of plans to construct a scenic area - Panaroma Point - overlooking 50 to 100 miles of the Continental Divide. In 1968 the Visitor Center was built; it was dedicated and officially opened in 1969. Now, on a busy weekend, the Visitor Center averages more than 500 people per day. In 1970, with more and more people camping around the fishing ponds, plans were made for a 110-site campground below Panorama Point. In 1971, the 106 site Reverend's Ridge Campground opened. Also in 1970, 15 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails were created in the western section of the park, and a new road wound its way up the side of Promontory Ridge to connect the campground and Panorama Point with the maintenance shop and the Visitor Center.

Today, as in the past, the lands of Golden Gate Canyon State Park serve a vital role. An easily accessible recreation facility, which is unsurpassed in the metropolitan area, the park offers a multitude of activities to the visitor. Camping, picnicking, fishing, and sightseeing are only a few of the many recreational, educational, and cultural activities to be found.

Visitors to Golden Gate Canyon State Park are constantly reminded of the park's heritage. Many of the park's main features bear the names of previous owners or past activities. For example, Reverend's Ridge was named for the preacher who lived nearby. His cabin's chimney bore a cross of quartz which marked him as the "man of God" in the area. Ole' Barn Knoll and the Red Barn group picnic area were named for historic structures which still exist. Bootleg Bottom was a notorious moonshine production center during the 1920's.

Kriley Pond was named after William Kriley, the original owner of the land; and Greenfield Meadow was named after the Greenfield family, who homesteaded the meadow.

Today, Golden Gate Canyon State Park encompasses nearly 10,000 acres of land and 20 acres of water. There are 15 marked trails totaling approximately 50 miles, many of which are open to horses.

Along with several visitor facilities, strategically located interpretive facilities offer the park visitor a more in-depth look at Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Information may be obtained at the park's main Visitor Center or at Reverend's Ridge Information Center. Displays, nature walks, demonstrations, and environmental programs are coordinated from the facilities. An amphitheater at Reverend's Ridge Campground provides a staging area for nightly campfire programs featuring guest speakers, demonstrations, and slide shows.

The history of the park ends here, its future **will** involve few changes, little additional development, and no more colorful characters living in the area, with the exception of park personnel. Its major focus is to preserve the natural resources and the cultural heritage for generations of park visitors to enjoy in the coming years.

B. Aesthetics

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is known as the "crown jewel" or "showplace" of the state park system. It is not a spectacular park, as one might consider some of the national parks, but it is special and unique in its own right.

It is typical of the forested mountain slopes found along the entire Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Unlike many similar areas now being subdivided and developed for real estate, the park remains in a relatively natural state, an island of "wilderness" available to all.

The elevation ranges from 7,000 to 10,400 feet. The highest point is Tremont Mountain along Promontory Ridge, which runs along the western park boundary. The exposed rocks here and elsewhere along the front range are among the oldest found anywhere on the earth. Promontory Ridge features "The Bear", a rock outcrop, which keeps a watchful eye on the "Lazy Squaw," an outcrop to the north. Another outcrop, "Ralston Roost," is a popular destination for afternoon hikers and birdwatchers along Blue Grouse Trail. Coyote Trail winds up and over the ridge, offering a view of the lofty peaks of the Continental Divide.

Farther north, Panorama Point offers a commanding view of the Continental Divide from Mount Evans in the south to the flat-topped Longs Peak toward the north. It is a popular and inspirational site for wedding ceremonies. At several points in the park, views of the plains are excellent. City Lights Ridge at the end of Eagle Trail, Windy Peak - a short detour off Mountain Lion Trail and points along Gap Road offer this view, which is of particular interest to the many Denverites who visit the park.

The changing terrain and differences in elevation offer interesting changes in vegetation. Colorado blue spruce and willows stand along the creek bottoms. Sunny, south-facing slopes support a few ponderosa pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, and meadows of Indian paintbrush lupine, and aster. Dense forests of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir are found on the north-facing slopes with an aspen grove here and there. In the meadow, myriads of flowers grow such as wild roses, geraniums, and columbines.

The thriving diversity of plant life provides home and food for a variety of wildlife species. The visitor will most often encounter chipmunks. And the bird known as the "Camp robber" delights the picnickers as it perches on nearby limbs awaiting an opportune time to steal a few crumbs of bread. A lucky visitor might see one of the many mule deer that graze the grassy meadows, or perhaps catch a glimpse of a coyote or a bobcat. Although seldom seen, the beaver is one of the most fascinating animals to park visitors. Along Ralston Creek are many signs of beaver activity: gnawed tree stumps, fallen trees, an old dam. The presence of footprints, bones, feathers, or droppings along trails might heighten a visitor's outdoor experience as he discovers evidence of the many animals which make the park their home.

Throughout the park a sense of history lingers. Old characters from the past are revived in the minds of visitors who follow trails blazed by early farmers, hopeful prospectors, lumberjacks or perhaps some of those notorious "moonshiners" escaping from the "revenuers."

The hiker walking along the popular Horseshoe Trail will encounter remnants of the early 1900's including a log cabin and barn resting quietly in Frazer Meadow, with forgotten horse-drawn farm equipment scattered about and hidden in the tall grasses. The hiker can take a drink from the natural spring tapped long ago - the rusty pipe still trickles water into an old metal trough, now tumbling downward to quench the thirst of a clump of wildflowers. The stillness of the meadow, encircled and protected by high rock fortresses, leads one to conclude that life could have been quite comfortable in this beautiful, protected meadow.

A gentle hike following the Burro Trail leads to an old quartz site. Beyond that, along Deer Creek, foundations are all that remain of some abandoned cabins.

A fisherman hiking to Forgotten Valley to try his luck may wonder about the lifestyle of former inhabitants of the homes abandoned here. Another weathered cabin overlooks Dude's Fishin' Hole. Old relics of farming, ranching, and logging days, left to weather among the weeds throughout the park, remind us of the plight of yesteryear's inhabitants.

Bootleg Bottom, named for the notorious moonshining activity in the prohibition days of the 1920's, offers a look at the past. A visitor might stumble upon an old cabin, some barrel staves, rusty metal rings, or broken pieces of crocks, which once held an illegal, yet highly desirable, potion of "white lightning." The Blue Grouse, Ground Squirrel, Coyote, Burro Trails are only a few of the trails that lead to old still sites.

There are nearly 60 miles of hiking trails winding through the park that offer photographic views and reflective stops; however, the drive-through sightseer and picnicker can also experience the park. Crawford Gulch Road follows Ralston Creek, which tumbles past cottonwoods and willows (there is obvious beaver activity for those who look), and continues on past the Ranch Ponds where a duck or two may be swimming, or an eagle soaring overhead to perch atop a sheer rock wall. The old barns, now converted into a group picnic area, remind the visitor of the area's farming and ranching heritage. Gap Road along the northern, higher boundary of the park offers excellent views of the western Continental Divide and the eastern plains, and more primitive setting for picnics along a gravel road amid the shady lodgepole

forest or on the outskirts of an aspen grove. Mountain Base Road connects the two roads, climbing 1,000 feet in elevation in three miles at a steep 19 percent grade, imposing the rugged and unyielding nature of the mountains upon the visitor out to "see the sights." An old barn below, nestled in a field of wildflowers, serves as a conversation starter for a family picnicking at Ole' Barn Knoll. Dotted along each road are picnic areas; some where a family can •get away from it all•, and other areas for the more sociable who might like to join in on a volleyball game.

Favorite roadside stops are either Kriley or Slough pond. Although small, they are quite large in the eyes of the fishermen who frequent the park in large numbers in the summertime. The man-made ponds are stocked throughout the summer with rainbow trout. These ponds promote the popular pastimes of fishing and quiet lakeside relaxation for all ages and will soon be accessible to fishermen who are physically disabled.

Several miles down Ralston Creek are a series of dammed ponds called the Ranch Ponds, which offer more fishing opportunities, with picnic tables situated in quiet nooks along their length. For more avid fishermen, a short quarter mile hike ends at Forgotten Valley where another man-made reservoir darns upper Nott Creek in a beautiful setting of old cabins. The meadow is usually full of blossoms in the summertime. Four creeks empty from the higher northern elevations in the park into Ralston Creek below. They are all very small, some fading to a mere trickle by mid-August. Lower Ralston Creek often dries up by the end of the summer, turning the Ranch Ponds into lesser pools of water, which will later freeze.

Summer is not the only season visitors enjoy at Golden Gate. During the winter, dedicated fishermen continue to try their luck in Kriley or Slough ponds. The sufficient ice cover makes the park a popular place to ice skate. The ice on Kriley is usually too abused by the western winds to be smooth enough, but Forgotten Valley Reservoir and the Visitor Center pond are smooth enough for skating. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing along the park's trails is becoming increasingly popular.

C. Park Resources

Golden Gate is a classic representation of a montane ecosystem. Elevation varies from 7,000 to 10,400 feet. Dominant vegetation is lodgepole/ponderosa pine with accompanying shrubs and grasses. The park's wildlife population is diverse and well balanced. Large mammals, small mammals and birds indicative of the montane zone can be found. The different life zones within the park boundaries follow:

D. Life Zones

1, Lower Montane

The lower montane life zone extends approximately 6,000 feet to 7,800 feet in elevation. A small part of the park at the east end, where Deer and Nott creeks join Ralston Creek, represents this lower montane zone. In this zone the soil, water, and sun exposure vary widely. This offers favorable conditions for numerous types of flowering plants and shrubs. There are more species of flowering plants found in this zone than in any other single zone. The climax vegetation of the lower montane zone is generally an open forest of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. There are frequent grassy openings and extensive grassland stands. North-facing slopes generally have denser forests with closed canopies. There are less Douglas fir and more mountain juniper on

these slopes. The valley floors of the lower montane support a mixture of grasses, shrubs, and trees. Trees include cottonwood, Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, and Colorado blue spruce. A light forest fire aids in the reseeding of lodgepole pine, which explains the dense stands of lodgepole pine at Golden Gate.

2. Upper Montane

The upper montane life zone lies between about 8,000 and 9,000 feet in elevation. Most of the park lies in this region. Annual rainfall (18 - 22 inches a year) in this life zone is nearly double that of the Colorado plains. The result is open grassy areas interspersed with areas of Douglas fir, aspen, and ponderosa pine. The forests of the upper montane are generally dense with compacted canopies. There is also an increase in Douglas fir, aspen, and lodgepole pine stands. At higher elevations of this zone there are dense lodgepole pine stands. These stands developed in fire-damaged areas where logging operations removed many trees. The valley floors of the upper montane are similar to the lower montane. There is a dense understory of grasses and shrubs and a canopy of trees. There are occasional subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce.

3. Subalpine

The subalpine life zone lies between approximately 9,000 feet and 11,000 feet in elevation. A small portion of the park lies in this zone - the upper area along Promontory Ridge. The forests are generally similar to the upper montane with many of the same vegetation species. There is an increase in subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce which had been suppressed due to fire and logging. The understory is less abundant with scattered species of herbs,

grasses, mosses, and lichens. In the future, subalpine forests should increase in dominance.

4. Stream-side Habitat

Stream-side vegetation is so abundant it must be dealt with in generalities. Vegetation that inhabits a stream-side varies according to elevation and corresponding life zones. The soil of a stream-side is often rather sandy and lacks humus. Common herbaceous plants along streams include willow-herb and pioneer grasses. Where an accumulation of humus occurs, there are clover meadows, dandelions, bluegrass, and timothy. Trees include cottonwoods, willows, and hackberries. In lower montane regions, plant species would be similar to those previously listed - the common liverwort and willow herbs. The trees now include various willows, alder, birch, Colorado blue spruce, and Douglas fir. As the altitude increases trees are restricted to Engelmann spruce, willows, and alders. Common understory include chiming bells, marsh marigold, and bittercress to name only a few of the various species.

E. Forest Types

The dominant forest type is ponderosa pine. Heaviest concentrations are at the lower elevations and the backcountry of the park. Limited quantities of commercial trees can be found. The ponderosa pine resource is an even-age mature stand. Significant damage from the pine beetle occurred in the late 1970's. The current condition and vitality of this species is good.

The lodgepole pine is the next most significant forest group. The lodgepole can be found at higher elevations (Reverend's Ridge Campground/Gap Road). This species is also an even-age stand. Other than typical dog hair stands and mistletoe problems, this forest group is very healthy. Commercial post and pole qualities are substantial throughout the park.

The third dominant forest type is the spruce and fir group. This forest type can be found along stream bottoms and hill sides of the Ralston Creek drainage up to the crest of Mountain Base Road. The spruce and fir are under severe attack from the spruce budworm and fir beetle. Most of the trees are not of commercial grade, but pockets exist in the Forgotten Valley area which are large enough to be utilized by commercial sawmills. Presently, most of the spruce and fir trees that are removed are processed into firewood - and only then in clearing of fire-hazard areas along the highly developed areas within the park.

Aspen groves are quite common along stream courses and are the main reason for a substantial beaver population. There are large pockets of aspen trees along Mountain Base Road and in the backcountry. These pockets are enjoyed by thousands of visitors every fall. There is very little disease in the aspen groves except for black spotting and rust. Some of the over-mature stands are dying out.

There are significant groups of limber pine in the park. Most of these trees are along the Mountain Base and Gap Road sections of the park, but they also occur as low as the Visitor Center. This is quite unusual, as they are not common in the surrounding area and generally grow farther into the mountain ranges near subalpine regions past the foothills.

Grasslands are typical as associated with each forest type. Grasses appear to be quite healthy and exhibit no deficiencies such as yellowing due to lack of nitrogen. The only grazing in the park is by wildlife.

F. Wildlife

Golden Gate Canyon State Park contains habitat areas that support a variety of resident and migratory animal life. Environmental variables such as topography, climate, and vegetation determine, in large part, the distribution and varieties of wildlife found within the park. Golden Gate's wildlife population and species representation must be considered excellent. Big game and small game hunting and wildlife observation are all significant park uses. Deer, coyote and beaver are seen frequently by park visitors year round. Elk, bighorn sheep, mountain lion, turkey, bobcat and black bear observations are also reported regularly.

Non-game and small mammals provide the park visitor with the typical mountain experience. Blue grouse, cottontail, snowshoe hare, Aberts and pine squirrels, Stellers and grey jay sightings are daily occurrences during the high use season.

There has not been a detailed wildlife study done in Golden Gate. However, due to the long-term consistent big and small game harvests and regular observation of game species, wildlife populations and habitat utilization, the parks wildlife populations are apparently well balanced.

Appendix A gives a detailed list of the common animal and bird varieties found in Golden Gate.

G. Soils

Soil types identified within Golden Gate Canyon State Park are typical of those formed along Colorado's Front Range. Generally, they consist of shallow, sandy loams that have developed from geologic formations of granite, schist, and gneiss. These bedrock formations emerge at, or close to, the surface in many areas throughout much of the park.

Soils developing on the steeper slopes (15 - 75 percent) are generally sandy, stony, and poorly developed. These soils are extremely susceptible to erosion, particularly on south and west exposures, where sparse vegetative cover offers inadequate control.

Soil on shallower slopes are also sandy and stony, but are usually well drained. Although the soil texture can withstand recreational traffic, the vegetative cover is less resilient and is difficult to re-establish. Ponds constructed on these soils are subject to high seepage losses due to the high sand content.

The soils that have developed on the alluvial wash along the drainage bottoms generally contain large amounts of organic material. Soil textures present along these areas are well-suited for intensive recreation, providing they receive rehabilitative periods.

The major limitations posed by the soil types within the park are slope, stoniness, flood potential, depth to bedrock, and water table. These limitations determine the suitability of a given site for a specific use and should be considered in the planning phase prior to any construction or excavation. Site suitability limitations have been interpreted for picnic areas, campgrounds, playgrounds, trails, shallow excavations, small commercial buildings, and septic fields.

Slope presents a severe limitation for one or more of these uses in 85 percent of the soil types present in the park. The degree of slope often dictates the suitability of an area for buildings, roads, trails, and leach fields. The problems associated with erosion control, construction, and revegetation are compounded by increases in slope. Roads and trails should be designed in ways that will prevent the concentration of run-off. Building foundations in these areas will also require careful planning.

Stoniness relates to the composition of the soil texture. Approximately three-quarters of the area's soil types have been rated "severe" for this category. These areas should be particularly avoided when excavating water lines and leach fields.

Soil types adjacent to Nott Creek and its major tributaries are subject to flooding from rain showers and snow melt. Those areas that have a severe potential for flooding should be developed with careful consideration. Although drainage bottoms are often nearly level and easily accessible, they are best left as open space.

More than half of the area's soil types possess a severe limitation regarding depth to bedrock. They are generally shallow soils, which are difficult and costly to excavate. Particularly a problem throughout the Crawford Gulch area, these soil types should be avoided when selecting potential sites for excavation.

Soil types having a severe limitation for water table/wetness indicate areas with a fluctuating water table. Approximately one-quarter of the soils in the park exhibit this trait and should not be considered for use as picnic areas, campgrounds, building sites, or leach fields.

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III. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

A. Existing Land Use

1. Natural Zone

Included in this zone are areas of outstanding scenic or natural value. This zone is called "the backcountry." Only minor developments, such as trails, backcountry campsites, interpretive displays and primitive toilets will be permitted in this zone.

This is Golden Gate's most significant resource and its preservation is very important to the integrity of the park. This zone includes 8,036 acres - 90 percent of the park's total acreage.

2. Development Zone

The development zone includes those areas which have been developed or have high potential to accommodate recreation use without severe adverse effects on the natural or scenic qualities of the park. Facilities such as campgrounds, roads, picnic areas, group use areas, parking, visitor centers, toilets and maintenance buildings are acceptable developments in this zone. All facilities or developments should be non-commercial.

Design, architecture, color schemes and overall visibility must remain compatible with existing facilities. This zone includes 626 acres or 7 percent of the park. This zone has allowance for future development as identified in this plan.

3. Special Use Zone

This zone has three uses: private road accesses, REA utility easements and the Youth Camp. Private property access easement is a significant issue as the park is virtually surrounded by private land. All future requests for easements should meet criteria established by the Park Manager. This criteria will be based upon resource impact, scenic analysis and benefit to the park.

The 50-year REA powerline easement is only 3 acres, but it is 4.5 miles long. Although the power line is highly visible it is fundamentally benign. This easement expires in 2035.

The Youth Camp was abandoned by the Division of Youth Services in 1987. Future use must be compatible with the definition of a State Park.

Total acreage in this zone is 268 acres or about 3 percent of the park.

B. current Development

The main development of Golden Gate Canyon lies on its outer boundaries, keeping the interior of the park preserved for backcountry trails and campsites. Facilities for picnicking, trailheads, camping, and fishing are fully constructed.

The Crawford Gulch area of the park has shop facilities, a group picnic facility for 100 people, five fishing ponds, and five main picnic areas. Picnic areas are also located along the Highway 46 corridor, Mountain Base Road, and the Panorama Point Overlook. Altogether there are 288 picnic sites and 584 parking spaces in the park.

The Visitor Center is located at the Highway 46 and Crawford Gulch junction. This facility serves approximately 40,000 visitors annually and is open to the public every day. The Visitor Center contains the main office complex for the park, and a large display area with displays depicting different activities and scenery in the area.

There are approximately 20 acres of water available in the park for fishing and stocking. Kriley and Slough ponds are the park's main fishing areas. Like other lakes in the park, these small lakes are stocked every two weeks during the high use season by the Division of Wildlife. Ralston Creek is also excellent for fishing.

Reverend's Ridge Campground lies in the northwest corner of the park. This main camping facility is equipped with 106 campsites, showers, laundry facilities, amphitheater and an office complex with living quarters for seasonal employees.

The Panorama Point Overlook structure is one mile east of Reverend's Ridge Campground on the north end of the park. This structure was built and is maintained by donation funds from the Ken R. Larkin Memorial. The view from the structure is of over 50 miles of the Continental Divide. The area is used extensively by the general public and is popular for weddings during the summer months.

The Lazy Squaw Ranch, donated to the park by the William Harmsen family, lies east of Panorama Point. This facility is comprised of the main ranch house, barn, three line sheds, a caretaker's trailer house, and several small outbuildings. The ranch and interior of the main home have been catalogued and appraised. Past uses of the ranch include an "Artist in Residence" program, meeting facility for staff members, a meeting facility for other agencies, and other minor uses. The staff at Golden Gate Canyon State Park has studied many alternatives for the ranch. Some of these include: Artist in Residence Program, living history program, meeting and conference center, horse concession, museum for the Harmsen collection, trails center, and wedding reception area. The staff visited with several different agencies including the Littleton Historical Museum and Rocky Mountain National Park to attempt to arrive at the best decision for using this valuable property.

The conclusion is that the ranch be used as a conference center with overnight accommodations for 8-10 persons and for wedding receptions following weddings at Panorama Point. A check of similar public-owned facilities in the metro area shows a real need for more of these types of facilities. Tight control over the area must be implemented to limit the damage to the property. This can be ensured through a large deposit, regular patrols of the area, caretaker presence, and the control placed over the lead party in charge of the group. More information about the planned use of the ranch can be found at the park office.

Aspen Meadows Campground is east of the Lazy Squaw Ranch. The campground was built in several sections with the upper campground loops used by either tent campers or horse groups. The lower loops are used by tent campers. Motor homes and pickup campers are not allowed access to this campground because of its steep roads and the tent facility construction.

Rifleman Phillips Campground is a group facility consisting of three large tent camp pads that hold approximately 30 visitors per pad. Each of the pads is complete with two picnic tables, fire-ring, water and nearby restroom facilities.

The backcountry system includes sixty miles of hiking trails leading from each parking lot in the park. Five areas in the backcountry are designated backcountry camping sites, and are clearly marked for tents. No fires are allowed in the backcountry. There are two backcountry lakes for fishing - Forgotten Valley Lake and Dude's Fishin' Hole.

The Golden Gate Youth Camp facility is located on the southwest boundary of the park. This camp was opened in 1965 by the Division of Youth Services and operated as a youth detention facility for twenty-three years. The camp housed 35 to 45 youth offenders who worked in the park doing labor intensive projects. In January 1987, according to the contracts set forth in 1963, the Division of Youth Services abandoned the camp and returned the facilities to the park. The facility is comprised of an administration building, dining and classroom facility, main dormitory, and a gymnasium.

In the spring of 1987, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation obtained full control of the facility from the Department of Institutions. To minimize the impact on the park, the Division sought use of the facility as an outdoor education laboratory by a local school district. A request for proposal was sent to 23 school districts in the immediate area, suggesting future use of the facility as an outdoor laboratory.

Adams County School District 12 was awarded the opportunity to place its outdoor education laboratory at the old Youth Camp. Negotiations are underway to facilitate a transfer of this facility to Adams County School District 12 in exchange for land located within the Green Ranch, south of the current boundaries of Golden Gate Canyon State Park.

The Outdoor Education Laboratory should be operational in September 1989. When complete it will house 200 sixth-grade students and staff. The Outdoor Education program will extend beyond the limits of the camp into the park and surrounding areas. An operational draft plan is available at the park office or from Adams County School District 12 offices. The impact to Golden Gate will be during the off season, with the camp operating primarily from September to May each year. The summer months will be dedicated to a lesser operation - teacher education, etc. The staff at Golden Gate will be involved with the operation of the camp to ensure quality control and compatibility with park operations. Teacher education on the goals and objectives of the park will be handled by the Golden Gate staff. Staff time allotted will be significant in the beginning of the program, but will diminish after the camp has been operational for a time. Continuing staff time will be needed to coordinate interpretive activities and the general use of the park facilities by the school district.

The park's main maintenance facility is located on the southwest boundary of the park next to Kriley Pond. This facility houses the maintenance section for the park and is utilized year round.

SEE ATTACHED MAP FOR LOCATIONS - APPENDIX D

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IV. INFLUENCES ON MANAGEMENT

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is owned and managed by the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The Colorado Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation establishes policies and regulations for the Division. The following agencies also influence management at Golden Gate Canyon State Park:

A. Agency Interaction

Agency	Role/Impact
Gilpin County Sheriff	Concurrent jurisdiction
Jefferson County Sheriff	Concurrent jurisdiction
Division of Wildlife	Cooperative wildlife management, fish stocking program, enforcement, hunting restrictions
Gilpin County Search & Rescue	Source of search & rescue
Colorado State Forest Service	Forest Management Plan/Fire control
Gilpin County Ambulance	First Aid/ambulance services
Jefferson County Health Dept.	Water quality monitoring/testing
Union Rural Electric	Electrical easements
Trinity Mountain Church Camp	Horse concessionaire
Jetz Corp.	Laundry concessionaire
Colorado Blind Services	Sundry item concessionaire
High Country Fire Department	Fire Suppression

B. Internal Management Influences

1. Acquisition and Inholdings

Golden Gate's configuration and boundary leads to numerous difficulties. The park is surrounded by approximately 115 different landowners. The boundary is not yet completely fenced, allowing easy encroachment activities. The park boundary is difficult to manage due to the large amount of land purchases making up the park. (See Appendix B) At the present time there are approximately 8 inholdings (See Appendix C) that also affect management of the area. The Division's 5-year plan includes purchase of these inholdings. The priority order of purchase is as follows:

- * Works/True Property - Purchase completed in January 1988

- * Green Ranch - To be acquired through combination land trade with partial donation and partial purchase.

- * Elson Property - Needed to give common boundary with Golden Gate on present south boundary.

- * Toll Property - Small cabin areas within Reverend's Ridge Campground and 101 acres along Promontory Ridge.

* Harmsen Property - May result in land trade elsewhere within the present boundaries.

* Nelson Property - 80 acres across from Lazy Squaw Ranch.

* Bandimere Ranch - Approx. 320 acres in Fraser Meadow area.

* Hart Property - Approx. 910 acres closing in the east portion of the park.

These inholdings, along with numerous points of access along the north boundary of the park, lead to ongoing difficulties with access, encroachment, forest fire suppression responsibility and a confused park user. Unintentional trespassing is quite common.

C. Natural Resources

Natural resource challenges are many. The main challenges for management are the numerous tree diseases prevalent in the park. Spruce budworm infestation is the main problem, followed by fir beetle, rust and pine beetle. At present, a major Forest Management Plan is being developed by the Colorado State Forest Service. The plan was conceived with a \$1500 contract to study tree diseases throughout the park in 1986. The study will grow into a full Forest Management Plan in the years to come. Timbering for fire suppression continues to be done with the resulting wood bundled for sale in state park campgrounds. This program will continue. The spruce budworm has dramatically affected the major scenic corridor of the park. It has also created a fire hazard along the major use areas. Larger scale timbering for commercial sales is anticipated.

Fire suppression has not been a big problem in the past but is always a possibility. At present, the park is equipped with a slip-on pumper on a park unit, three fire caches located throughout the park, and teams set up for fire crews. The main source of support comes from the High Country Fire Department. This may present a problem as the Department is operating out of its area of responsibility in the Jefferson County portion of the park. The Gilpin County Sheriff's Department is the authority for the Gilpin County portion of the park and the Jefferson County Sheriff is the authority for the Jefferson County portion of the park. The Colorado State Forest Service is available for assistance in case of a large fire.

Hunting in Golden Gate is controlled through a permit system for big game animals with a maximum of 50 hunters allowed per day. Small game seasons are controlled with a check-in/out system at the visitor center. The harvest of approximately 40 big game animals per year indicate the stabilization of the herds in the area. General observation of habitat condition indicates that the 50 hunters per day is very acceptable, Hunting is allowed only in the Jefferson County portion of the park, per the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation in agreement with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

D. Visitation Dynamics

Golden Gate Canyon State Park has become a destination park during the past five years. The overall visitation has been in the 500,000 visitor range for the past several years. Visitation statistics, including type of activities, are as follows:

	1985	1986
TOTAL VISITATION	529,760	499,648
<u>TYPE OF ACTIVITIES</u>		
SIGHTSEEING	82,515	97,531
FISHING	115,125	106,205
HUNTING (Registered)	625	685
HORSEBACK RIDING	2,382	2,665
HIKING	109,917	114,861
BICYCLING	1,145	2,802
PICNICKING	171,763	173,831
INTERPRETATION (Registered)	32,231	39,136
CAMPING	20,465	17,880

The park is at capacity most weekends in the summer season, so a push for off-season and mid-week visitation is needed. The park is virtually empty during the weekdays and could be much better utilized. The one common factor limiting the visitation of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is the general lack of knowledge about the park by the general public.

E. The User

The Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation conducted a User Survey at Golden Gate in 1983. User demographics, perceptions, use patterns, and desires were analyzed. A recap of the user data are as follows:

Average people per car - 3.4

Type of pass used - Annual 17 percent, Daily 72 percent, Aspen Leaf 10 percent

Annual visits per pass type - Annual 19, Daily 4

Most visitors traveled between 20-30 miles to the park

Average annual income of most users -\$20,000 to \$35,000

Average age of users - 26-35 years

City of origin	Denver	32%
	Arvada	10%
	Aurora	9.5%
	Lakewood	9%
	Golden	7.2%

County of origin	Jefferson	42.5%
	Denver	25.9%
	Arapahoe	12.5%
	Adams	6.2%

91 percent of all users originate from Colorado. The majority of out-of-state visitors to the park are from: Illinois, California, Wyoming, Michigan and Texas.

Overall opinion expressed in the user survey indicated that Golden Gate Canyon State Park was developed quite well and maintained in an excellent state. The most adverse comment concerned overcrowding of the lakes, but only 20 percent responded in that way. Another issue was lack of campsites with 15 percent indicating that the present number of campsites (164) was inadequate.

F. Regional Influences

The park's close proximity to the Denver metro area is a major influence. As the park becomes better known through marketing and promotion, the utilization of the area should definitely climb. Other regional influences are the recreational resources available in the area. Close to the tourist attractions of Black Hawk and Central City, the park is also surrounded to the west by U.S. Forest Service land which does contain developed campgrounds in close proximity to the park. These campgrounds fill to capacity during the high use season weekends. There is a KOA campground 2 miles west of the park boundary. This campground is also filled to capacity during the summer months. Other recreational opportunities exist at the Jefferson County Open Space White Ranch located to the northeast of the park boundary.

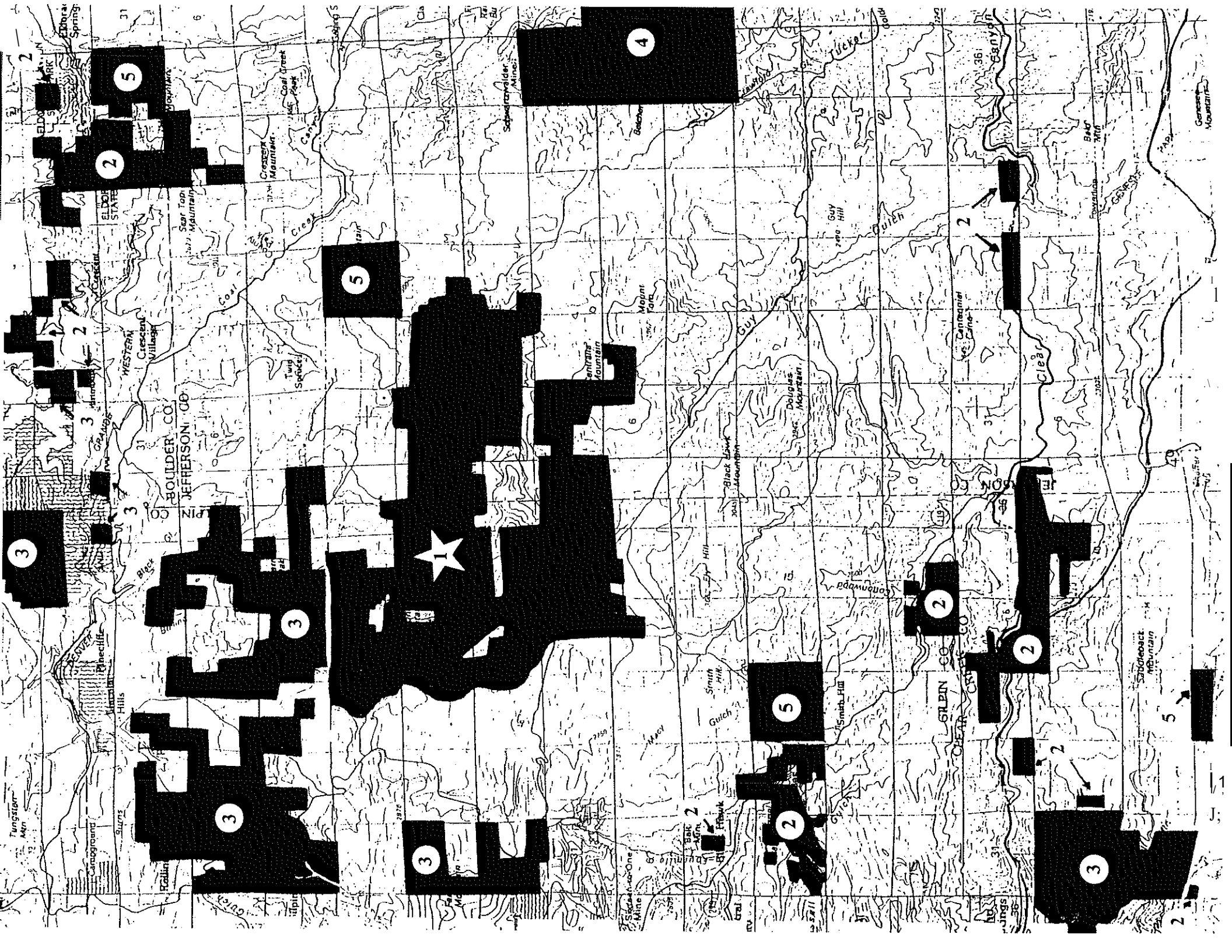
G. Climatic Influences

The park is definitely affected by the dramatic climate changes that occur each year. The weather is typical of the central foothills, ranging from extremely dry years to wet, deep snow years. The temperature extremes vary from 30 degrees below zero to a high of about 80 degrees during warm summer days. These temperature extremes, coupled with differing snowfall amounts, greatly affect the length of use seasons and types of activities carried out from one year to the next. Generally, however, winters are mild with long-term snow cover being rare in the lower end of the park and good snow depth occurring in the campground areas. An early or late snow storm can be very detrimental to park visitation.

H. Land Ownership Map And Discussion Of Agencies Surrounding Golden Gate

Key - Public Land Ownership

1. Golden Gate Canyon State Park
2. Bureau of Land Management
3. U.S. Forest Service
4. Jefferson County Open Space - White Ranch Park
5. State Land Board



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V. GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The overall management goal of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is to foster visitor understanding of the need to preserve this unique area in its present state and minimize human impact on the landscape in the future. Golden Gate Canyon State Park was purchased to obtain a natural area or semi-wilderness area close to metropolitan Denver and preserve it for generations to come. As the park expands to the east and the south, the theme of past development should remain in effect. It is critical to keep the development and natural zones in contact with any future construction.

A. Natural Resource Management

1. The park's natural resources will be managed in coordination with known and established management techniques to:

- a. Maintain and protect the natural systems and processes while harvesting, planting, and thinning in accordance with forest management plan recommendations to control diseases in high use areas. Timber management will follow the State Forest Service Disease Control Plan and the future Forestry Management Plan as accepted by the Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Wherever areas are thinned or timber completely removed, replanting of forests will occur as needed. Most of the park with the exceptions of high use areas or high visibility areas will be left alone in a "let nature takes its course" setting.

b. Improve the environmental quality of the developed areas of the park. Man-made fertilizers and native species seeds will be used to enhance developed areas. Replanting cutting areas for disease or fire control will be encouraged.

c. Preserve threatened resources and reintroduce native species where possible.

2. Consumption of renewable and nonrenewable natural resources:

a. Management activities must be mediated by the statutory designation of being a State Park. Occurrences of extreme degradation from diseases and epidemics, however, should be mitigated by careful timbering practices through designed management plans of the timber resources.

b. Hunting will be allowed in approximately one third of the park, in the Jefferson County portion of the park only. Past management practices have proven effective and should continue. As additional land is purchased to the south and the east, review with the Division of Wildlife should be sought to determine hunting levels on appropriate tracts of land.

3. Improvement of environmental quality:

a. Management activities will strive to improve the quality of the park's resources during future development, and will follow-up maintenance activities to ensure quality.

4. Management Of Fire In Natural Ecosystems:

a. Wildfire will be effectively prevented, controlled, contained, and extinguished at the earliest time possible. Timber management will be geared toward wildfire prevention in high-use areas by utilizing fire breaks in heavily diseased areas.

5. Management Of Landscaped Areas:

a. Developed areas will be maintained in as natural a state as possible. Only native plantings will be acceptable, but improving soils and conditions with fertilizers is permissible. Natural grass species will be reintroduced in heavy use areas as conditions deteriorate.

6. Management of stream bed resources and pond resources:

a. Management of the Ralston Creek stream bed and other small streams in the park will consist of maintaining the areas in a clean, sanitary and stable manner. Management of thi ponds in the park will be the same as above, with the exception of aquatic weed control, to enhance the recreational experience and the fishing resource.

7. Management of wildlife or particular animal species:

a. Harvesting of populations will occur under the direct control of the park staff with recommendations from the Division of Wildlife. Controlled hunting is a must in an area this size, with the numbers of hunters limited on a daily basis. Hunting on newly acquired areas will be established after input from the Division of Wildlife and the approval of the Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

B. Land Based Management

The overall goal of the park's staff is to secure through acquisitions, scenic easements, donations and other means, a land base with a more symetric boundary. Such a land base would facilitate efficient administration, long-term perpetuation of park resources and diverse opportunities for park visitors. Acquisition of private lands within the park is the highest priority. Private inholdings within state parks should be removed as quickly and efficiently as possible. Addition of land to the present land base is another high priority. There is a need to expand the park while there **are** still large land bases available for purchase adjacent to the present boundaries. These priorities have been identified in Appendix C.

C. Development Criteria

The park is developed sufficiently for its present acreage. However, it is imperative that future development remains compatible with existing structures and the natural environment. The past practices of maintaining separate development and natural zones should be adhered to strictly. Future acquisitions will open possibilities for new facilities. Current development is complete with the exception of the Gap Road Study addressing the north boundary of the park. The development outlined in that study is consistent with past and present philosophies. Additional development requiring evaluation is for additional parking at the major trailheads. The present parking was designed for use before expansion of the trails to their current mileage. With the demand during the high-use season, the need for expansion of camping and picnicking

listed in the Gap Road Study.

facilities should be explored as

D. Visitor Use And Protection

The park's goal in this area is to manage visitor use and enjoyment of the park, including all appropriate activities, in a manner that is compatible with the natural and cultural environment. Objectives to meet this goal are:

- Provide safe and clean facilities. Hazards that are natural or man-made will be repaired promptly or posted and closed.
- Accommodate the disabled visitor to the greatest extent possible.
- Law enforcement activities will be proactive instead of reactive, and will be commensurate **with** the ranger image.
- Assure a quality recreation experience and environmental protection by controlling the levels and types of uses to reduce overcrowding and conflicting activities.
- Provide park operations, activities, and facilities which reflect the most advanced technology available for reducing adverse impacts on park resources and for assuring health and safety standards.
- Publicize the park to ensure maximum public knowledge of available activities.
- Operate the park on a year-round, seven days a week basis to provide the maximum possible hours of use. The Visitor Center will remain open 365 days a year.
- Keep the Jefferson County portion of the park open to mountain bicycles where the terrain and trails are appropriately suited for this activity. The park will remain closed to all off-road, motorized uses.

E. Interpretation

To foster understanding and appreciation of the park's mountain scenery, wildlife, history, and other resources as well as preservation of them. A variety of on and off site interpretive and information programs will be provided focusing on the park and the Division. The interpretive programs will follow the interpretive master plan outlined for the park in 1988, as approved by the Division.

F. Cooperation

County agency cooperation and positive interaction is a prerequisite for efficient park management. Park staff will continue to work with land owners of adjacent property to balance the park's goals and the landowners' needs.

G. Forest Management

In 1986 the Parks' Board approved a tree disease study at Golden Gate and contracted with the State Forest Service for \$1500 to complete the study. A copy of the study is available at the park office.

A limited forestry program including firewood cutting in high-use areas with firewood sales to the public, aspen tree sales through the State Forest Service, and other disease control measures (not utilizing sprays) to maintain the area and help pay for a Forest Management Plan covering the entire park. The cost of implementing this plan is approximately \$1.50 per acre. The operation is currently in its second year and has been successful in cleaning up the fire hazard in the high-use areas, as well as beginning to pay for itself. During the fall of 1987, approximately 75 truckloads of firewood were sold, and several hundred aspen trees moved to nurseries. The initial year of the plan broke even. Continuing the program on a larger scale may permit the accumulation of funds necessary for the forest management plan.

At the present time, crews for the logging program are funded by the Job Training Partnership Act Program (JTPA) of Jefferson County at no cost to the park. The supervisor for the crew and the additional cost of operating the program are paid for from firewood sales money. Any additional monies derived from the program are held in escrow with the State Forest Service until money is available for the forest management plan.

At the present time there are no plans for commercial logging at Golden Gate. Emphasis is on curbing new diseases, replanting the timbered areas, and selective cutting in high use, highly visible areas. Sales of aspen and ponderosa pine trees within the park are on a limited basis, with new seedlings planted with each tree taken. These tree sales will only occur until the forest management plan is fully paid for.

H. Gap Road Master Plan

On September 17, 1981 the Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation approved the Gap Road Master Plan for Golden Gate Canyon State Park. This study was conducted to collect and assemble data on the northern portion of Golden Gate Canyon State Park, known as the Gap Road, into one source document. The study recommended the following improvements: Gap Road resurfacing; develop The Lazy Squaw Ranch site; the Lazy Squaw Picnic Area and parking lot; addition of 15 backcountry campsites at Rifleman Phillips homestead area; the addition of 20 picnic sites at Aspen Meadows Picnic Area; addition of the Big Sweep Overlook; and a Gap Road Trailhead parking area for 15 vehicles. The plan also addressed acquisition of inholdings on the north end of the park and establishment of boundaries and fencing areas.

Parts of this plan are being accomplished. Inholding acquisitions are being consummated at the current time as described elsewhere in this plan. The recommendations for the Lazy Squaw Ranch have been eliminated in favor of different uses of the ranch. The recommended uses for the Lazy Squaw Ranch proper as addressed in the Gap Road Master Plan are not feasible and should be ignored. It is recommended that the remainder of the Gap Road Master Plan be pursued with zeal as an important part of the park that has not been developed in its final phase. Reconstruction of Gap Road along with facilities described in the plan would make the north end of the park more viable for the public and take advantage of a very under-utilized portion of the park.

I. Promotion

One important aspect of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is a concept of promoting this "Sleeping Giant" to the public. Many aspects can be used, the current being:

*The park is part of the Channel 4 Weatherwatchers. This provides for free "advertisement" of the park each day.

*The park sends monthly articles entitled "Golden Gate Nuggets" to the Central City Register Call, The Mountaineer and the Golden Weekly Transcript.

*Interpretive programs are presented to large corporations in the metro Denver area.

*Directional signs have been placed along highways 93, 46, and 119 to attract tourists entering Golden, Central City, and the Peak to Peak Highway area.

*Articles have been published on Golden Gate in many magazines, the latest of which is the Peak to Peak publication of June 1988.

*Camper information has been disseminated to camp-oriented publications such as Rand/McNally.

*The park has published a Golden Gate Trails Guide, which is sold through the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

These are only some of the promotional techniques used at Golden Gate. Future plans call for activity days (well publicized in the summer months); interpretive themes to be publicized and changed each year; promoting the park through the Outdoor Education Center. In addition, local radio personalities will be invited to do remote broadcasts in the park; Watchable Wildlife Staff will be invited to operate programs within the park; and the production of a video program to be displayed in the Visitor Center.

VI. FACILITY ANALYSIS

A. EXISTING FACILITIES

Golden Gate Canyon State Park was developed extensively for the visitor during a period of low development statewide. The facilities range from rather mundane to elaborate. The facilities were developed certainly with the natural settings in mind and are well suited to visitors with only a few exceptions.

Shops - The maintenance shops in the park were built in the 1960's and serve well to this day. Both shops are two bay facilities with offices and seasonal housing. The facilities are getting old and must be maintained in a better fashion according OSHA standards. The main funding required is for upgrading to OSHA standards, upgrade of furnace systems, upgrade of old water systems, and replacement of leach fields. Funding has been requested under controlled maintenance requests for these changes.

Visitor Center - While this building has undergone an extensive facelift during the past two years, expansion of the current administrative facilities are a high priority. The current administration offices were designed for half the staff currently located in the park. As the park expands, the necessity for this expansion will become even more mandatory. The public restrooms in the visitor center are wholly inadequate without possibility of conversion to handicapped facilities. With expansion of the administrative offices, new restroom facilities for the handicapped should be built. Funding has been requested for these changes.

Entrance Stations - The current entrance station (2) are small wooden buildings located at the two main entrances. These stations were constructed 15 years ago and have outlived their usefulness and appearance. Two permanent entrance station structures with adequate safety/comforts for employees have been requested through the controlled maintenance budget process.

Picnic Areas - Picnic areas located throughout the park are adequate for the visitation we now receive. The tables and grills are scheduled for replacement under the HORIZON plan. This will be accomplished as materials arrive.

Group Picnic Facilities - Golden Gate Canyon State Park is fortunate to have an excellent facility for group picnics. The only drawback to this facility is the size of groups that it can accommodate. The facility is reserved each high-use weekend during the summer. The visitation can certainly support another group picnic facility of a larger size. A group facility that can handle approximately 200 visitors will be requested.

Campgrounds - The current camping facilities at Golden Gate are excellent and have received an upgrade during the past two years. In total there are 106 sites in Reverend's Ridge Campground, 35 sites in Aspen Meadows Campground. Requests for upgrading the building siding and the main pumphouse in Reverend's Ridge have been submitted. Tables, grills, and railroad tie replacements have been scheduled through HORIZON. Tent pads are in need of replacement and will be done with operations budget as allowed.

Roads - Golden Gate Canyon State Park's road system is currently under repair utilizing Highway Users Tax Funds. The only park roads not currently under repair is Mountain Base Road, which is in good repair, and Gap Road, which has been studied under the Gap Road Master Plan and has been requested for repairs under the HUTF funding.

Restrooms - There are 26 vault toilets in Golden Gate Canyon State Park. They are being systematically replaced at the rate of two or three per year. The intention is to replace all the existing old toilet facilities with new handicapped toilets.

Handicapped Facilities - At the time Golden Gate's facilities were built, the handicapped were not addressed. Handicapped facilities are in dire need throughout the area. Plans for handicapped entrance facilities are planned throughout the park where possible with operating budget. Future upgrade of facilities will be built fully handicapped accessible. Current plans by management include: access to Panorama Point Overlook structure; Handicapped

camping sites in Reverend's Ridge Campground; Handicapped fishing access at Kriley Pond; Handicapped ramps located at the main facilities in Reverend's Ridge Campground; Handicapped picnic sites at Ole Barn Knoll, Bootleg Bottom, Kriley Pond, and Bridge Creek picnic areas. These picnic areas have new handicapped accessible restrooms currently constructed or under construction at this time.

Sign System - Currently the sign system is approximately 50 percent replaced under a graduated replacement program utilizing Special Projects money. The remainder of the signs are scheduled to be replaced within three years. Entrance signs specific to Golden Gate should be designed and constructed.

Fencing - Approximately two-thirds of the park's current boundary is fenced and surveyed with an on-going program. With the boundary changes occurring due to inholding acquisition, surveying and fencing in the future is critical. Fencing for new sections of the park and the eastern boundary will be applied.

VII. CURRENT OPERATION

A. Service Level

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is classified by the Colorado Division of Parks as a park between Service Levels II and III or between the Standard Level Band the "Extra" Service Level A. Service Level II and III parks are defined as follows:

- *** Areas that receive significant visitation annually or intensive visitation.
- *** Areas with significant, unique, natural resource values.
- *** Areas that have multiple activities with several significant activities.
- *** Areas with facilities that include such items as Class B campground.
- *** Areas that include on-site management presence in terms of FTE's including a park manager, assistant park manager, rangers and maintenance staff.

The park is staffed with a Park Manager III, a Park Manager I, two Ranger B's, one Senior Maintenance Mechanic, and a Senior Administrative Clerk Typist. This staff also manages Eldorado Canyon State Park where a Senior Ranger and a part time Ranger Bare employed. Golden Gate Canyon State Park employs 30 seasonal workers each year.

These employees work as entrance station attendants, visitor center attendants, campground desk attendants, maintenance workers, campground maintenance workers, seasonal rangers, and backcountry trails workers. With a few exceptions, the seasonal staff works from May to October. Other seasonal programs are: Colorado Conservation Corps, Special Projects Wood Cutting Crew under the JTPA program, Summer Work Program under the JTPA program, year-round on the job training program through the JTPA is also used.

B. Operations Budget

The current budget allocation for park operations is sufficient to operate the park at an adequate level of service. Priorities used in budgeting are as follows:

1. Public safety, health, and welfare
2. Resource protection and facility maintenance
3. Revenue collection and administration
4. Environmental Education

	<u>OPERATING BUDGET</u>			
	84/85	85/86	86/87	87/88
Operating budget	\$41,000	\$33,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Seasonal work program	\$71,000	\$33,000	\$70,452	\$70,452
Utilities	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$17,127
Special operating			\$ 2,150	\$ 3,000

VIII. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

A. Inholding Acquisition Development Plan

As inholdings are purchased, development criteria for those parcels should meet the needs of the particular area. Planned development for inholding purchase priorities are as follows:

*Works/True Land Trade - The Division should pursue an open space philosophy for this parcel. The old access road to this parcel should be blocked off and a trail extension from Panorama Point to the Elk Trail be constructed for horses and cross-country skiers. The present trail link is not conducive to those uses.

*Toll Cabin - The old Toll Cabin in the center of Reverend's Ridge Campground would be repaired for seasonal housing during the summer and used as a ski cabin rental facility for the winter months. Approximate repair costs to this cabin would be \$1,500 for a wood stove, roof repair, doors and windows, and chinking. We see relatively low interpretive potential for this site.

*Toll **Property** - This 101-acre parcel is located atop the Promontory Ridge area. This area will be left as open space with a spur trail off Coyote Trail with benches placed on the lookout area. Plans will be made to stabilize the old cabin on the Coyote Trail for its historic value.

*Harmsen Property - Before the land trade to Bob Harmsen in the early 1980's, this parcel was used as a trail corridor for the Goat Trail. The trail was abandoned at that time. Rerouting of the trail will be addressed in the trails section of the management plan. A hike-in picnic area should be developed in the center of this property (the aesthetics at that point are excellent, and there are few picnic grounds on the north end of the park).

*Nelson Property - This parcel should be looked at only as open space land. Trail expansion to the top of Tremont Mountain (a highly requested expansion) will be addressed in the trails section.

*Bandimere Property - This parcel should be looked at as a buffer between development in the Crawford Gulch area and the Frazer Meadow backcountry area. This land has been developed on the east side, but has been left as open space in the interior of the park. Since acquisition of the inholdings in the center of the Crawford Gulch area cannot be purchased due to its highly developed nature, this parcel is a critical buffer zone. There is a cabin in the center of the property that could be used as a cross-country skiing cabin rental with little or no improvements. Development of ski trails and hiking trails to this area are discussed in the trails development section.

*Hart Property - This 910-acre parcel connects the two eastern portions of the park. The land is steep and is not suited for development. It is planned for trails and backcountry campsite development only. Further discussion linking the trails at Golden Gate with the trails at the White Ranch are located in the trails section of the plan.

***Green Ranch/Elson Property** - Full discussions of the complicated development of the Green Ranch/Elson property are located in a special section of this plan.

*Specific trails planned for development are found in Appendix E of this plan.

B. Green Ranch Development Plan

1. General Management Goals

The general management goals for the Green Ranch are similar to those of Golden Gate Canyon State Park:

- * Preserve the area in a semi-wilderness state.
- * Provide for a safe, quality experience and a wide variety of recreational opportunities for park visitors.
- * Identify significant natural and cultural resources.
- * Protect the ranch's unique scenic, scientific and educational values.
- * Conduct land management practices that cause minimal impact to land, vegetation and wildlife.
- * Develop and implement programs to monitor the condition of **park** vegetation and wildlife, and provide for forest management where necessary.
- * Manage the ranch to preserve its open space values.
- * Limit development to the perimeter of the ranch as much as possible to enhance the semi-wilderness concept.

Since the Green Ranch acquisition seems viable, development of the area should follow the following guidelines. It is recommended that a wide variety of recreational activities be permitted

that are compatible with the mountainous terrain environment. The major exception to this would be the prohibition of off-highway vehicles. Recreational activities involved will include, but not be limited to, hiking, camping, fishing, horseback riding, picnicking, cross-country skiing, controlled hunting and group use. Each of these activities will be studied to determine the suitability of the activity and will be conducted in the land-use zone deemed best fitted for the particular activity.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The basic goal for development of the Green Ranch parcel is to supplement the existing facilities at Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Golden Gate is developed sufficiently for its present acreage, but additional facilities are required due to developmental changes since the original master plan and changes in use patterns over the past ten years.

The addition of the Green Ranch creates an exceptional opportunity to expand facilities that Golden Gate is currently lacking or that are presently at capacity during the high use season. This is also an excellent opportunity to develop the handicapped facilities that are sorely lacking at Golden Gate.

With this in mind, all development that is planned and constructed in the Green Ranch should be totally handicap-accessible as far as possible. These facilities will be available for handicapped and non-handicapped persons alike. The only exception is the majority of the back-country trails system. Handicapped trails should be developed close to the camping facilities or other day use areas.

Another facility at Golden Gate currently at capacity is the Red Barn Group Picnic Area, which is reserved every weekend from mid-May to mid-September. Requests for use of this facility that cannot be filled are received consistently. Many requests are also taken from groups which exceed the capacity of the Red Barn Group Picnic Area (J00) indicating the need for a group area that could accommodate up to 300 visitors. An area of this size could be easily developed at the Green Ranch.

Camping at Golden Gate is now available at two campgrounds, Reverend's Ridge and Aspen Meadows. Reverend's Ridge has 106 sites, 20 of which are designed for tent camping only. Aspen Meadows Campground has 35 sites all limited to tent campers. During the high use season, both campgrounds reach capacity on the weekends (along with private and Forest Service campgrounds in the area). No facilities for persons with disabilities are available within the immediate area. Development of a 50-site accessible campground with moderate facilities would provide an opportunity not available in the region at this time. Moderate facilities would include water stations, dump stations, moderate restroom facilities, a rustic amphitheater, and accessible nature trail.

There are no cabin rental facilities, private or commercial, in the immediate area. The need for this type of facility is significant; many requests are taken at the park. Development of a concession-owned and-operated cabin rental facility could easily occur at the Green Ranch. Approximately 12 rustic semi-modern cabins could be constructed. The location of these are on the map in Appendix F.

2. General Development Guidelines

Development guidelines for the Green Ranch should be similar to those at Golden Gate Canyon State Park. All buildings and facilities development should be limited, when possible, to the exterior perimeter of the property. The concept of perimeter development has worked extremely well at Golden Gate and would be popular on the Green Ranch, allowing the semi-wilderness concept to be maintained while properly developing facilities and access for the public.

The area will be separated into a development zone (campgrounds, picnic areas, group picnic areas, etc.); a natural zone (backcountry trails, campsites, zero development); and a special use zone (cabin rental areas, etc.). These zones, marked on the map in Appendix F, were determined by the staff of Golden Gate after preliminary inspection of the site. These zones were developed by using the perimeter development guidelines, accessibility, and land topography.

3. Facility Needs

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is developed sufficiently for the present acreage, but many of its facilities are at capacity or are under-sized for the current recreational demand placed on them. For example, parking lots developed for picnic sites are now used by hikers and picnickers, so the parking lots are often at capacity even though the picnic facilities remain empty.

A horse stable concession should be opened on the Green Ranch. Presently there no horse rentals within 25 miles of the park. Numerous requests for such service are received at the park and the downtown office. Corrals are available on the ranch and a concession should be initiated for a stable.

Many day use picnic areas could be constructed along the main access road into the ranch; small day use areas could be built along the lower end of Smith Hill road. Current need dictates approximately 100 picnic sites be developed. Overlooks and additional parking for day use may be located as indicated on the map in Appendix F.

Trails development (as shown on the map in Appendix G) would enhance the current trails system at Golden Gate. Trails shown on this map include expansion toward the White Ranch on the east as well as toward Eldorado Canyon State Park and Walker Ranch on the north as is addressed in the Jefferson County Open Space Trails Plan. Along with these expansions, a system of 3-sided overnight huts would be developed to replace some existing backcountry sites in Golden Gate. Approximate

locations of these huts are shown in Appendix G. Additional trails development on inholding lands currently being purchased are described in Section VIII of the management plan.

Construction of a fishing pond of approximately 10 acres should be developed in the lower end of the "Big Meadow" as shown on the development map. There is sufficient water available from two spring fed streams leading to this area. This area is directly below the cabin area and close to the campground development.

In summary, the development plan of the Green Ranch is in the early stages and much work remains to be done. Development will follow the perimeter concept which allows much of the ranch to stay in its semi-wilderness state, while enhancing the current facilities at Golden Gate Canyon State Park.

C. Development Schedule

Controlled Maintenance Projects		Year Programmed	
Kriley Pond Dam Repairs	CM	1988-89	10,000
Reverend's Ridge Furnace	CM	1989	2,500
Upper Shop Furnaces	CM	1989	2,500
Lower Shop Furnaces	CM	1989	2,500
Vault Toilets			
Ranch Ponds	CM	1990	10,000
Bootleg Bottom	CM	1990	10,000
Ralston Creek	CM	1990	10,000
Kriley Well Replacement	CM	1989	30,000
Entrance Station Replacement	CM	1990	20,000
V.C. Expansion/Restrooms	CM	1994	75,000
Green Ranch Development	Cap. Const.	1995	1,000,000
Gap Road Study	HUTF Cap. Const.	1995	280,000
Acquisitions			
Works		1988	Trade- no cost
Toll		1988-89	77,000
Harmsen		1988-89	68,000
Nelson		1988-89	48,000
Bandimere		1988-89	240,000
Green		1989-90	1,500,000
Hart		1989-90	596,000

(F)

IX. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

*** Natural Resource Management

** Complete Forestry Management Plan and protect timber resource according to plan recommendations.

** Fertilize and seed high-use areas

** According to Forestry Management Plan, harvest timber in high-use areas for visual effects and fire hazard control.

** Allow hunting in Jefferson County portion of park and new areas as determined in cooperation with Division of Wildlife.

** Improve quality of the park through preventative maintenance.

** Prevent, control and contain wildfires.

*** Land Base Management

** Secure through acquisitions, scenic easements, donations, or other means - a land base that will facilitate maximum recreation activities and perpetuate existing park resources.

*** Development Criteria

** Past engineering practices of maintaining the

development zones and the natural zones should be adhered to strictly.

*** Visitor Use and Protection

- ** Provide safe and clean facilities.
- ** Accommodate disabled visitors to the greatest extent possible.
- ** Ensure law enforcement is proactive whenever possible.
- ** Control visitor activities via use of carrying capacity.
- ** Actively promote the park to the public.
- ** Operate the park to provide maximum hours of use.

*** Interpretation

- ** Foster an understanding and appreciation of the park
- ** Develop interpretative activities according to the interpretive master plan and annual themes.
- ** **Work** closely with Adams County School District 12 on the Outdoor Education Center to ensure proper park usage.

*** Cooperation

- ** Continue to support a positive interagency cooperative atmosphere to enhance management activities.

***Current Facilities

- **Bring shops up to OSHA standards.
- **Expand administrative facilities.
- **Construct two permanent entrance station facilities.
- **Enhance picnic areas through reconstruction of sites.
- **Continue to enhance the camping experience through redevelopment of current sites.
- **Construct facilities for people with disabilities throughout the park as operating budget and controlled maintenance budget allow.
- **Complete replacement of sign system by 1990.
- **Secure funding to complete fencing boundaries.

***Inholding Acquisition and Development

- **Develop acquisition inholdings as delineated in the management plan.
- **Develop new trails as described in Appendix E.
- **Seek inter-agency agreements to link trails system with Jefferson County Open Space and Boulder County Open Space.
- **Develop Green Ranch acquisition as described in Management Plan allowed by the Divisions five-year plan.

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X. APPENDICES

- A. Wildlife Types
- B. Past Land Purchases
- C. Inholdings
- D. Facilities Location
- E. Trails Development Map
- F. Green Ranch Development Map
- G. Interagency Trail Development

List of Animals at
Golden Gate Canyon State Park

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Black Bear	<u>Ursus americanus</u>
Beaver	<u>Castor canadensis</u>
Mule Deer	<u>Odocoileus hemionus</u>
Elk	<u>Cervus canadensis</u>
Coyote	<u>Canis latrans</u>
Porcupine	<u>Erethizon dorsatum</u>
Muskrat	<u>Ondatra zibethicus</u>
Abert's Squirrel	<u>Sciurus aberti</u>
Golden-Mantled GroundSquirrel	<u>Spermophilus lateralis</u>
Thirteen-lined GroundSquirrel	<u>Spermophilus tridecemlineatus</u>
Richardson's Ground Squirrel	<u>Spermophilus richardsonii</u>
Yellow-Bellied Marmot	<u>Marmota flaviventris</u>
Snowshoe Hare	<u>Lepus americanus</u>
Nuttall's Cottontail	<u>Sylvilagus nuttallii</u>
Raccoon	<u>Procyon lotor</u>
Long-Tailed Weasel	<u>Mustela freata</u>
American Badger	<u>Taxidea taxus</u>
Deer Mouse	<u>Peromyscus maniculatus</u>
Mountain Lion	<u>Felis concolor</u>
Bobcat	<u>Felis rufus</u>
Pine Squirrel	<u>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</u>
Vole	<u>Microtus</u>
Pocket Gopher	<u>Thomomys</u>

Sighted PhctG Bird Na!e (2!}:habeti:ai)

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LAND ACQUISITION LISTING

Fee Title:

Dowdle	152.5
Colsmen	287.5
Hayes and Dowdle	160
Strang	1610
Cline	315.88
Greenfield	320
Baker	80
Gallagher	159.1
Elson	120
Ellyson	198
Ellyson	480
Gray	5
Anderson	5
Blunk	5
Shortridge	5
Braecher	135
Braecher	338.686
BLM	158.32
BLM	400
State School	640
Works	561.09
Harmsen	55
Harmsen	2002
BLM	520
Binder	51.36
Mayfield	5

Total Fee Title 8769.436 acres

EASEMENTS:

Nelson	160
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Total Easements 160 acres

Total Water Area 20 acres

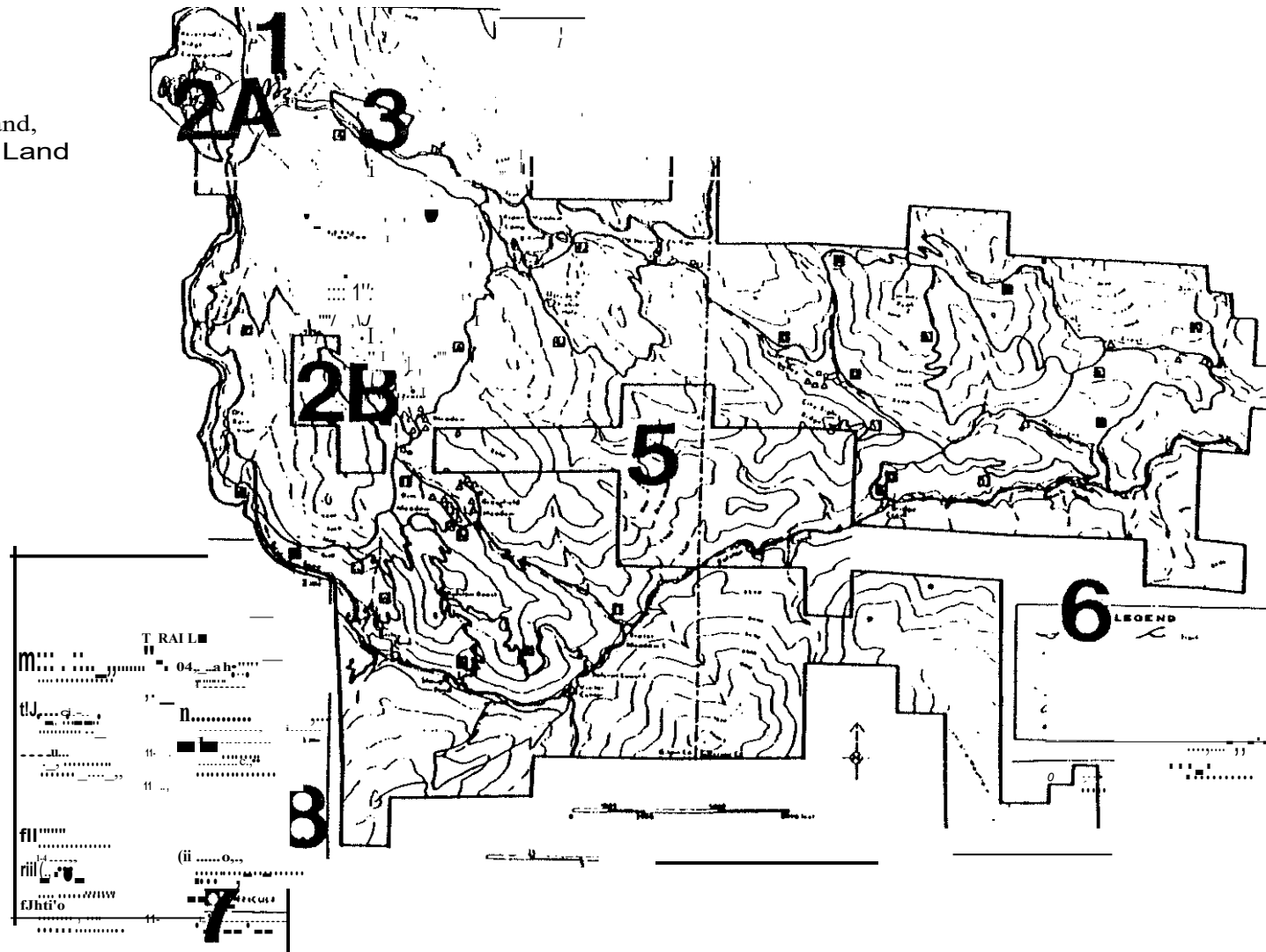
GOLDEN GATE INHOLDINGS

- Parcel #1 6-acre private inholding located below Panorama Point between Panorama Point and Reverend's Ridge Campground. This inholding is of vital importance as its location between Panorama Point and Reverend's Ridge Campground makes it a focal point of Golden Gate Canyon State Park. The owner plans construction of a home directly in view of Panorama Point.
- Parcel #2A .25-acre with cabin built in 1860 - located in center of Reverend's Ridge. Owner does not wish to sell or inhabit; scenic easement is a good possibility.
- Parcel #28 102.9-acres - located in center of park along Promontory Ridge. Owners do not wish to sell, but might consider a scenic easement.
- Parcel #3 35-acre Harmsen inholding. Trade of this property necessary since owner does not want to sell.
- Parcel #4 80-acre private inholding on northwest side of Tremont Mountain. Owner willing to sell to the state. Development would encroach the view from Gap Road and Harmsen Ranch. Owner has access to the property for development.

- Parcel #5 320-acre private inholding traversing the center of the park into Frazer Meadow. Development of this parcel would severely damage the integrity of the center of Golden Gate.
- Parcel #5 910-acres of private land that would join the northeast and southeast portions of Golden Gate. This land is currently sub-divided into 40 acre parcels for sale.
- Parcel #7 2200-acres located south of present park boundary. Very high quality, pristine land. Owner wishes it to become part of Golden Gate. This property truly fits the original "wilderness" concept Golden Gate was founded upon.
- Parcel #8 240-acre parcel called the Elson property. Acquire for contiguous boundary with parcel 7.

OLDEN GATE LAND ACQUISITION

- Parcel 1 - 6 acres
- Parcel 2A - Cabin
- Parcel 2B - 102 acres
- Parcel 3 - 35 acres
- Parcel 4 - 100 acres
- Parcel 5 - 320 acres
- Parcel 6 - 910 acres
- Parcel 7 - 2200 acres + BUI Land,
State School Board Land
- Parcel 8 - 240 acres

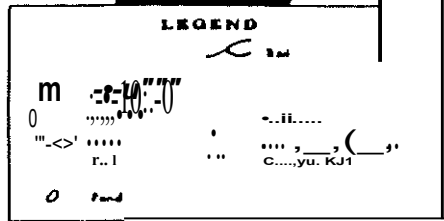
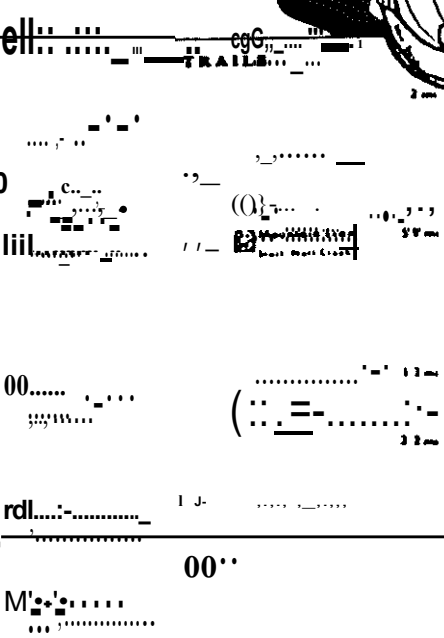
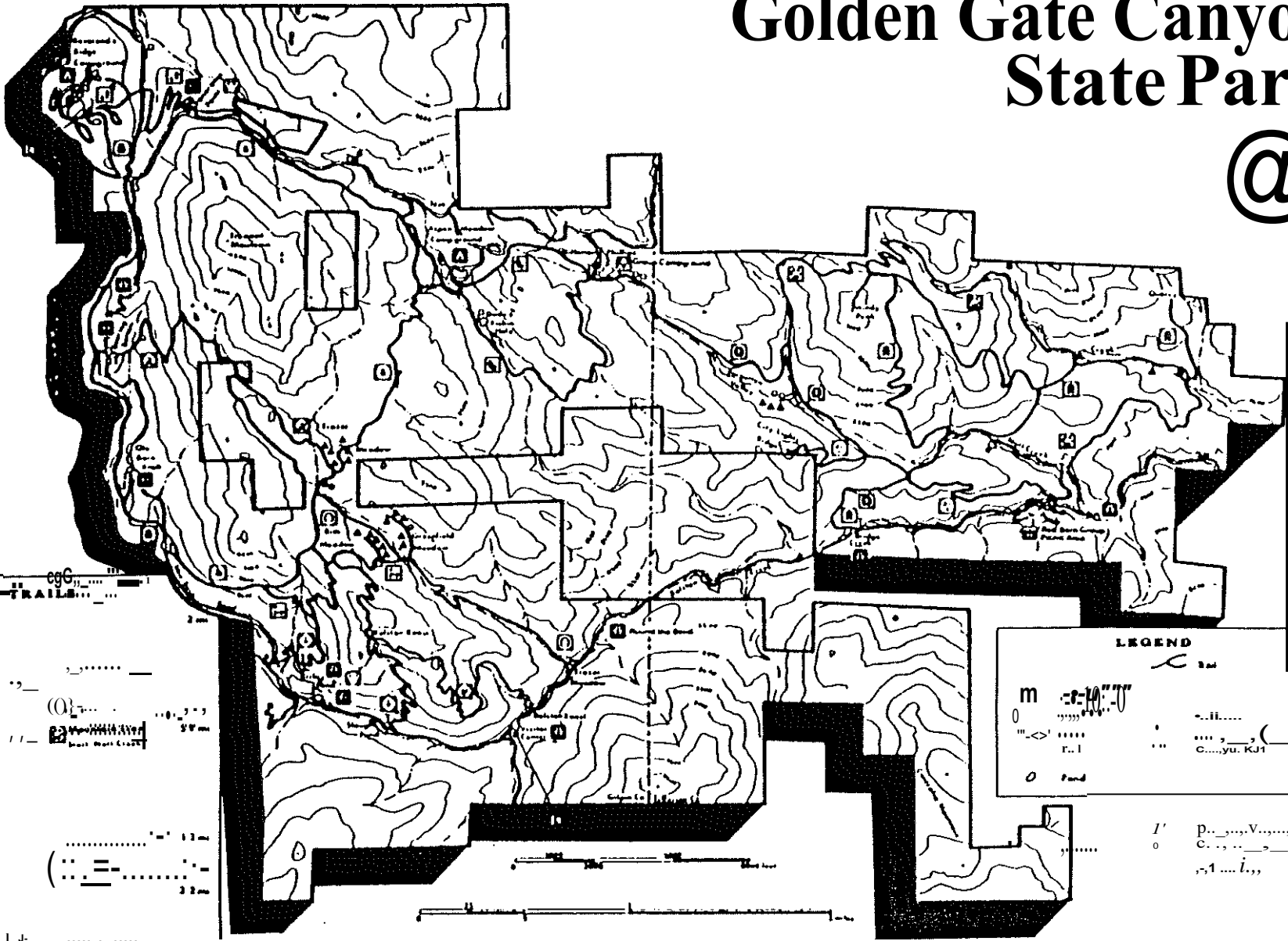


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Golden Gate Canyon State Park

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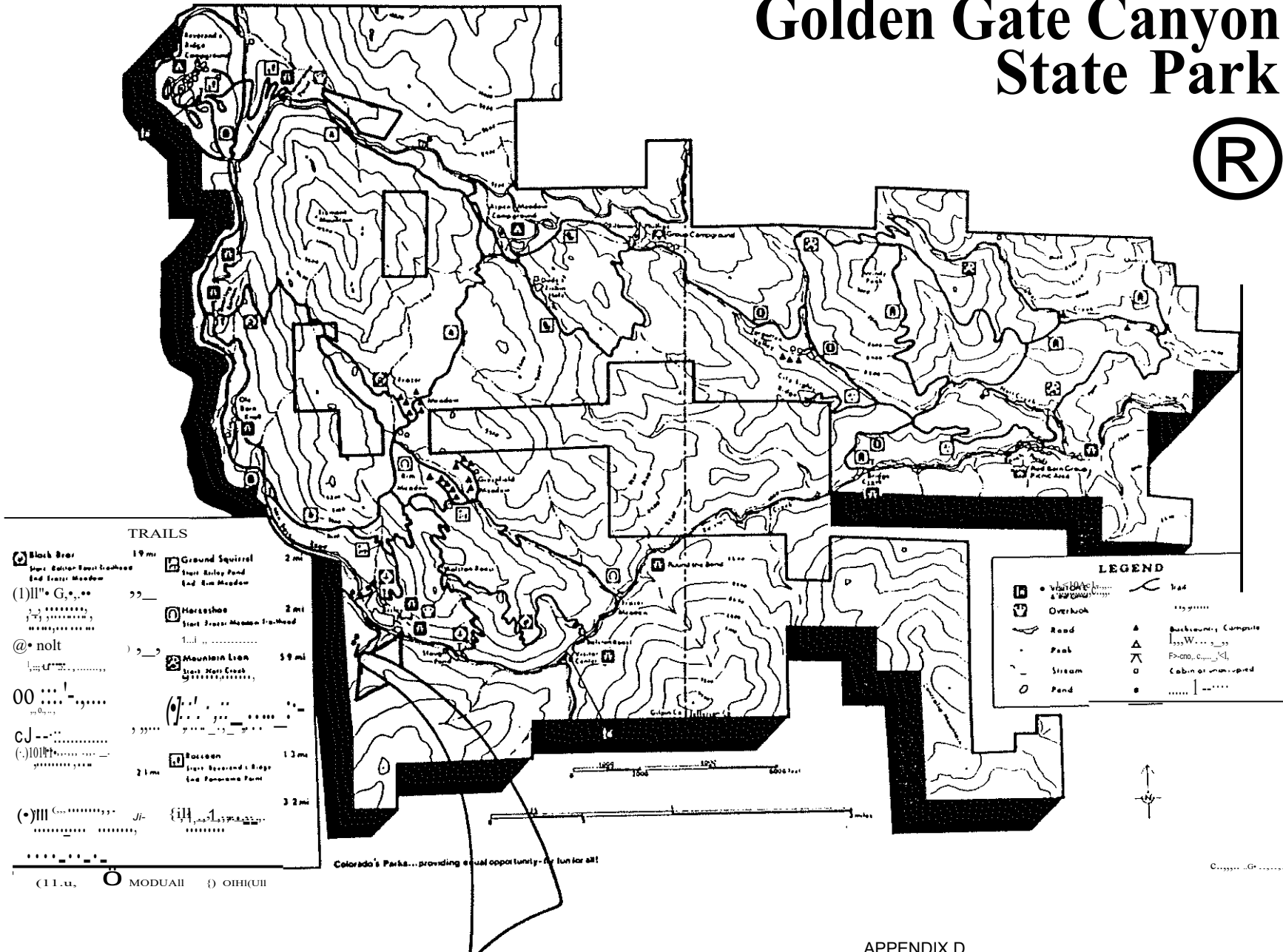
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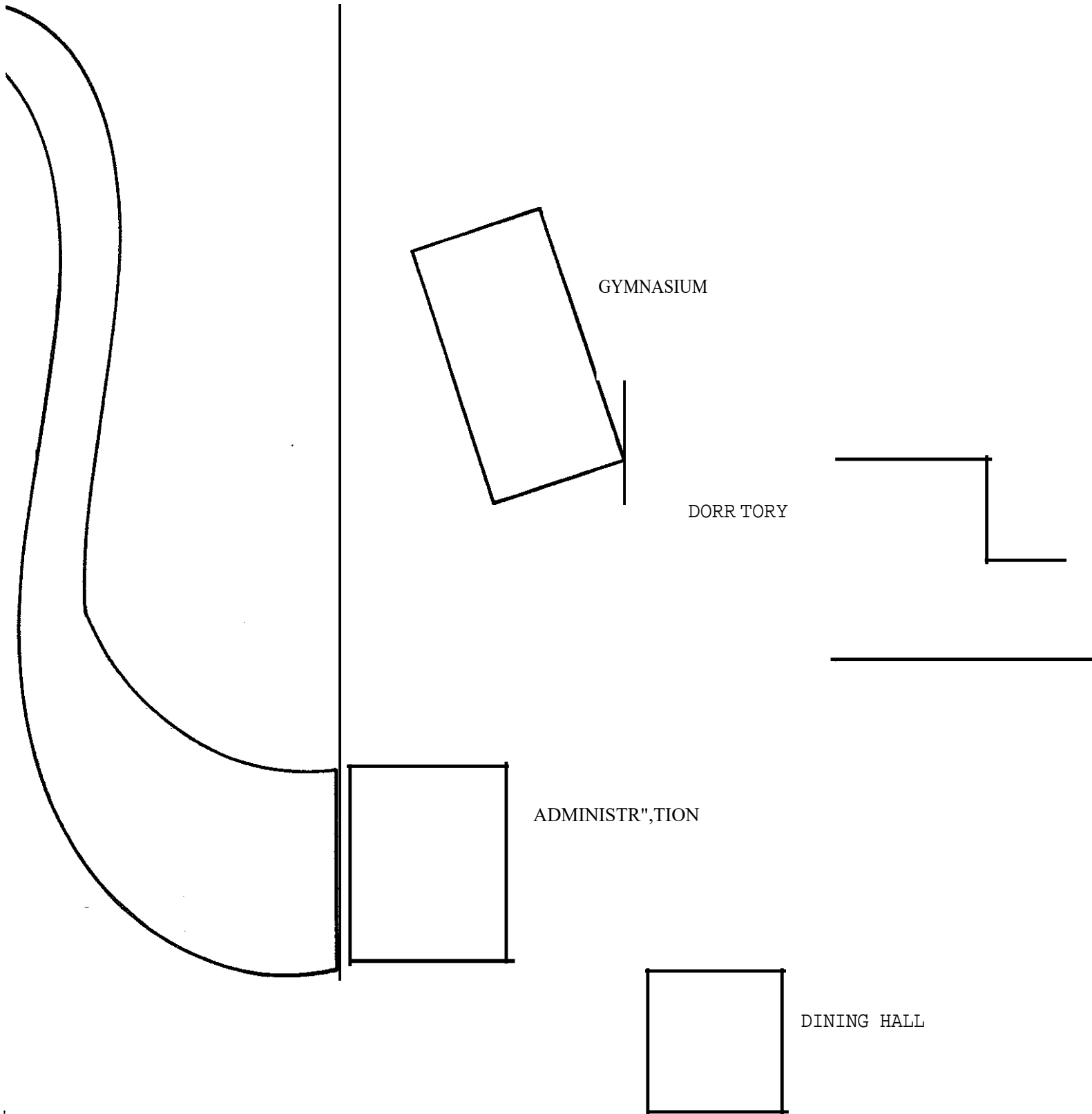
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APPENDIX D

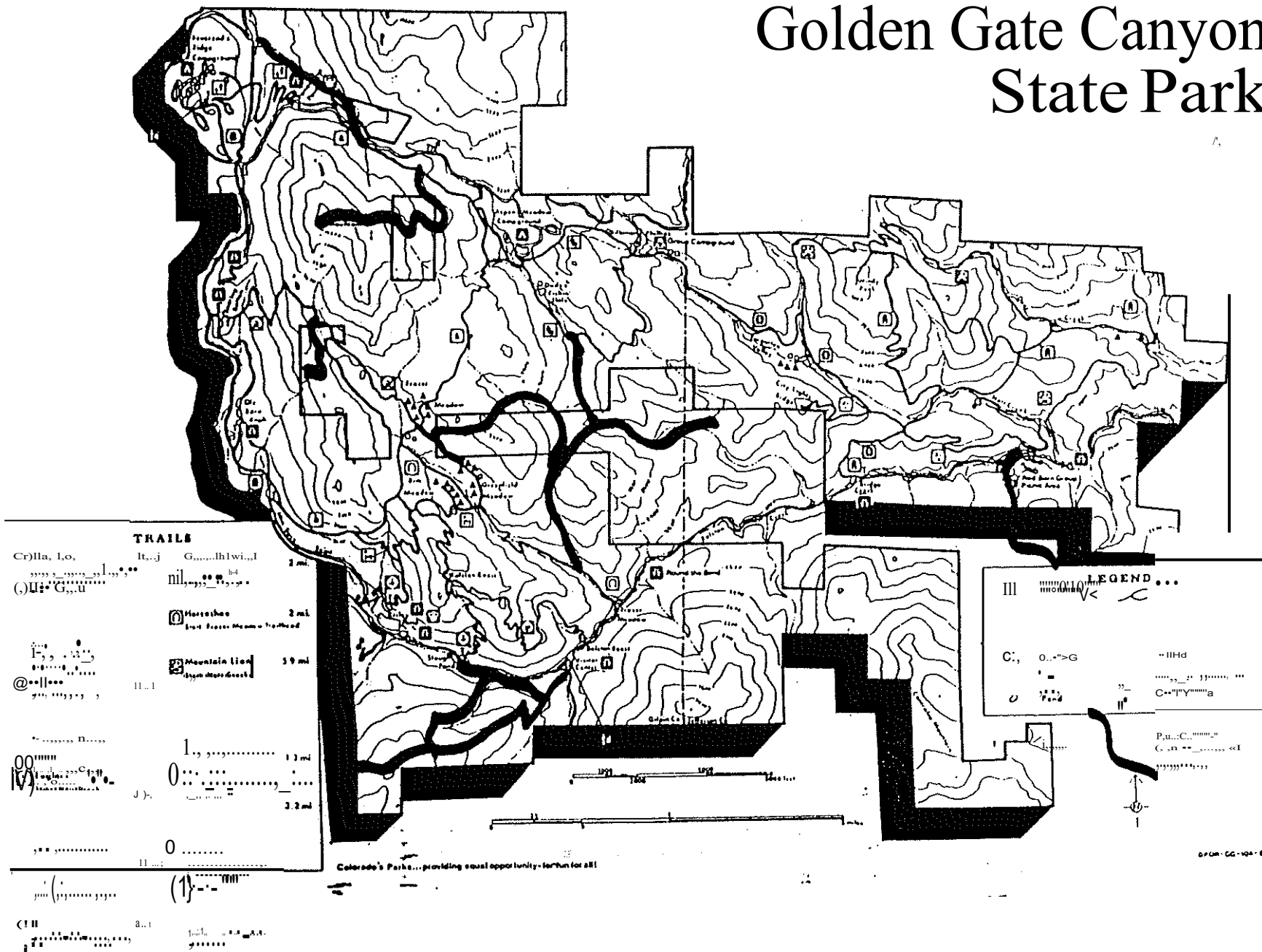
Golden Gate Canyon State Park



GOLDEN GATE YOUTH CAMP FACILITY



Golden Gate Canyon State Park



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Colorado's Parks... providing equal opportunity for fun for all

APPENDIX E

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TRAIL SUGGESTIONS FOR **NEW** LAND ACQUISITIONS

Parcel #1 Elk Trail runs along the west boundary of this parcel leading from Gap Road to Raccoon Trail. Raccoon Trail connects Reverend's Ridge Campground and Panorama Point. At this time the Raccoon Trail is too steep for horse or cross-country ski traffic, causing these two user groups to use the Gap Road, a heavily traveled county road.

Suggest construction of a trail connecting the current Elk Trail through parcel #1 to Panorama Point. This trail would have an easier incline, fewer switchbacks, and be more accommodating to these user groups. Addition of this trail would also create a loop trail to and from Panorama Point from Reverend's Ridge. Length of this trail would be approximately .6 mile.

Parcel #2 Coyote Trail begins at Bootleg Bottom picnic area at the foot of the west side of Promontory Ridge. It then switchbacks up the ridge and crosses the saddle into Frazer Meadow. Promontory Ridge offers a spectacular view for visitors of the Continental Divide, which has been unattainable due to the private inholding status of this property. A spur trail off Coyote Trail has been

highly recommended and requested by the public to access this lookout point. Construction of a trail of approximately .75 mile to the top of Promontory Ridge would enable visitors to enjoy this **view**. Construction of this spur trail would benefit both day-destination hikers and also the picnic/short distance hikers. Recommendations have been made that rest benches be installed at this location.

Parcel #3 Before the early 1980's and a land trade involving this property, a connecting trail existed between Elk Trail in Gaphole and Mule Deer Trail near the Lazy Squaw Ranch. With the addition of this parcel to the park it would enable the establishment of this trail to the system. This trail is a far better horse and cross-country ski trail than the existing Mule Deer Trail south of Gap Road. It would provide visitor access to the northern tier of the park where there are none **now**. This trail also will provide access to **a walk-in** picnic area being planned for this land parcel. Since this trail existed previously, there will be a relatively small amount of time and development involved in "re-opening" it.

Parcel #4 Tremont Mountain has the highest elevation point in the park at 10,400 feet. This parcel lies to the east side of Tremont Mountain opening up the earliest and most direct route to the summit. Mule Deer Trail runs from north of

Tremont Mountain and this land parcel, turns south and then runs east. A spur trail of approximately 1.5 miles could branch from Deer Trail directly south of the Lazy Squaw Ranch and go to the summit of Tremont Mountain through this parcel of land. This trail would pass through some of the more rugged topography of the park and at the summit provide an opportunity for a great view of the Continental Divide, Mount Evans and the entire park. This trail would be easily accessible from Aspen Meadow Campground and would increase hiking opportunities in this portion of the park. Many inquiries and requests from the visiting public have been made about the possibilities of such a trail.

Parcel #5 **With** this property being somewhat centralized in the existing park, it has severely restricted the trail system connections between the Gilpin County and Jefferson County portions of the park. The acquisition of this land would open up several possibilities for backcountry trail expansion and use.

In the east-central section of this property there is a cabin that could be used as a rental cabin for backcountry hikers or cross-country skiers. This could be put into use with little or no improvements. Presently the cabin is not accessible by park-maintained trails.

Currently the Golden Gate trail system does not have a short 3 to 5 mile loop or a longer 9 to 10 mile loop trail. Many visitors have requested this type of hike. They can be accommodated with the addition of approximately 4 miles of new trail, 2 miles of which would be located on this parcel.

To accommodate the 3 - 5 mile loop route, the Greenfield Meadow Backcountry Campsite Trail needs to be extended through the southwest corner of the property and along the northwest corner of this parcel.

The trail would then continue east on current park land for approximately one-half mile and cross the parcel at the 9,000 foot level for approximately one-half mile. The trail would then be at the head of an intermittent drainage. It would continue down the drainage until its intersection with the Deer Trail from Frazer Meadow trailhead. This would complete an approximately 4 mile loop.

To complete a longer 8-mile trail loop, the trail would be extended approximately one-half mile beyond the Greenfield Meadow campsites to the intersection with Deer Trail in Frazer Meadow. The existing Deer Trail connects with Snowshoe Hare Trail near Aspen Meadow Campground. This trail follows the drainage below Dude's Fishin' Hole for approximately one-half mile and then turns away from it.

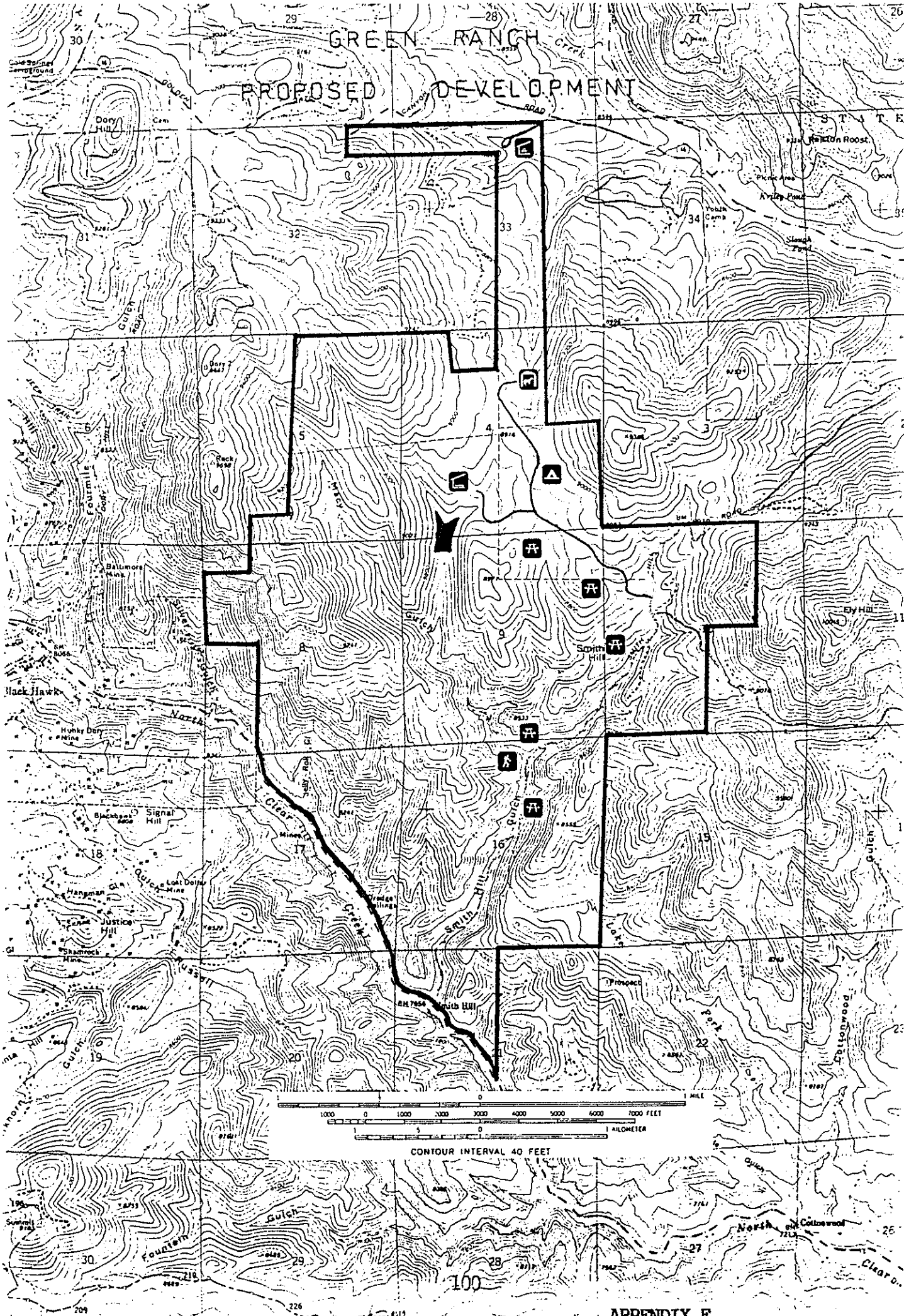
Construction of one-half mile of new trail would be required to connect the Snowshoe Hare Trail with the new parcel of land. This would be built along the drainage flowing out of Dude's Fishin' Hole. Upon entering the new land parcel, a one-half mile connecting trail would be built to connect with the aforementioned shorter loop. Another trail would be constructed one-half mile farther along the Dude's Fishing Hole drainage thus connecting the backcountry rental cabin to the trail system. This expansion of the trail system would accommodate several user groups, in both summer and winter and more effectively connect the trails between the park's two counties.

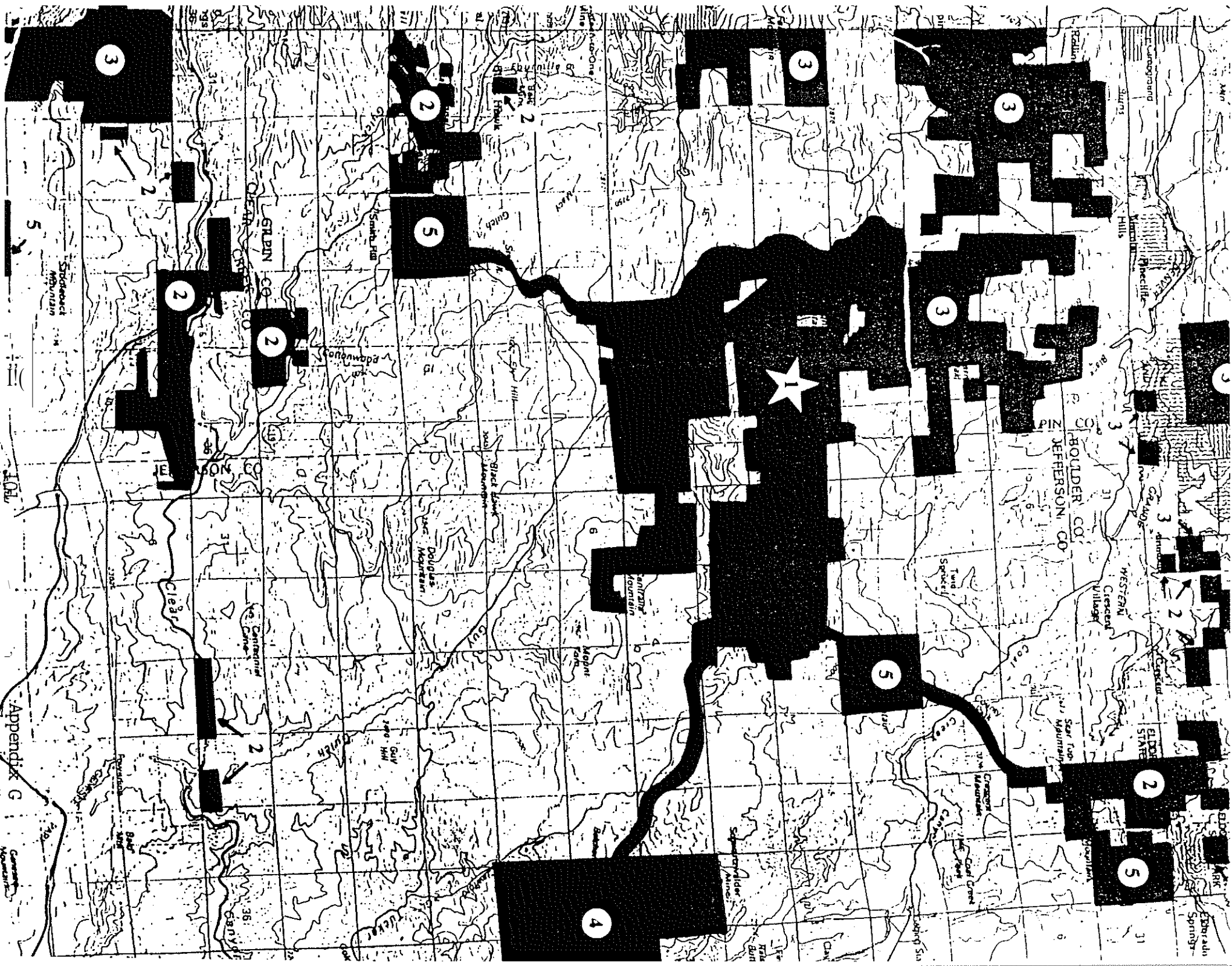
Parcel #6 This land parcel connects the two eastern portions of the park. At this time there is no trail development in the park south of Crawford Gulch Road (Gipin - Jefferson County #57). This is because this parcel has created a barrier between existing park lands to the north and south of Road #57 and between the two existing eastern portions of the park. With the acquisition of this property many opportunities will exist for the expansion of the current trail system into this property. This parcel is dominated by moderately rugged terrain and is not suitable for development other than trails and backcountry campsites. Specific trail routes and sites are under study until further examination and analysis of the area. Routes should be constructed to facilitate trail connection between previously closed off section of the park.

Another opportunity that will come about with the inclusion of this parcel is the connection of the Golden Gate Canyon State Park trail system with trails on Jefferson County Open Space District's White Ranch Park. White Ranch Park is approximately 4 miles east of this parcel. A trail possibility exists through the property between parcel #6 and White Ranch Park. This property is owned by Union Pacific Railroad. A trail easement should be obtainable by some means. If this trail expansion were to occur, a trail link could be accomplished from Colorado Highway #93, 2 miles north of Golden to Golden Gate Canyon State Park.

Parcel #7 This parcel is discussed under the Green Ranch portion of the plan.

Parcel #8 This parcel is known as the Elson property. It would provide a common boundary between present Golden Gate Canyon State Park and the Green Ranch and provide trail access from the existing Beaver Trail along the south edge of the park. The trail will begin at the Visitor Center, wind up the ridge top, through a saddle above Slough Pond to a viewpoint of Mount Evans. From this point, the trail will drop through the saddle to the Elson property and on to the Green Ranch and connect with proposed development on the Green property.





Golden Gate Canyon State Park
3873 Highway 46
Golden, CO 80403
(303) 592-1502

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Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Management Plan

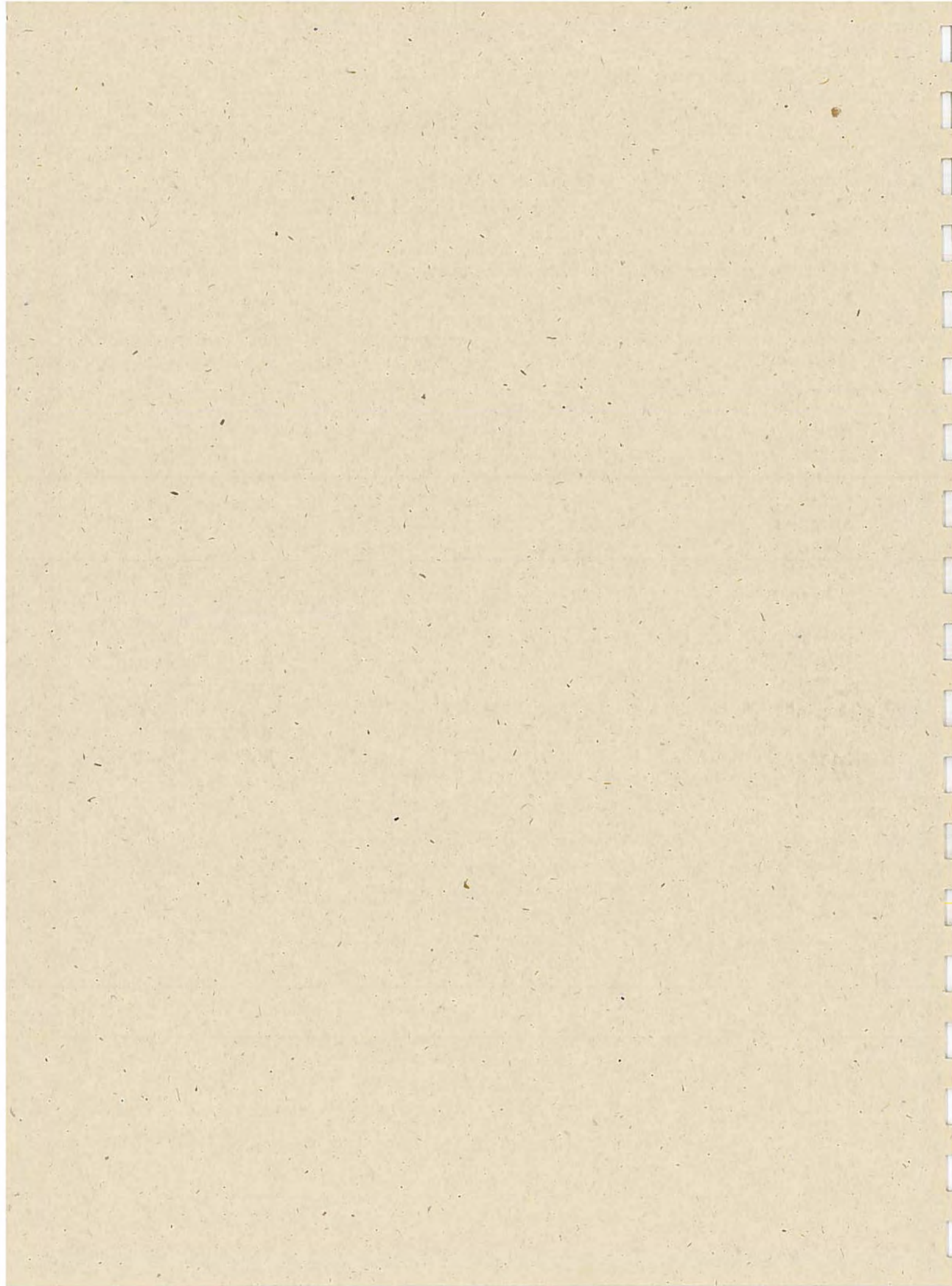
DRAFT

July 1996

**Colorado Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation**

**Golden Gate Canyon State Park
3873 Highway 46
Golden, CO 80203**

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Executive Summary

The roots of Golden Gate Canyon as a State Park trace back to 1960 when its first land acquisition of 200 acres was made. Since that time, 46 land purchases have built the park to its present size of 14,360 acres.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park exemplifies most people's ideal for a Colorado mountain park - campgrounds for a day or week-long retreat, miles of hiking trails on which to explore the backcountry of the park, streams and ponds in which to fish, locations that give spectacular views of the park and surrounding mountains, picnic areas where groups can gather or where you can enjoy a secluded lunch. Over half a million people come to the park to use its facilities or participate in an interpretive program to learn more about the park.

Golden Gate experiences many of the same problems that are facing other parks in the Colorado State Park System - overcrowding during the high use season, older facilities that need to be replaced or renovated, demands for new facilities that meet the needs of the modern-day camper or general recreationist. Golden Gate is fortunate to have just completed the renovation and expansion of the Visitor Center built in 1968 to meet some of these demands. In 1997, Reverend's Ridge Campground, opened in 1972, will undergo a million dollar renovation to upgrade current facilities and add electrical hook-ups. Projects similar to these need to be continued to insure that other facilities receive the same treatment.

Summer weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day and beyond are times when the park is the busiest. The park as it existed prior to the addition of the Green Ranch is at an appropriate level of development. Facilities on this part of the park may be renovated and expanded to meet some of the demand of brought by today's and the future's ever-expanding recreation crowd. However, Golden Gate has another opportunity to meet this need - by developing recreation facilities and activities on the recently added Green Ranch property that are in keeping with the goals of the park, particularly to protect the natural resources of the park.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park's future management will focus on improving the facilities and activities that are already in place and on developing quality recreation experiences and facilities on the Green Ranch. By doing this, Golden Gate will be prepared to meet the mission of Colorado State Parks well into the 21st century.

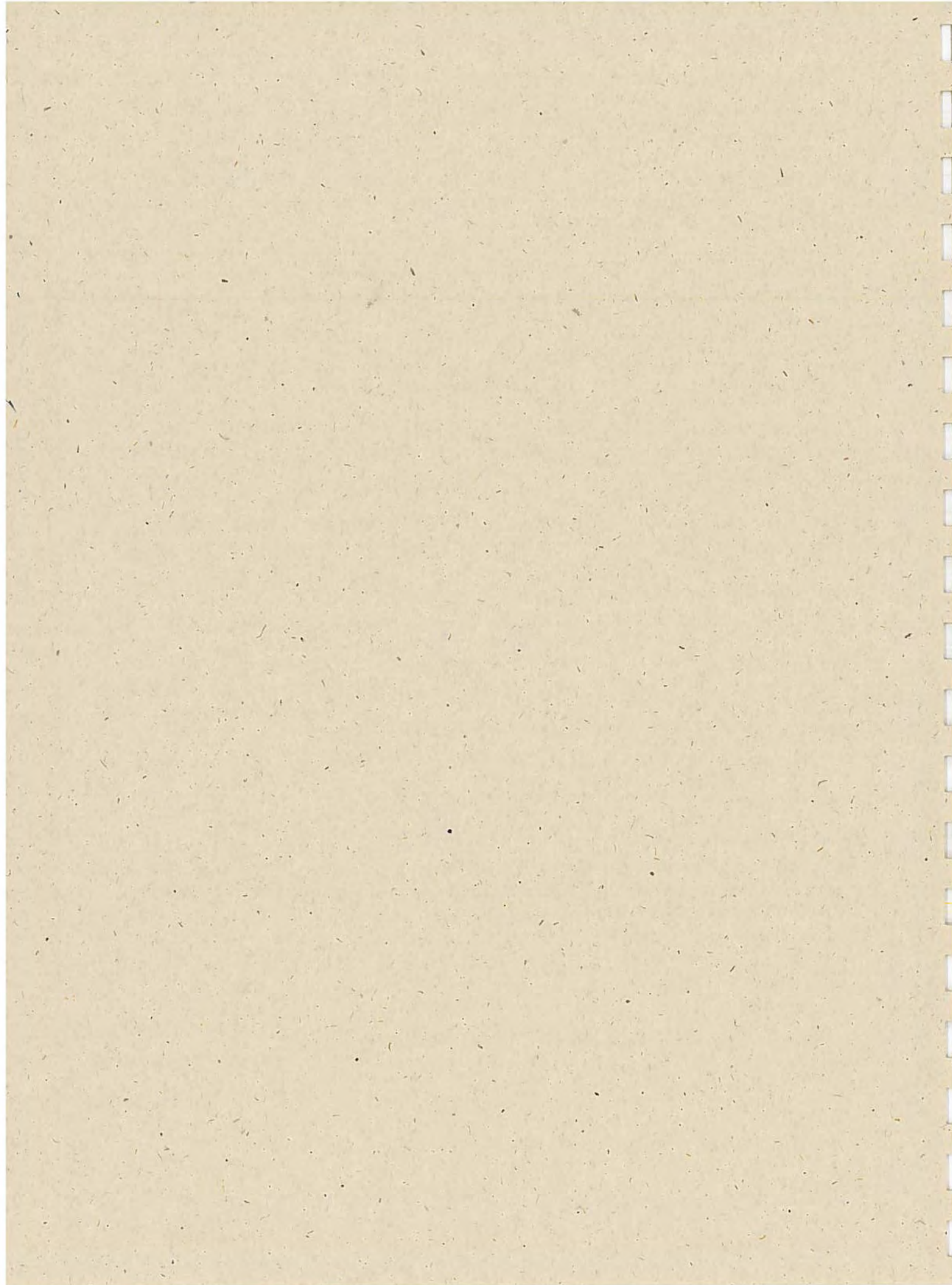


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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Plan

In 1988, a draft management plan was prepared for Golden Gate Canyon State Park. However, pending acquisitions that would push the park's acreage from 8,926 acres in 1987 to today's expanse of 14,363 acres - an increase of over 60% - resulted in the decision to delay the adoption of a final management plan. Now that these major acquisitions have been completed, the time is appropriate to establish the goals that will guide the park's management for the next five to ten years.

The purposes of this management plan are to:

1. Review the past history and current status of activities and developments in the park.
2. Provide a synopsis of information about the park's natural and cultural resources.
3. Identify current and potential future issues affecting the management of the park.
4. Review and analyze visitor profiles and visitor opinion surveys.
5. Establish management goals for the future.
6. Identify actions and plans for achieving management goals.

1.2 Colorado State Parks Mission and Goals

Each year Colorado State Parks updates its five year planning document, Horizons, to insure that the agency maintains its commitment to offering outstanding recreation experiences in beautiful, natural settings throughout the state to meet the needs of the citizens of Colorado today. In addition, the parks fragile environments must be protected so they will be available for future visitors as well. As stated in the 1995 Horizons plan, the mission of Colorado State Parks is to:

provide a broad spectrum of safe, quality outdoor recreation experiences for our visitors while effectively managing the natural resources under our authority.

Eight goals have been identified by the Colorado State Parks Board and by Division staff to help our state parks address the challenges of the 1990's and beyond. Taken from the 1995 Horizons plan, these are as follows, along with a synopsis of how Golden gate Canyon State Park does and will help to achieve each:

- ◆ Rehabilitation of the existing park system
Golden Gate is one of Colorado's oldest state parks, and many of its structures date back to the late 60's and early 70's. Recent and current projects are addressing the need to renovate or replace many of the older structures. The

visitor center that was built in 1968 was remodelled and expanded in 1995. A million dollar renovation of Reverend's Ridge Campground is underway. Future projects will complete the campground renovation. These improvements all have an immediate and significant impact on the visitors' enjoyment of the park. Additional improvements identified in this plan will continue to improve and expand the visitors' experience.

◆ **Enhancing customer service and marketing**

Golden Gate is the closest state park to the Denver Metro area that offers the true Colorado Rocky Mountain experience. As such, the park has many opportunities to tell of the state park heritage.

Recent and upcoming projects at the park are aimed directly at enhancing customer service. The newly remodelled visitor center provides a variety of ways for park visitors to learn about Golden Gate and all of the state park system. The upcoming campground renovation will enhance the camping experience with the addition of electrical hook-ups, new shower facilities and accessible sites and facilities.

New and improved entrance signs and information kiosks at trailheads are planned to improve the flow of information to our visitors.

The park staff has customer service as its main focus in all aspects of their work, including maintenance, visitor services and law enforcement.

◆ **Providing leadership in outdoor recreation statewide**

The park staff works closely with other recreation providers in the district surrounding Golden Gate to insure a sharing of ideas and to advance innovations in the recreation field.

The park is part of the Metro Mountain Parks group, an inter-agency consortium that meets quarterly to discuss issues affecting recreation and open space providers and to share ideas and accomplishments.

The park staff frequently serves as the leader on potential state park projects in the surrounding district, such as the effort to form a partnership with the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and Denver Mountain Parks on Mount Evans.

The park staff inspects local park projects funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

◆ **Building effective partnerships**

Partnerships play an important role in the success of Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Some of these include:

- Participating in the Department of Natural Resource's Youth in Natural Resources Program
- Establishing a memorandum of understanding with the Colorado State Forest Service to complete a forest management plan for the park and implement forest management practices
- Working with Colorado Division of Wildlife to improve wildlife related interpretation at the park through the Watchable Wildlife in Parks project
- Working with GoCo for funding for many park projects, including land acquisitions (the Green Ranch), visitor center construction and hiring interpreters
- Working with the Trust for Public Lands to make the Green Ranch acquisition possible
- Working with private non-profit organizations (Clear Creek Conservancy, Coal Creek Coalition) to protect open space and secure trail corridors
- Work with the Larkin family to manage the Larkin Trust Fund for Panorama Point and Visitor Center projects
- Work with Rocky Mountain Nature Association to provide interpretive projects and supplies through the book sales program

- ◆ Fostering an appreciation and understanding of Colorado's natural heritage
Golden Gate is a premier setting for exploring and learning about Colorado's mountain environment. Many of the park's projects and services focus on improving opportunities to accomplish this. Interpretive exhibits are currently being developed for in and near the visitor center that will promote an understanding and appreciation of the park's environment. New interpretive panels are being designed for Panorama Point that will promote watchable wildlife aspects of the park. The park's interpretive program is being re-invigorated, taking advantage of funding through the GoCo program and opportunities to present programs in the new visitor center program room as well as throughout the park. The park's Junior Ranger Program and Adventure Packs as well as the campfire programs continue to be popular activities. Future interpretive signs at trailheads and picnic areas will further enhance the visitors' opportunities to learn about the park's resources.

- ◆ Finding recreation water for the future
Golden Gate is dissected by many small drainages, the most significant being Ralston Creek. The park will continue to strive to maintain water quality in these drainages through park planning and monitoring local developments.

Dredging operations should be funded and scheduled to insure that the park's ponds can sustain viable fishing opportunities.

◆ Growing to keep pace with Colorado's recreation future

As the Denver metro area continues to grow, so will the demands on Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Many of the park's current projects, including the campground renovation and visitor expansion, are designed to assist with this growing and changing demand.

The future development of the Green Ranch will provide many additional and new opportunities as recreational facilities are developed on this recent addition to the park.

◆ Securing stable, long term funding

Many of the improved and new facilities that have recently been built or are being planned for Golden Gate will increase revenues collected at the park by attracting new visitors to new facilities, maximizing use of existing facilities and adding additional revenue-creating services, such as electrical hook-ups.

1.3 Golden Gate Canyon State Park Management Goals

The management goals of Golden Gate Canyon State Park reflect the mission and goals of Colorado State Parks, while being more specific in nature. As with all state parks, Golden Gate's activities, facilities and services should meet the needs of the people while insuring that the park is protected for future generations.

The goals of the management of Golden Gate Canyon State Park are to:

- ◆ Provide a wide variety of safe, quality outdoor recreation experiences that are appropriate in a mountain setting and that complement the other goals of the park
- ◆ Protect and maintain the quality of the natural, cultural and scenic resources of the park for future generations
- ◆ Foster an appreciation and understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of Golden Gate Canyon State Park
- ◆ Establish partnerships that enhance the park's recreation activities and resource protection
- ◆ Provide high quality customer service in all aspects of park operations
- ◆ Implement and maintain park revenue generating activities that are consistent with the goals of the park while assisting with the State Park goal of securing stable, long term funding
- ◆ Maintain existing facilities and build new facilities that enhance the park visitor's recreation experiences and that minimize environmental impacts
- ◆ Provide a model for outdoor recreation management for other parks in the region and throughout the state

2. Golden Gate - A Review of the Natural and Cultural Resources of the Park

2.1 General Description of the Region

Golden Gate Canyon State Park lies approximately 25 miles west of downtown Denver, in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The park's 14,400 acres span the boundary between Gilpin County and Jefferson County. The area surrounding the park remains predominantly rural in nature. However, more housing subdivisions are emerging in the areas around the park, both in Gilpin and Jefferson County. The park is bounded to the north by Arapaho National Forest, and much of Gilpin County is national forest land. The other major industry in Gilpin County is associated with Central City and Black Hawk. In 1991, limited stakes gambling was legalized in these towns, bringing a major influx of day-use tourists to the area.

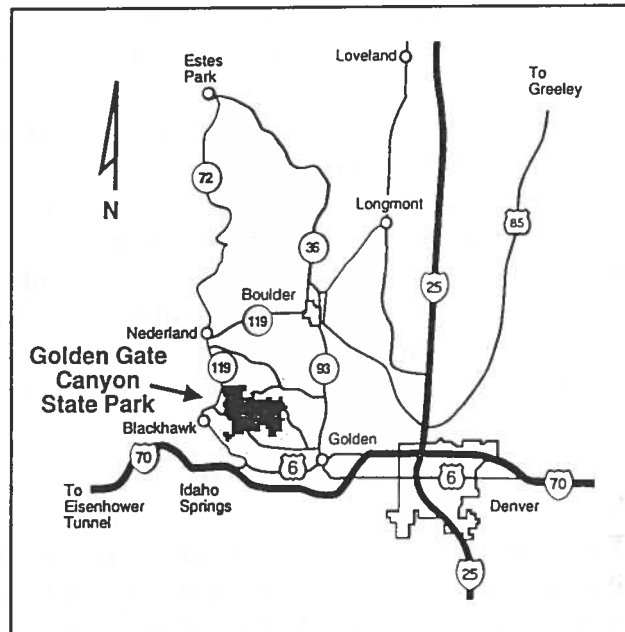


Figure 2-1: Location of Golden Gate Canyon State Park

2.2 General Description of the Park

Golden Gate Canyon State Park lies in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountain Region. The park is characterized by steep ridges and rocky outcrops, and dense forests interspersed with open meadows. Elevations in the park range from 7,400' at the extreme south and southeastern portions of the park to 10,388 feet at the top of Tremont Mountain. Numerous intermittent streams and gulches dissect the park, while there is one major drainage, Ralston Creek, that travels west to east through the park. Portions of the Green Ranch in the southwest part of the park drain into the North Fork of Clear Creek. Although there are no naturally occurring lakes, several small (one to five acre) ponds have been built throughout the park. Precipitation averages 20 inches annually, and temperatures range from wintertime lows of -30 degrees to summertime highs in the 80's.

2.3 Geological History of the Park

2.3.1 General Overview

The geology of Golden Gate Canyon State Park gives only a partial reflection of the geological history of the State of Colorado. Many of the geological periods evident in rocks elsewhere in the state are not represented in the rocks of Golden Gate - depositions of these periods may have been here, but have long since been completely eroded away.

The major rock formations in the park are of the Precambrian Era, while the sedimentary deposits of the Paleozoic and Mesozoic Eras are absent. During the Cretaceous Period of the late Mesozoic Era, igneous rocks associated with ore deposits were intruded into the older Precambrian rocks. This was followed in the late Cretaceous and early Tertiary Periods by fault movements associated with the Laramide orogeny. However, these fault movements cannot be distinguished from the older and younger faulting and folding. The park's landscape was further affected by the down cutting of valleys during the late Cenozoic Era, bringing us to today's landscape that continues to be shaped by the forces of erosion.

2.3.2 Geology of the Park

The geology of Golden Gate Canyon State Park reflects the three major stages of geological events of the area - sedimentation, metamorphism and multiple stages of folding. The resulting landscape was further sculpted by the effects of erosion and down cutting of valleys.

Golden Gate was initially part of a subsiding depositional basin that was filled with tufts and flows, sedimentation filled with volcanic detritus, and shales and sandstones. Metamorphic action transformed these sedimentary rocks into layered gneisses, such as sillimanitic biotite gneiss, hornblende gneiss, feldspar-rich gneiss and other inter-layered gneisses, as well as quartzite and muscovite schists. This regional metamorphism was accompanied by folding of the layered rocks on a west to northwest-trending axes. Folds of this era are spaced about a mile apart from the Lake Fork of Clear Creek (southeast of the Green Ranch) to Junction Ranch (at the intersection of Golden Gate Canyon Road and Smith Hill Road.) The Junction Ranch Fault follows this northwest axis alignment from Guy Gulch, along Golden Gate Canyon through the site of the Visitor Center, and on along the west side of Promontory Ridge.

Soon after this first period of folding ended, a second period started, superposing on the earlier folds. The features of the park were not greatly affected by folding actions during this deformative stage. However, it was during this same time period that the emplacement of the Boulder Creek granodiorite and the younger quartz monzonite occurred. These rock units, which cover most of the central part of the park, represent the southern terminus of the Boulder Creek Batholith, one of the major intrusive bodies of the Front Range. The unusual

warping and folding found along the southern edge of this intrusion suggest the force that was associated with its emplacement. The western edge of the batholith is marked by a zone of protoclasts and shearing, which falls just to the west of Promontory Ridge.

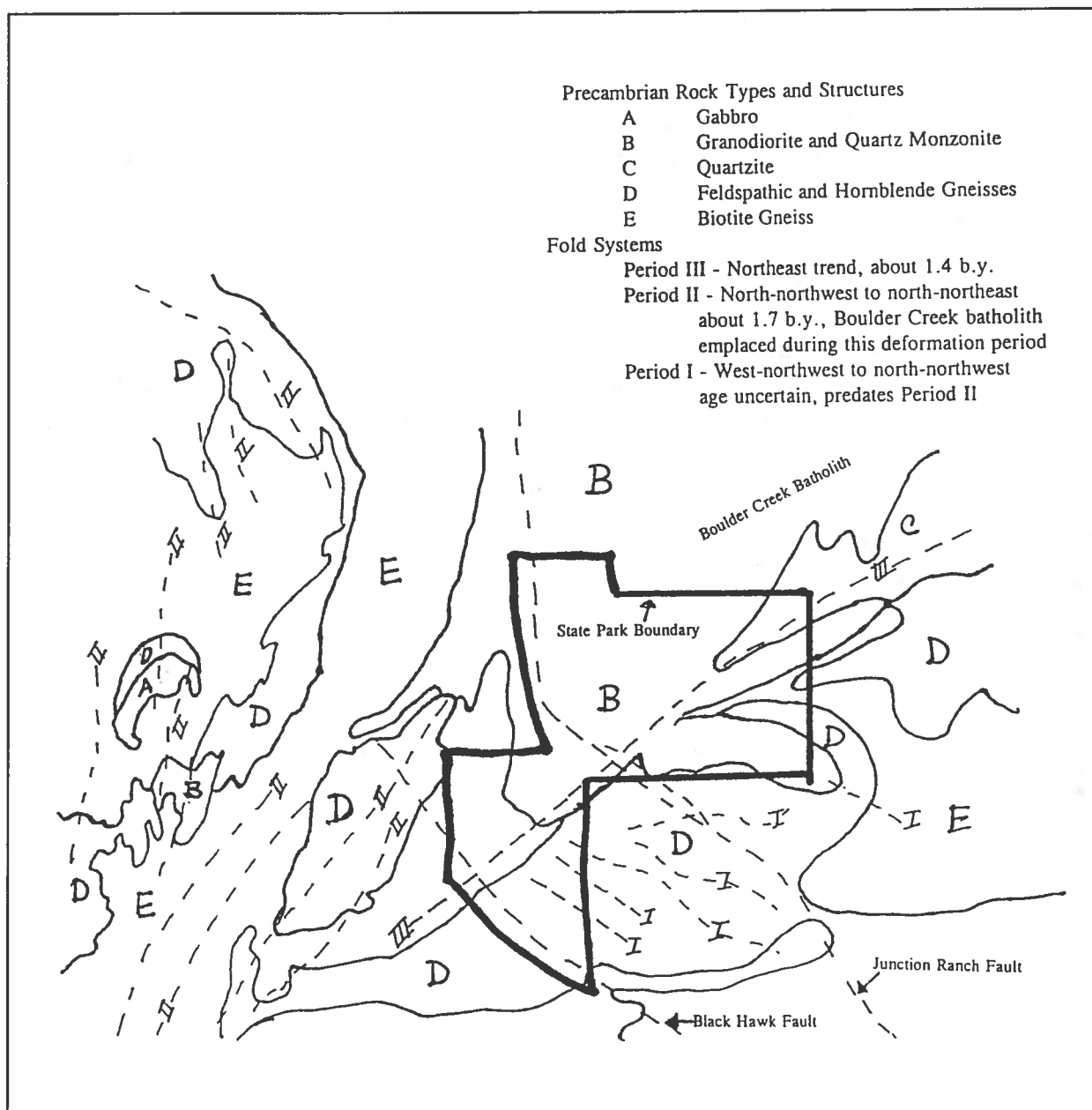


Figure 2-2: Major Rock Types and Fault and Fold Lines in and around Golden Gate Canyon State Park

A third period of deformation was superposed on the region's already twice deformed rocks. The northeast trending folding zone of this third period, known as the Idaho Springs - Ralston cataclastic zone, goes directly through the park - from the junction of Smith Hill

Gulch and North Clear Creek, to the Visitor Center, and on to the northeast along Ralston Creek. Folds of this third period are characterized by the shear folds found in Smith Hill Gulch and to the northeast along Ralston Creek.

The intrusion of the Boulder Creek batholith occurred in the Precambrian Era, over a billion years ago. The next geological record present in the park is from the Upper Cretaceous Period, probably somewhere around 100 million years ago. As stated previously, no other geological records from the Mesozoic and the earlier Paleozoic Eras are present in the park. (The Cretaceous is the most recent period of the Mesozoic Era.) During the Upper Cretaceous period, intrusions of bostonite and quartz monzonite associated with ore deposits occurred. Only small veins of these can be found in the park at the extreme southern end of the Green Ranch. No ore deposits are found in the main part of the park, and although mining patents were filed, the Green Ranch veins were not mined.

Today's geography was further shaped by continued down cutting of the major valleys and a series of alluvial deposits during the Quaternary Period of the Cenozoic Era - the Ice Age. These actions in the park are represented by talus and colluvium associated with Promontory Ridge and Tremont Mountain, and alluvium associated with upland meadows and flood plains along drainages.

A detailed map of the major rock mapping units in Golden Gate Canyon State Park is included in the Appendix.

2.4 Topography

The topography of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is typical of that of the Foothills of the Rocky Mountain's Front Range. Elevations in the park range from just over 7,400' at the east entrance to the park along Ralston Creek as well as at the southeast tip of the Green Ranch along North Clear Creek, to 10,388' atop Tremont Mountain. In general, the park is characterized by moderate to steep slopes with a few gently rolling meadows interspersed.

Significant topographical features in the park include the already mentioned Tremont Mountain, Promontory Ridge (elevation along the ridge varies, but is around 9,500'), Ralston Roost (9,334'), Centralia Mountain (9,795'), City Lights Ridge (8,680') and Windy Peak (9,141'.) From within the park at an overlook called Panorama Point, visitors can see from Mount Evans to Long's Peak and beyond.

As the Ralston Creek valley winds its way from the eastern boundary of the park with its 7,400' elevation, it climbs to 8,235' at the Visitor Center and attains 8,400' at Kriley Pond. From here, Mountain Base Road leads the visitor below the 9,500' heights of Promontory Ridge to an elevation of 9,200' at the road's intersection with Gap Road. Reverend's Ridge Campground is at 9,100'. Aspen Meadows Campground lies between the 9,000' and 9,200' contours.

Flat land is a scarce commodity in the park. The greatest expanses of meadows lie on the Green Ranch, while Frazer Meadow, Aspen Meadow and Forgotten Valley are the most moderately sloping areas in the central part of the park. Little wonder that these were the most attractive homestead sites for the earliest settlers.

The valleys, gulches and drainages of the park are discussed in the hydrology section.



Figure 2-3: Steep Slopes and Rocky Outcrops of Promontory Ridge

2.5 Soils

Soil types in Golden Gate Canyon State Park are typical of those of Colorado's Front Range. Generally, soils are shallow sandy loams or loamy sands that have developed from the underlying gneiss, schist, and granodiorite.

Throughout the park, there are many rock outcrops, both igneous and metamorphic, that support little vegetative cover.

Loamy alluvium and colluvium soils have developed in floodplains associated with drainages as well as in upland meadows.

The major limitations posed by soils in the park relate to their slope, stoniness, flooding potential and depth to bedrock and watertables.

2.6 Hydrology

The park is deeply dissected by major gulches and valleys, some of which are the result of ancient faulting and down cutting of mountain valleys that occurred in the Ice Age. These valleys have been further cut by the continuing forces of erosion. Runoff initiating in the park from rain, springs or snowmelt is carried to its eventual destination of the South Platte River by either Ralston Creek or North Clear Creek.

Ralston Creek starts about 3 miles west of the park on Fairburn Mountain in Arapaho National Forest. As it flows to the east through the park, it picks up water from several unnamed drainages in the park, including those from Frazer Meadow and Dude's Fishing Hole. Also feeding Ralston Creek are Nott Creek, Sawmill Gulch and Deer Creek. Ralston Creek is dammed at three locations in the park to form Kriley Pond, Slough Pond and Ranch Ponds. Other park ponds include Dude's Fishing Hole and an unnamed pond on Nott Creek in Forgotten Valley. These ponds total about 20 surface acres. About seven miles east of the park, Ralston Creek flows into Ralston Reservoir. After it leaves Ralston Reservoir, Ralston Creek joins with Leyden Creek and farther downstream empties into Clear Creek.

Green Ranch's major drainage is Macy Gulch, which drops into Smith Hill Gulch. Smith Hill Gulch intersects North Clear Creek. Several small drainages, such as Jelly Roll Gulch, enter directly into North Clear Creek. North and South Clear Creeks join to form Clear Creek, which flows through the western suburbs of Denver before entering the South Platte River.

Surface springs can be found throughout the park, many of which were associated with earlier homestead locations. Some of these are significant, maintaining wet, boggy areas throughout the summer. The park has numerous water rights, obtained as ranches and

parcels of property were obtained for park land.

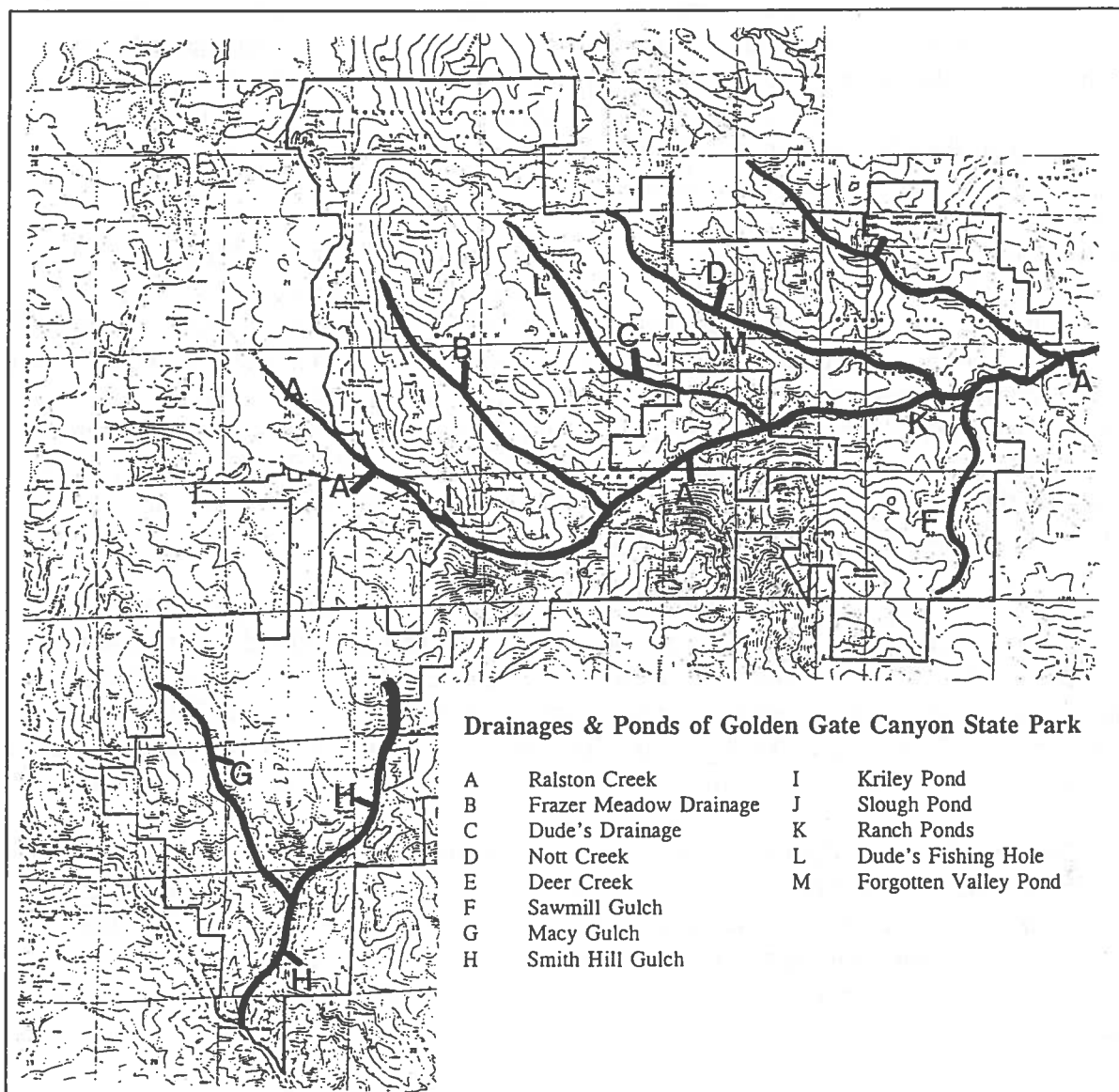


Figure 2-4: Drainages and Ponds of Golden Gate Canyon State Park

2.7 Climate and Weather

Located in the central region of North America, Colorado has a continental climate. It is sunny, with warm summers and cool winters. As described in From Grasslands to Glaciers, Colorado's weather is marked by extreme variations in temperature and precipitation from year to year, season to season, day to night, and even from hour to hour. These variations occur because the climate is not moderated by a large body of water. Local climates are affected by elevation and the position of mountains and valleys.

The climate of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is representative of the climate of the foothills of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Central Colorado. The general climatic conditions that are discussed here are affected locally within the park by topography. Topography produces differences in elevation, exposure to sun, differences in wind patterns and distribution of precipitation. For every 1,000' gain in elevation, there is an associated loss of 3-5 degrees Fahrenheit. Conversely, mountain valleys can be colder as the denser, cold air sinks, usually at night, from adjacent slopes into the valley bottoms. Temperatures are also influenced by the exposure of a slope to the sun. North facing slopes are cooler and moister, while south facing slopes are warmer and drier.

(Note: The following weather information is based on 30 year averages generated from weather information collected between 1960-1990 at Evergreen, Colorado, the closest weather station to Golden Gate. Evergreen is approximately 18 miles south of the Golden Gate Visitor Center. Evergreen's elevation is approximately 7,040', while Golden Gate ranges between 7,400' and 10,400'. Depending on the location in the park, temperatures at Golden Gate would range from similar to those at Evergreen, to up to 10 degrees cooler.)

Temperature extremes at Golden Gate generally range from as cold as 30 degrees F. below zero in the winter to summer highs of over 80 degrees F. Winter months are generally characterized by cool, clear, windy days with cold, sometimes windy nights. Localized pockets of colder morning temperatures are common in the lower valleys of the park. In January average low temperatures range around 9 degrees, while average highs are over 40 degrees.

Most summer days bring fluctuations of nearly 40 degrees between the night time lows and day time highs. Summer nights generally dip to around 40 degrees, with afternoon highs reaching into the 80's. Summer afternoon thunderstorms are common, and can quickly drop afternoon temperatures.

Average Temperatures

at Golden Gate Canyon State Park

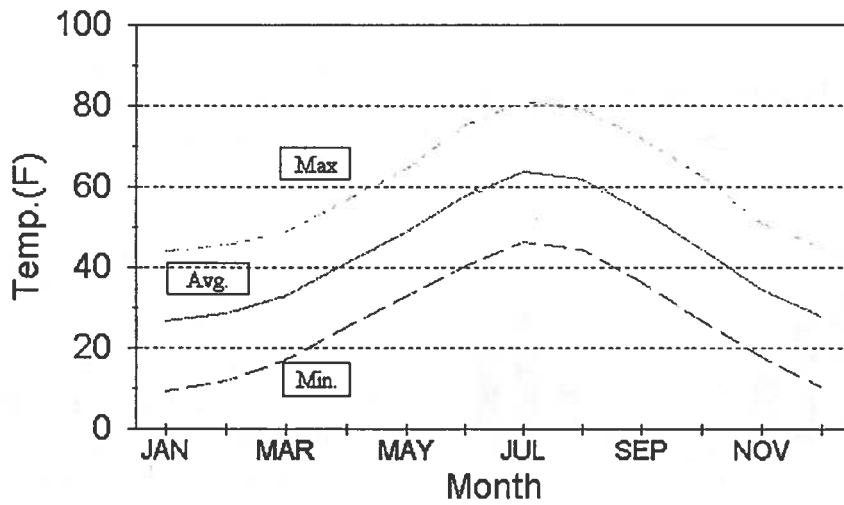


Figure 2-5: Average Monthly Temperatures

Average Precipitation

at Golden Gate Canyon State Park

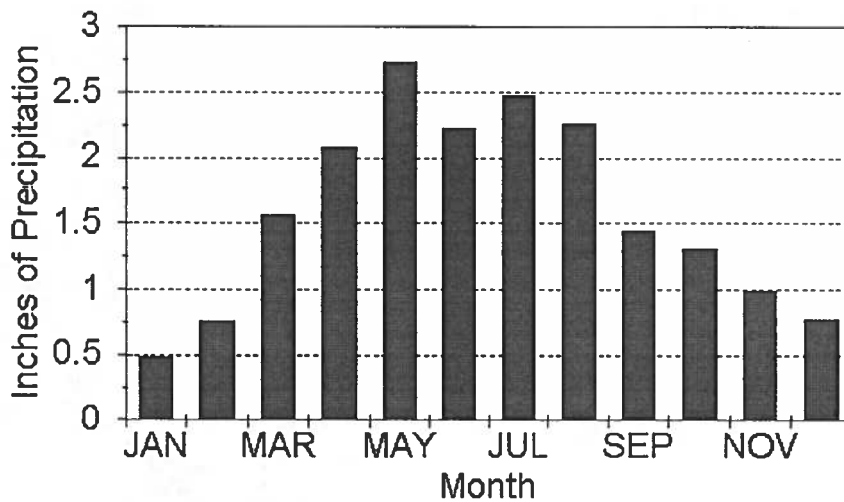


Figure 2-6: Average Monthly Precipitation

The average annual precipitation at the park is 18.6". May is the wettest month, averaging 2.73" of precipitation - a combination of snow and rain. Frequent summer afternoon thunderstorms result in an average of over 2" of precipitation in June, July and August as well.

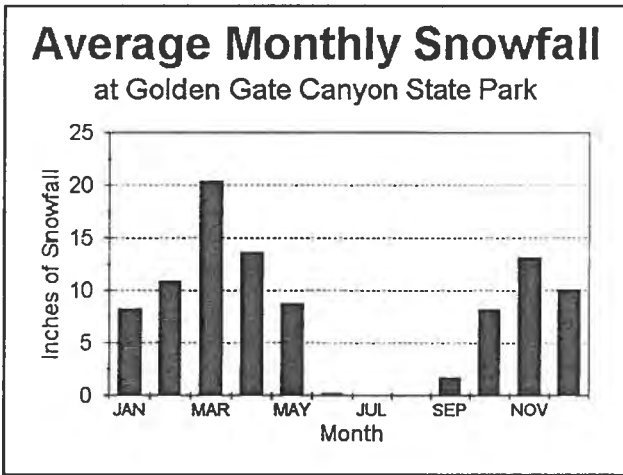


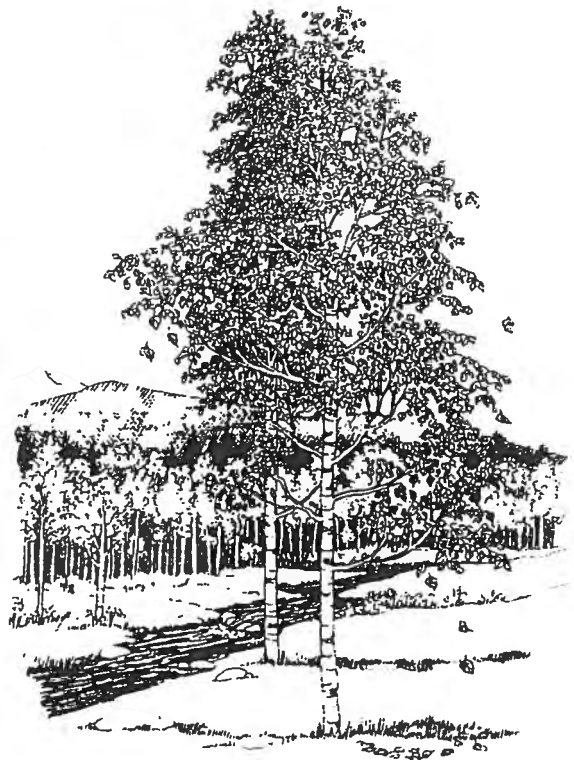
Figure 2-7: Average Monthly Snowfall

July and August are the only months at Golden Gate that generally don't include snowfalls. Snowstorms as late as Memorial Day and as early as Labor Day are not uncommon. March is usually the snowiest month of the year, averaging 20.4" of snow. January is usually the least snowy month of the winter, averaging just under 8". However, these averages can vary greatly from year to year, and while they provide general expectations, the overriding rule is to expect the unexpected!

2.8 Flora and Fauna

2.8.1 General Introduction

Golden Gate Canyon State Park's 7,400' to 10,400' elevations span all or part of three different life zones. These lifezones are foothills (6,000' to 8,000'), montane (8,000'-10,000') and sub-alpine (10,000'-11,500'). Most of the park is in the montane life zone, with only the extreme heights of Tremont Mountain in the sub-alpine zone and the lower extremes of Ralston Creek in the park and the bottom of Smith Hill Gulch being in the foothills life zone. Plant and animal communities within the park have no sharp boundaries, rather tending to integrate into the different life



zones, influenced by elevation, slope orientation, difference in wind patterns and distribution of water. Ecosystems that occur within the park include mountain grasslands and meadows, mountain riparian ecosystems, forests of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, Engelmann spruce-subalpine fir or lodgepole pine, aspen groves, and mountain aquatic ecosystems.

2.8.2 Flora

The distribution of plants within the park is affected by natural conditions as well as historical uses. Use of the forests, mainly the lodgepole pine, was critical to the earliest American Indians, but probably did not have a significant impact on the forests. After the discovery of gold in Gilpin County in 1859, entire climax spruce and fir forests were clear cut to supply the mining industry's need for timber. Logging and clearing of the forests continued as homesteaders opened additional areas for grazing livestock and planting crops. Few if any of today's forests in the park are virgin stands.

The natural conditions affecting the plant distribution in the park are topography, soils, climate and hydrology - topics previously covered in this section.

The following information about the flora of the park comes from a study prepared in October of 1995 by the staff of the Colorado Natural Areas Program, entitled "Wetland Resources of Golden Gate Canyon State Park."

Nearly barren rock outcrops, crags and cliffs support communities of lichens and mosses. A subalpine forest dominated by Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir covers gravelly deposits on the highest portions of Promontory Ridge and Tremont Mountain along the western side of the park.

Montane forest communities dominate most of the park consisting of mixed forests and monotypic stands of trees. Lodgepole pine dominate the zone below the subalpine forests. They occur as nearly monotypic stands at the upper elevations, and in a mixed conifer plant community at lower elevations. Lodgepole pine grow in association with Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, Colorado blue spruce and quaking aspen at lower elevations. Depending on slope and aspect, lower elevations of the park are dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and/or Rocky Mountain juniper.

Ponderosa pine tolerate drier conditions on south, east and west facing slopes. Douglas fir are abundant on the moist north facing slopes. Several stands of limber pine also occur in the park, mainly along the Mountain Base and Gap Road sections. Understory shrubs of the forest communities are generally sparse and include kinnikinnick, Oregon grape, blueberry, mountain mahogany, snowberry and serviceberry as well as the herbs sun sedge, lupine, strawberry and heart-leaf arnica.

The quaking aspen community occupies drainages and associated slopes throughout the park where ground water is within five feet of the surface. This community supports a diverse understory, including common juniper, thimbleberry, Woods' rose, currant, blue elderberry, Colorado columbine, monkshood, lupine and nodding brome.

Forb-dominated meadows are associated with aspen stands where they occupy openings between clones, and comprise the understory species. Forb meadows support bluegrass, meadowrue, lupine, black-eyed Susan, cinquefoil, valerian and yarrow. High levels of pocket gopher activity serve to constantly turn the soils in this community.



Grasses and shrub communities form a mosaic on south-facing slopes and dry ridges at lower and middle elevations in the park. The dominant grass species include Arizona fescue, mountain muhly, blue gramma, needle-and-thread, western wheatgrass, Junegrass and squirreltail. These grasses dominate open areas and make up the understory in stands of shrubs which include mountain mahogany, serviceberry, skunkbrush and currant.

Rare plant species known in the park include the wood lily, observed along moist drainages and streams.

Some exotic and noxious weeds have become established as a result of historic land use including logging, farming, grazing and recreation use of the area.

A complete list of park plants prepared by the park's botanical survey volunteers is available at the visitor center.

Wetland and riparian communities are present in the park, particularly along perennial drainages and on seeps. According to the Natural Areas Program study cited above, wetlands at Golden Gate are of four major types - aquatic, emergent, shrub-scrub and forested. They occupy creeks, pond margins, seeps, gulches and other intermittent drainages within the park and support a diversity of plant species. A checklist of over 250 wetland and riparian plant species for the park is included in the study. The range of wetland communities found within the park includes the major park drainages - Ralston, Nott and

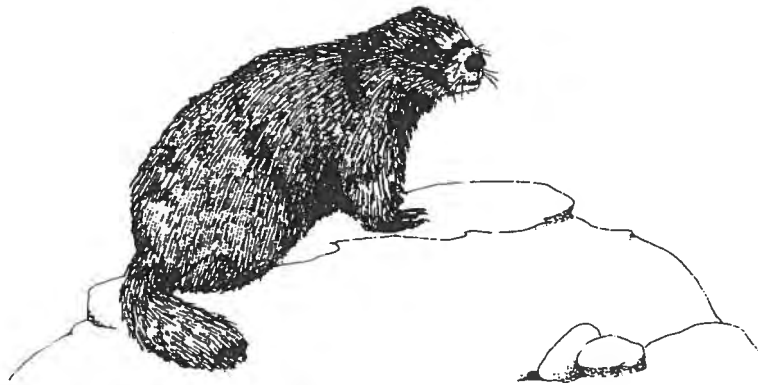
Deer Creeks, Sawmill and Macy gulches, and the park's ponds.

Riparian communities in Golden Gate occupy the banks of creeks, gulches, small islands, point bars, intermittent drainages, seeps and the margins of ponds.

Wetland and riparian community distribution maps are included in the wetland resources study.

2.8.3 Fauna

The wildlife found within Golden Gate is typical of that found in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The diversity of habitats within the park supports an equal diversity of wildlife. At Golden Gate, visitors can find year-round wildlife residents, as well as seasonal or migratory species that spend only part of the year here.



The large mammals - or mega fauna - that can be seen at Golden Gate include elk, mule deer, mountain lion and black bear. The most frequently spotted of all mammals are the rodents, including golden-mantled ground squirrels, chipmunks, Wyoming ground squirrels and pine squirrels. Other common park mammals include beaver, coyote, porcupine, muskrat, Abert's squirrel, pocket gopher, yellow-

bellied marmot, snowshoe hare, cottontail, raccoon, long-tailed weasel, badger and bobcat. A complete mammal list for the park is included in the Appendix.

The park is host to waterfowl, song birds, game birds and raptors. Red-tailed hawks are commonly seen soaring on thermals from their roosting sites on Promontory Ridge. Other raptors in the park include golden eagles, great-horned owls, goshawks and an occasional bald eagle. Blue grouse and wild turkey are year-round resident game birds. Mallards are the most frequently seen waterfowl. Migratory song birds include hummingbirds, pine Siskins, mountain bluebirds, western tanagers, Wilson's warblers, Bohemian waxwings and many others. Common winter birds include ravens, gray jays, Stellar's jays, black-capped chickadees and Clark's nutcrackers. A complete checklist of Golden Gate's birds, which includes 170 species, is included in the Appendix.

According to Geoffrey Hammerson in Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado, about 70% of

the amphibian species in Colorado do not range above 8,000'. Over 50% of the reptile species do not occur above 6,000' and more than 80% are not found above 8,000'. This explains why reptiles and amphibians do not appear in great numbers at Golden Gate.

A review of the range map and distribution information in Hammerson's book shows that four amphibian species and six reptilian species are likely to be found in Golden Gate. Among these are tiger salamanders, western toads, garter snakes and rattlesnakes. A complete listing of the park's reptiles and amphibians is included in the Appendix.

Golden Gate's streams and ponds are stocked with rainbow trout by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and this is the species most frequently caught by the park's anglers. Also present are brown and brook trout.

2.9 Cultural History

Golden Gate Canyon State Park has a long and colorful history - from very early visits to the area by people of the Woodland Culture to today's park visitors. Each chapter of the park's history was highlighted by people who came to the area because of the resources of the land - resources they came to use, each in their own unique way.

The earliest recorded evidence of people in the area came from an archaeological find in the early 1970's. During a construction project, the skeletal remains of a 30 year old male from the Woodland Culture were unearthed in the park. Additional evidence of the Woodland's use of the area was found to the east of the park, near Van Bibber Creek. The Woodland people were hunters and gatherers, and probably visited the area in search of game and nuts and fruit.

Although there is little physical evidence of extensive use of the area by American Indians, Golden Gate was used by a succession of natives who were again attracted by the resources of the area. The Ute Indians prevailed over most of the Colorado territory, both mountains and plains, until the 1800's. The encroachment of the Comanche from the east and the Arapaho from the north forced the Utes to retreat into the mountains. All of these tribes were likely users of the present day park, visiting or travelling through the area to gather lodgepole pines for tepees, to hunt game or to harvest plants for food and medicine.

In the early 1800's, explorers including Long, Pike and Fremont came to Colorado, documenting their travels through this vast and wild land. At the same time, fur trappers and traders also explored, testing its potential for lucrative trapping and fur trading. The fur trade was indeed lucrative in Colorado, and nearly every drainage of the front range was penetrated as trappers sought beaver. They left no permanent evidence of their presence in Golden Gate, but it is certain that the reaches of Ralston Creek and North Clear Creek were among the streams explored for beaver trapping.

The discovery of gold in 1858 at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River brought floods of prospectors to the Denver area. As they extended their explorations to the foothills, more gold discoveries were made - such as John Gregory's on May 6, 1859 near the present day towns of Black Hawk and Central City. Within a month, a steep and treacherous route, the Golden Gate Canyon Toll Road, had opened and over 5,000 miners were prospecting the surrounding hills. In 1860, a stage service opened between Denver and the mines. One of the stage stops was on what is now Golden Gate Canyon State Park, on the Green Ranch at the upper end of Smith Hill Canyon.

Not everyone who came into the area looking for gold "struck it rich." Many turned to other means of surviving, opening businesses in town, or turning to a more rural lifestyle of cattle ranching, farming or logging. The area now encompassed by Golden Gate Canyon State Park offered a combination of dense forests, open meadows and water supplies that would support these rural vocations. The meadows would enable a family to raise food for themselves and to sell in the nearby towns. The forests could be logged to meet the needs of the mining industry which required a great deal of timber. Eventually, most of the mountainsides throughout the Golden Gate area were logged. Still visible on the Green Ranch are the remains of charcoal pits that were used to reduce timber to charcoal needed for the smelts, kilns and ovens of the mines and mining towns.

The property boundaries of the park's first settlers form a patchwork mosaic over the territory now covered by the park. These first settlers obtained their patents on these public lands by either buying them with government issued scrip or by homesteading. After a homesteader filed a claim on their 160 acres, they had five years to meet the homesteading requirements of establishing their house and other buildings, raising crops and fencing the property. This was difficult in this rugged land, and some had to seek extensions on their claim. Therefore, some of the patent records, which reflect the date the patent was issued when either purchased by scrip or the homesteading requirements were met, don't actually reflect when the land was first settled.

As might be assumed, the valleys and meadows were the first lands claimed by the earliest settlers. Some of these settlers' names still remain of park feature - Frazer Meadow, Greenfield Meadow, etc. Most of the homesteading of the area took place from the 1860's through 1900, although there are a few original patents dated as late as the 1920's.

By the early 1900's, the chaos accompanying the gold rush had settled into a routine lifestyle. In 1916, Colorado joined the Prohibitionist movement, becoming a "dry" state. Bootlegging immediately sprang up all over Gilpin and surrounding counties. The area of the park was ideal for producing illegal whiskey - there was a good supply of water for brewing and the gulches provided isolation and remoteness from the revenueurs, yet it wasn't that far to the market in Denver. Remnants of this colorful period of Golden Gate's history - barrel staves and copper tubing from the stills - can still be seen by the alert hiker in some of the park's gulches. After the repeal of prohibition, life again returned to ranching.

In the early to mid 1900's, many of the original landowners sold their small homesteads, and several large ranches developed in the Golden Gate area. The Green Ranch, totalling nearly 2,900 acres, was assembled by the Green family starting in 1917 from various inholdings. The Greens bought land that was initially settled by approximately 19 different patent holders, with original patent dates ranging from as early as 1869 to as late as 1927.

A second major ranch was assembled by the Strang family in the 1930's and 40's. The Strang family ranch totalled 1,610 acres in the northeast corner of the park. The Harmsen Ranch, covering over 2,000 acres in the north-central part of the park, was founded by Bill and Dorothy Harmsen in the 1950's. The Harmsens were the founders of Jolly Rancher Candy in Arvada.

The extensive size of these ranches could support a true ranching endeavor compared to the earlier homesteads, most of which were 160 acres or less in size. However, heavy winter periods were always difficult. For example, the Green Ranch reportedly had a carrying capacity of 200 head of cattle on a year-round basis assuming the use of supplemental feed during the winter.

In the 1960's, the State of Colorado made its initial purchases in the Golden Gate area. The first purchases were from the Ellyson family and are the land around today's visitor center and Slough Pond. Other purchases in the 60's were mainly in what is now the western part of the park (exclusive of the Green Ranch) with the exception of the Strang Ranch in the northeastern part of the park. Prior to 1972, state parks were part of the Division of Game, Fish and Parks. Lands acquired at Golden Gate in the 60's were known as Golden Gate Canyon State Recreation Area. In 1969, Senate Joint Resolution No. 12 was passed by the Colorado State Legislature, designating the area as Golden Gate Canyon State Park. After 1972, the park fell under the jurisdiction of Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor recreation.

The development of the then state recreation area began with the construction of maintenance shops and offices at Kriley Pond and Nott Creek. In 1964 Kriley and Slough ponds were built, followed by the Ranch Ponds in 1967. The Visitor Center was built in 1968, and was officially opened and dedicated in 1969, coinciding with the renaming of Golden Gate from a state recreation area to a state park.

Reverend's Ridge Campground, with 106 tent and RV sites, was built in 1971 and opened in 1972. In 1972, Panorama Point, a memorial to Kenneth A. Larkin, was built. This overlook provides a view of over 100 miles of the continental divide. During this same time, Mountain Base Road was built to connect the Visitor Center and maintenance shops in the

lower valleys of the park to the new campground and Panorama Point at the higher elevations. In 1978 34 tent sites were added to Golden Gate's camping system with the opening of Aspen Meadow Campground.



Figure 2-8: Office at Reverend's Ridge Campground

Throughout the following decades, additional developments in the park were completed to enhance the enjoyment of the park's visitors. Trails, picnic sites, toilets, back country camping sites and shelters were just a few of the amenities added.



Figure 2-9: The Visitor Center in 1996

In 1995, the old visitor center was remodelled and expanded, with improved public restrooms, a multiple purpose program room, new staff offices and interpretive displays.

3. Influences on Management

3.1 Legislative and Administrative

The legislation establishing Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is found in Colorado Revised Statutes 33-10-101-(1):

It is the policy of the state of Colorado that the natural, scenic, scientific and outdoor recreation areas of this state are to be protected, preserved, enhanced, and managed for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people of this state and the visitors of this state.

For implementing this policy, the state legislature gave the direction to:

Develop state parks and recreation areas suitable for such recreational activities as camping, picnicking, hiking, horse back riding, environmental education, sightseeing, hunting, boating, fishing, swimming, and other water sports, and other recreational activities.

In addition to creating the state parks agency, the legislature established a citizens board, the Colorado State Parks Board, to govern state parks. The board's duties include enacting regulations and making major policy decisions that set the parameters for the use of state parks.

In addition to its initial role in establishing state parks, the legislature affects the operations of state parks on an annual basis. The state legislature continues to pass legislation setting statutes that affect the administration of state park programs as well as laws that govern the use of state parks. The state legislature also sets annual budgets for the division that ultimately affect the operational and service levels at each state park.

3.2 Regional and Local Influences

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is located in eastern Gilpin and northwestern Jefferson counties. A limited amount of agricultural use still occurs in the area, mainly raising cattle. Much of the private land surrounding the park has been subdivided into residential areas, such as Dory Hill and Golden Gate Estates in Gilpin County and the new Red Schoolhouse subdivision between the park and White Ranch Park in Jefferson County. These subdivisions consist mainly of lots varying in size from 5 to 35 acres; there is no dense residential development closer than Golden, 15 miles away.

The closest industry to the park is the limited stakes gambling in Black Hawk and Central

City. This has brought an influx of tourists to Gilpin County, mainly via Highway 6 and 119 through Clear Creek Canyon.

The increase of residences surrounding the park and the gambling have increased traffic coming through the park on Golden Gate Canyon Road/Highway 46. The tourists are fairly focussed in their purpose of getting to the casinos and don't make extensive use of the park. The biggest impact from this through traffic is from people needing a restroom break, stopping either at the Visitor Center or at the Kriley Pond restrooms. Very few of these park users purchase park passes. At this time, there is minimal use of the Golden Gate campgrounds by these individuals.

There is a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities in the area around Golden Gate. National Forest land adjoins the park to the north, and is separated from the park by only a few miles of private land to the west. Jefferson County's White Ranch park is just three miles to the east of the park. Also within 50 miles driving distance are Estes park and Rocky Mountain National Park, Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, Mount Evans, Black Hawk, Central City, Idaho Springs and Georgetown, all of which are major tourist attractions.

The main access to the park is from Golden via Golden Gate Canyon Road, a paved road that receives exceptional attention by the Jefferson County Highway Department and is kept open on all but the very worst winter snow days.

3.3 Surrounding Landowners and Inholdings

After an aggressive acquisition program in the 1980's that resulted in the purchase of over 2,000 acres of critical inholdings, the park has a fairly uninterrupted flow from east to west and north to south with one exception. There remains on a major section of private land, totalling over 600 acres, in what was the middle of the park prior to the addition of the Green Ranch to the west. Due to the number of individual owners within this acreage and to the number of long established residences here, this is not a candidate for priority acquisition for park land. However, if properties do become available, especially if they are adjacent to the park's boundaries, consideration should be given for acquisition.

With a few exceptions, the park is mostly surrounded by private property. The exceptions are Forest Service land at the northwestern part of the park, a State Land Board Section situated northeast of the park, and Bureau of Land Management property southwest of the park, as shown in Figure 4-1.

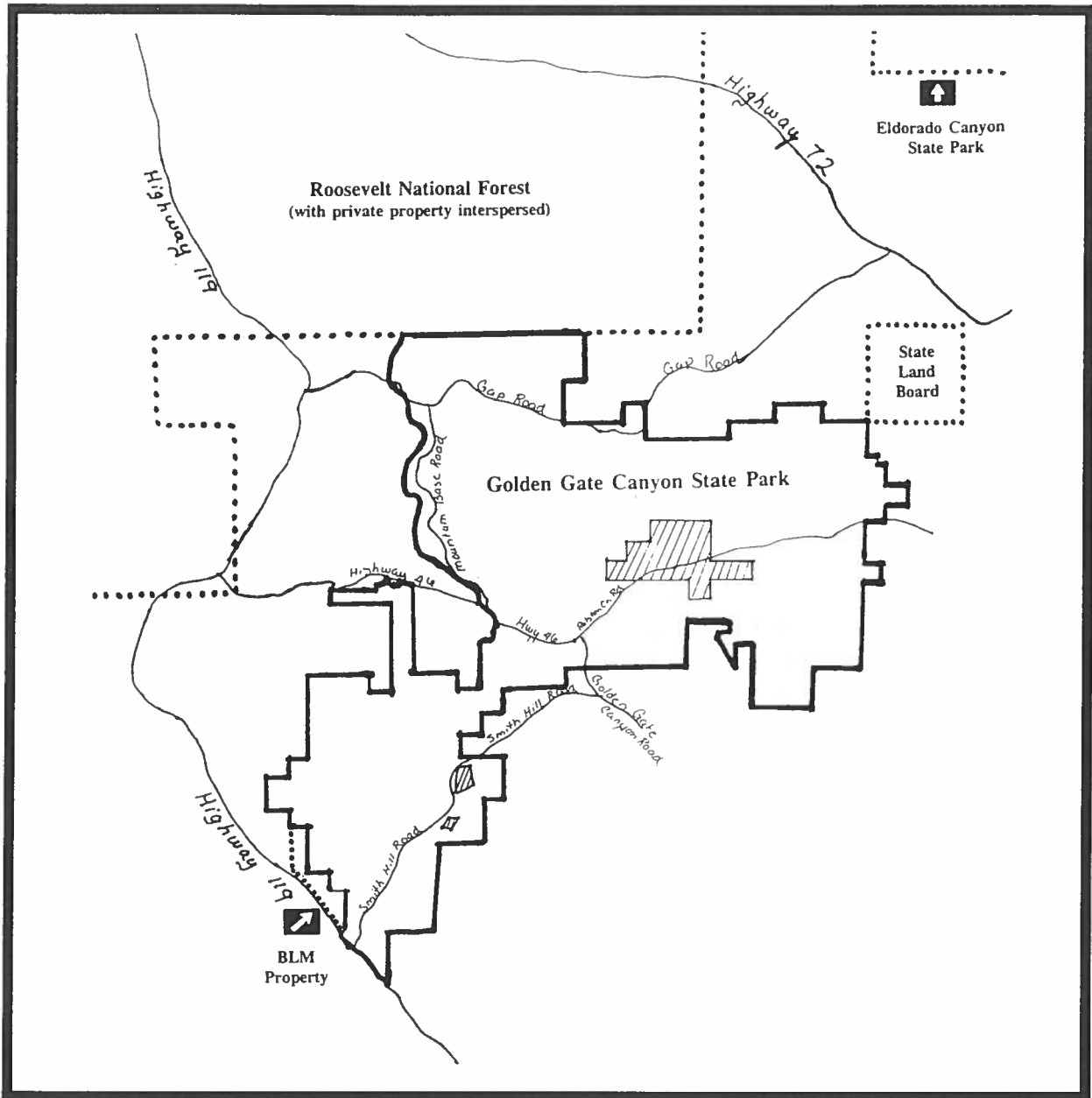


Figure 3-1: Location of Public Lands Adjacent to the Park

There are several landowners to the north of the park, north of Gap Road, that must cross park land to access their private property. Efforts have been made, with limited success, to provide these landowners with easements that legalize their access across park land. These will be handled on an individual basis until all easements are completed.

3.4 Acquisition and Lease Conditions

Several of the properties within Golden Gate Canyon State Park have constraints or special stipulations associated with their deeds or easements.

The Nelson/Gruchy Property: (Property #20 on the Acquisition Map in the Appendix) An easement was granted to the state on this 160 acre property in 1974. This is an exclusive perpetual easement for public recreation purposes, including but not limited to hiking and horseback riding. The state can build access roads and parking areas and erect signs on the property. The Nelsons could install pipes, conduits or wires on the property. Neither party can construct dwellings on the property. The easement states that the rule of strict construction does not apply to this grant.

Bandimere Property: (Property # 34 on the Acquisition Map) The 1988 contract for the purchase of this 320 acre property included a clause requiring the state to construct and place a memorial marker in or near Frazer Meadow memorializing Fred E. and Anna Bandimere.

BLM Property: (Property # 6 on the Acquisition Map) The transfer of this property from the BLM to the state in 1963 included a record of decision that required that the state acknowledge that these lands were acquired through the cooperation of the Bureau of Land Management by erecting permanent signs to such effect at or near the entrance to the park.

Green Property: (Property # 43 on the Acquisition Map) By way of a letter to the park manager in 1995, Ken and Lela Green have requested the following:

- *The Green Ranch be a place where disabled and older people be able to observe wildlife in its natural state.
- *That we be warned against horseback riding facilities. Horseback riding should be "haul your own horses in."
- *Allow limited hunting, realizing that the number of game animals must be controlled in the area.
- *That the name Green Ranch be preserved in memory of the family.

3.5 Related Agencies, Partners and Service Providers

The following synopsis provides the names of the agencies, service providers and partners that provide assistance and support for the operations at Golden Gate Canyon State Park and a brief description of the type of service or support that each provides.

1. Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW)

DOW assists with the management of the fishery and wildlife resources in the park. Dow stacks all of the park's fishing ponds on a regular

basis, primarily with catchable size rainbow trout. The agencies work cooperatively to protect park resources and provide mutual aid in law enforcement, particularly with wildlife related statutes and regulations.

The park and DOW staff work closely on Watchable Wildlife in Parks projects. These have included Visitor Center displays and Larkin Memorial Trail (Trout Pond) displays.

2. Gilpin County Sheriff's Department (GCSO)

Share concurrent jurisdiction in the Gilpin County side of the park; agencies cooperate to provide mutual aid in law enforcement, search and rescue, and related emergency operations.

3. Jefferson County Sheriff's Department (JCSO)

Share concurrent jurisdiction in the Jefferson County portion of the park; agencies cooperate to provide mutual aid in law enforcement, search and rescue, and related emergency operations.

4. Colorado State Patrol (CSP)

Provides mutual aid in law enforcement, traffic accident investigation, DUI, and related emergency operations.

5. High Country, Golden Gate and Coal Creek Fire Departments

Respond to structural fires, wildland fires, auto accidents, and related emergency operations. Department called depends on location in the park.

6. Gilpin County Search and Rescue

Responds to medical emergencies, lost person searches, and related emergencies in the park. Provides emergency ambulance transport to area hospitals.

7. Jefferson County Health Department

Conducts water quality tests on drinking water provided in the park.

8. State Land Board

A portion of the Green Ranch part of Golden Gate is State Land Board

land that is managed through an agreement as a part of the park.

9. U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Several parcels in the park are BLM lands managed as park land through patents or other land agreements.

10. Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA)

Agencies have a cooperative agreement whereby RMNA supplies books, post cards, posters, clothing, and similar items for sale on consignment at the Visitor Center. Golden Gate, in return, receives a portion of the proceeds back in the form of materials and equipment from RMNA.

3.6 Utilities

Golden Gate receives its electrical service from United Power, a rural electric association headquartered in Brighton, Colorado. Propane gas is delivered by Northern Energy.

Water at the park comes from wells owned and maintained by the park. Sewage is handled either by park maintained sewage lagoons (at Reverend's Ridge Campground) or by leach fields at the maintenance shops, Visitor Center, park housing area and Harmsen Ranch. Vault toilet sewage removal and general trash hauling are provide by private contractors.

Phone service (local) is provided by U. S. West.

3.7 Climate and Weather

Park visitation is affected by actual and perceived weather conditions. As described in Section 2.7, Golden Gate's weather can have extreme variations from year to year and within a single season. Extreme weather conditions can especially adversely affect camping and day use at the beginning and end of the high use season.

The lack of snow in the early winter months can have a double-edged affect. Visitors who would like to participate in snow-related activities such as tubing, cross-country skiing or snow shoeing are often disappointed at he lack of snow. Other visitors assume there is snow on the ground because of the park's mountainous location and stay away because of that. In many years, trails are free of snow in late December and offer excellent winter hiking conditions.

3.8 Visitor Characteristics

With surveys conducted in 1983, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995, and information captured on a month by month basis on the Park Management Reports, there is a wealth of information from which to characterize the visitors to Golden Gate Canyon State Park. In this section visitor demographics will be presented followed by information about the activities the visitors participate in and their satisfaction with the services at the park.

3.8.1 Visitor Demographics

The 1993 Visitor and Economic Survey indicate that approximately **80%** of Golden Gate's visitors:

- drive 60 miles or less to reach the park
- are Colorado residents
- view Golden Gate as a destination
- use a daily pass
- use the park on weekends

The 1993 survey went more in depth to tell us a little more about these people who are using the park.

Formal Education

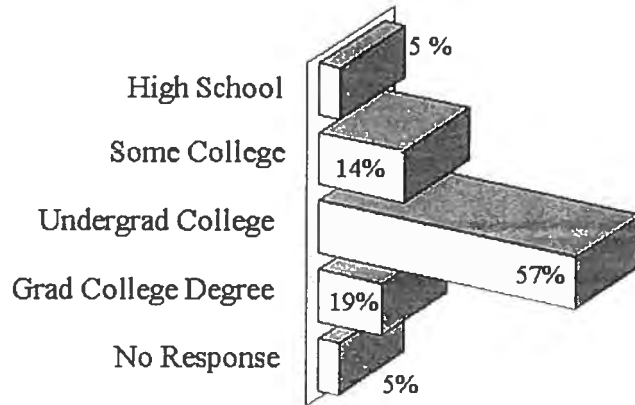


Figure 3-2: Education Level of Golden Gate's Visitors

Household Income

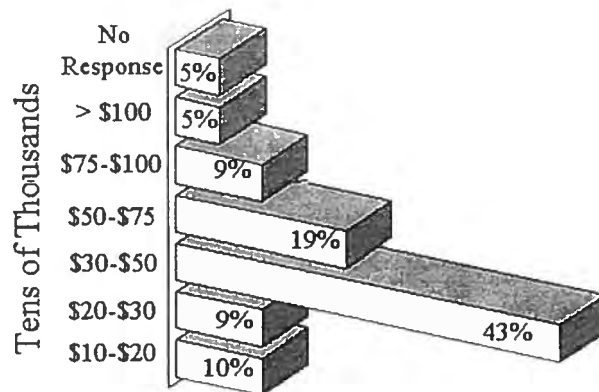


Figure 3-3: Average Annual Income of Golden Gate's Visitors

The survey showed that 76% of the park's visitors have either an undergraduate or graduate college degree, and 63% fall in the range of \$30,000 to \$75,000 for annual household income. Only 19% make less than \$30,000 annually. The average age of Golden Gate's visitors is 41.5 years

The park's visitors are nearly equally split between the genders, with 49% male and 51% female.

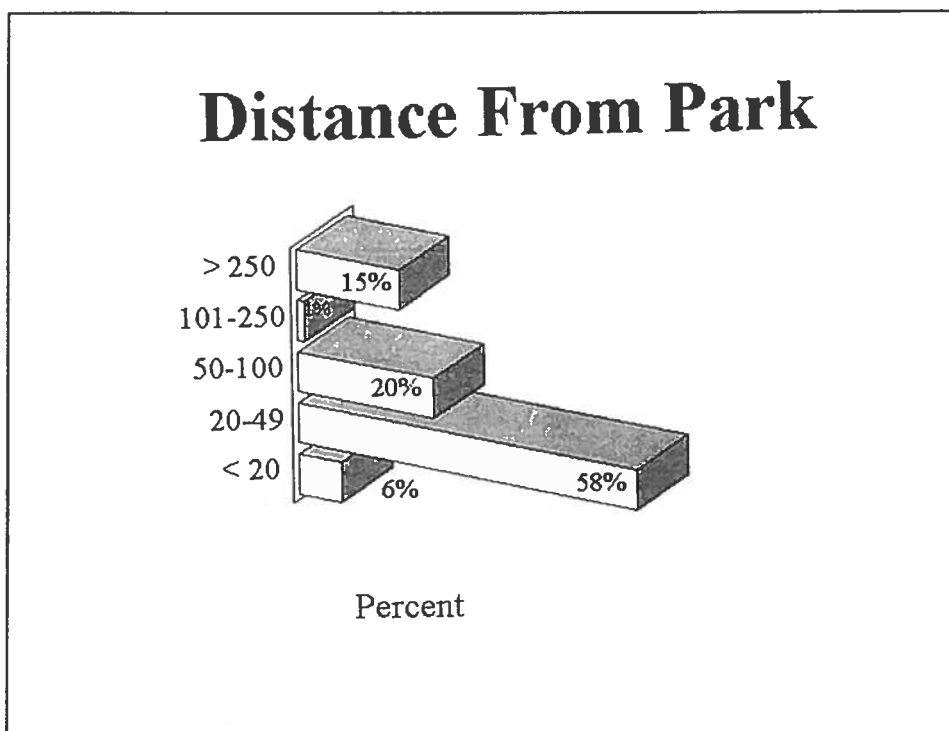


Figure 3-4: Distance Visitors Drive to Reach the Park

The majority of the park's visitors are from fairly close by - 80% travelled 60 miles or less to reach the park. Denver is the most frequently cited town of origination, followed by Aurora, Arvada, Lakewood, Littleton, Westminster, Wheatridge, Broomfield, Boulder and Lakewood. Colorado residents accounted for 83% of the park's visitors; non-residents 17%. Obviously, given that 80% of the park's visitors travelled 60 miles or less to reach the park, most of the Colorado residents who used the park were from fairly close by.

3.8.2 Visitation Patterns

The average annual visitation for Golden Gate Canyon State Park during the calendar years of 1992 through 1995 was 545,000. Using the average of 3.263 people per vehicle, this

translates into over 170,000 vehicles entering the park.

60% of Golden Gate's annual visitation occurs in the three summer months of June, July and August. May, September and October account for another 30%, while the months of November through April, 50 % of the year, host only 10% of the park's annual visitation.

The following chart shows the park's average monthly visitation from 1992 through 1995.

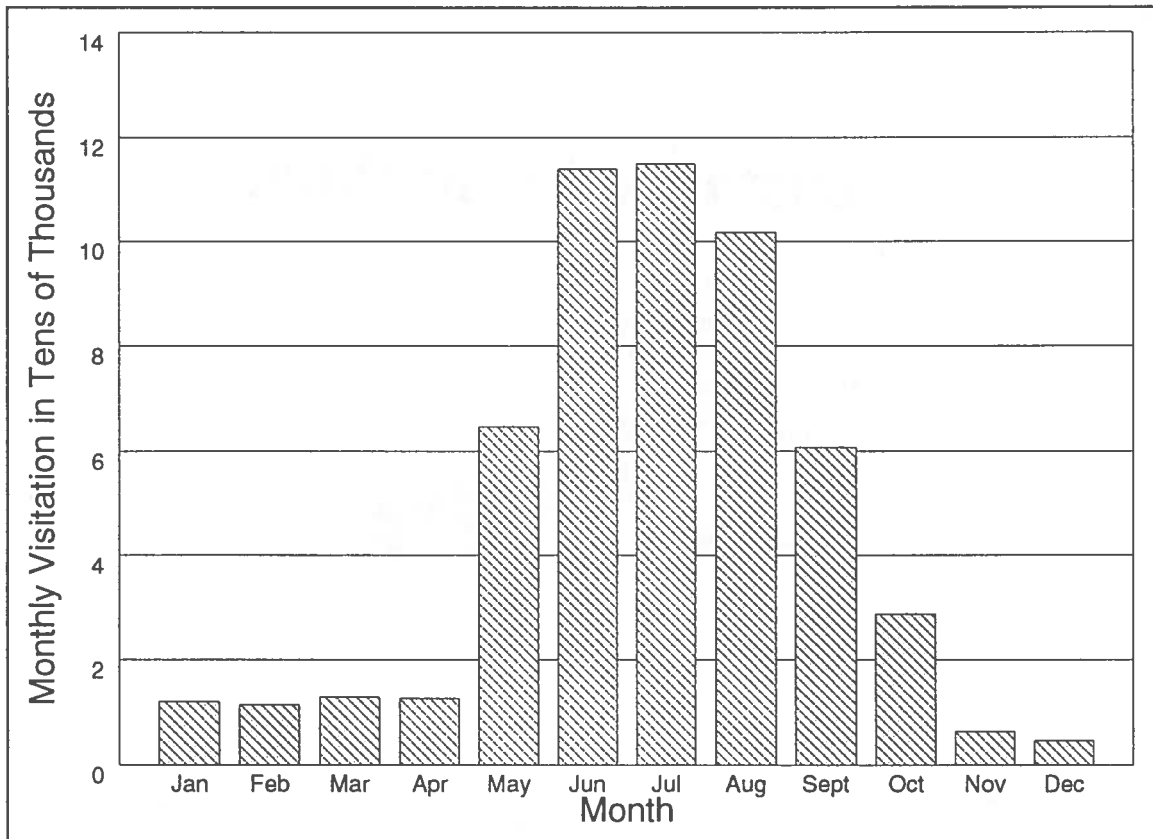


Figure 3-5: Average Monthly Visitation
1992-1995

According to use information compiled from monthly park use records, between 20-25% of the park's visitors came for trail use, 21-25% to picnic, 16-20% to fish, and 6-8% to camp. About 7% stopped at the visitor center, while less than 1% participated in organized interpretive programs, such as campfire programs or guided hikes. Hunting accounted for about .1% of the visitation.

Nearly 60 percent of the park's visitors come to the park only once or twice per year. This is an interesting anecdote, considering that most of the visitors are from less than 60 miles away and are good candidates for repeat visitation. Golden Gate is obviously a destination

park that requires a "plan" to visit, and does not experience the repetitive visitation associated with most of the other "closer in" Metro Region state parks.

Nearly 36% of the park's visitors are "day users," and their average stay is per visit is less than 2 hours. People who stay for one or two days account for another 40 percent of the visitors.

Perhaps this high percentage of visitors who use the park two days or less per year accounts for Golden Gate's slightly higher percentage of daily pass users than the state-wide percentage. State wide, daily pass use is at 62%, while at Golden Gate daily pass use make up 76% of passes used. The percentage of each type of pass used both state wide and at Golden Gate is shown in Figure 4-5. Aspen Leaf pass use is also less than on a statewide basis.

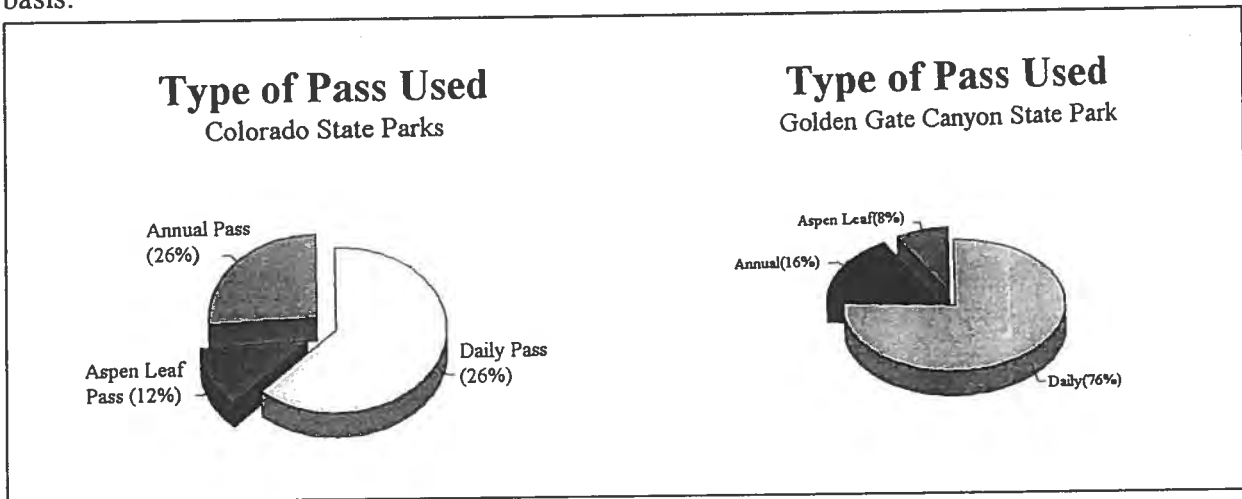


Figure 3-6: Types of Passes Used Statewide and at Golden Gate

3.8.3 Reasons for Visiting

The 1993 Visitor Survey collected information about why people visit Golden Gate Canyon State Park and what activities and facilities are important to them.

As shown in Figure 4-6, nearly 83 percent of the park's visitors consider Golden Gate to be their primary destination.

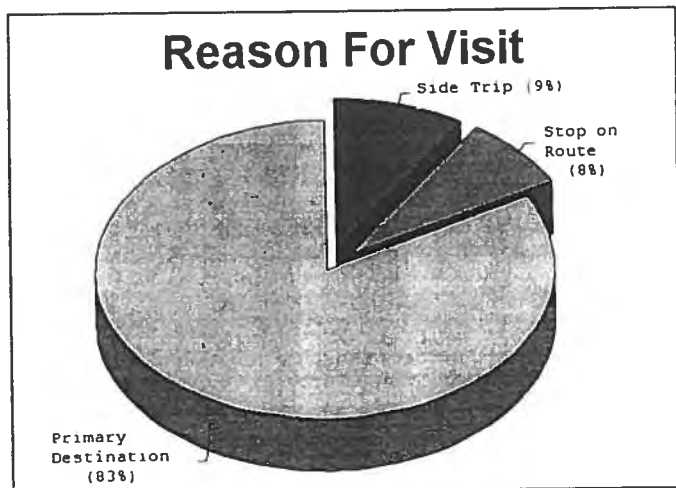


Figure 3-7: Reason For Visit

In the survey, visitors were asked about the importance of certain facilities and activities in influencing their decision to visit the park. Table 3-1 shows the information that was gathered at Golden Gate. It should be noted that this value rating is not a measure of what they actually did during their visit. Actual use information was provided in Section 3.8.2. For example, although electrical hook-ups were reported as being either somewhat or very important, there were none available.

**Table 3-1: Importance of Facilities & Activities
In Deciding to Visit Golden Gate**

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Somewhat + Very Important
Auto Sightseeing	22%	48%	30%	78%
Hiking	16	28	56	84
Camping	23	7	70	77
Electrical Hookups	80	12	8	20
Showers	45	29	26	55
Swimming	78	17	5	22
Boating	87	10	3	13
Fishing	49	25	26	51
Biking	63	22	15	37
Picnicking	25	31	44	75
Horseback Riding	80	16	4	20
Climbing	60	26	14	40
Wildlife Viewing/Photography	13	36	51	87
Interp. Programs/ Nature Study	34	43	23	66

Activities that were important to over 80% of the respondents were hiking and wildlife viewing. Auto sightseeing, camping and picnicking were important to over 70%, closely followed by interpretive programs. Shower facilities and fishing opportunities were important to over 50% of the respondents. Activities such as climbing, biking and horseback riding

were less of an influence on their decision to use the park. It's interesting that although swimming is not available at Golden Gate, this survey showed that it had slightly more importance than horseback riding or climbing, and was equal to biking, all three of which are activities available at the park! Just because you can't do it doesn't mean it isn't important!

3.8.4 Visitor's Satisfaction

In the 1993 survey, visitors were asked to rate a variety of aspects about Golden Gate. Ratings on all 11 aspects were very high. Four categories received over 90% of the ratings as excellent or better than average: first impression, attractiveness of park, cleanliness of grounds, and overall satisfaction. Criteria rated by more than 80% of the respondents as either excellent or better than average were helpfulness of staff, cleanliness of restrooms, information at park, safety and security and hours of operation. Over three quarters of the respondents rate control of pets and ease of access as better than average or above.

Table 3-2: Visitor Satisfaction at Golden Gate

	Excellent	Better than Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
First Impression	56%	36%	6%	1%	1%
Staff Helpfulness	63	26	9	1	1
Restroom Cleanliness	50	32	14	2	2
Info at Park	56	28	11	3	2
Attractions	66	28	6		
Safety & Security	51	35	13	1	
Cleanliness of Grounds	68	27	5		
Ease of Access	51	28	14	5	2
Hours of Operation	52	32	15		1
Control of Pets	47	30	19	2	2
Overall Satisfaction	59	36	4	1	

3.8.5 Factors Influencing Visits to State Parks

In addition to on-site surveys conducted as part of the 1993 study, a follow-up phone survey was conducted. As part of this respondents were asked why they visit Colorado state parks in

general. This survey focused on two aspects of park visitation - facilities and activities.

Well maintained facilities were important to virtually all visitors. Some of the aspects of this survey, such as those relating to water sports (clean water, swimming beach, boat ramps, marinas) don't pertain to Golden Gate operations, but are interesting as a point of reference.

Table 3-3: Facility Related Reasons for Visiting State Parks

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
Well-maintained Facility	86%	12%	2%
Clean Water	68	17	15
Uniformed Ranger	47	37	16
Swimming Beach	29	37	34
Boat Ramps	29	18	53
Showers	22	31	47
Marinas	18	24	58
Electrical Hookups	16	21	63
Equipment Rentals	7	22	71
Laundry Facilities	4	15	81

In the activity related reasons for visiting state parks, fishing was the activity chosen as the most important, followed by wildlife viewing and hiking.

Table 3-4: Activity Related Reasons for Visiting State Parks

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
Fishing	64%	19%	17%
Wildlife Viewing	51	34	15
Hiking	48	34	18
Water Sports	37	33	30
Hunting	22	14	64
Mountain Biking	17	26	57

3.9 Issues Affecting the Park

As with any public park or recreation location, Golden Gate Canyon State Park has issues that affect the management of the park. Some of these are fairly universal in nature to all public park areas, others are somewhat unique to Golden Gate.

Universal Accessibility: With the passage of the Americans with Disability Act, it is mandatory that park facilities and programs are universally accessible. All current park programs and facilities are being modified to meet requirements, and all new programs and facilities must be designed to meet ADA requirements.

Capacity Conditions: Capacity issues deal with weekend use of campgrounds, day use areas (picnic areas and trail head parking areas) group campground and group picnicking area.

Day use areas are at capacity on most summer weekends and holidays. Both of the developed campgrounds, Reverend's Ridge and Aspen Meadows, are at capacity on all summer weekends, but range from 45-55% full during the week. Reservations for the group campground and picnic facility are accepted after January 1 of each year, and these two facilities are usually completely booked for the summer and early fall weekends and holidays, as well as many weekdays, by the beginning of March. Requests that cannot be accommodated, for all types of reserved facilities including the family campgrounds, indicate the need for additional facilities.

Off season use (November through the beginning of May) rarely brings near or at capacity crowds.

Trail Maintenance/New Construction: The loss or reduction of several key federally or state funded youth programs such as YACC, JTPA and YNR have severely impacted the labor force that was previously available to build and maintain trails in the park. This has created a back-log of both maintenance and construction projects as we search for alternative ways to accomplish these task.

Trail System Planning: The current trail system utilizes many old ranch roads as well as trails constructed by the park. Efforts are currently underway to develop a complete plan for the trail system at Golden Gate. Issues such as establishing better loops and connections between existing trails, location of trails in relation to critical wetland areas and wildlife habitat will be considered, as well as establishing standards for trail construction.

Conflicts between Trail Users: As the Denver metropolitan area continues to grow, so do the number of users and types of use on Golden Gate's trail system. Types of trail uses permitted at Golden Gate include, hiking, backpacking (campers using the backcountry sites), horseback riding , mountain biking, llama trekking and horse-drawn wagon rides. Trail use conflicts are generated as the quantity of use increases and more types of use are permitted

on the trails. Although most mountain bikers are courteous and responsible trail users, there is a small minority of this category of user that seems to generate the majority of complaints relating to trail use.

Trail Links: Although Golden Gate offers extensive hiking opportunities within its own boundaries, the use of the Golden Gate trail system could be enhanced and expanded by establishing trail links to other key locations, such as Eldorado Canyon State Park, Jefferson County's White Ranch, and National Forest properties in Gilpin and Boulder counties.

Forest Management: The Colorado State Forest Service has completed an inventory of and management plan for Golden Gate's forest resources. This inventory has identified forest disease problems (insects as well as other types of infestation such as mistletoe) and wildfire management concerns. Forest management decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Decisions such as removing standing dead timber, removing mistletoe infested trees and thinning must be continually answered on both an intellectual and emotional level.

Wildfire Management: The current park wildfire management practice is to control and stop all forest fires as quickly as possible. This practice is based on the need to protect park facilities and residential areas outside the park. Controlled burns have been used for resource management.

Noxious and Non-Native Plant Control: The control of noxious weeds and other non-native vegetation is becoming an increasing issue. More aggressive actions need to be taken to control the spread of non-native vegetation and to take steps toward removing noxious weeds.

Hunting: Currently hunting is allowed only between Labor Day and Memorial Day and only in the Jefferson County portion of the park. Hunting remains a controversial program based on individual ethical considerations, potential safety concerns as a result of other park activities, and its role as a viable wildlife population management technique. Other influences on hunting include the closure of all Jefferson County public lands to hunting, and the lack of access to private lands for hunting purposes. Although hunting is permitted on many of the federal public lands in Boulder and Gilpin counties, frequently big game animals are not on these public lands during the hunting season.

Human Interactions with Wildlife: Interactions between humans and wildlife, particularly bears and mountain lions, is a major issue at Golden Gate due to the park's backcountry activities and campgrounds. Visitors need to be aware of the presence of these animals, as well as techniques that can help to prevent dangerous encounters and how to reduce the risk of harm to the wildlife and to humans if encounters do occur. In addition, the park needs to address outreach opportunities with the local residents to address these same issues.

Wildlife viewing is becoming an increasingly popular activity across the nation. Golden Gate has a significant population of elk and mule deer, as well as other watchable wildlife including bears, mountain lions and small mammals. Wildlife viewing activities must be

directed so the viewer has a safe, enjoyable experience without impacting the wildlife they are viewing. Visitors must be education about the impacts of wildlife feeding and laws that have been enacted to protect wildlife.

Special Use Permits: Special use requests range from search and rescue practice sessions to horse trail competitions to use of roads for filming car commercials. As requests increase in number and variety, a balance must be maintained between accommodating requests, maintaining traditional park use and protecting the park's natural resources.



4. General Management Plan: Golden Gate - A Look at the Park in 1996 and in the Future

4.1 General Overview

One of the management goals at Golden Gate Canyon State Park is to provide a wide variety of safe, quality outdoor recreation experiences that are appropriate in a mountain setting and that complement the other goals of the park. Currently, there is a diversity of outdoor recreation activities in which visitors might engage at Golden Gate. These include camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, sightseeing, nature study (including wildlife watching), cross country skiing, sledding and snow shoeing. Today's facilities in the park have been thoughtfully designed and situated to support the park's visitors as they engage in these activities. The major facilities, roads and trails of the park as they exist in 1996, exclusive of the Green Ranch, are shown on the map in Figure 4-1. An inventory of major park facilities is included in Tables 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3.

The remaining sections of this chapter provide an overview of the major park activities, services and facilities as they exist in 1996 along with recommendations for future management actions. These future management recommendations are based on current and projected conditions of the park, information gained from surveys of park visitors, the issues affecting the park presented in Chapter 3, and the goals of the park presented in Chapter 1.

As the park was being developed, a conscious effort was made to maintain the main body of the park in a semi-wilderness condition, with only trails and backcountry camping sites added to the park's interior. The majority of the developments as shown in Figure 4-1, including picnic areas, campgrounds, the visitor center and other developed sites, have been situated along the park, county and state highways that provide access to the park. This strategy will be continued, and will be the pattern for development on the Green Ranch as well.

Figure 4-1 Map of Golden Gate Canyon State Park (excluding the Green Ranch)

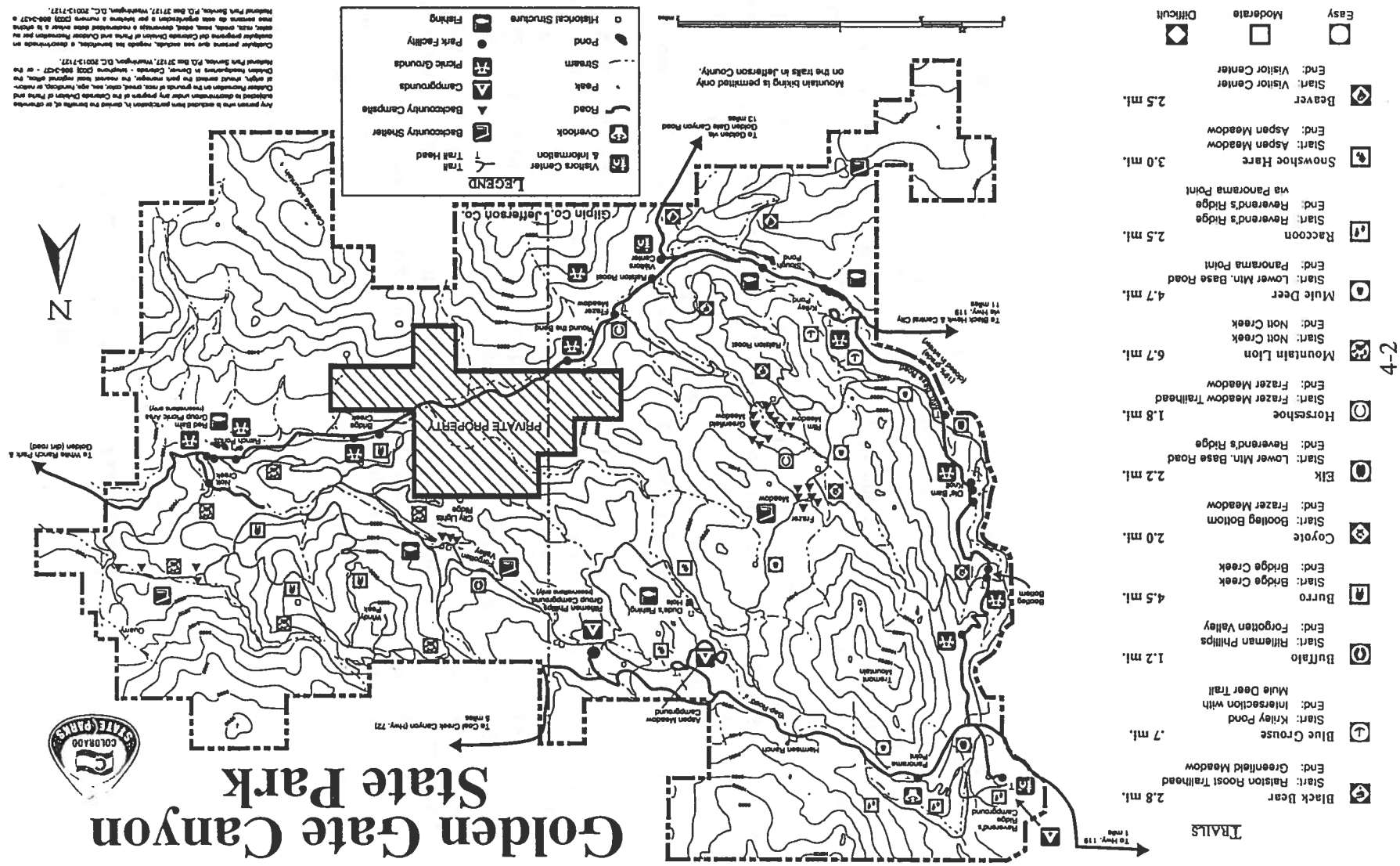


Table 4-1**Inventory of Trailheads and Picnic Areas**

(* indicates some handicapped accessible facilities are available at this location)

Location	# of Parking Spaces	# of Picnic Sites	Toilets	Trail Access
Red Barn Group Picnic Area*	30*	accommodates up to 150 people*	1 vault	none
Nott Creek	40	-0-	1 vault	Mountain Lion
Ranch Ponds	38	23	2 vaults	Mountain Lion
Bridge Creek*	28	16*	1 vault	Burro Trail
Round the Bend	8	5	1 vault	none
Frazer Meadow	15	-0-	1 vault	Horseshoe Trail
Ralston Roost	24	11	1 vault	Black Bear Trail
Slough Pond	12	-0-	1 vault	Beaver Trail
Kriley Pond*	25*	7*	1 vault*	none
Kriley Overlook	10	6	1 vault	Blue Grouse Trail
Lower Mountain Base	14	-0-	-0-	Elk and Mule Deer Trails
Old Barn Knoll	35	27	1 vault	Elk Trail
Bootleg Bottom	27*	20*	2 vaults*	Coyote & Elk Trails
Upper Mountain Base	10	3	-0-	none
Panorama Point*	15*	7*	1 vault	Raccoon Trail
Dude's Fishing Hole	8	-0-	vault toilet at Aspen Meadows Campground	Snowshoe Hare trail
Rifleman Phillips Trailhead	10	-0-	-0-	Buffalo

**Table 4-2
Inventory of Camping Facilities at Golden Gate Canyon State Park**

Location	# of Camping Sites	Type of Sites	Toilets	Other Facilities or Restrictions
Reverend's Ridge	106	Tent & RV	1 vault 4 flush	Campground Office, Shower & Laundry, Outdoor Amphitheater, Trailhead for Raccoon Trail
Aspen Meadows	35	Tents only	4 vaults	Hand pumps for water, Trailhead for Snowshoe Hare Trail
Backcountry Sites	23	Tents only	None	Tent pad, no fires allowed, no drinking water available
Backcountry Appalachian Style Shelters	4	3-sided wooden shelter with roof	none	no fires allowed, no drinking water available
Rifleman Phillips Group Campground	accommodates up to 75 people	tents only	1 vault	Hand pumps for water

Table 4-3
Inventory of Visitor Center, Entrance Station and Other Park Facilities
 (* denotes handicapped accessible facilities available at this location)

Location	Description
Visitor Center*	23 parking spaces, Public restrooms, Interpretive displays, Information desk, Program/meeting room, After-hours backcountry registration and pass sales on visitor center deck, Paved nature trail (Wilbur and Nellie Larkin Memorial Trail) adjacent to building
Harmsen Ranch	Historic ranch house open for public tours as announced at Visitor Center
Golden Gate Entrance	Entrance station staffed during high use season, Regulation signs, Self service pass sales
Crawford Gulch Entrance	6 parking spaces, Regulation signs, Self service pass sales
Highway 46 Entrance	Regulation signs, Self service pass sales, Information kiosk
Gap/Mountain Base Road Entrance	Regulation signs, Self service pass sales, Information kiosk
Panorama Point Entrance	Regulation signs, Self service pass sales, Information kiosk, Deck that provides view of continental divide - see also information under Table 4-2-A for other information
Aspen Meadows Entrance	Entrance station staffed on some weekends, Regulation signs with solar lighting, Self service pass and camping permit sales, Information kiosk in campground

4.2 Today's Park Boundaries and Future Acquisitions

In 1960 and 1961, two separate properties were purchased from the Ellysons totalling 680 acres. These lands, on which the Visitor Center and Slough Pond were built, represent the beginning of Golden Gate Canyon State Park. In 1995, the park reached its present size of approximately 14,363 acres. It took some 46 different land negotiations in the years between to arrive at today's park.

By 1969, when Golden Gate Canyon State Recreation Area was renamed Golden Gate Canyon State Park and the Visitor Center was opened, the park was about 4,600 acres in size. With the exception of the Strang Ranch in the northeast section of the park, most of this land was in the extreme western part of the park, with extensive private land in between.

In 1972 when Reverend's Ridge Campground opened, the park had grown to over 8,100 acres. The biggest single addition during this time was the 2,000 acre Harmsen Ranch in the central part of the park. The park was slowly starting to connect from east to west.

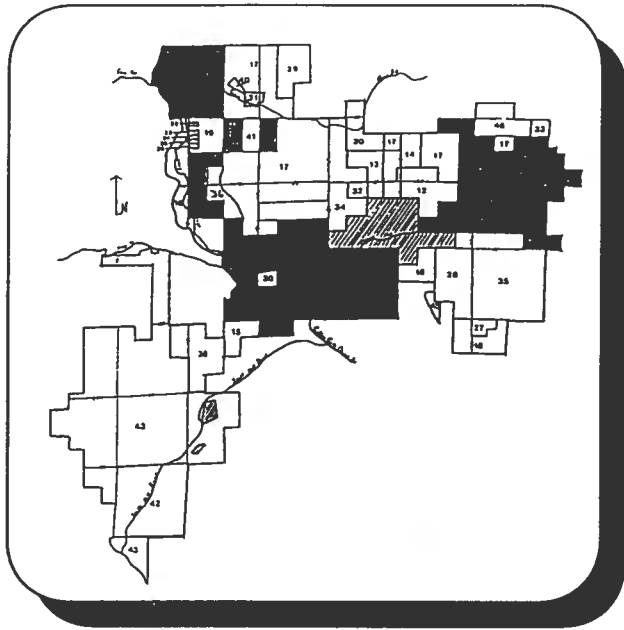
For the remainder of the 70's, only about 330 acres were added to the park. It wasn't until the mid to late 80's that the park staff was able to negotiate for critical inholdings that provided necessary trail links and prevented developments that could have had severe impacts on the park. By 1990, the park had grown to 10,665 acres.

The 90's saw the largest single addition to Golden Gate Canyon State Park - the 2,878 acre Green Ranch and the 640 acres of State Land Board land that had been leased to the Greens. The park also accepted the transfer of BLM lands from North Jeffco Mountain Park in 1994.

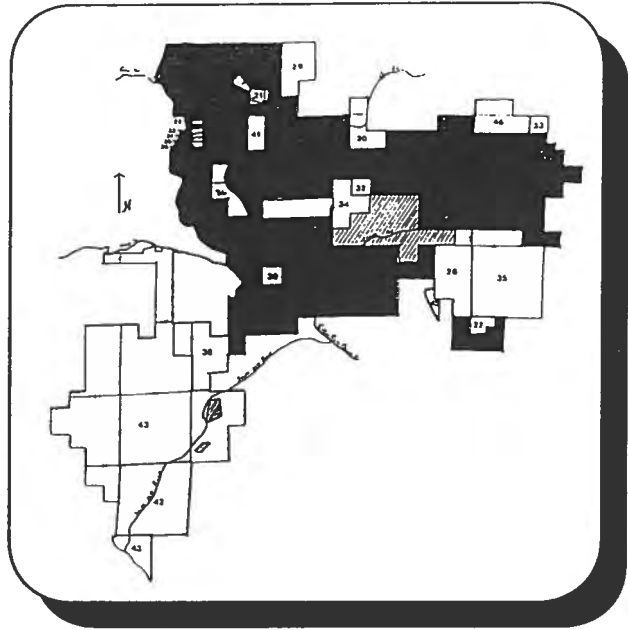
A complete list of park acquisitions and a map keyed to this list are included in the Appendix.

The illustrations included in the Figure 4-2 on the following page depict the park at various stages of its growth, with the 1995 illustration showing today's park boundaries.

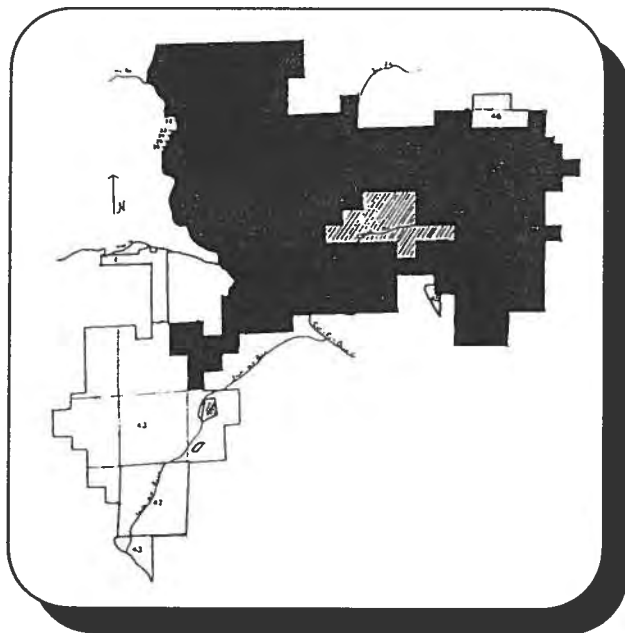
Future acquisitions should be made with an eye toward establishing trail corridors between Golden Gate and surrounding park and forest lands, especially for trail connections; for adding land along present borders as opportunities arise, especially where there is only a narrow strip of land between park developments such as Mountain Base Road and private land; and for converting an easement to fee-title state ownership.



The Park in 1968



The Park in 1971



The Park in 1990



The Park in 1995

Figure 4-2: The Growth of Golden Gate Canyon State Park
 The darkened portion of each illustration is land that was in the park at that time.

With these goals in mind, the following areas and/or properties have been identified as potential land purchases. See Figure 4-3 for the location of these properties in relation to current park boundaries.

A. State Land Board owned section known as Blue Mountain: This would provide a trail connection in the direction of Eldorado Canyon State Park.

B. Nelson Gruchy Easement: Recommend that this land which is now under park management through a recreation easement be purchased fee title.

C. BLM Property between the Green Ranch and Highway 119: This property should be acquired to prevent other private developments or conversions between the Green Ranch and Highway 119.

D. Private property between Mountain Base Road and a private access road. There is a narrow strip of private land between Lower Mountain Base Road and a private access road. In some places, Mountain Base Road comes within 20-30 feet of the park boundary. Purchasing this land or obtaining a conservation easement would prevent any private development. This property is not for sale presently.

E. Private property to the east of the Crawford Gulch entrance to the park: Currently there are three privately owned parcels under consideration in this area. These would help fill in the jagged eastern boundary of the park and might help with connections to Jefferson County's White Ranch. All contain riparian ecosystems and attractive forest stands. Property owners b) and c) have inquired about the park's interest in their property. Properties include:

- a) Vigil Property - 160 acres
- b) Corscak Property - 56 acres
- c) Robinson Property - 154 acres

Additional acquisition opportunities will be reviewed as they arise.

Fencing of boundary lines will continue to be a priority. Locations that are in need of fencing or re-alignment of existing fence lines include major parts of the Green Ranch, the North Jeffco Mountain Park addition and the southeast part of the park, mainly south of Ralston Creek.

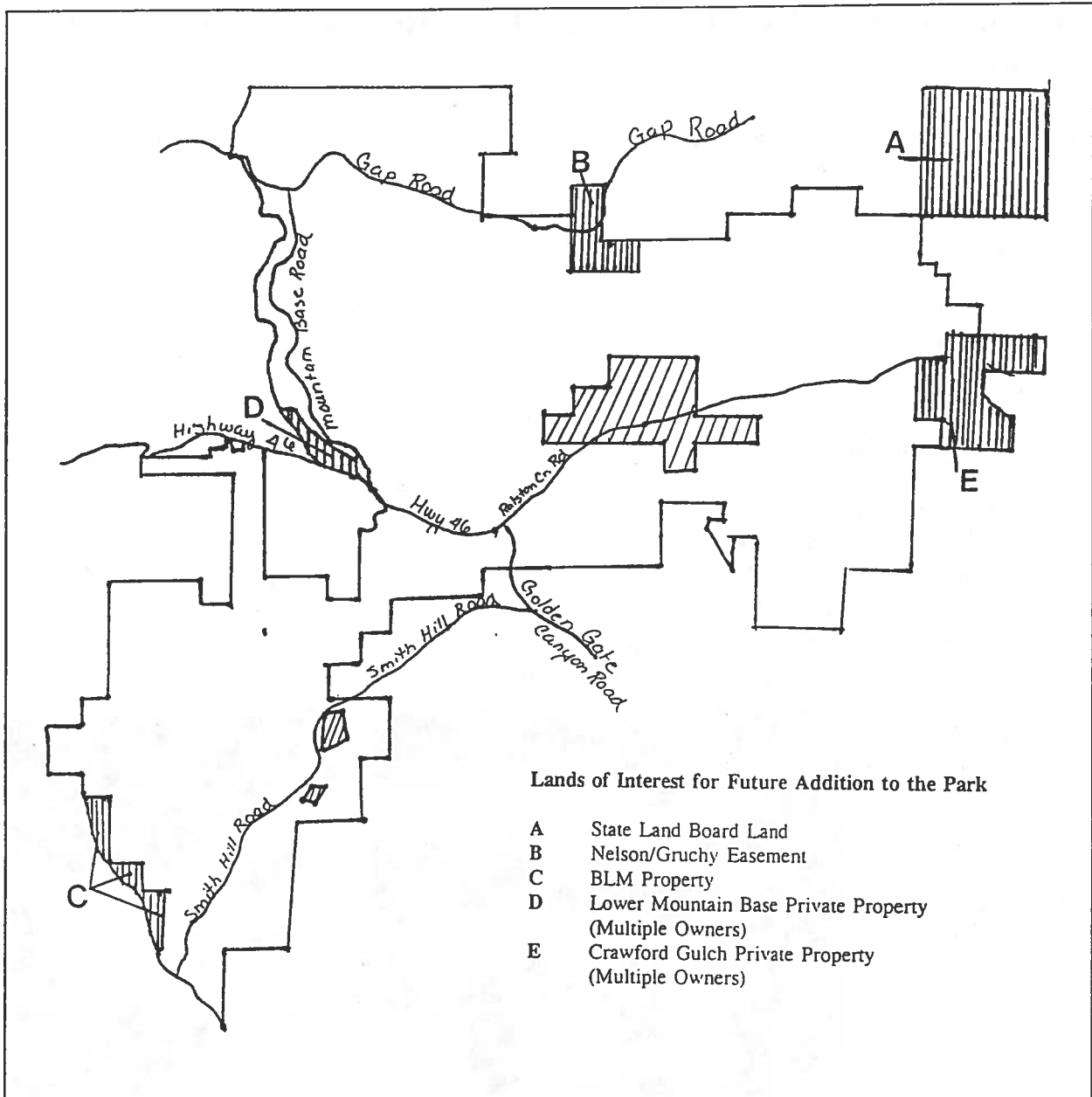


Figure 4-3: Map Showing Location of Potential Future Land Acquisitions

4.3 Management of Park Infrastructure, Recreation Facilities & Activities

4.3.1 Visitor Center

The managers of Golden Gate realized very early in the history of the park that a visitor center was a critical facility for the park and its visitors. A visitor center was first opened in 1969, and remained substantially the same until it was remodelled and expanded in 1995. It has served as the focal point of the park, a role enhanced by its location just inside the park boundary on the main road leading into the park from Golden.

As articulated in the recently completed Visitor Center Interpretive Master Plan, the purposes of the visitor center are as follows:

- *Orient visitors to recreational activities and conditions in the park
- *Provide for creature comforts
- *Acquaint park visitors with the state parks mission
- *Provide access to park stories
- *Assist visitors with planning responsible, safe and rewarding recreational experiences
- *Acquaint visitors with park management issues

The visitor center is open year round, seven days a week except for major holidays during the winter. The building was remodelled in 1995 to expand the interpretive display area (displays are expected to be completed early in 1997), add new public restrooms that meet ADA standards, add a multipurpose program room, and add staff offices. Five out of six of the park's full time staff, as well as seasonal staff, have offices in this building.



Figure 4-4: Information Desk in the Visitor Center

Funding for the visitor center project came from many sources, including GoCo funds, Lottery money, Watchable Wildlife in Parks project money (funds from GoCo through both Parks and Wildlife) and private funding.

The visitor center is currently utilized by less than 10% of the total park visitors. It is anticipated that this percentage will grow with the "new look" of the remodelled and expanded building and through improved marketing focussing on the new displays and the addition of interpretive programs in the building.

1996 will also see the addition of a series of interpretive signs to the Wilbur and Nellie Larkin Memorial Trail around the pond in front of the Visitor Center.

4.3.2 Maintenance Facilities

The park has two separate maintenance facilities, one located near Kriley Pond (known as the Upper Shop) and one at the Nott Creek area along Ralston Creek Road. The location of these facilities is shown in Figure 4-5. Both were built in the 60's, shortly after the initial land acquisitions in the park. The park maintenance supervisor's office is in the Kriley maintenance shop.

The Upper Shop location provides a centralized location for all maintenance operations, especially with the addition of the Green Ranch. However, the present shop is old, dating back to the early 60's, and more bay

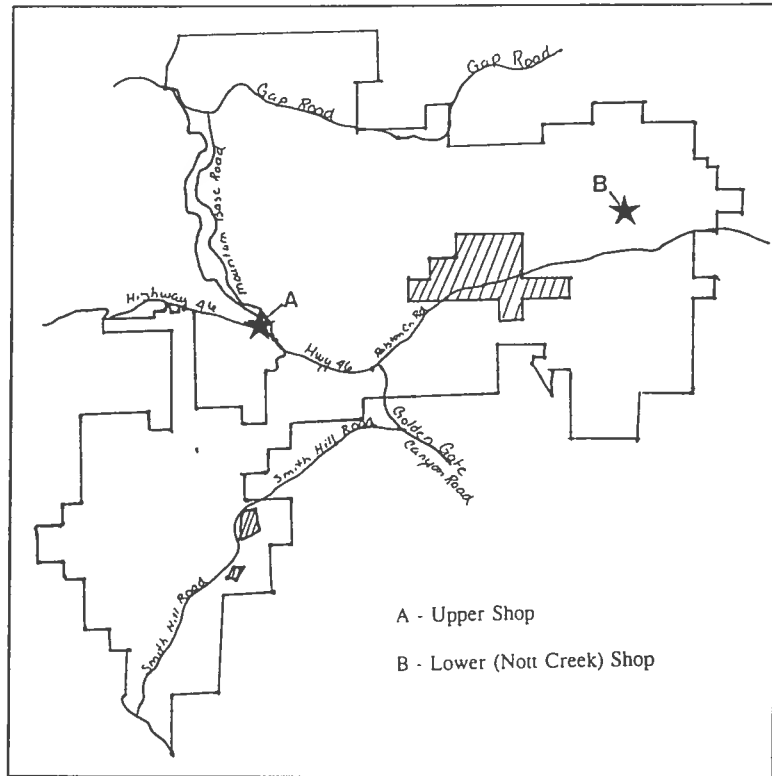


Figure 4-5: Location of Existing Shop Facilities



Figure 4-6: Photo of Existing Upper Shop with Location of Proposed New Shop to the Right

space, work space and storage space is needed. The old shop should be demolished and a new one built just to the west of the existing building. Care should be given to designing an aesthetically pleasing building (as opposed to the old metal building) because this building will be highly visible from both park and public roads.

4.3.3 Roads

There are a total of approximately 21.15 miles of roads in the park. A map showing all of these roads is included in the Appendix.

These roads are a combination of state highways, county roads and state park roads. Paved roads account for 9.55 miles; gravel roads, 11.6 miles. The main state park owned and maintained road is Mountain Base Road; others include the accesses

to Reverend's Ridge, Aspen Meadow and Rifleman Phillips Campgrounds and Nott Creek road. The park is responsible for maintenance and snow removal on all roads on park-owned land. The park is also responsible for maintaining the asphalt on and removing the snow from the Gilpin County portion of Ralston Creek Road, although this is a Gilpin County road. This road was paved at the request and expense of the park, after the park requested that it be improved from a gravel to asphalt road.



Figure 4-7: Switchback on Mountain Base Road

Gilpin County's Smith Hill Road and Gap Road present limitations. Both roads are narrow and winding in spots, and are generally in poor condition. Gilpin County continues to make improvements to sections of Gap Road as possible, and the condition of the section to Panorama Point has been enhanced. The park should continue to encourage Gilpin County's improvements on this road which also provides access to many private residences. Park funding should be sought to assist with road improvements, with Gilpin County retaining responsibility for routine maintenance such as regular repairs, grading and snow plowing. Emphasis should be placed on improving the section between Mountain Base Road and Aspen Meadows Campground, and consideration should be given to paving the section from

Mountain Base Road to Panorama Point.

Smith Hill Road provides access to the south end of the Green Ranch from both Golden Gate Canyon Road (Highway 46) and Highway 119. The Highway 119/Smith Hill Road junction is just two miles southeast of Black Hawk. This road in its present condition will definitely limit access to the south side of Green Ranch. Large vehicles such as RV's and vehicles pulling trailers should not be encouraged on this road. Winter time use often requires four wheel drive. The Green Ranch development plan should reflect this limited access.



Figure 4-8: Gap Road east of Panorama Point

4.3.4 Camping

The park has four different kinds of camping opportunities as described below. Table 4-2 provides an inventory of the facilities associated with each of these types of camping, and their locations are shown on the map in Figure 4-1.

Reverend's Ridge Campground: This 106 site campground accommodates both tents and recreational vehicles. In addition to a picnic table and grill at each site, amenities available for campers include showers, a laundry facility, flush toilets, and a dump station. This campground is currently closed during the winter, reopening in early May or as weather permits.

The campground administration building at Reverend's Ridge provides campers with a place

to get information about camping, to purchase their camping permits and parks passes, and to purchase a book or T-shirt through the park's sales program. Firewood is also available for purchase here. Near the administration building and shower building is the campground amphitheater, where campfire programs are offered on weekend nights.

Aspen Meadow Campground: This 35 site campground is designed for tent use and offers a picnic table and grill at each site. Hand pumps provide water and vault toilets are provided. Some sites are available year round.

Rifleman Phillips Campground: This group area that accommodates up to 75 people is available by reservation only. It is designed for tent camping and offers picnic tables, grills, a vault toilet and a hand pump for water. This camping area is accessible only during the summertime.

Backcountry: Four locations in the backcountry have been designated as backcountry camping areas. These areas offer a total of 23 tent sites. In addition, 4 Adirondack style wooden shelters were constructed using the generous donation of Bruce Clinton, one of the park's neighbors and a businessman from Chicago. All backcountry sites require an approximate 45 minute hike for access, and no amenities are available. No fires are allowed at backcountry sites. These are available to use year round.

The 1993 Visitor Survey indicated that camping was important to 77% of Golden Gate's visitors and to 60% of state park visitors statewide. At Golden Gate, the demand continues for tent camping as well as recreational vehicle campsites.

Golden Gate's Reverend's Ridge will undergo a major renovation starting in 1996. The major goals of the renovation are to provide sites and facilities that meet ADA standards, to add electrical hook-ups for RV's, and to replace old laundry and shower facilities.

Both of Golden Gate's campgrounds, Reverend's Ridge and Aspen Meadows, are at or near capacity on every summer weekend. However, their use ranges between 45-55% on weekday nights. One of the anticipated results of adding the electrical hook-ups is that campers desiring or requiring electricity will be attracted to Reverend's Ridge Campground. This will result in increased competition for sites already at capacity on weekends, but will also result in increased use during the week. A new tent-only campground is recommended for the Green Ranch. This addition will relieve some of the pressure at Reverend's Ridge for tent use of sites that can accommodate recreation vehicles.

Backcountry campsites remain under-utilized on weekdays and most weekends. Marketing of this opportunity, both at the park and through outreach media, is needed to publicize these unique camping opportunities, both for tent sites and Appalachian style huts. In spite of these less than capacity conditions, the addition of a limited number of similar sites should be part of the Green Ranch development, mainly to improve the options for multiple-day hiking/camping opportunities.



Figure 4-9: Tent Camping at Aspen Meadows Campground



Figure 4-10: Recreational Vehicle Camping at Reverend's Ridge Campground

As mentioned in Section 3.9 on Capacity Conditions, the Rifleman-Phillips Group Camping Area is reserved for all summer weekends through September by early in the year. This area is for tent camping only and accommodates up to 75 people. At least an equal number of requests are turned down due to the campground already being reserved. In addition, the park does not have a location to accommodate group requests for recreational vehicle or trailers at a group campsite. The addition of another group campsite, one which could accommodate RV's and trailers and with electrical hook-ups, could address the problems of turning down request because the existing group campground is already full and of not being able to accommodate RV's and trailers. A potential location for this is at the north end of the Green Ranch, off of Highway 46.

4.3.5 Picnicking

There are nine picnic areas throughout the park, mostly along Ralston Creek Road and Mountain Base Road. These have a total of about 125 sites between them, each site having a table and grill. All locations have a vault toilet and some have hand water pumps. Several locations have fully accessible sites.



Figure 4-11: Picnicking at Golden Gate

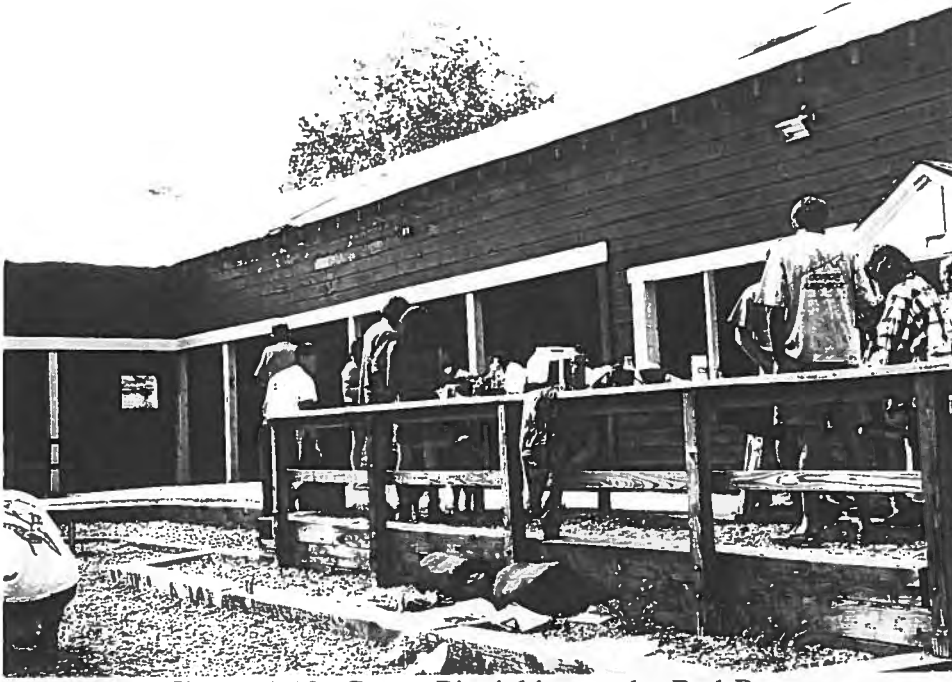


Figure 4-12: Group Picnicking at the Red Barn

The Red Barn Group Picnic Area can accommodate groups of up to 150 people. Reservations are required for this area, which is fully accessible. There is a campfire area, picnic tables (some are sheltered), a volleyball court and vault toilet. Solar power provides electrical outlets for crock pots.

The park's present picnic sites provide an adequate number

of facilities on all but the busiest of summer weekends. Each site should continue to be maintained and improved as needed. All tables except those in the campgrounds, have already been upgraded to expanded steel tops and seats. Sites that meet ADA standards have been added at Bridge Creek and Bootleg Bottom. Older vault toilets should continue to be replaced at the rate of at least one per year.

Additional picnicking will be included at the Green Ranch.

A new group picnic site is proposed along Gap Road between Panorama Point and the Harmsen Ranch. The need for this site is indicated by the present reservations for the Red Barn Group Picnic Area. The Red Barn is reserved for all summer weekends by early March, and an equal or larger number of requests cannot be accommodated. This new picnic site should include a covered overlook (this location is particularly suited for this aspect) and picnic area for 100-125 people, water, electricity for lights and outlets, parking for 35-40 cars, and a vault toilet. All facilities should meet ADA standards. In addition to serving as a second group picnic area, this location can also be used as a wedding location, taking some of the pressure off of Panorama Point and returning it to more general public use. Presently, wedding parties are scheduled for Panorama Point, but the area is not reserved exclusively for this use. The wedding party also usually reserves the Red Barn for their wedding reception. This new group area will accommodate both the wedding and the reception/picnic afterwards.

4.3.6 Trails

The park has 35 miles of maintained natural surface trails. These are rated for hiking use from easy to difficult. Horses are allowed only on easy rated trails. Currently mountain biking is allowed on all trails in the Jefferson County portion of the park.



Figure 4-13: Hiking at Golden Gate

A short accessible concrete trail adjacent to the visitor center is being developed as

a nature trail. Interpretive signs will be placed along this trail, which is called the Wilbur and Nellie Larkin Memorial Trail and was funded by a generous donation from the Larkin family.

Current and future trail management issues at Golden Gate fall into several categories. These include maintaining existing trails, constructing new trails, limiting conflicts between trail users, and use designations on trails that would improve options for different trail users.

Golden Gate's 35 miles of existing trails require regular maintenance to deal with impacts of weather and use. Even this basic, routine maintenance has become difficult to sustain with the loss of labor-intensive youth programs that were prevalent in the 1980's. Presently, a crew of two to four trail workers are hired each summer to complete as much trail maintenance as possible. This level of maintenance is likely to be the norm for the foreseeable future.

A park-wide trail plan is currently being developed. This plan will include an analysis of existing trails and will identify sections that need to be re-routed or that require extensive maintenance operations. Funding has been obtained through State Parks to hire a trail planner to assist with developing this plan.

Several key sections of new trail within the main part of the park (exclusive of the Green Ranch) have been identified as high priorities and will definitely be part of the previously

mentioned trail plan. These include a trail through the old North Jeffco Mountain Park, a connection between the Horseshoe Trail and the Mountain Lion Trail and a trail across the southeastern part of the park, south of Ralston Creek Road. These are shown in Figure 4-14. Trail construction will be achieved as possible by the park trail crew, but major work will be possible only through full-scale volunteer efforts, such as a Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado project.

The addition of "connector" trails between the Jefferson and Gilpin County sides of the park will multiply the options for trail use in the park. Current use patterns are for hikers to choose a loop hike on either the Jefferson County side of the park or on the Gilpin County side of the park. The Horseshoe/Mountain Lion Trail connection mentioned above would provide better opportunities for a longer loop option.

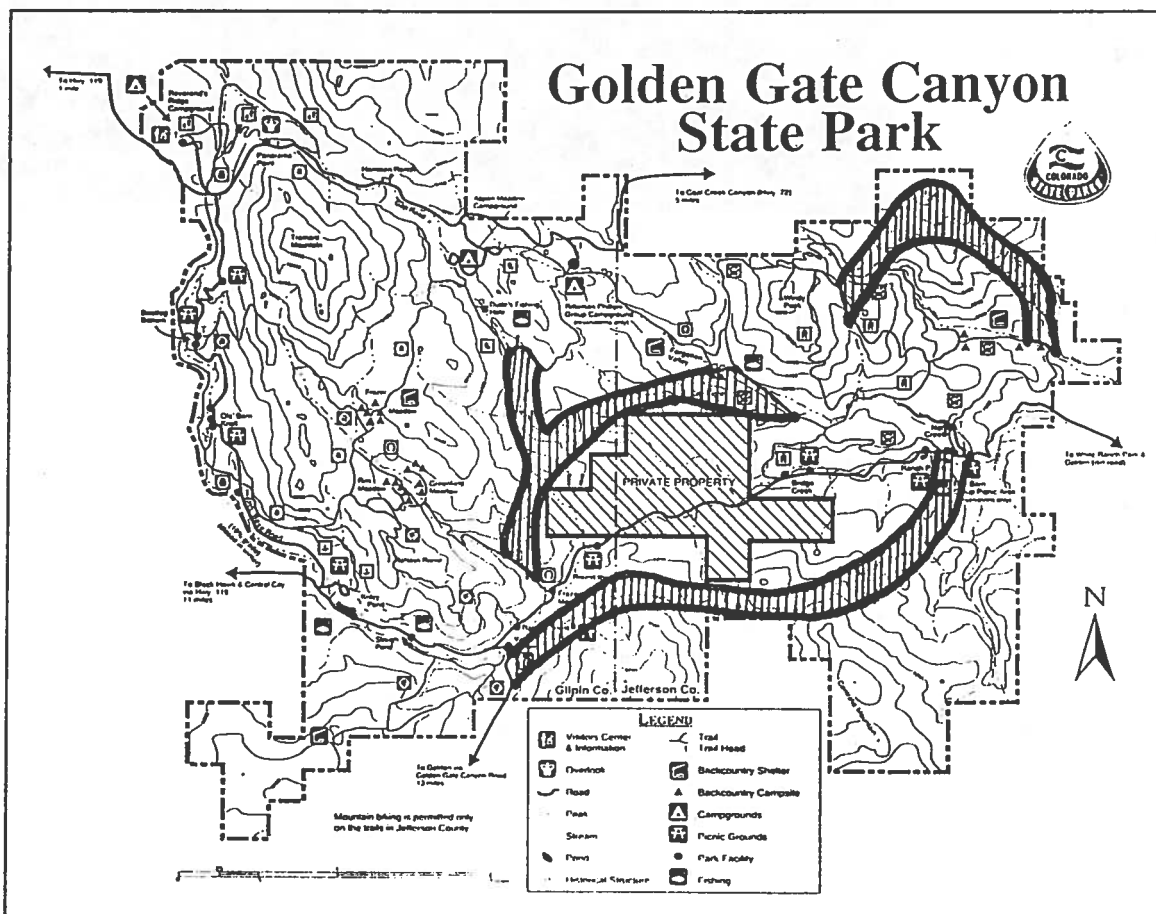


Figure 4-14: General Location of Future New Trails

Presently, horseback riders are restricted to using only trails designated as "easy" for hikers. and mountain biking is allowed on all trails on the Jefferson County side of the park. A quick review of the park map shows that horseback riders must use a county road to connect

between the trails in the Jefferson and Gilpin sides of the park and in the area of Panorama Point/Reverend's Ridge. During hunting season, mountain bike riders only have access to trails where hunting is occurring since mountain biking and hunting are both restricted to the Jefferson County side of the park. To alleviate this situation, trails designated for use by horseback riders and mountain bike riders should be chosen independent of location by county or designation for hiking. Loops within the east and west sides of the park with a trail connection between should be designated for each use. This designation should be made by park staff with flexibility to change as conditions change or new trails are constructed.

Reported conflicts between trail users are not a frequent problem at Golden Gate, but these conflicts need to be addressed to keep them from becoming significant. It is also safe to assume that many such conflicts go unreported, and this is a major issue in neighboring park areas such as Jefferson County Open Space. Plans to address conflicts include education through trailhead signing that emphasizes trail courtesy, clear signing on the trails indicating designated use (for example, to make it clear where mountain bikes are allowed), and increased patrols of the backcountry through expanded volunteer programs.

4.3.7 Overlooks

Panorama Point is an area that provides a spectacular view of the continental divide. This overlook is located on the Gap Road, near Reverend's Ridge Campground, and is linked to the campground by a trail. A multi-levelled deck provides a safe and protected viewing area. This is a popular site for weddings. The area was made possible by a donation from the Larkin family to serve as a memorial to their son, Kenneth A. Larkin.



Figure 4-15: Visitors at Panorama Point

No major changes are planned for Panorama Point. This location has recently been selected

as the location for interpretive panels that will be funded and developed through the Watchable Wildlife in Parks project. Within the next few years, the popular mountain locator signs on the deck will need to be replaced. The addition of the new group picnic area mentioned in Section 4.3.5 will alleviate much of the demand put on this area for weddings.

4.3.8 Interpretive Programs

Interpretation at Golden Gate has consistently been an important program since the 1970's when the support of the park manager and an adequate level of funding for seasonal employees made an aggressive program possible. Interpretive programs have been offered since that time, with the quantity of programs and thus the overall level of participation varying with the availability of funding for seasonal staffing. Starting in 1995 and continuing in 1996, interpretation has again started to increase and improve for two reasons: the addition of GoCo funds for seasonal interpreters and major interpretive exhibits at the visitor center and adjacent trout pond.

The following list provides a representation of programming that has been or is being offered at Golden Gate:

- X Personal Services (Presented by park staff, volunteers, or other guest speakers)
 - *Campfire programs at Reverend's Ridge Campground
 - *Children's Hour Programs (at Reverend's Ridge Campground, mainly for campers)
 - *Guided hikes and program on and off site on requested topics
- X Non-personal Services (Activities that visitors can participate in on their own, with minimal assistance from park staff.)
 - *Self-guided nature trails at Reverend's Ridge and visitor center
 - *Junior Ranger Program
 - *Activity Packs for kids
 - *Visitor Center displays
 - *Information kiosks at major entrances and campgrounds
 - *Self-guided orienteering trail at Reverend's Ridge
 - *Book sale program at visitor center and Reverend's Ridge

Emphasis for "personal services" interpretive programs in recent years has been placed on campfire programs and kid's hour programs. These attract almost exclusively campers and are offered only on weekends and holidays during the summer months. Other programs are offered by rangers and seasonal interpreters as requested and as staff is available. Personal services are provided mainly from May through September by a seasonal interpreter supervised by a full-time ranger. Services at other times of the year are offered on request as staff time is available.

Although the programs that are offered are well-attended, fewer than 1% (4,369 participants out of over 550,000 visitors in 1995) of the park's visitors participated in ranger-led

activities in 1995. This is probably more of a function of how many programs were offered, and the number of participants would certainly have increased had staffing been available to offer more programs. Use statistics have not been maintained for participation in non-personal services such as the self-guided trails, junior ranger program, etc.

The book sales program mentioned above is operated through a cooperative agreement with Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Field guides, books on the ecology and history of the area, other nature books and tee shirts are just some of the items offered for sale at both the visitor center and Reverend's Ridge campground office. A percentage of gross sales (between 10-15%) is returned to the park in the form of equipment and materials for Golden Gate's interpretive programs.

Interpretive programs will continue to be an important aspect of Golden Gate's visitor services. A park-wide interpretive plan will be finalized in 1996. The goals for interpretation at the park as presented in the plan are:

1. To provide high quality interpretive services that embrace the diversity of learning styles, cultural backgrounds and physical capabilities of our present and future visitors.
2. To present a positive, professional image of the Colorado State Park system.
3. To foster understanding and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural resources that results in the protection of these resources.
4. To instill an environmental and outdoor ethic in all visitors that results in resource protection through responsible and respectful use, promotes safe experiences through the development of outdoor skills, and encourages life-long involvement in outdoor recreation activities.
5. To promote understanding and support for management decisions at Golden Gate Canyon State Park and throughout Colorado State Parks.
6. To promote compliance to park regulations through understanding of why regulations are in place.

The interpretive plan, which is available at the Visitor Center, includes specific objectives and strategies to achieve these goals. As we approach the 21st century, our state's urban population continues to grow, and the number of people who grow up without a connection to our natural world continues to increase. Interpretive programs at Golden Gate will play a vital role in providing an opportunity for our urban population to learn about the environment.

These planning efforts illustrate the necessity to continue and to expand the personal and non-personal interpretive programs reviewed above, and to implement new strategies such as increased interpretive signs throughout the park, guided hikes, seminars, workshops, and a volunteer naturalist program. This need is reinforced by the results of the 1993 Visitor Survey that found that interpretive programs and nature study are important to 66% of the park's visitors.

Programming will particularly focus on attracting additional visitation away from the high use season. Interpretive programming during the high use season will be targeted mainly toward current park visitors on weekends, with an eye on attracting additional visitation during the week.

4.3.9 Winter Use

As illustrated in Figure 3-5, visitation during the winter plummets compared to spring and fall and certainly summer visitation. While some of this is related to intensive camping, hiking and picnicking associated with summer time use, some is also associated with the lack of understanding of wintertime conditions at Golden Gate.

Winter uses can include snowshoeing, cross country skiing, sledding, tubing, ice skating and fishing. However, depending on the year, conditions may be such that hiking is still possible in January. A marketing effort focussed on disseminating accurate information about current conditions and publicizing use possibilities, accompanied by winter time interpretive programs and ranger-led outings are needed to attract additional winter time visitation.

4.3.10 Harmsen Ranch

In the 1970's, Bill and Dorothy Harmsen donated their ranch, previously known as the Lazy Squaw for the rock formation above the house, to Colorado State Parks. This donation included 50 acres of land, the ranch house and surrounding outbuildings. The house contains the Harmsen's extensive collection of furniture and art. The house is also of historical significance, since when they purchased the property in the 1950's the Harmsens chose to rebuild and add on to the original house left by earlier homesteaders.

The Harmsen Ranch has been used for a variety of purposes since the Harmsens donated the ranch to the park and others have been considered but not implemented. One of the primary considerations was to operate the house as a commercial bed and breakfast operation or as a corporate meeting and retreat facility. Any such commercial



Figure 4-16: The Harmsen Ranch House

operation would be limited by seasonal access challenges as well as capacity. In addition, any public use would be curtailed.

Although commercial opportunities would be lost, the park staff recommends that in the future, the ranch should be opened for public open houses and tours so the history of both the Harmsen family and the earlier settlers whose homesteads were grouped into the Harmsen Ranch can be told. The proposed expansion of the volunteer host program will be vital to the success of these programs. As the program progresses, the ranch could be open and staffed for several weekend days per month, with special tours scheduled at other times. In addition, the ranch house could be used as a meeting location for agency staff.

4.4 Management of Natural and Cultural Resources and Related Recreation

4.4.1 Wildlife Recreation and Wildlife Management

Fishing

Fishing is a very popular activity in the park's streams and ponds. The success of this activity is due to the intensive fish stocking program of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

There are five stocked ponds in Golden Gate, as well as several miles of fishable streams. Kriley, Slough and Ranch ponds are part of the Ralston Creek system, and are easily accessed from the main park roads. Kriley Pond has a universally accessible fishing pier. Since these three areas are easily accessible, they are the most popular fishing spots in the park.



Figure 4-17: Fishing at Kriley Pond

Dude's Hole and the pond at the Tallman Ranch in Forgotten Valley provide more of a backcountry fishing experience, with a fifteen and forty five minute hike to reach them, respectively.

All these ponds are regularly stocked by the Colorado Division of Wildlife with rainbow trout from late spring, as soon as the ice melts, to early fall. Ice fishing is also a popular activity, especially at Kriley and Slough Ponds.

The park staff should work with Colorado Division of Wildlife to insure that the current fish stocking program is continued throughout the park's streams and ponds. A second accessible fishing pier and amenities should be added at the Ranch Ponds to provide additional opportunities and to divert some use from the heavily used Kriley Pond area.

Dredging the park's five ponds needs to be continued on a regular basis (on an eight to ten year cycle) to prevent loss of the fishery through sedimentation and weed growth. To prevent the accelerated sedimentation that is now experienced, a catch basin should be constructed upstream from the major ponds - Kriley Pond, the Visitor Center Trout Pond and Ranch Ponds.

Hunting

Hunting is currently permitted only in the Jefferson County side of the park and only on the days between Labor Day and Memorial Day. The maximum hunters per day is restricted to 50, and all hunters must register at the visitor center prior to hunting.

The bulk of the hunting use at Golden Gate, which totals less than 700 hunters per year, is for big game (elk and deer) hunting. Big game hunting success is marginal at best, with harvest counts in recent years ranging from as low as one animal to a high of eleven. Other hunting pursuits include small game, mainly rabbits and squirrels, black bear, mountain lion, wild turkey and blue grouse.

Table 4-4 provides a review of the number of big game and small game hunting use at the park for the last four years. Big game hunting success rates are low, ranging from .25% to 4%.

Year	# of Big Game Hunters	# of Small Game Hunters	Total # of Hunters	Elk Harvested	Deer Harvested
95-96	401	201	602	0	1
94-95	511	155	666	3	8
93-94	370	172	542	2	9
92-93	284	77	361	0	11

Hunting at Golden Gate serves two purposes. The first is to provide hunting as a recreational activity. The second purpose is to assist Colorado Division of Wildlife with its goal of managing wildlife, especially the elk herds occurring in this area. The information provided in Table 4-4 indicates that the hunting program at Golden Gate has achieved the purpose of providing the opportunity to hunt, but the harvest rate indicates that hunting has had limited and varied success as a wildlife management tool.

In spite of the low success rate of big game hunters at Golden Gate, the importance of hunting at the park has grown due to the continuing loss of hunting areas close to the Denver metropolitan area. In addition, Colorado Division of Wildlife is concerned about the growing elk herd in the Golden Gate area, especially in Gilpin County, and is advising that hunting

opportunities at the park be increased to help manage this growing population.

The dilemma that is presented by expanding areas of the park open to hunting comes from the fact that big game hunting occurs in the fall - October and November - coinciding with a very popular time of the year to visit and hike at Golden Gate. It is essential to maintain parts of the park that are closed to hunting to accommodate the visitors who do not want to interface with hunters.

This dilemma can be addressed through two actions. The first is to maintain the current hunting opportunities in the park. Hunting will be allowed in the Jefferson County side of the park between Labor Day and Memorial Day with a maximum number of hunters each day. The current maximum number is fifty. This number should be adjusted up or down in the future to reflect changing conditions. The second is to allow limited elk and deer hunting on certain sections of the Green Ranch. The main body of the ranch (as shown in Figure 4-18) would be open during elk and deer seasons as determined on an annual basis by parks and wildlife staff. The numbers of hunters would be limited by either a cap on the numbers per day or through licensing. The actual technique for doing this would be determined by CSP and CDOW staff based on their future abilities to implement and staff such a program.

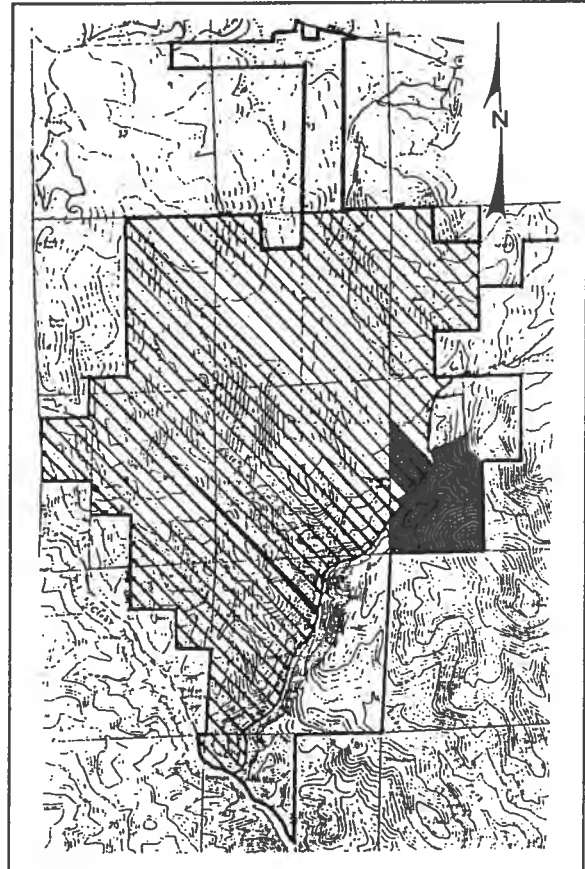


Figure 4-18: Shaded Area is the Part of the Green Ranch Proposed to Open For Hunting

Wildlife Viewing and Related Recreation

Wildlife watching is another wildlife-related form of recreation in the park. The park staff works closely with the Division of Wildlife's regional staff to develop watchable wildlife opportunities and projects, including the displays in and around the visitor center.

The 1993 Visitor Survey reported that wildlife viewing and wildlife photography was either somewhat or very important to 87% of the park's visitors in making their decision to visit Golden Gate. Many of the visitors' questions center on where, when and how to view wildlife. Wildlife related interpretation and information should answer these questions, as well as provide information on safe and ethical viewing techniques.

Managing Other Wildlife Issues

Wildlife/human interactions in the park are an increasing concern. Of particular concern are human interactions with black bears and mountain lions. Visitors are informed of the possibility of encountering a bear or mountain lion, and what to do if this happens. Special attention is given to providing information to campers and hikers, as most encounters occur either in the backcountry or in the campgrounds at night. Information is given to campers about the necessity of keeping a clean campsite, and the park is currently replacing all its trash receptacles with bear-proof trash cans.

The park is working closely with the Division of Wildlife in their efforts to keep wildlife wild by informing the public of the impacts of feeding wildlife. Feeding big game animals is not currently a problem at the park, but feeding of small mammals and "campground" birds does occur. In an effort to have a consistent "no-feeding" message, feeding of the trout at the visitor center pond has been stopped.

The removal of problem wildlife is used only as a last resort. Any removal is done by Colorado Division of Wildlife and follows their established procedures. Education and prevention methods are actively pursued. However, it is inevitable that removal may sometimes be necessary, both for the protection of visitors and structures (i.e., when beaver activity is affecting the integrity of a road.)

4.4.2 Management of the Park's Vegetation

As cited earlier in this plan, one of the purposes of Golden Gate Canyon State Park is to protect and maintain the quality of the natural, cultural and scenic resources of the park for future generations. Therefore, the park staff has implemented specific management practices to achieve this goal.

Forest Management

In 1991, the Colorado State Forest Service prepared a forest management plan for Golden Gate Canyon State Park. A copy of this plan is available in the park's visitor center. This plan consisted of a complete survey of the forest resources within the park along with recommendations on how to manage these resources. As identified in the plan, the following are the main goals of forest resource management in the park:

- *Protect the forest from major insect and disease epidemics
- * Duplicate natural process and forest growth while protecting from devastating fires

and insect and disease cycles

*Alter fuel structure to provide for protection of the timber resource from devastating fire

*Preserve the historic and aesthetic character of the park and ensure the continued enjoyment of the park as a recreation site and wildlife area through proper forest management

*Maximize monetary returns from timber operations to support timber stand improvement, prescribed burning, site preparation, planting or other maintenance projects

As of 1996, the inventory of the park's forest resources has been completed, including the Green Ranch. The park staff works with the State Forest Service staff each year to arrive at an annual plan of forest projects. For the past several years, these have focused on removing standing dead timber to reduce fire hazards, removing mistletoe diseased trees, thinning for timber stand improvement, conducting controlled burns, and removing dog-hair stands of lodgepole pines to clear an area to be replanted with ponderosa pine seedlings.

Noxious Weed Control

Several exotic and noxious plant species that have become established in the park were identified in the study titled "Wetland Resources of Golden Gate Canyon State Park." These include Canada thistle, leafy spurge, diffuse knapweed, musk thistle, hound's tongue, bindweed, curly dock, mullein, butter-and-eggs and dalmatian toadflax.

The park staff has utilized mechanical means of controlling weeds, mainly Canada thistle, in the past. A weed control plan will be prepared to plan for future weed control actions.

Wetland Management

In 1995, staff of the Colorado Natural Areas Program prepared the document entitled "Wetland Resources of Golden Gate Canyon State Park." This document inventories and delineates wetlands and riparian areas within the park and makes recommendations for management of these resources.

The short-term management issues identified in this plan fell into two main categories - drainage functions and weed control. Long term management needs depend on park development plans and the resulting maintenance needs. The plan endorses a management strategy that avoids wetlands and riparian communities and encourages introduction of these habitats when practical.

This plan will provide guidelines for recognizing and protecting wetlands on the park when planning for future park developments and activities.

4.4.3 Historic Site Management

As a result of the diligent efforts of several volunteers and park staff members, much of the history of Golden Gate has been researched and documented. This project is continuing at this time. One aspect of this research was to identify the original homesteaders in the park. The results of this historical research are available at the park's visitor center.

Historical sites within the park have received widely diverse treatments throughout the years, depending on the prevailing attitude at the time. This has ranged from tearing down and removing old structures to today's attitude of preservation and interpretation of historic sites. In 1995, several sites within the park were designated as state historic sites, including the Tallman Ranch in Forgotten Valley, the barns in Frazer Meadow and the bootleggers cabin at Bootlegger Bottom. Consideration is currently being given to designation of the park as a historic region rather than continuing with designation of individual historic sites.

In addition to preservation of the remaining sites, of which there are about twelve, efforts are currently underway to improve the interpretation of these sites. A historic display that is planned for the visitor center would communicate the history of the park as well as tell visitors where they could go to see actual sites within the park. Further signs are being considered at some of the more frequently visited sites.



Figure 4-19: 1940's View of the Tallman Ranch in Forgotten Valley

4.5 Park Administration & Special Functions

4.5.1 Staffing

The park currently has six full time employees. These positions are:

- *Park Manager VI (Head Manager)
- *Park Manager III (Senior Ranger)
- *Two Park Manager II's (Park Rangers)
- *Senior Administrative Clerk (Office and Visitor Center Supervisor)
- *Park Environmental Technician (Maintenance Supervisor)

From May through September, this permanent staff is supplemented by 25 or more temporary or seasonal employees who are hired to provide services during the busiest time of the year. A smaller number of employees are retained through the fall, and a minimum number (sometimes none or only part-time) is kept through the winter. These temporary employees are hired in the following categories:

- *Seasonal Ranger
- *Visitor Center/Entrance workers
- *Trail Crew
- *Campground Staff
- *Maintenance Staff
- *Interpreter (naturalist)

Seasonal housing is critical to the success of the park 's recruitment of seasonal workers due to the commuting distance, time and cost from Denver or Golden. The existing seasonal housing has enabled the park to attract both Colorado and out-of-state workers. The replacement of the existing seasonal housing during the campground renovation is a high priority.

The park relies heavily on assistance from volunteers. While the total number of hours contributed varies from year to year, it is usually between 2,000 and 2,500 hours per year. The types of volunteer work include campground and visitor center host, botanical surveys, historical research, campfire program guest speakers, and maintenance and trail work. Plans are currently underway to expand and formalize the volunteer interpreter/host program. A formal recruitment and training plan is being developed.

As further developments occur within the park at Reverend's Ridge Campground and at the Green Ranch, as additional trails are constructed, as interpretive programs grow at the expanded visitor center and as hunting programs are expanded, the need for additional full time positions will increase. Consideration should be given to adding a maintenance and a ranger position.

4.5.2 Budget

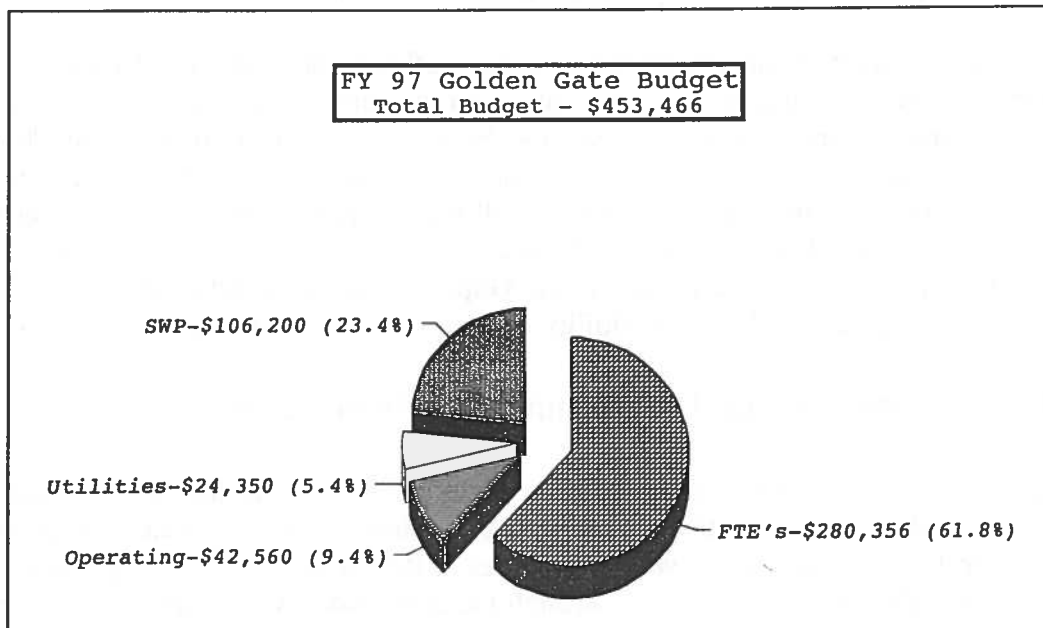


Figure 4-20: FY 97 Annual Budget

The annual operational, seasonal staff and utility budget are the main factors in determining the level of services available. The park received an increase in the operations, SWP and utility budget to reflect needs driven by the expansion of the Visitor Center and associated programs. Additional increases will be needed to accommodate the changes at Reverend's Ridge Campground and the eventual development of the Green Ranch.

4.5.3 Level of Services

Park rangers provide regular patrol of the park year-round. Winter-time coverage is generally 8 am to 5 pm seven days a week. This coverage is expanded during the summer time to provide coverage from 7 am to 1 am on weekends, especially focusing on campground coverage.

The Visitor Center is open seven days a week, year-round, except for major holidays during the wintertime. The Golden Gate entrance is staffed on weekends and some weekdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and weekends in September and October. The campground office is open on weekends from mid-May through mid-September, and most weekdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In addition to the information and assistance available at these staffed facilities, many park visitors get information at the seven self service entrances.

Interpretive programs are presently provided mainly from May through October. Plans are currently underway to develop a year-round program, although the most intense programming will continue to be in the summer high-use season.

The full time maintenance supervisor and seasonal staff provide a variety of routine maintenance functions including litter pick-up, toilet cleaning and repairs of park facilities. Major repairs and construction projects, such as building or repairing foot bridges, building fences and trails, replacing washed-out dam structures, installing bear-proof trash cans, picnic tables, grills, and parking barricades are all fairly typical Golden Gate maintenance projects. Road grading of the park's gravel roads is contracted to a local grader service. Snow plowing of Mountain Base Road and the Gilpin County road between Highway 46 and the Jefferson County line is the responsibility of the park maintenance staff.

4.5.4 Concessions, Special Use Permits and Reservations

The park staff takes reservations for two group facilities in the park that are available for use by reservation only. These facilities are the Red Barn Group Picnic Area and Rifleman-Phillips Group Campground. Reservations for sites at Reverend's Ridge Campground and Aspen Meadows Campground are taken through the state-wide campground reservation system.

Special Use Permits are issued for non-exclusive use of Panorama Point for weddings, which are scheduled for before 11 am or after 3 pm. In 1995, 30 permits were issued for this use. These permits are issued for scheduling purposes only, to attempt to keep two weddings from happening at the same time. The area does remain open and available for other park visitors during weddings.

The other types of Special Use Permits issued in a typical year include the following:

- *Klondike events at Reverend's Ridge Campground
- *Entomological surveys for scientific purposes
- *Training activities for search and rescue organizations and military units
- *Special classes offered for fees in the visitor center and elsewhere in the park
- *Commercial uses including filming car commercials
- *Horse competition events
- *Organized hikes

The above categories of special uses account for about 15-20 permits issued each year.

Concessions in the park include the laundry facilities and food vending in the campground.

Eagle Mountain Ranch, a local horseback riding and outdoor outfitting venture, has a short term contract to allow them to use the park's facilities for horseback rides, horse-drawn wagon rides, and western style dinners. The first year this was tried was in 1995, and it is continuing in 1996.

4.6 The Green Ranch

4.6.1 Green Ranch Development Goals

The Green Ranch, the most recent addition to the park, is the largest single acquisition in the history of the park. Including the State Land Board section, the ranch covers over 3,500 acres that range from gently rolling meadows to rugged, treacherously steep slopes.

The development of the Green Ranch as part of the park should follow these considerations.

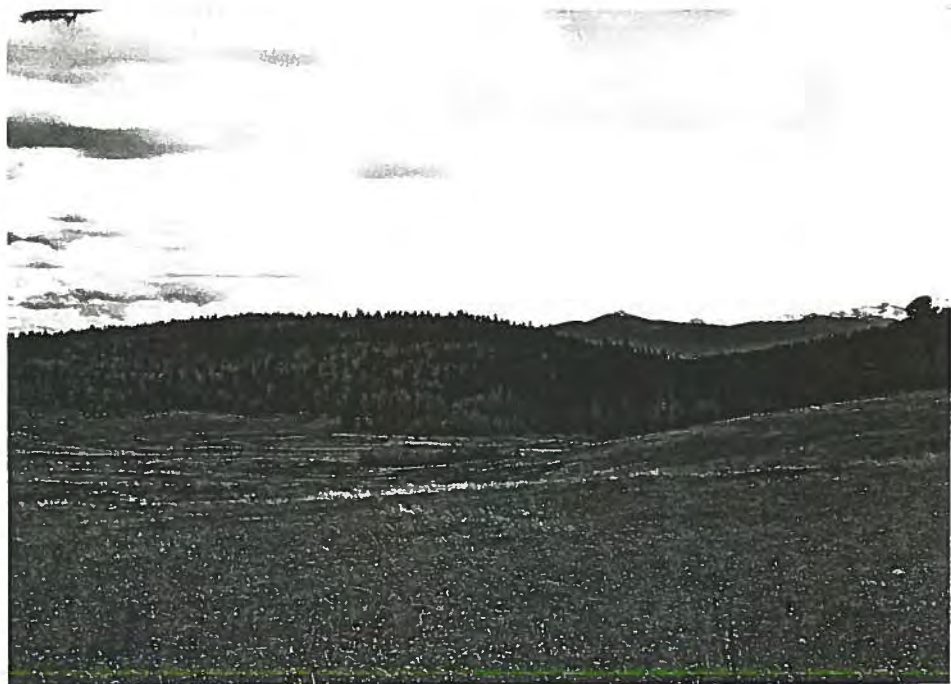


Figure 4-21: Meadows and Forests on Green Ranch

1. Green Ranch developments should support the park management goals for Golden Gate Canyon State Park as identified in Section 1.3 and the State Park Horizon Goals listed in Section 1.2
2. Green Ranch development should reflect the personal requests of Ken and Lela Green as shared in 1995:

"Our first, and foremost hope was that it be preserved and protected from development forever, and remain in as natural a state as possible, consistent with State Park use. We had hopes of it being a place where disabled and older people would be able to observe wildlife in its natural state. This, I believe, would mean limited hunting, so that animals would not be afraid of people, although we do realize that the number of game animals must be controlled on the area.

We must strongly warn against "horseback riding facilities." If there is such a thing, it should be haul your own horses in." There should be no horse grazing. Horses do over graze this

low capacity land so badly, in a short time, especially with the competition of game animals.

We do hope that the name Green Ranch can be preserved in the memory of our family."

(Note: These comments came in response to the Green's review of the Green Ranch Resource Analysis which made recommendations for developments, including horseback riding facilities.)

3. Green Ranch development should follow the concept of perimeter development that has successfully worked in the main body of Golden Gate Canyon State Park to preserve the semi-wilderness nature of the park.

4. The Green Ranch may offer opportunities for outdoor recreation activities not available elsewhere in the park. The Green Ranch also offers the opportunity to supplement existing park facilities and address capacity issues identified elsewhere in this plan and needs identified through visitor surveys.

4.6.2 Development Recommendations

The following development recommendations are conceptual in nature. Their ultimate feasibility, design and location will be determined through actual site analysis and final design. However, the purpose of these recommendations is to establish parameters for activities and facilities to be included in final development plans.

Zoning

Development of the Green Ranch should be planned to leave large areas that are accessed by trails only. Structural developments should be kept mainly to the outer perimeters and access points.

Trails

Trails for hikers, bikers and horseback riders as well as trails that meet accessibility standards should be constructed at the Green Ranch. General locations of these trails are shown in Figure 4-22. Sections of these trails may be subject to closures during elk calving season.

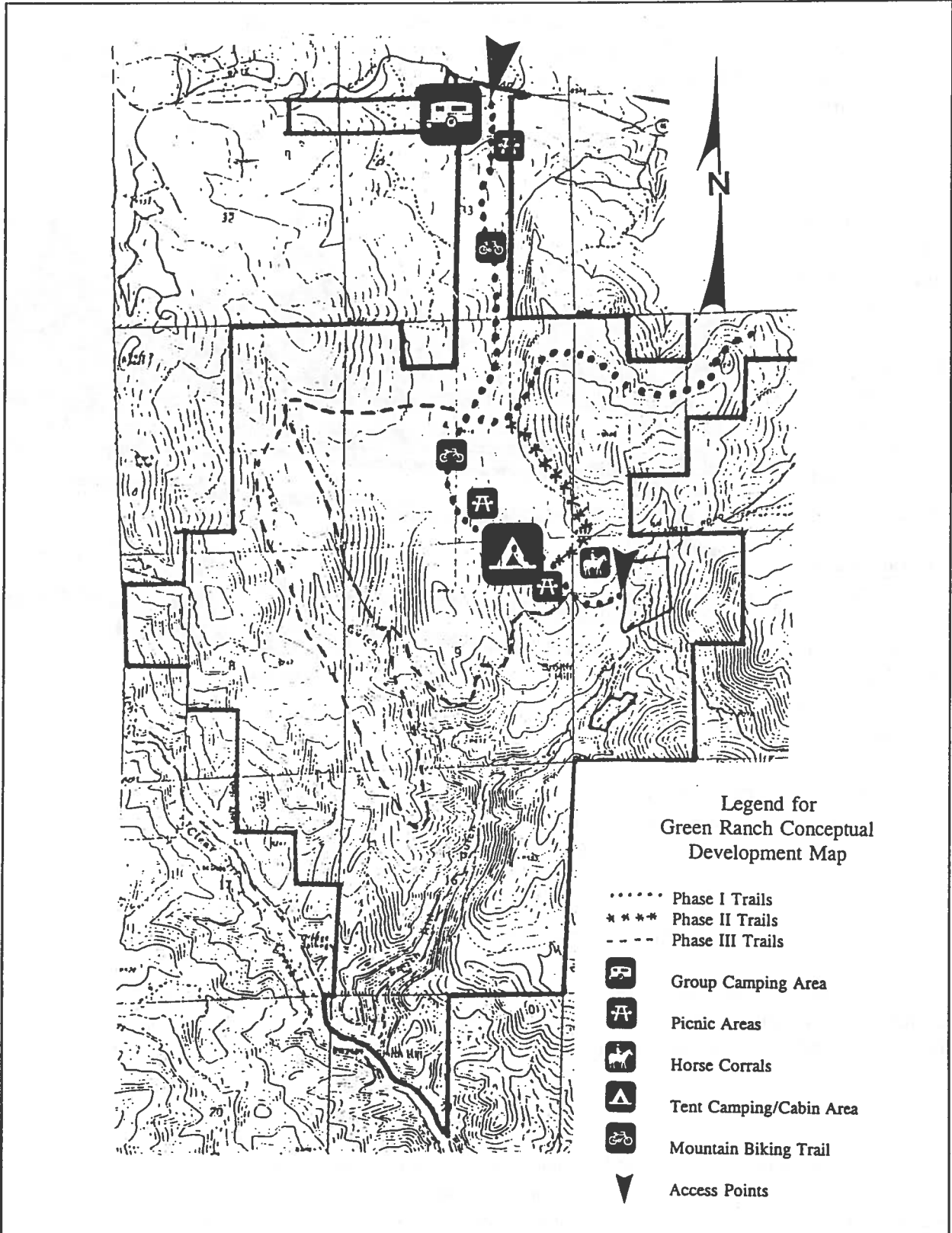


Figure 4.22: Conceptual Development Plans for the Green Ranch

The initial phase of trail development at the Green Ranch should include the construction of a trail connecting the existing ranch roads to the existing Beaver Trail in the park. This new section of trail would be about 1.5 miles long. This should be done as early as feasible to open the Green Ranch to limited public use - trail use only.

The old ranch roads bisect two large meadows in the main body of the ranch. While these ranch roads may provide the initial trail access, the second phase of trail development should include trails that skirt the meadows and go through the adjacent forests. The ranch roads could remain part of the long-term trail system, used as both service and emergency access and mountain bike routes.



Figure 4-23: Corral along Ranch Road on Green Ranch

The third phase of trail construction should focus on constructing new trails in the west/southwest part of the Green Ranch. Terrain varies in this section of the park, and trail construction will require extensive planning, labor and materials.

Future trail developments may include a link between the Green Ranch and Forest Service lands by crossing Highway 119 to the southwest.

Special emphasis should be placed on constructing a trail that could be used by physically challenged individuals. This should start from the north end of the ranch near the Highway 46 entrance and go to one of the big meadows at the north end of the main body of the ranch.

Vehicle Access

Vehicle access should be restricted to near the two main access points to the ranch - at the Smith Hill/Robinson Road intersection and at the northeast intersection of the ranch with Highway 46. Penetration of the ranch with roads should be kept to a minimum.

Smith Hill Road is a narrow, winding gravel road that is extremely steep in some locations. Vehicles accessing the park via Smith Hill Road should be restricted to cars, vans and small trucks. All parking for large recreational vehicles, vehicles towing camping or horse trailers, and buses should be at the Highway 46 entrance to the ranch. These restrictions should be maintained until Smith Hill Road is upgraded.

Camping and Cabins

In response to needs identified by visitor surveys and current weekend capacity conditions at the park's existing campgrounds, a new 30-50 site tent campground should be considered at the Green Ranch. The campground should include a central shower/toilet building, and should be accessed via Smith Hill Road. This campground should divert some tent use away from sites at Reverend's Ridge Campground that can be used for recreational vehicles.

A new group campground for 25-30 recreational vehicles or trailers should be constructed at the north end of the ranch, near the Highway 46 entrance. Electrical hook-ups, toilet facilities and a sewage dump station should be provided.

A limited number of backcountry camp sites should be situated at locations along the trail system. Current use of the existing backcountry sites and shelters does not indicate the need for many additional sites. However, the Green Ranch does offer an alternative setting for backcountry campers, as well as more possibilities for multiple-day hiking/camping experiences.

Rustic cabins that could be rented would be an addition almost certainly to be an instant attraction for visitors. Eight to twelve cabins should be considered to be built. These could be cluster in groups of 3-4, and could be located near the tent campground to share the same water supply and restroom facilities. Cabins should have wood-burning stoves to encourage winter time use.

Picnicking

Small picnic areas should be scattered along access roads into the ranch. Some picnic sites should be separate from trailhead parking so picnic area parking is not used entirely by hikers as routinely happens at existing dual purpose parking areas.

Horseback Riding Facilities

Parking areas for horse trailers should be provided at the Highway 46 access to the Green Ranch. A horse trail that is separate, but perhaps adjacent to the handicapped access trail, should be constructed from the parking area to the main part of the ranch. The Green's specifically suggested that horseback riding facilities, i.e., a horse stable concession, should not be developed due to the impact that grazing has on the low capacity land. However, there might be an acceptable location where a private local horse concession could bring horses to offer trail rides, provided that horses would be moved in and out on a daily basis and would not be pastured.

Hunting

Hunting recommendations for the Green Ranch were included in Section 4.4.1 - Wildlife Recreation and Wildlife Management.

5. Summary of Management and Development Issues

Golden Gate Canyon State Park is in a good position to prepare for recreationists in the 21st century. The park is secure in its size, facilities and activities to be so prepared. However, in the previous chapter several management and development issues were identified that need to be addressed to insure that Golden Gate is able to provide the highest quality of recreation experiences while continuing to protect the natural and cultural resources of the park. A synopsis of the major issues from Chapter 4 is provided in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of Management Issues

Capacity Situations: The park reaches capacity on busy summer weekends. Methods for dealing with these capacity conditions include developing new facilities, mainly on the Green Ranch, and marketing use during the off season and during the week.

Trail Use Designation: All trails in the park will continue to be open to hikers. Trails open to mountain biking and horseback riding will be designated by the trail's appropriateness for such use rather than depending on the current designation by hiking difficulty rating or by county location. Some trails should remain exclusively for hiking use. Educating hikers of trail use ethics will be a priority.

Vegetation Management: Caring for the park's vegetative resources will remain a priority. The recommendation of the Forest Management Plan and the Wetlands Resources Plan will provide guidelines for future management decisions and actions.

Hunting and Other Wildlife Management Issues: The existing hunting program should be continues in Jefferson County. A limited hunting season for elk and deer should be opened on the Green Ranch. Providing information about human interaction with bears and mountain lions, wildlife viewing techniques that are safe for the watcher and the wildlife and the impact of feeding wildlife will continue to be a priority.

Universal Accessibility: All future facilities and programs will be planned and designed for universal accessibility. Retro-fitting existing facilities will be done whenever and wherever feasible to insure that an appropriate percentage of all facilities are accessible.

5.2 Summary of Development Issues

Reverend's Ridge Campground: Reverend's Ridge Campground is currently undergoing Phase I of redevelopment. This phase includes a new campers' service building, electrical hook-ups to approximately 35-40 camp sites, starting new seasonal housing and replacing

two restrooms. This is projected to cost one million dollars with a completion date of September 1997.

Phase II of the campground's renovation should include replacement or renovation of the campground administration building, replacing the remaining old restroom and constructing two additional new ones, and finishing the seasonal housing. Projected cost is \$700,000 and recommended completion date is 1998.

Green Ranch Development: Highlights of the Green Ranch Development include a tent campground and rustic cabins, picnic sites, a group campground, backcountry campsites, access roads and parking areas and trails. Total development costs will be in the range of \$3-\$5 million, depending on final plans. Recommended completion date is 2002, although limited public access and the first phase of trail should be completed by 1998.

Group Picnic Area: The proposed group picnic area and overlook near the Harmsen Ranch and Panorama Point will include vault toilets, water supply, electrical supply, covered picnic area, overlook and parking. Projected cost is \$300,000 and recommended completion date is 1999.

Trail Development: Additional trail connections between existing trails are needed to broaden the trail user's experience. Although general locations for these trails were identified in this plan, final locations will be determined in a separate trail plan. This plan should also identify funding and labor sources for completing the trails, as well as a timeline for completion.

Maintaining the Park's Fishing Ponds: All of the park's five fishing ponds (Kriley, Slough, Ranch, Dude's and Forgotten Valley) are in need of dredging to maintain them as viable fishing locations. In addition, an upstream catch basin is needed to deter the rapid siltation that occurs in these ponds. This needs to be done as soon as possible. Projected cost could range from \$400,000 to \$750,000, depending on the design of the catch basin and our ability to remove the dredged material.

Maintenance Shop: Replacing the existing Upper Shop has been identified as a future need. Projected cost for replacing the building and removing the old building is \$300,000. Recommended completion date is 2002 or later.

Land Acquisition: Several land acquisition issues were identified in the plan. These should be pursued and completed as the opportunity arises, this being tied to availability of the properties to purchase and availability of acquisition funds. Potential partners should be considered whenever possible. Appraisals have not been completed on any of the identified properties.

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Appendix

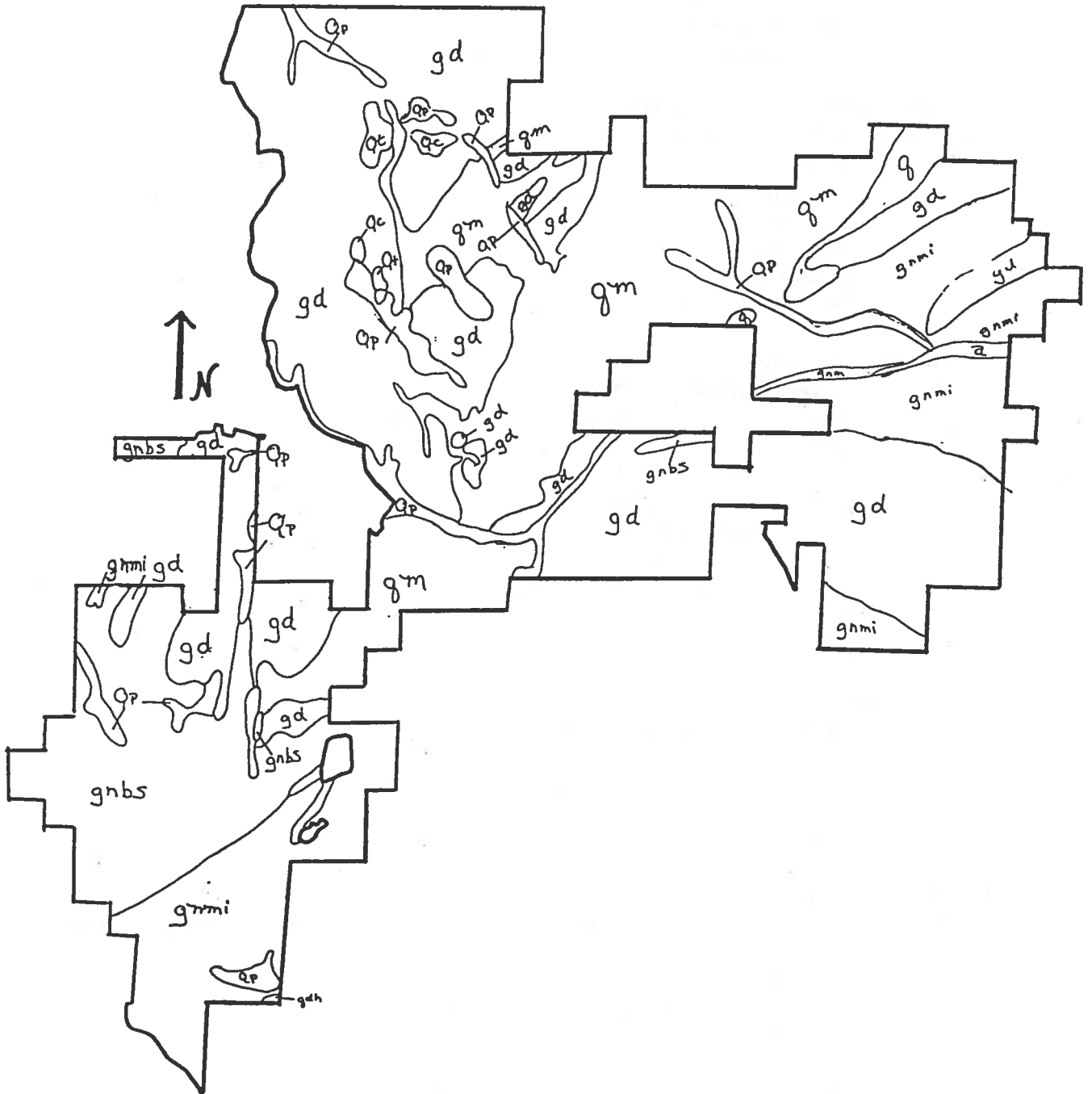
Rock Mapping Units Found in Golden Gate Canyon State Park

from the Geological Map of the Black Hawk Quadrangle by Richard B. Taylor, Published by the U.S. Geological Survey, 1976

Symbol	Name and description		
Qpp	Post-Piney Creek Alluvium (Quaternary) Boulder alluvium with sandy or silty matrix underlying modern flood plains.	q	Quartzite (Precambrian) Quartzite and conglomeratic quartzite. White, light-gray, pale-green, or pale-red fine- to medium grained well-bedded muscovite quartzite containing minor layers of well-rounded quartz pebbles. Metamorphic.
Qp	Piney Creek Alluvium (Quaternary) Fine grained compressible alluvium composed of dark-gray humic sand and silt containing lenses of sand and pebbles in lower part. Underlies upland meadows.	qs	Muscovite Schist (Precambrian) Muscovite-quartz-biotite schist forming interlayers in quartzite.
Qc	Colluvium (Quaternary) Heterogeneous deposits of boulders, cobbles, sand and clay - grades to alluvium at base of slope.	a	Amphibolite (Precambrian) Fine- to medium-grained dark-greenish-gray to black poorly layered amphibolite. Generally is conformable masses, but some are cross-cutting; in part metasedimentary and in part metavolcanic.
Qt	Talus (Quaternary) Angular rock fragments a few inches to several feet in diameter.		
Kb	Bostonite and Related Rocks (Upper Cretaceous) Intrusive rocks associated with ore deposits.	gnm	Feldspar-rich Gneiss (Precambrian) Microcline-plagioclase-quartz-biotite gneiss of granitic appearance. Fine- to medium-grained light- to medium-gray gneiss that weathers to shades of light tan or brown. The feldspar-rich gneiss is interpreted as metasedimentary and metavolcanic. General composition is near granodiorite.
Kqm	Granodiorite and Quartz Monzonite Porphyry (Upper Cretaceous) Intrusive rocks associated with ore deposits.		
sy	Leucosyenite (Precambrian) Intrusive rocks found in dikes and small irregular intrusive masses.	gnbs	Sillimanitic Biotite Gneiss (Precambrian) Silvery gray fine- to medium-grained biotite-quartz-plagioclase-sillimanite gneiss containing variable quantities of garnet and muscovite. Interpreted as formed by metamorphism of a clay-rich sediment containing sandy layers.
p	Pegmatite (Precambrian) Coarse-grained white, pink or light-gray granite pegmatite forming dikes and irregular intrusive masses.		
qm	Quartz Monzonite (Precambrian) Light-gray, tan to medium-gray, fine- to medium-grained quartz monzonite composed of plagioclase, microcline and quartz and lesser amounts of muscovite and biotite. Intrusive.	gnh	Hornblende Gneiss (Precambrian) Hornblende-plagioclase gneiss interlayered with other gneiss varieties. Metamorphosed from well-layered sequence of impure carbonate rocks and graywackes.
gd	Boulder Creek Granodiorite (Precambrian) Light-gray, pinkish-gray to medium-gray or speckled black and white medium- to coarse-grained granodiorite containing minor amounts of quartz monzonite and quartz diorite. Zone of protoclasia in part defines western side of Boulder Creek Batholith. Intrusive.	gnls gnmi	Calc-silicate Gneiss (Precambrian) Fine- to medium-grained light greenish gray, yellowish gray, to dark greenish-gray or black. Metamorphosed from impure carbonate-rich sedimentary rocks. Feldspar-rich Gneiss and Other Interlayered Gneisses (Precambrian) Predominantly rocks typical of the feldspar-rich gneiss (gnm) unit but containing 10-30% layers and lenses of biotite gneiss, amphibolite, and calc-silicate gneiss
qdh	Quartz Diorite (Precambrian) Fine to medium-grained gray to greenish-gray hornblende-biotite quartz diorite. Intrusive, unknown relation to Boulder Creek Granodiorite.		

Map of the Major Rock Units in Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Note: See explanation of the major rock mapping units on the previous page.



Checklist of the Mammals of Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Includes Historic Species

Note: This checklist is based on distribution maps from Mammals of Colorado by James P. Fitzgerald, Carron A. Meaney and David M. Armstrong, published by the Denver Museum of Natural History and the University Press of Colorado in 1994

Order: Marsupialia - Marsupials

Family: Didelphidae - Opossums

*Virginia Opossum - *Didelphis virginiana*

Order: Insectivora - Insectivores: Moles, Shrews and Allies

Family: Soricidae - Shrews

- *Masked Shrew - *Sorex cinereus*
- *Merriam's Shrew - *Sorex merriami*
- *Montane Shrew - *Sorex monticolus*
- *Dwarf Shrew - *Sorex nanus*
- *Water Shrew - *Sorex palustris*
- *Least Shrew - *Cryptotis parva*

Order: Chiroptera - Bats

Family: Vespertilionidae - Vespertilionid Bats

- *Western Small-footed Myotis - *Myotis ciliolabrum*
- *Long-eared Myotis - *Myotis evotis*
- *Little Brown Myotis - *Myotis lucifugus*
- *Fringed Myotis - *Myotis thysanodes*
- *Long-legged Myotis - *Myotis volans*
- *Hoary Bat - *Lasiurus cinereus*
- *Silver-haired Bat - *Lasionycteris noctivagans*
- *Big Brown Bat - *Eptesicus fuscus*
- *Townsend's Big-eared Bat - *Plecotus townsendii*

Order: Lagomorpha - Pikas, Hares, Rabbits

Family: Leporidae - Hares and Rabbits

- *Eastern Cottontail - *Sylvilagus floridanus*
- *Mountain or Nuttalls Cottontail - *Sylvilagus nuttallii*
- *Snowshoe Hare - *Lepus americanus*
- *White-tailed Jackrabbit - *Lepus townsendii*

Order: Rodentia - Rodents

Family: Sciuridae - Squirrels: Chipmunks, Ground Squirrels, Prairie Dogs, Marmots & Tree Squirrels

- *Least Chipmunk - *Tamias minimus*
- *Colorado Chipmunk - *Tamias quadrivittatus*
- *Uinta Chipmunk - *Tamias umbrinus*
- *Yellow-bellied Marmot - *Marmota flaviventris*
- *Wyoming (previously Richardson's) Ground Squirrel - *Spermophilus elegans*
- *Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel - *Spermophilus lateralis*
- *Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel - *Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*

- *Rock Squirrel - *Spermophilus variegatus*
- *Black-tailed Prairie Dog - *Cynomys ludovicianus*
- *Abert's Squirrel - *Sciurus aberti*
- *Pine Squirrel, Chickaree, or "Red Squirrel" - *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*

Family: Geomyidae - Pocket Gophers

- *Northern Pocket Gopher - *Thomomys talpoides*
- *Plains Pocket Gopher - *Geomys bursarius*

Family Heteromyidae - Kangaroo Rats & Pocket Mice

- *Hispid Pocket Mouse - *Chaetodipus hispidus*

Family Castoridae - Beavers

- *American Beaver - *Castor canadensis*

Family Muridae: Rats, Mice and Voles

Subfamily Sigmodontinae - New World Rats and Mice

- *Western Harvest Mouse - *Reithrodontomys megalotis*
- *Deer Mouse - *Peromyscus maniculatus*
- *Northern Grasshopper Mouse - *Onychomys leucogaster*
- *Bushy-tailed Woodrat - *Neotoma cinerea*
- *Mexican Woodrat - *Neotoma mexicana*

Subfamily Murinae - Old World Rats and Mice

- *House Mouse - *Mus musculus*

Subfamily Arvicolinae - Voles, Meadow Mice, Muskrats

- *Southern Red-backed Vole - *Clethrionomys gapperi*
- *Long-tailed Vole - *Microtus longicaudus*
- *Montane Vole - *Microtus montanus*
- *Meadow Vole - *Microtus pennsylvanicus*
- *Common Muskrat - *Onadatra zibethicus*

Family Zapodidae: Jumping Mice

- *Western Jumping Mouse - *Zapus princeps*

Family: Erethizontidae - New World Porcupines

- *Common Porcupine - *Erethizon dorsatum*

Order: Carnivora - Carnivores

Family: Canidae - Dogs, Foxes and Allies

- *Coyote - *Canis latrans*
- *Gray Wolf (historic species) - *Canis lupus*
- *Red Fox - *Vulpes vulpes*
- *Gray Fox - *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*

Family: Ursidae - Bears

- *Black Bear - *Ursus americanus*
- *Grizzly or Brown Bear (historic species) - *Ursus arctos*

Family: Procyonidae - Raccoons, Ringtails, and Allies

- *Ringtail - *Bassariscus astutus*
- *Raccoon - *Procyon lotor*

Family Mustelidae - Weasels and Allies

- *Ermine or Short-tailed Weasel - *Mustela erminea*
- *Long-tailed Weasel - *Mustela frenata*
- *Black-footed Ferret (historic species) - *Mustela nigripes*
- *Mink - *Mustela vison*
- *Wolverine - *Gulo gulo*

- *American Badger - *Taxidea taxus*
- *Western Spotted Skunk - *Spilogale gracilis*
- *Striped Skunk - *Mephitis mephitis*

Family: Felidae - Cats

- *Mountain Lion - *Felis concolor*
- *Bobcat - *Lynx rufus*

Order: Artiodactyla - Artiodactyls, Even-toed Hoofed Animals

Family: Cervidae - Deer and Allies

- *American Elk or Wapiti - *Cervus elaphus*
- *Mule Deer - *Odocoileus hemionus*
- *White-tailed Deer - *Odocoileus virginianus*

Family: Bovidae - Bovids

- *Bison (historic species) - *Bison bison*
- *Bighorn or Mountain Sheep - *Ovis canadensis*

Checklist of Birds of Golden Gate Canyon State Park
Based on review of previous checklists and of range maps from Colorado Birds

Grebes

Pied-billed Grebe

Pelicans

American White Pelican

Hérons

Great Blue Heron

Snowy Egret

Black-crowned Night Heron

Waterfowl

Canada Goose

Green-winged Teal*

Mallard*

Blue-winged Teal*

Cinnamon Teal*

Gadwall

American Wigeon

Ring-necked Duck

Northern Shoveler

Northern Pintail

Redhead

Common Goldeneye

Common Merganser

Ruddy Duck*

Lesser Scaup

Vultures

Turkey Vulture

Hawks & Eagles

Osprey

Bald Eagle

Northern Harrier

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

Northern Goshawk*

Swainson's Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk:

__ Western subspecies*

Harlan's subspecies

Ferruginous Hawk

Rough-legged Hawk

Golden Eagle*

American Kestrel*

Merlin

Prairie Falcon*

Peregrine Falcon

Grouse, Quail

Blue Grouse*

Wild Turkey

Rails & Coots

Virginia Rail

Sora

American Coot*

Plovers

Killdeer*

Sandpipers & Yellowlegs

Spotted Sandpiper*

Common Snipe*

Willet

Gulls

Franklin's Gull

Ring-billed Gull

California Gull

Pigeons & Doves

Rock Dove

Band-tailed Pigeon

Mourning Dove*

Owls

Flammulated Owl*

Western Screech Owl

Great Horned Owl

Northern Pygmy Owl

Long-eared Owl

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Boreal Owl

Nighthawks & Poorwhils

Common Nighthawk*

Common Poorwhil*

Swifts

White-throated Swift*

Black Swift

Hummingbirds

Calliope Hummingbird

Broad-tailed Hummingbird*

Rufous Hummingbird

Kingfishers

Belted Kingfisher

Woodpeckers

Williamson's Sapsucker*

Downy Woodpecker*

Hairy Woodpecker*

Three-toed Woodpecker

Northern Flicker

__ Red-shafted form*

Red-headed Woodpecker

Red-naped Sapsucker*

Tyrant Flycatchers

Olive-sided Flycatcher*

Western Wood-Pewee*

Willow Flycatcher

Hammond's Flycatcher

Dusky Flycatcher*

Cordilleran Flycatcher*

Say's Phoebe

Western Kingbird

Larks

Horned Lark

Swallows

__ Tree Swallow*
__ Violet-green Swallow*
__ Cliff Swallow
__ Barn Swallow*

Jays, Magpies & Crows

__ Gray Jay
__ Stellar's Jay*
__ Blue Jay
__ Scrub Jay
__ Clark's Nutcracker
__ Black-billed Magpie*
__ American Crow*
__ Common Raven*

Chickadees & Titmice

__ Black-capped Chickadee
__ Mountain Chickadee*

Nuthatches

__ White-breasted Nuthatch*
__ Pygmy Nuthatch*
__ Red-breasted Nuthatch*

Creepers

__ Brown Creeper*

Wrens

__ Rock Wren*
__ Canyon Wren
__ House Wren*

Dippers

__ American Dipper*

Kinglets & Thrushes

__ Golden-crowned Kinglet
__ Ruby-crowned Kinglet*
__ Western Bluebird
__ Mountain Bluebird*
__ Townsend's Solitaire*
__ Swainson's Thrush
__ Hermit Thrush*
__ American Robin*

Thrashers

__ Sage Thrasher

Pipits

__ American Pipit

Waxwings

__ Bohemian Waxwing
__ Cedar Waxwing

Shrikes

__ Northern Shrike
__ Loggerhead Shrike

Starlings

__ European Starling

Vireos

__ Solitary Vireo
__ plumbeous subspecies*
__ Warbling Vireo*

Warblers

__ Orange-crowned Warbler
__ Virginia's Warbler
__ Yellow Warbler
__ Yellow-rumped Warbler

__ Myrtle form

__ Audubon's form*

__ MacGillivray's Warbler*

__ Common Yellowthroat

__ Wilson's Warbler

__ Townsend's Warbler

Tanagers

__ Western Tanager*

Grosbeaks & Buntings

__ Black-headed Grosbeak*

__ Rose-breasted Grosbeak

__ Lazuli Bunting

Towhees, Sparrows & Longspurs

__ Lark Bunting

__ Green-tailed Towhee*

__ American Tree Sparrow

__ Chipping Sparrow*

__ Vesper Sparrow*

__ Savannah Sparrow

__ Fox Sparrow

__ Rocky Mountain form*

__ Song Sparrow*

__ Brewer's Sparrow

__ Lincoln's Sparrow*

__ White-crowned Sparrow*

__ Lark Sparrow

__ Dark-eyed Junco

__ White-winged form

__ Slate-colored form

__ Oregon form

__ Gray-headed form*

Blackbirds & Orioles

__ Red-winged Blackbird*

__ Western Meadowlark*

__ Brewer's Blackbird*

__ Common Grackle

__ Brown-headed Cowbird*

__ Northern Oriole

__ Bullock's form

Finches

__ Rosy Finch

__ Gray-crowned form

__ Black form

__ Brown-capped form

__ Pine Grosbeak

__ Cassin's Finch

__ House Finch

__ Red Crossbill*

__ Common Redpoll

__ Pine Siskin

__ Lesser Goldfinch

__ American Goldfinch

__ Evening Grosbeak

Weaver Finches

__ House Sparrow

Amphibians and Reptiles of Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Based on review of range maps and distribution information in Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado by Geoffrey A. Hammerson

Amphibians

Salamanders

- Mole Salamanders - *Family Ambystomatidae*
- *Tiger Salamander - *Ambystoma tigrinum*

Frogs and Toads

- True Toads - *Family Bufonidae*
- *Western Toad - *Bufo boreas*
- Tree Frogs - *Family Hylidae*
- *Striped Chorus Frog - *Pseudacris triseriata*
- True Frogs - *Family Ranidae*
- *Northern Leopard Frog - *Rana pipiens*

Reptiles

Lizards

- Iguanids - *Family Iguanidae*
- *Eastern Fence Lizard - *Sceloporus undulatus*

Snakes

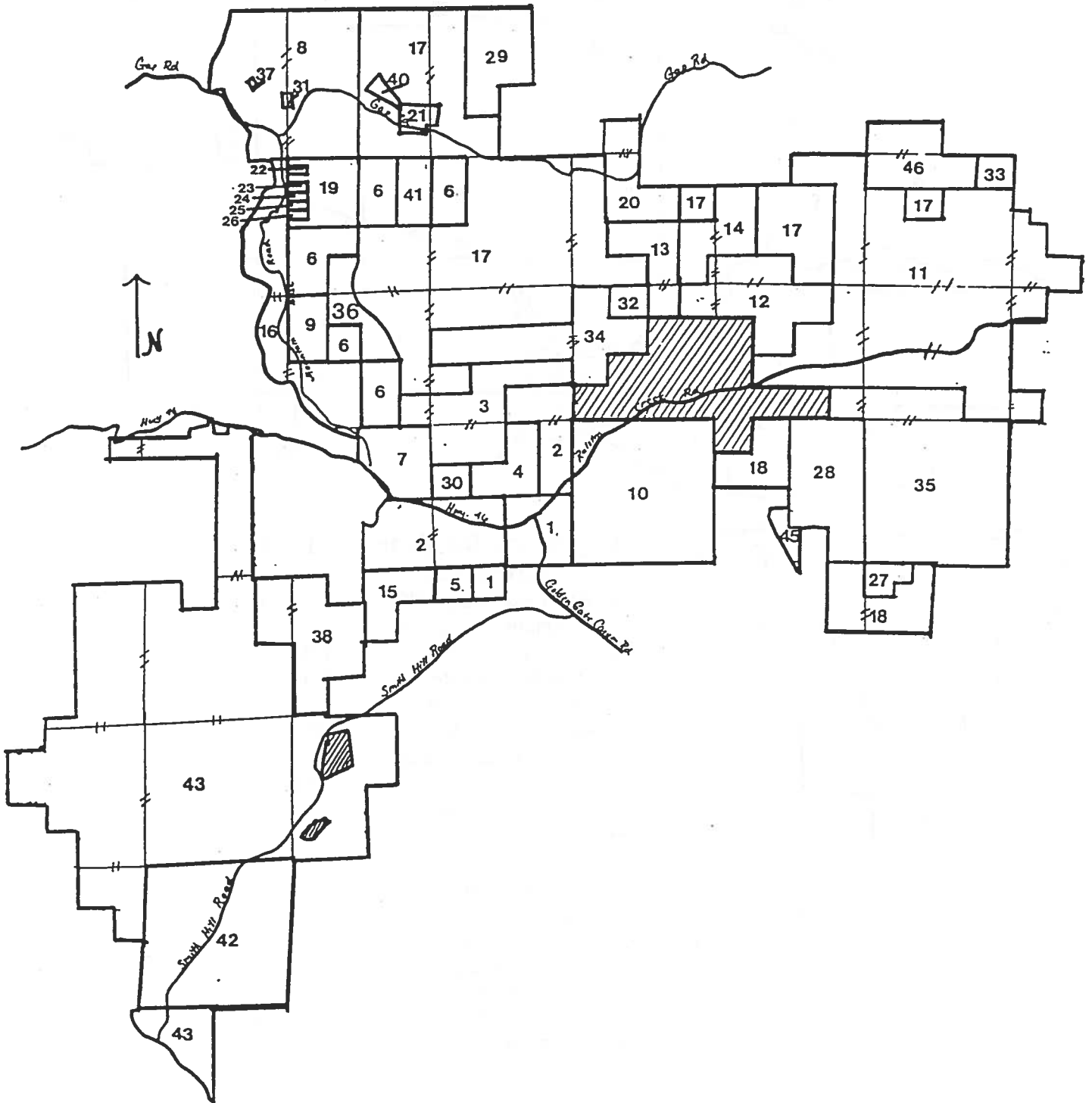
- Colubrids - *Family Colubridae*
- *Milk Snake - *Lampropeltis triangulum*
- *Smooth Green Snake - *Opheodrys vernalis*
- *Bullsnake - *Pituophis melanoleucus*
- *Western Terrestrial Garter Snake - *Thamnophis elegans*
- Vipers - *Family Viperidae*
- *Western Rattlesnake - *Crotalus viridis*

Golden Gate Canyon State Park Acquisition History

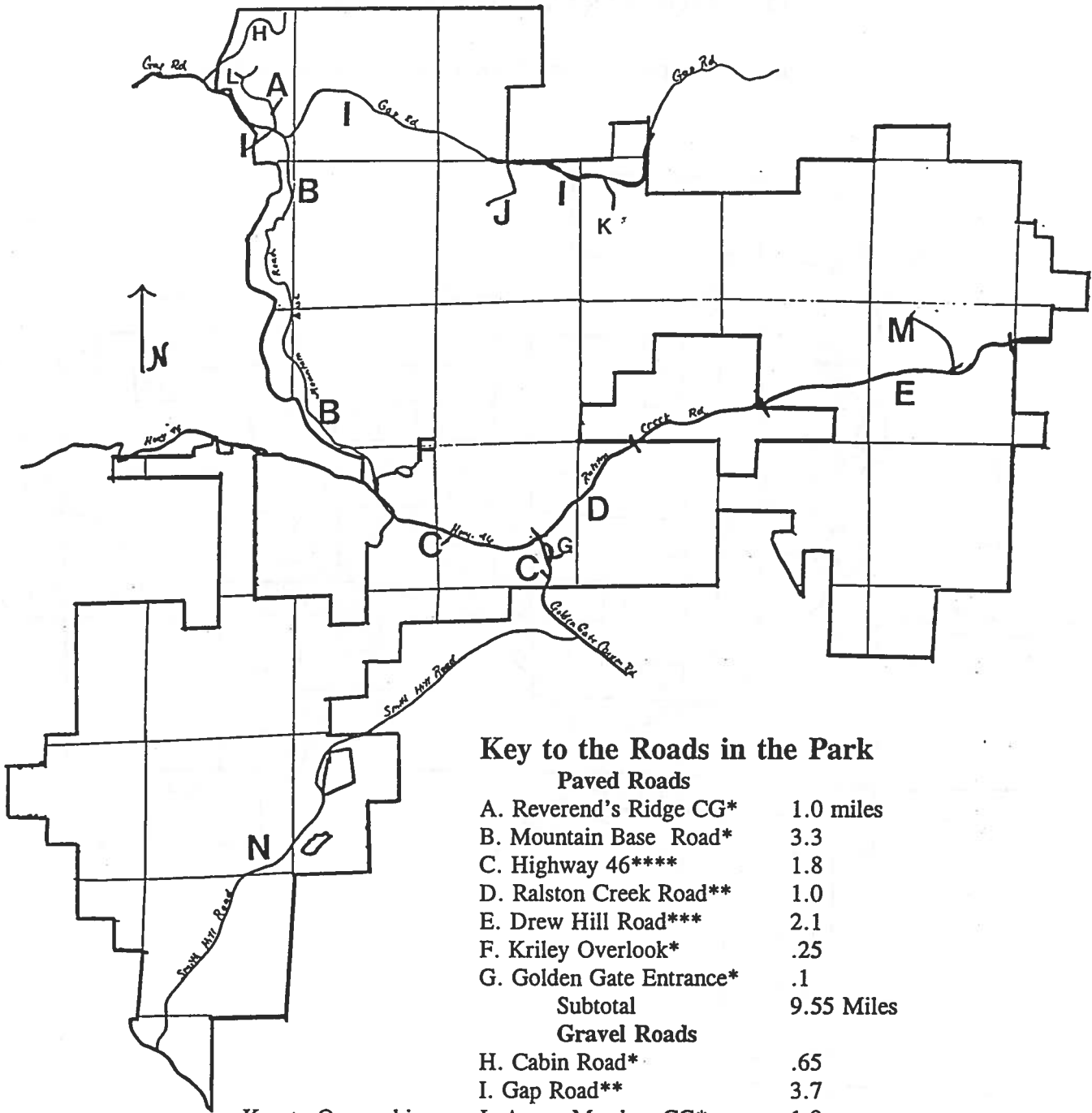
<u>Property #</u>	<u>Date Acquired</u>	<u>Acquired From</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cumulative Acres</u>
1	1960	Ellyson	200	
2	1961	Ellyson	480	
3	1963	Greenfields	320	
4		BLM	120	
5		BLM	38.32	
6		BLM	400	
7		Gallagher	159.1	
8	1965	Works	561.09	
9	1966	Baker	80	
10	1968	State Land Bd	640	
11		Strang	1610	4,608.51
12	1970	Colsman	287.5	
13		Dowdle/Hayes	160	
14		Dowdle	152.5	
15		Elson	120	
16		Braecher	338.7	
17		Harmsen	2002	
18		Cline Bn Alp	315.88	
19	1971	Braecher	135	8,120.09
20	1974	Nelson/Gru.	160	
21	1977	Harmsen	50	
22	1979	Gray	5	
23		Anderson	5	
24		Blunk	5	
25		Shortridge	5	
26		Mayfield	5	8,355.09
27	1984	Binder	51.36	
28	1987	BLM	280	
29		BLM	200	
30		BLM	40	
31		True/Works Land Trade	Net 0	
32	1988	Russel	40	
33		Equality Bank	40	
34		Bandimere	320	
35		Hart	800	
36		Toll/Perry	102.9	
37		Toll	0.34	
38	1989	Elson	400	
39		To Harmsen	-80	
40		Harmsen	35	
41		Nelson	80	10,664.69
42	1991	State Land Brd	640	
43	1991 -95	Green Ranch	2878	
44	1993	Youth Camp Trade	-55.1	
45		Binder	35	
46	1994	BLM/N. Jeffco	200	14,362.59

Map of Acquisitions in Golden Gate Canyon State Park

Numbers on map correspond to list of acquisitions on previous page.



Roads in Golden Gate Canyon State Park



Key to the Roads in the Park

Paved Roads

A. Reverend's Ridge CG*	1.0 miles
B. Mountain Base Road*	3.3
C. Highway 46****	1.8
D. Ralston Creek Road**	1.0
E. Drew Hill Road***	2.1
F. Kriley Overlook*	.25
G. Golden Gate Entrance*	.1
Subtotal	9.55 Miles

Gravel Roads

H. Cabin Road*	.65
I. Gap Road**	3.7
J. Aspen Meadow CG*	1.0
K. Rifleman Phillips*	.25
L. Reverend's Ridge CG*	1.8
M. Nott Creek Road*	.7
N. Smith Hill Road**	3.0
Subtotal	11.10 Miles
Grand Total	20.65 Miles

Key to Ownership

- *State Park
- **Gilpin County
- ***Jefferson County
- ****CDOT