

Stagecoach State Park

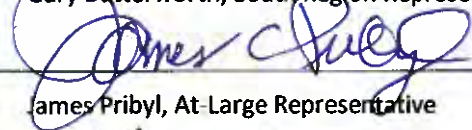
Management Plan
2011-2021

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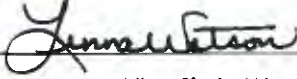
**The Colorado Board of State Parks and Outdoor Recreation
May 19, 2011**



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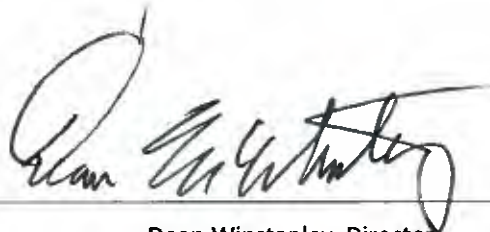
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This management plan is the third management plan to be developed based on the Colorado State Parks Management Plan Template, which was approved in 2009 by the Colorado State Parks Board.

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Executive Summary



Stagecoach State Park is a popular summer and winter destination for visitors from the surrounding area and statewide.

Stagecoach State Park is located in Routt County near the City of Steamboat Springs in the Northwest portion of the state (Map 1). Stagecoach is a popular recreational destination drawing over 130,000 visitors each year. The main feature of the park is the 819-acre reservoir on the Upper Yampa River, which boasts some of the best rainbow trout fishing in the state. The Yampa River below the dam is also well known as a world-class trophy fishery. The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD) owns the land and water that comprise the park and is a key partner.

The dam and reservoir were completed by the UYWCD in 1989, the same year the park started operation. Stagecoach is operated pursuant to a lease between the UYWCD and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks). In the summer of 2010, UYWCD raised the height of the dam spillway crest by 4 feet, thereby raising the maximum pool elevation of Stagecoach Reservoir by 4 feet, from 7,200 feet mean sea level (msl) to 7,204 feet msl.

Key natural features at the park include a biologically-diverse wetland in the westernmost portion of the park that offers fishing access, wildlife viewing, and hunting opportunities. About 189 species of birds make the park an excellent birding location—the park features a higher diversity of breeding birds and more rare birds than many other parks.¹ Critical winter range for elk is located just north of the park on Adams State Wildlife Area, which serves as a concentration ground for a herd of about 250 to 300 elk.

Stagecoach offers an excellent natural setting where visitors can delight in the wide open expanse and connect to the natural world. Lands adjacent to the reservoir feature expansive views of sagebrush montane shrubland and the snow-capped Flattop Mountains to the southwest, Greenridge to the south, and Blacktail Mountain with its rimrock outcroppings to the north.

Among the recreational facilities available at Stagecoach are 92 campsites, a swim beach, 8 miles of hiking trails, two boat ramps, a 31-slip marina offering boat rentals, supplies and food services, a wildlife observation area, and group picnic and campsites.

About the Plan

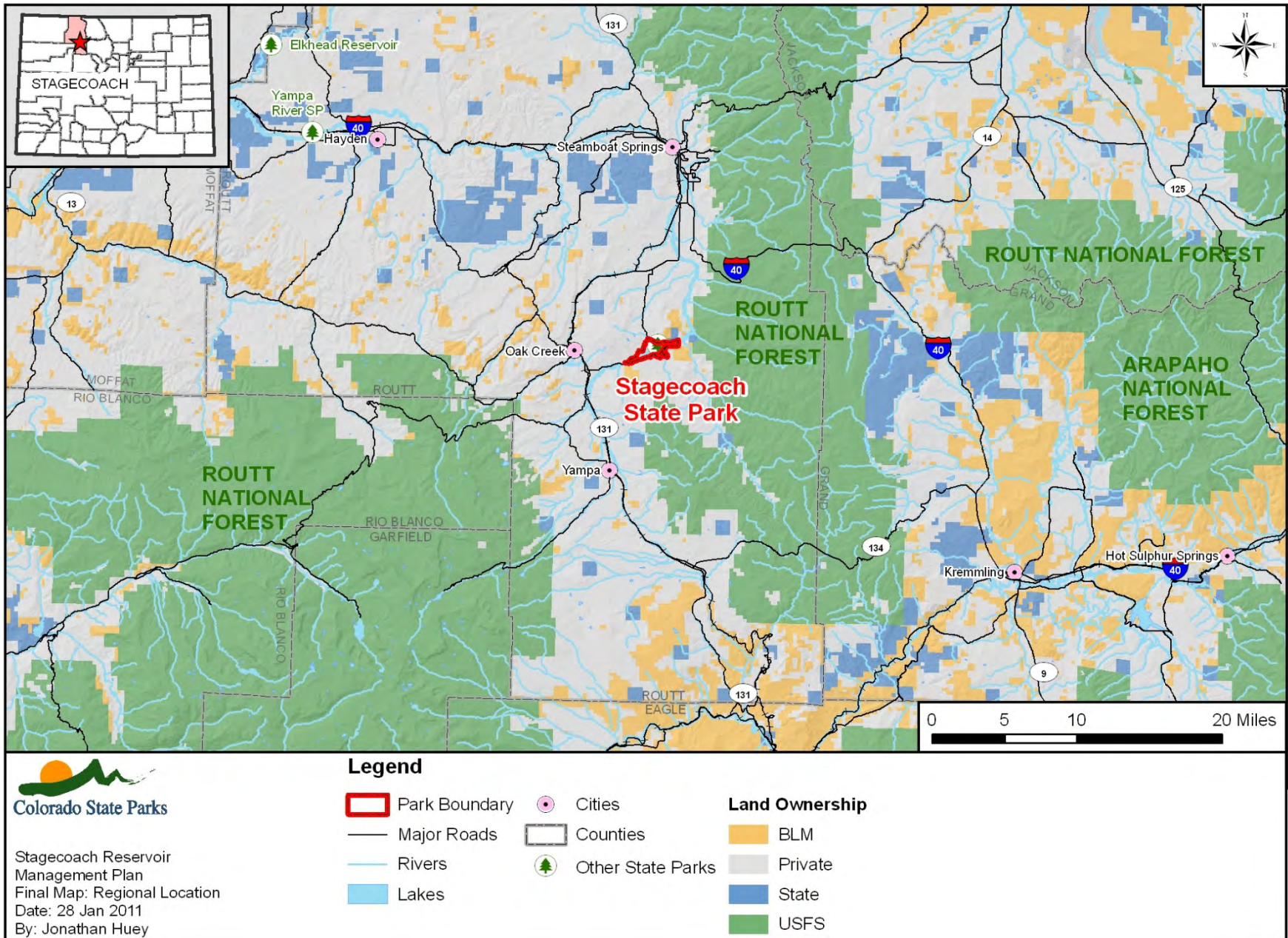
Management Plans are an important planning tool for park managers. The Stagecoach State Park Management Plan serves as the foremost guiding document for Stagecoach State Park. All other park planning documents should be consistent with this plan.

The Stagecoach State Park Management Plan provides a conceptual planning framework for setting management priorities and specific management direction for park resources. The plan also:

- Serves as a guide and policy document for current and future park staff, other partnering agencies, elected officials, and interested members of the public.
- Guides management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Provides a framework for monitoring and maintaining resources at Stagecoach State Park.

¹ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005.

Map 1. Location and Regional Context



- Identifies park enhancement opportunities including possible upgrades to or new park facilities, recreation infrastructure, etc.
- Serves as a guide for future park budget allocations and annual funding requests.

Implementation of the Stagecoach State Park Management Plan will assist park staff in their efforts to preserve and enhance the park for future recreational users. The Stagecoach State Park manager should regularly review the park management plan to evaluate implementation progress. This includes annually reviewing the document at the beginning of each calendar year.

The following park-level goals were developed during the management plan update. These goals provide an overarching framework for many of the suggested actions and recommendations included in Sections 5.0 and 6.0.

- Sustainably manage the park while planning ahead for anticipated increases in visitation associated with local and regional population growth.
- Offer a range of high-quality visitor experiences that are compatible with park resource management needs and resource capacity.
- Provide high quality customer service and opportunities to access and learn about park resources and enjoy popular recreation activities.
- Conduct development activities and operations in a manner that does not adversely affect park resources and environments.
- Build cost-effective, high quality recreation facilities that are aesthetically compatible and consistent with park resources, are energy efficient, and do not exceed the maintenance capabilities of park staff.

Management Zoning

The management zoning scheme adapted specifically for Colorado’s state parks provides a framework for identifying areas that provide for different types of visitor experiences and recreation opportunities, based on the resource constraints that occur within the park. Within each management zone, suitable types of facilities and land uses are also identified, along with the suggested visitor experience and management focus.

Influencing the zoning of Stagecoach State Park were a number of factors including resource, land ownership, and engineering suitability mapping (presented in subsequent sections of the plan). Ten distinct areas within the park were identified and officially acknowledged in the plan (these are depicted on Map 2 and briefly discussed in Section 4.0).

Summary of Recommended Park Enhancement Opportunities

Based on resource considerations, outdoor recreation trends, visitor preferences, financial considerations and other issues identified in this plan, there are a number of possible park “enhancement opportunities” suggested for Stagecoach State Park (Map 2). These enhancement opportunities are discussed in detail in Section 5.0 Park Enhancement Opportunities and Initiatives. All of the Enhancement Opportunities and other suggested management priorities are included in the *Summary Implementation Priorities Table* included in Section 6.0. Enhancement opportunities generally include park improvements that are

significant in terms of their spacial scale and level of effort needed to implement them, and may warrant considerable financial resources. It is important to note that new facilities and infrastructure should be balanced with maintaining and preserving what we already have. Also, major new facility investments should be balanced with resource enhancements. Finally, park enhancement opportunities are not “commitments.” Implementation of enhancement opportunities and other recommendations in the management plan are contingent on the park securing adequate financial and human resources. Any park enhancement that requires additional funding or staffing must be considered or weighed within the context of other Division-wide needs.

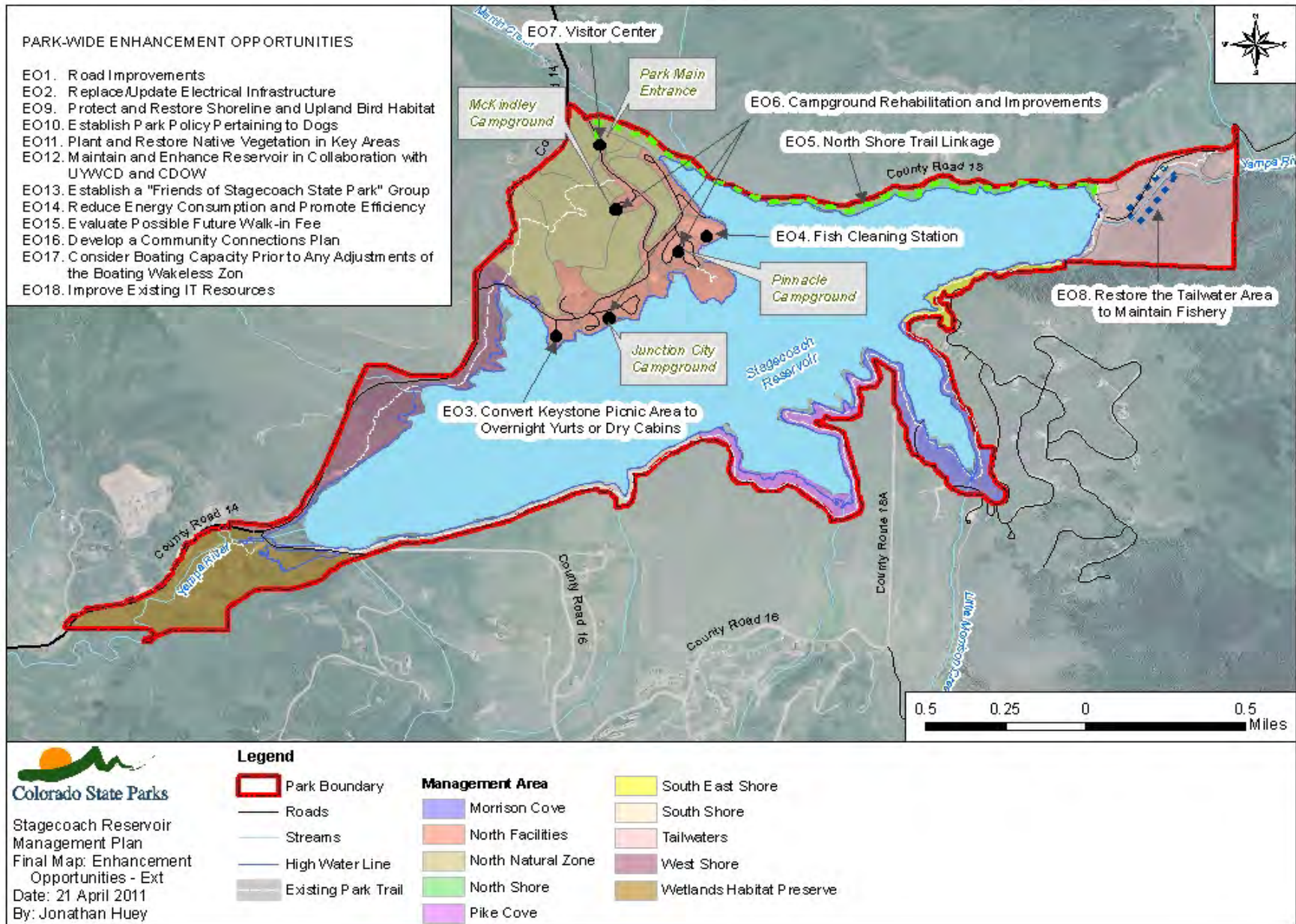
Existing Facilities & Infrastructure

EO1. Road Improvements. Roads that exceed 200 vehicles per day for the majority of the year typically require paved surfacing. During June, July, and much of August, this threshold is regularly exceeded along the main park road. There are also major drainage issues (particularly in the vicinity of Junction City Campground), that need to be addressed. While vehicular traffic is significantly reduced during winter months, intensive snow removal efforts and the spring time mud season severely rut roads. Periodic grading occurs once annually in late April or early May. In late May to early June, this is followed up with a less extensive grading and chemical treatments (MgCl) to avoid washboarding and dust.

- **EO1(a) Priority Road Maintenance (High Priority).** While the existing roads are presently in fair condition, additional road maintenance (aside from basic road grading and application of gravel) is needed to improve the park entrance road. Priority road maintenance work envisioned as part of this enhancement includes sub-grade preparation, re-establishing the road crown, compaction, providing four inches of new road base, and other minor drainage improvements. Although addressing the drainage issues is necessary to keep roads intact and to avoid erosion, it will only provide a short-term fix and will not reduce the periodic maintenance costs associated with grading and application of gravel dust suppressant.
- **EO1(b) Paving from Park Entrance to Junction City Campground (Medium Priority).** Paving the 1.04 miles of park road between the park entrance and the Junction City Campground will provide a long-term solution to the road maintenance issue. At this time, it is anticipated that a 4-inch asphalt overlay would be necessary. While paving requires a higher capital investment, it will reduce staff time and money spent on road maintenance, enhance accessibility year round, reduce visitor complaints, and improve the park's appearance. [Note: basic road preparation steps described under EO1(a) would still be necessary prior to any paving.]

EO2. Replace/Update Electrical Infrastructure (High Priority). Stagecoach State Park's electrical infrastructure remains unchanged from when it was initially installed in the late 1980s, and the electrical system has been somewhat problematic from the start. Over the last few years, numerous issues have been uncovered that present problems for the Stagecoach maintenance staff. In addition, electrical demand has increased, primarily due to heightened electrical needs associated with more sophisticated Recreational Vehicles (RVs) that operate higher-amperage amenities (e.g., televisions, air conditioning, etc.). Future facility upgrades at the park may require increased electricity and substantial

Map 2. Park Enhancement Opportunities



investments in the existing electrical infrastructure (including possible campground renovations). Key elements of the electrical infrastructure that need to be upgraded include the primary transmission line and transformer; however, additional infrastructure upgrades are likely necessary.

New Facilities & Infrastructure

EO3. Convert Keystone Picnic Area to Overnight Dry Cabins or Yurt (*High Priority*).

Diversification of overnight facilities available at Stagecoach would offer another option for park users to enjoy Stagecoach, and provide additional park revenue during the off season. The Stagecoach Planning Team considers cabins as a viable recreation amenity at Stagecoach State park, pending such an investment covers annual operations and maintenance costs (see Appendix H).

The existing Keystone Picnic Area, which is located just past the Junction City Campground, is the area of the park that is most suitable for up to three overnight yurts or cabins. Unique features of this area include expansive views to the south, as well as shoreline access. While the area is fairly popular as a parking site for accessing shoreline fishing, picnic facilities in the area are underutilized.

In FY 2009, average annual occupancy of the Division's yurts was about 40%, while dry cabins were 44%. At parks like Sylvan Lake, Pearl Lake, and Golden Gate Canyon, average occupancy is as high as 85% to 90% percent during peak summer months, and 19% to 31% during peak winter months.^{2,3} It is expected that yurt or cabin occupancy at Stagecoach would be comparable to these numbers during the summer, and likely higher than average during winter (due to the popularity of ice fishing and the proximity of the accommodations to the reservoir).

EO4. Fish Cleaning Station (*Medium Priority*). One of the more frequently cited visitor suggestions at Stagecoach State Park is the addition of a fish cleaning station. Visitors to the park currently use areas along the shoreline, picnic tables or whatever area they can find to gut/clean their fish before throwing the entrails either back into the water,⁴ in the bush/grass, or in bathroom trash cans. There are numerous problems associated with this practice, ranging from environmental, odor, and sanitation issues.

Conventional fish cleaning stations like those found at many existing parks grind up the fish waste and use water to send the waste to the water treatment facility. Installation of a conventional fish cleaning station is not currently feasible at Stagecoach, as it would increase the biological oxygen demand (BOD) of the wastewater and thus, hinder existing wastewater treatment needs. Upgrading the park's wastewater treatment facility to handle this increased load would also be a large capital investment (likely over \$300,000).

The Stagecoach Planning Team evaluated a number of possible options to address this issue and concluded that, currently, a fish composting facility is the best option (and is more affordable). This option would be similar to a conventional fish cleaning station. However, it would divert the fish waste to an underground composting unit that is linked to a 1,250 gallon septic tank, and an infiltrator absorption system. Current park management at Stagecoach believe this type of facility would work well at the park, and that proper training

²Ibid.

³Sylvan Lake State Park's yurts were not operational during winter months in FY 2009 and therefore, no occupancy was recorded.

⁴While rarely enforced, CDOW prohibits the disposal of fish entrails or other byproducts into any body of water. CDOW (2010). 2010-2011 *Fishing Regulations Brochure*. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Fishing. P. 37.

and oversight associated with operating such a unit should not be a problem. Typical daily maintenance during the summer is about 15 minutes per day between April and October, and could easily be performed by a trained seasonal staff. Solid waste produced from the unit would be odorless and could be used as a nutrient-rich fertilizer.⁵ County approval of this facility would be necessary.⁶

EO5. North Shore Trail Linkage (*Medium Priority*). Trails currently span around three-quarters of the reservoir. Between the dam and the park's main entrance, visitors typically walk along the county road, where on busy weekends there can be substantial numbers of vehicles (likely over 200 vehicles per day). An additional 1.2 miles of trail along the northwest shoreline below County Road 18 would help provide a contiguous trail system encircling the entire reservoir, and provide safer and more enjoyable hiking, mountain bicycling, or horseback riding experiences.

EO6. Campground Rehabilitation and Improvements (*Med Priority*). Stagecoach presently offers 65 "improved" campsites that provide 30-amp electrical hookups at Junction City, Pinnacle, and McKindley campgrounds. These campsites accommodate about 64% of all annual overnight visitation, or about 79% of total overnight revenue.⁷ The layout and configuration of Stagecoach's campsites were designed to accommodate smaller RVs and camping trailers that are increasingly being replaced by larger RVs and trailers with higher electrical demands (50 amps and up). In addition, many of the existing campsites do not have clearly delineated boundaries and are thus susceptible to erosion and expansion over time. While these facilities are suitable for current visitor use, the need for improving and rehabilitating these facilities only increases with time.

Implementing this park enhancement will be contingent on completing a campground rehabilitation master plan for Stagecoach State Park to more accurately determine an appropriate number of electrical campsites at each campground given electrical and vehicle size constraints, and any needed campground configuration changes. It is expected that any new campsites would be slightly larger, spaced farther apart, and have clearly-delineated boundaries. All existing electrical campsites would likely be targeted for upgrades from 30 amps to 50 amps, while other campsites would be completely redeveloped with new 50 amp electrical infrastructure.⁸ A minor reduction in the total number of campsites may result from this enhancement due to accommodating slightly larger average-size vehicles and changes to the spatial configuration of campsites.

Key elements associated of this park enhancement are likely to include:

- *Campsite Rehabilitation.* Existing campsites would be graded, improved, and clearly delineated. All campsites in the Junction City, Pinnacle, and McKindley campgrounds would be upgraded to facilitate 50-amp hookups. Additional landscaping vegetation may be necessary.
- *Campground Road Rehabilitation.* Existing campground roads would need to be rerouted and improved, as needed.

⁵According to Kem Davidson, Reservoir Operator at Wolford Reservoir, the fish composting unit has only had to be unloaded three times in the last 15 years.

⁶Conversations with the Routt County Department of Health revealed that the County would likely support this type of concept, and would likely waive the ISDS permitting fee.

⁷Babcock, Scott. *Detailed Overnight Use Revenue & Participation Trends (FY06-FY09)*. Rep. Colorado State Parks, 2009.

⁸The National Electric Code (NEC) currently requires that at least 20% of all campsites be equipped with 50-amp service pedestals.

- *New, ADA Accessible Camper Services Building.* A new, stand-alone ADA-accessible camper services building managed by Colorado State Parks would be included as part of this enhancement. The current camper services building, which is incorporated within the Stagecoach Marina building, is nearing the end of its 30-year life cycle. Frequent repairs and maintenance are limited in their effectiveness. Once completed, Colorado State Parks could work with the Stagecoach Marina concessionaire to evaluate options for possibly expanding the existing retail operations.

EO7. Visitor Center (Low Priority). The park entrance station currently serves as the park's primary point of contact for park visitors. Visitors seeking to purchase annual passes, talk to staff, or learn more detailed information about the park and park programs are directed to the Stagecoach Park Office, which serves primarily as a park maintenance and storage facility and secondarily as office space and, seasonal housing. A small 72-square foot entrance area at the Park Office doubles as a visitor reception area. The visitor reception area is not welcoming to visitors, and hinders the ability of park staff to interface with the public. In addition, there is no space for retail and interpretive purposes.

A new visitor center, modeled after the Highline State Park Visitor Center, would benefit the park and significantly enhance the visitor experience. This facility would house the park entrance station, two to three park offices, retail space, and interpretive/educational displays, while the existing Park Office would continue to be used for park maintenance, storage, and seasonal housing. This building would also be energy efficient, and built from materials that require minimal maintenance. Several locations were explored for locating a visitor center, but the relatively level area just east of the existing entrance station is likely the best option. An adjacent parking area designed to accommodate up to 25 vehicles would also be included as part of this enhancement.

Rehabilitation & Restoration Efforts

EO8. Restore the Tailwater Area to Maintain a High Quality Fishery (High Priority). Increasing use and popularity of the Tailwater area requires that park staff partner with CDOW to more intensively manage and restore the Yampa River and the upland river corridor. Within the river, continued efforts are needed to monitor and compare data on rainbow trout populations, and restrict access to spring spawning beds to ensure their long-term reproductive success. Visitor survey data should also be gathered to track and monitor angler catch rates, satisfaction, species caught, and perceptions on issues like crowding. If needed, Stagecoach staff should restructure special use permit allocations for angling outfitters and/or implement a permit system for other public users of the Tailwater area. This could be done via a "check-in" or reservation system administered by the park.

Stream quality is typically linked to conditions upstream and land use of adjacent lands. For this reason, restoration of the river shoreline through planting of native willow and wetland vegetation along the stream banks to prevent erosion and stream habitat loss is also a high priority. Some upland areas may need to be temporarily blocked off to visitors and anglers for up to several years or until restoration efforts are completed. During and after restoration efforts, Colorado State Parks and CDOW should partner to provide detailed educational/interpretive signage to help minimize future resource impacts associated with visitor use of the Tailwater area.

EO9. Protect and Restore Shoreline and Upland Bird Habitat (High Priority). Stagecoach Reservoir's shoreline wetlands and adjacent uplands provide refuge and breeding grounds

for a variety of bird species. The upland sage habitat provides important forage and breeding areas for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. State Parks staff may need to consider seasonally closing portions of trails as well as working with adjacent landowners on neighboring lands to ensure this species does not disappear from the area. Implementing this park enhancement will entail partnering with CDOW and possibly other land trust organizations to pursue conservation easements with adjacent landowners and working with local communities (such as the South Shore community) and park visitors to educate them on the importance of protection and restoration of shoreline and upland bird habitat.

EO10. Establish a Formal, Comprehensive Park Policy Pertaining to Dogs (*High Priority*). Park staff should aggressively enforce existing dog off leash laws to reduce threats to nesting birds and prevent degradation of shoreline habitat. In addition, park staff should consider more conservative approaches to managing dog use within the park, given historical impacts to breeding birds. This will likely involve prohibiting dogs in several key habitat areas to protect sensitive wildlife and key recreational experiences.

EO11. Plant and Restore Native Vegetation Near Park Office and Other Key Interpretive Areas (*Medium Priority*). Native vegetation should be planted near the visitor center and in any disturbed areas. Wherever possible, interpretive signage should be sited at these locations to educate the public on native plant species and communities found at the park, plant adaptations in the sagebrush upland habitat, and the importance of these areas to various species of wildlife.

Management Initiatives

EO12. Maintain and Enhance Stagecoach Reservoir in Collaboration with UYWCD and CDOW (*High Priority*). Stagecoach Reservoir is one of northwest Colorado's most productive trout and northern pike fisheries. Three related actions tied to this enhancement include:

- Working closely with CDOW to maintain trout stocking levels in the reservoir, and reaching out to anglers by participating in regular Angler Roundtables where CDOW biologists examine biological and social data from state waters and gauge angler concerns and issues.
- Working closely with CDOW to obtain regular creel census and other fishery data that will enable CDOW and the park to evaluate trends in fish populations and angler satisfaction.
- Working with UYWCD to monitor water quality and ensure that reservoir operations do not deleteriously affect trout populations.

EO13. Establish a "Friends of Stagecoach State Park" group (*High Priority*). Establishment of a 501(c)(3) non-profit "Friends of Stagecoach State Park" would provide further financial and stakeholder support for the park. This group would be comprised of both local and seasonal residents who have a common interest in promoting and maintaining Stagecoach State Park. In addition to assisting the park with fundraising efforts, members of such a group could help with:

- Environmental education/Interpretive programs
- Tree planting
- Trail maintenance and monitoring
- Campsite improvements

- Staffing "Friends" booths at community events
- Beautification projects including maintaining the park's many flower beds
- Road and park cleanups
- Other construction projects as needed

EO14. Reduce energy consumption and promote efficiency in the operation of park facilities, vehicles, and equipment (*High Priority*). The Park Office/Maintenance Shop and Camper Services buildings were constructed in the late 1980s, before the current emphasis on energy efficiency. Recommendations from the December 2009 energy audit should be implemented to reduce utility costs. Specifically, the Energy Audit recommended converting T12 tubular lighting to T8, installing occupancy sensors, and converting incandescent bulbs to CFL. Likewise, the park's vehicle fleet needs to reflect a growing importance on reducing energy consumption. Stagecoach staff should consider fuel efficiency and the full range of alternative vehicles available when looking to address the park's future transportation needs.

EO15. Evaluate Possibility of Implementing a Walk-In Fee (*Med Priority*). As the surrounding residential communities expand and grow in population, it is in the park's long-term best interest to manage and control access. Stagecoach should consider implementing a walk-in fee as a possible management tool. Such a fee should apply not only at the park's main entrance, but other more remote access points (possibly with use of an iron ranger or self-serve station). There are significant logistical challenges with enforcing a walk-in fee at more remote access points, but these challenges must be met to ensure that trail use from outside the park's boundaries is properly managed, monitored, and controlled over time.

EO16. Community Connections Plan (*Med Priority*). Stagecoach State Park staff should work with the Volunteer Program staff to develop a formal Community Connections Plan (CCP). Appendix J has been set aside for inclusion of this plan once completed. The scope of the CCP is to recommend programs and media that engage and connect the community with Stagecoach in ways that: 1) increase visitors' appreciation of and sensitivity to the Park's historic, cultural, and natural resources and promote stewardship of those resources; 2) identify partnership opportunities appropriate for potential funders, outdoor education organizations, and other recreation/open space providers in the area; and to 3) help staff set goals and prioritize interpretation, education and outreach program development.

EO17. Consider Boating Capacity and Potential Impacts to Shore Anglers Prior to Any Adjustment of the Boating Wakeless Zone (*Med Priority*). Within a year or two of completion of UYWCD's raising of the dam, Stagecoach staff will be able to more closely evaluate the viability of reducing the portion of the boating wakeless zone that bisects the reservoir from north to south (primarily in response to surrounding community and local park constituent desires). In particular, park staff should evaluate whether altering the boundary will negatively affect spatial, facility, ecological, and social capacities (as defined in Appendix G). In particular, park staff should evaluate shoreline vegetation conditions following the dam level raise to determine whether vegetation has stabilized, whether waterfowl and other shorebirds have adapted to increased water levels. Finally, park staff should carefully consider whether displacement of shore anglers is likely to result as a consequence of altering the wakeless zone area.

EO18. Improve Existing Information Technology Resources (*Med Priority*). Access to computers and information technology are critical to the daily business of running the park. Staff increasingly depends on technology to manage park resources, communicate with one

another, and meet the growing needs of our customers. Any new construction or building/facility relocation should make provisions for up-to-date Information Technology resources, to include:

- Upgrade to Voice Over Internet Protocol [VoIP] phone system, which will allow voicemail and standard business call features like hunt group and forwarding at the main Park Office.
- Extend the existing T-1 to the entrance stations and Camper Services locations throughout the park. Currently this expense is approximately \$5,000 per wireless LAN segment; assuming line of sight exists between the locations. This segment would have Motorola Canopy antennas at both ends [Visitor Center and extension location] with proper router and workstation at the extension end.
- Proper backup system for all electronic files and information; after proper evaluation, this could include a server on location, or other less costly solution. A server solution currently costs \$3,500 for each lifecycle of the equipment, every four years.

1.0 Introduction

Park Description

Stagecoach State Park is located in Routt County near the City of Steamboat Springs in the Northwest area of the state. Stagecoach is a popular recreational destination drawing over 130,000 visitors each year. The main feature of the park is the 819-acre reservoir on the Upper Yampa River which boasts some of the best rainbow trout fishing in the state. The Yampa River below the dam is also well known as a world-class trophy fishery. The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD) owns the land and water that comprise the park.

Just above the reservoir is a biologically diverse wetland that also offers fishing access, wildlife viewing, and hunting opportunities. About 189 species of birds make the park an excellent birding location—the park features a higher diversity of breeding birds and more rare birds than many other parks.⁹ Critical winter range for elk is located just north of the park on Adams State Wildlife Area, which serves as a concentration ground for a herd of about 250 to 300 elk.

Lands adjacent to the reservoir feature an expanse of sagebrush montane shrubland that allow for unobstructed views of the snow-capped Flattop Mountains to the southwest, Greenridge to the south, and Blacktail Mountain with its rimrock outcroppings to the north. Stagecoach offers an excellent natural setting where visitors can delight in the wide open expanse and connect to the natural world.

In addition to natural features, the park has many modern amenities that offer comfort and convenience to visitors that come to the park to fish, boat, camp, hike, swim, and enjoy the outdoors. Among the facilities available are 92 campsites, a swim beach, 8 miles of hiking trails, two boat ramps, a 31-slip marina offering boat rentals, supplies and food services, a wildlife observation area, and group picnic and campsites.

The dam and reservoir were completed by the UYWCD in 1989, the same year the park started operation. Stagecoach is operated pursuant to a lease between the UYWCD and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks). The original lease, signed by the UYWCD and the State of Colorado on December 11, 1987, gives Colorado State Parks “exclusive use, control of and responsibility for the Reservoir Property for the management, administration and maintenance of permitted public recreational purposes and any facilities existing thereon or constructed therefore as it deems necessary for the use of this Reservoir Property by the general public for recreational activities only.” On August 25, 2004, a twenty-year lease agreement was agreed upon, making the current agreement valid through May 1, 2024 (Appendix A). In the summer of 2010, UYWCD raised the height of the dam spillway crest by 4 feet, thereby raising the maximum pool elevation of Stagecoach Reservoir by 4 feet, from 7,200 feet mean sea level (msl) to 7,204 feet msl.

⁹ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005.

Purpose of the Plan

The Stagecoach State Park Management Plan serves as the foremost guiding document for Stagecoach State Park. The ultimate purpose of developing the park management plan is to outline the vision for the park (see inset) and priorities that will provide for both the public's enjoyment and the protection of the park's resources. The management plan provides a conceptual planning framework for setting management priorities and specific management direction for park resources. The plan also:

- Serves as a guide and policy document for current and future park staff, other partnering agencies, elected officials, and interested members of the public.
- Guides management of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Provides a framework for monitoring and maintaining resources at Stagecoach State Park.
- Identifies park enhancement opportunities including possible upgrades to or new park facilities, recreation infrastructure, etc.
- Serves as a guide for future park budget allocations and annual funding requests.

Included in the plan is a description of the complete spectrum of recreational, cultural, and natural resources at Stagecoach State Park. Implementation of the Stagecoach State Park Management Plan will assist park staff in their efforts to preserve and enhance the park for future recreational users.

The Stagecoach State Park manager should regularly review the management plan to evaluate implementation progress. This includes annually reviewing the document at the beginning of each calendar year.

Relationship to the Division Strategic Plan

Using the Division Strategic Plan as an overarching guide, the Stagecoach State Park Management Plan serves as the primary "go-to" planning document for Stagecoach State Park staff. Specifically, the Division Strategic Plan is a useful guide for achieving a broad range of Division-wide goals and objectives, while the management plan is the primary guidance document for park-level planning efforts. The Stagecoach State Park Management Plan is consistent with the following Division-wide Mission, Vision, and Goals which are highlighted below:

Mission

To be leaders in providing outdoor recreation through the stewardship of Colorado's natural resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of present and future generations.

Vision Statement

Colorado State Parks offer exceptional settings for renewal of the human spirit. Residents and visitors enjoy healthy, fun-filled interaction with the natural world, creating rich traditions with family and friends that promote stewardship

Stagecoach Vision Statement:

Stagecoach State Park features high-quality, coldwater stream and reservoir fisheries as well as a variety of other activities such as camping, boating, hiking and biking trails, and unique scenic and watchable wildlife viewing. As a state recreation area, Stagecoach will continue to implement innovative ways to market these diverse opportunities to both local residents and area visitors. Park staff will maintain the highest standards by providing exceptional service, educational opportunities, and a variety of outdoor experiences.

of our natural resources. Parks employees and their partners work together to provide ongoing and outstanding customer service through recreational programs, amenities, and services.

2010 Division-wide Goals

- *Goal 1: Connect People to the Outdoors by Providing Quality Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Settings*
- *Goal 2: Conserve, Enhance, Manage, and Interpret Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources*
- *Goal 3: Foster and Actively Promote Excellence in our Workforce*
- *Goal 4: Stabilize and Strengthen Colorado State Parks' Financial Condition*
- *Goal 5: Strengthen Outreach and Partnerships*

Park Goals

The following park-level goals were developed during the management plan update. These goals provide an overarching framework for many of the suggested actions and recommendations included in Sections 5.0 and 6.0.

- Sustainably manage the park while planning ahead for anticipated increases in visitation associated with local and regional population growth.
- Offer a range of high-quality visitor experiences that are compatible with park resource management needs and resource capacity.
- Provide high quality customer service and opportunities to access and learn about park resources and enjoy popular recreation activities.
- Conduct development activities and operations in a manner that does not adversely affect park resources and environments.
- Build cost-effective, high quality recreation facilities that are aesthetically compatible and consistent with park resources, are energy efficient, and do not exceed the maintenance capabilities of park staff.

Future Plan Updates

The Stagecoach State Park Management Plan should be updated about every 10 years by park and other Division staff (e.g., Division planning, region, natural resource, and capital development staff). To ensure that the management plan is a dynamic document that meets the changing needs of the park and visitors over time, it may be supplemented with updated information as needed, including minor changes to management actions, additional management actions that help the park adapt to changes in recreational trends, and possibly additional mapping as new data comes available. This may occur during the annual review at the beginning of the calendar year, or whenever relevant information becomes available. In addition, at the 5-year mark, the Park Manager should perform a detailed review of the plan and determine whether any formal amendments are necessary. In general, park management plans may need to be amended when changes in circumstances are significant enough to merit

changing the plan. Examples of when formal amendments to the plan may be necessary include:

- Changes to the park land base (e.g., additional lands are purchased or portions of the park are sold off)
- Major new facilities or infrastructure are planned for the park
- A policy or directive is instituted that significantly affects park management direction
- Major changes to land use occur within or adjacent to the park
- Changes to the management zoning are necessary
- Significant environmental stress (i.e., fire, drought, etc.)

Relevant Planning Efforts

The following is a list of some of the relevant plans that were reviewed and considered in developing this management plan:

- Stagecoach State Park Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, Colorado State Parks, June 1, 2005.
- Stagecoach State Park Management Plan (Draft). Colorado State Parks, 2000. Print.
- Stagecoach State Park Management Plan. Colorado State Parks, 1988.
- Environmental Assessment Non-Capacity Amendment of License. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Department of Energy, Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance, Office of Energy Projects. 2009.
- Land and Resource Management Plan, Routt National Forest, US Department of Agriculture. 1998.
- Little Snake Resource Management Plan (Proposed) and Environmental Impact Statement (Final), Bureau of Land Management Little Snake Field Office. 2010.
- Stagecoach Community Plan, Routt County. 1999.

Public Input Process

Public input is an important part of the management planning process. Members of the public were encouraged to provide input on the Plan at two public open house meetings conducted on April 29, 2010 and April 13, 2011 at the Stagecoach Firehouse, 23655 CR 16, Oak Creek. The public was also invited to submit comments online or via mail. Visitor surveys completed as part of the *Corona Research Field Intercept Survey* between June 2008 and May 2009 also contributed public feedback that was considered during development of this plan.

Public Open House Comments

The first open house meeting (April 29, 2009) was attended by about 25 interested community members and provided them an opportunity to learn about the planning process. Attendees also offered State Parks staff valuable feedback on issues of interest or concern. A sampling of comments gathered at the first meeting generally focused on a variety of subjects including:

- ANS inspections should allow for after hours entry if vessel was checked after 5:00 PM.
- There should be a beach, ANS inspections, and mooring buoys on the south shore.

- There should be a continued effort to establish shade trees throughout the park.
- Support for continued programs for children.
- There is conflict between fishing activities and speedboat activities. Numerous local visitors requested shrinking the wakeless zone.
- Additional trails are needed to complete the trail around the reservoir and to add connections to neighboring communities.

At the April 13, 2011 open house meeting, Parks’ staff presented the public with ideas of potential park enhancement opportunities being considered in the Draft Management Plan, updated mapping, and a folder with summary handouts. Five community members attended and four provided responses on comment cards. All attendees indicated that they lived within ten miles of the park. An additional seven individuals submitted email comments and/or responded to an online survey. A sampling of key takeaways and comments gathered at the second meeting focused on a variety of subjects including:

April 13, 2011 Public Comments	
<u>Most Important Enhancements</u> (those having two or more votes)	<u>Least Important Enhancements</u> (those having two or more votes)
EO7. Visitor center (2 votes) EO9. Protect and restore shoreline and upland bird habitat (3 votes)	EO3. Convert Keystone Picnic Area to overnight dry cabins or yurts (3 votes). EO15. Evaluate possibility of implementing a walk-in fee (2 votes). EO18. Consider boating capacity and potential impacts to shore anglers prior to any adjustment of the boating wakeless zone (2 votes).

A sampling of email and online comments gathered during the public review period are noted below. A number of commenters repeated the need for maintaining quality pike fishing opportunities.

- Maintain the existing, high-quality pike fishing.
- A trophy pike fishery can coexist with a trophy trout fishery.
- Establish a protected slot for pike in the range from 26" - 50" give or take a few inches on either end.
- Great staff - appreciate Thurston’s operating marina/dogsled program.
- Park is a good asset and neighbor.
- Gradual, well thought out change is good.
- Consider wildlife over human use.
- Maintain as much wakeless area as possible.
- Continue efforts to expand cross-country ski trails.
- Walk-in fee would be too difficult to enforce.
- Visitor Center is important for educating visitors about the park.

Key Stakeholders

Key public and agency partners were involved in the development of the management plan in order to ensure its success. Other key stakeholders participated in public open houses and/or were contacted individually during development of the plan to ensure they were informed of the planning process and that they could weigh in on management plan recommendations if desired.

- Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD)
- Stagecoach Property Owners Association
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- TTGL, Inc. dba “Stagecoach Marina & Store”
- Stagecoach Wake and Ski
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Steamboat Conservation Youth Corps
- Local School Districts: Soroco Schools

Visitor Survey

Visitor surveys were used as another tool to further gauge visitor ideas, needs, and issues. Detailed results from the 2009 Corona Research Visitor Survey (discussed in *Section 3.0 – Park Setting and Resources*) provided a rich dataset strengthened and supported the management plan update. Stagecoach State Park staff and volunteers collected 216 completed surveys between June 2008 and May 2009.

Influences on Management

There are a number of “external” factors, or issues that are beyond the control of park staff that may influence park management (e.g., land development patterns and zoning adjacent to the park, population projections, partnerships, etc.). Six of the more significant “external” forces that either indirectly or directly influence park management that were factored into the Plan are summarized below:

- The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD) owns the land and controls the management of the water storage. The recent construction on the reservoir dam to increase the pool elevation by four feet created many changes at the Park. Plan recommendations and overall management of the park take into consideration known and possible unforeseen issues associated with these changes.
- Trophy rainbow trout and northern pike fishing are core visitor attractions at Stagecoach State Park. Park staff works closely with Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) to maintain the health of this important fishery. Currently, CDOW is managing Stagecoach Reservoir primarily as a rainbow trout fishery. As a result of their management strategies on the reservoir, overall northern pike numbers have

declined and numbers of large northern pike are also less abundant than in previous years.¹⁰

- Statewide budget constraints resulting from the economic recession in 2008-2010 have affected management at all state parks. Long-term operations and maintenance needs at Stagecoach must be weighed alongside the inherent financial constraints of Colorado State Parks.
- Stagecoach State Park offers exceptional views of natural landscapes. However, there are numerous private lands surrounding Stagecoach, many of which are zoned for future residential development. Further residential development of adjacent lands may change the character of the park, increase visitation and recreational use, and ultimately influence management needs.
- Future development adjacent to the park requires that staff continue to proactively partner and communicate with adjacent communities on both park and community issues.
- Possible future buffer acquisitions and conservation easements to protect key scenic areas and natural resources will also affect park management.

Management Considerations

Management considerations include issues and concerns that have been identified by park staff based on first-hand experience, knowledge, and/or information gathered from the public during the open house meetings and through survey responses. Some of the specific key management considerations addressed in this plan are listed below.

Natural Resource Protection—Stagecoach State Park is home to significant natural resources and continued protection, management, and restoration of unique park features, particularly wetland and sagebrush habitat, is central to future management of Stagecoach State Park.

Sustaining Park Resources and High-Quality Visitor Experiences—Some areas of the park receive high concentrations of park visitors, particularly during busy summer weekends. Park managers need to be sensitive of resource capacities and proactively strive to sustain park resources and a high-quality visitor experience.

Long-term Operations and Maintenance— Long-term operations and maintenance needs at Stagecoach are weighed alongside the inherent financial constraints of Colorado State Parks. In addition, many of the park facilities were constructed in 1989 and are showing signs of wear and tear with increased maintenance costs.

Development Buffers—Much of the property adjacent to Stagecoach State Park is zoned for future development. This plan evaluates the feasibility of purchasing conservation easements to create strategic land buffers to protect critical wildlife habitat and viewsheds.

Fisheries Management—Trophy Rainbow Trout and Northern Pike fishing are core visitor attractions. Park staff will continue to work closely with Colorado Division of Wildlife to maintain the health of this important fishery.

¹⁰ Northern pike are formally recognized as a threat to endangered fish downstream in the lower Yampa and Colorado Rivers.

Visitor Experience—Stagecoach State Park does not have a fully functional visitor center, which directly affects the level of staff engagement with visitors. The management plan explores new ways to enhance the visitor experience through the creation of a new visitor center, as well as cabins or yurts.

Electricity and Water Treatment—Stagecoach’s current electrical infrastructure limits the potential for future park growth and enhancement, and electrical upgrades are needed. Also, any new development projects in the park must fit within the operational constraints of the current water treatment facility.

Volunteer Program—Volunteers are essential to maintaining high levels of service and allow visitors to give back to the park on a personal level. Enhancing the volunteer support is an ongoing management issue.

Environmental Education—Stagecoach offers some of the premier opportunities for environmental education on a variety of topics in south Routt County. Environmental education will continue to be an important management consideration.

Community Relations—Stagecoach is an asset to neighboring communities and the region as a whole. Park staff will continue to proactively partner and communicate with nearby communities on both park and community issues.

2.0 REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Climate

Average daily temperatures at Stagecoach State Park range from 17°F in January to 61°F in July, and may fluctuate by as much as 23°F in a given month (Table 1). The climate is typically cool in the summer with moderate night and day temperature fluctuations. Winters tend to be extremely cold with temperatures often settling in the single digits and below zero at night. The warmest month of the year is July with an average maximum temperature of 76°F.

Average annual precipitation totals 22.12 inches (Table 2). Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. March is the wettest month of the year with an average precipitation total of 2.2 inches.

Table 1. Stagecoach State Park Mean Temperatures¹¹

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Max °F	30	34	40	50	60.7	71	76	75	67	56	40	32	52.6
Mean °F	17	20	28	36	46.2	55	61	59	51	41	27	19	38.4
Min °F	15	19	25	31	39.3	48	54	53	46	36	25	18	34.2

Source: YAMPA Weather station, 8.87 miles from Oak Creek.

Table 2. Stagecoach State Park Average Precipitation Totals

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Inch	1.9	1.7	2.2	2.1	1.88	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	2	22.12

Source: PYRAMID Weather station, 7.16 miles from Oak Creek.

Physical Setting

Stagecoach State Park is an 819 surface-acre reservoir located in Routt County in the northwest part of the state and lies within the Upper Yampa River Valley (Map 1). The reservoir is fed primarily by the Yampa River, with additional flows from Little Morrison, Middle, Thayer, and Martin creeks. The park lies just to the west of the Park Range portion of the Continental Divide and is in the southeastern flank of the Washakie Sedimentary Basin of the Rocky Mountains. Routt County encompasses a total of 2,231 square miles, about half of which is publicly owned.

The Yampa River is a major tributary of the Green River that originates in the Flat Tops Wilderness/Routt National Forest about 50 miles to the southwest of the park. Upstream of the Town of Yampa, the Yampa River is actually referred to as the Bear River. Downstream of Yampa the river travels several miles and flows into Stagecoach Reservoir. From Stagecoach State Park, the Yampa River continues northward to Catamount Lake and the City of Steamboat Springs, which is about 16 miles away. Nearby elevation ranges vary from 7,250 feet within the park to 10,568 feet at Mt. Werner near Steamboat Springs.

Eco-Regional Setting

Stagecoach Reservoir is the largest water storage facility located on the Yampa River.¹² The total drainage area of the Yampa River above Stagecoach Reservoir is about 228 square miles.

¹¹ [IDcide - Local Information Data Server](http://www.idcide.com/weather/co/oak-creek.htm). 7 January 2010. <http://www.idcide.com/weather/co/oak-creek.htm>.



Summer sunset as seen near Pinnacle Point.

The annual inflow hydrograph for Stagecoach Reservoir is typical of most rivers and streams in the upper Colorado River Basin, with high discharge in the spring and early summer, caused mostly by snowmelt runoff, and diminishing inflows through the summer. Inflows normally remain relatively low during the fall and throughout the winter when most of the precipitation falls as snow.¹³

According to 2006 and 2008 U.S. EPA water quality monitoring data in the Upper Yampa Basin, most of the water in the drainage is good to high quality. However, Dry Creek, a tributary to the Yampa River (above Stagecoach), reportedly tested high for selenium in 2006 and 2008.¹⁴ Further, as a result of damming, water temperature and dissolved oxygen rates are monitored at a number of data stations down river to ensure compliance with state and/or federal guidelines and to endure the health of the trout fishery. Other mainstem locations that have been recently monitored, or are currently monitored on an infrequent basis by the USGS include:

- Yampa River above Stagecoach Reservoir (USGS ID 9237450)
- Yampa River below Stagecoach Reservoir (USGS ID 9237500)

Portions of surrounding lands serve as elk wintering forage and winter range and provide shoreline and wetland areas for waterfowl nesting and about 189 species of birds. As of April 2010, 91 species of birds were recorded in the breeding season. This included a pair of bald eagles nesting near the park, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (a species of special concern), and Greater sandhill cranes. Out of these species, breeding was positively verified for the blue grouse, sharp-tailed grouse as well as 15 other species in 2010. Osprey and blue grouse are other species seen in the area but not confirmed as breeding within the park. During the spring and fall, flocks of migratory birds are seen at the park, including large numbers of white-faced ibis. Stagecoach Reservoir is an important bird breeding area, as well as an important stopover area within the Central Migratory Flyway. In addition, the park provides important summertime and stopover habitat for American white pelicans, which are common summertime residents of the park.

Adjacent Land Use and Land Ownership

Map 3 highlights property ownership surrounding Stagecoach State Park. Private lands surround much of the eastern half and southern portions of the park. The largest adjacent land owners include the Kidd, Stahl, and R. & E. Gay LTD Partnership. None of these landowners had entered into conservation easements in the immediate area at the time that this management plan was developed. Other major landowners are the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and Colorado Division of Wildlife.

¹² Upper Yampa Watershed, Environmental Protection Agency.

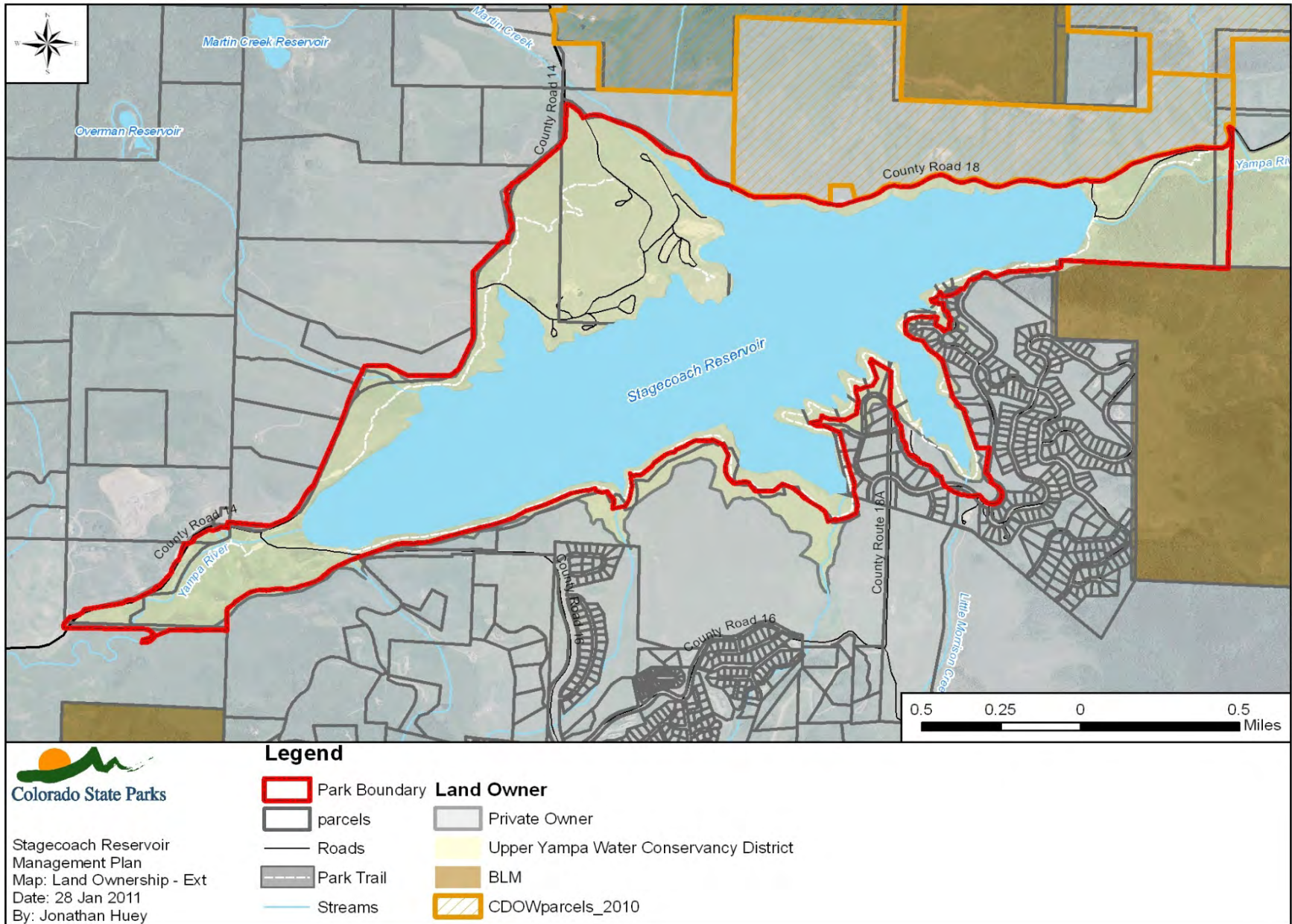
http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc_code=14050001

¹³ *Yampa Basin Watershed Plan*. Steamboat Springs, CO: Montgomery Watson Harza, 2002. Print.

¹⁴ Upper Yampa Watershed, Environmental Protection Agency

http://iaspub.epa.gov/tmdl_waters10/huc_rept.control?p_huc=14050001&p_huc_desc=UPPER%20YAMPA

Map 3. Land Ownership



Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD) was formed in 1966 to provide legal authority to plan and construct water conservation projects in the Yampa Valley. Yamcolo and Stagecoach Reservoirs represent two major water conservation projects constructed by the District. Colorado State Parks leases Stagecoach Reservoir from UYWCD to provide recreational opportunities to the public. The UYWCD boundaries include most of Routt County and a portion of Moffat County.



Colorado Division of Wildlife

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) is responsible for wildlife management in the park in cooperation with Colorado State Parks.¹⁵ CDOW also manages the Adams State Wildlife Area to the north, as well as the 581-acre Blacktail Conservation Easement. This area is comprised of scenic cliffs that overlook Stagecoach Reservoir and serves as a large-game wintering ground. The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District bought the land and subsequently donated a conservation easement to CDOW as mitigation for loss of and impacts to elk winter range due to the construction of the reservoir and, also to ensure the natural beauty of this area was protected in perpetuity. Adams State Wildlife Area on the east face of Blacktail Mountain is critical elk winter range for the herd of 250 to 300 elk, where they feed on relatively snow-free southeast-facing slopes with upland shrubs. Habitat management, winter feeding, programs, and other wildlife management practices on the Blacktail Conservation Easement and within the park boundary must be approved by CDOW. Costs of wildlife management on the 581-acre Blacktail Mountain Conservation Easement are shared CDOW and UYWCD as agreed.



U.S. Bureau of Land Management

A portion of U.S. Bureau of Land Management abuts the southeast corner of the park. The BLM land falls under the management of the Little Snake Field Office (LSFO) located in Craig, CO. The last Resource Management Plan (RMP) that sets comprehensive long-range decisions concerning the use and management of the land was adopted in 1989. In 2004, LSFO initiated the revision process. In August 2010, the Proposed RMP and the associated Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released for a 30-day public comment period ending September 13. In February 2011, the BLM was still finalizing its review of public comments and preparing a Record of Decision.

Of the four possible alternatives carried through the EIS, the Proposed RMP recommended Alternative C in order to “provide the best balance of resource protection and use within legal constraints.” Alternative C emphasizes multiple resource use and protection of sensitive resources. Commodity production will be balanced against wildlife and vegetation protection with some exceptions.

The BLM land adjacent and near Stagecoach State Parks falls under the following management guidelines:

¹⁵ At the time that this management plan was being completed, efforts were underway to merge the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks).

- The BLM land adjacent to Stagecoach State Park is not designated as a Special Recreation Management Area. However, Emerald Mountain near Steamboat Springs will be designated as such for the management of “quality camping, big game hunting, and non-motorized and motorized boating; quality OHV experiences; and back country non-motorized hunting experiences.”
- The BLM land is in the East Retention and Disposal Zone. In order to better facilitate management of all BLM lands, BLM will actively seek opportunities to exchange or sell lands within the East Zone.
- All of the BLM land near Stagecoach falls in the winter and summer Elk Range with portions of the land in elk concentration areas.
- There is little to no oil and gas occurrence potential.
- Cattle and sheep grazing are allowed on parts of the land.
- The land is open to Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use and is not limited to existing or designated roads and trails.

Planned Development

Residential and commercial development south of Stagecoach State Park is likely to increase in the future. While development has stalled in recent years due to the economic downturn, second home owners and financially secure “empty nesters” increasingly seek desirable, scenic mountain-living opportunities.

Representing this community is the Stagecoach Property Owner’s Association¹⁶ (SPOA), which advocates on the community’s behalf and educates property owners and residents about key issues. More information can be found on the SPOA website at: <http://www.stage-coach.com>. Directly adjacent to Stagecoach State Park are the South Shore and Meadowgreen areas (which are part of the greater Stagecoach Community). These areas include about 279 platted lots (tracts that have not recorded final subdivision approvals through Routt County). These areas are generally zoned HR (High-Density Residential) and C (Commercial) (Figure 1).¹⁷ Within the entire Stagecoach community there are about 1,796 platted single family home sites and platted multi-family development sites sufficient to accommodate several hundred townhouses and condominiums, and about 19 significant tracts of zoned-but-unplatted land.¹⁸

Prior to the existence of Stagecoach Reservoir in the early 1970’s, the Woodmore Corporation acquired the area to be known as Stagecoach with the plans to develop it into a luxury resort area that would include over 2,000 residential lots, 16 neighborhoods, skiing, a golf course, trails system, and a marina. The Woodmore Corporation went bankrupt in 1974, and the development has struggled ever since.

The 1999 Stagecoach Area Master Plan calls for a system of trails to link together the various recreational amenities in the surrounding area, and to give residents a better opportunity to explore the open spaces and enjoy the spectacular views in and around Stagecoach. The

¹⁶ Stagecoach Property Owner’s Association. <http://stage-coach.com/>

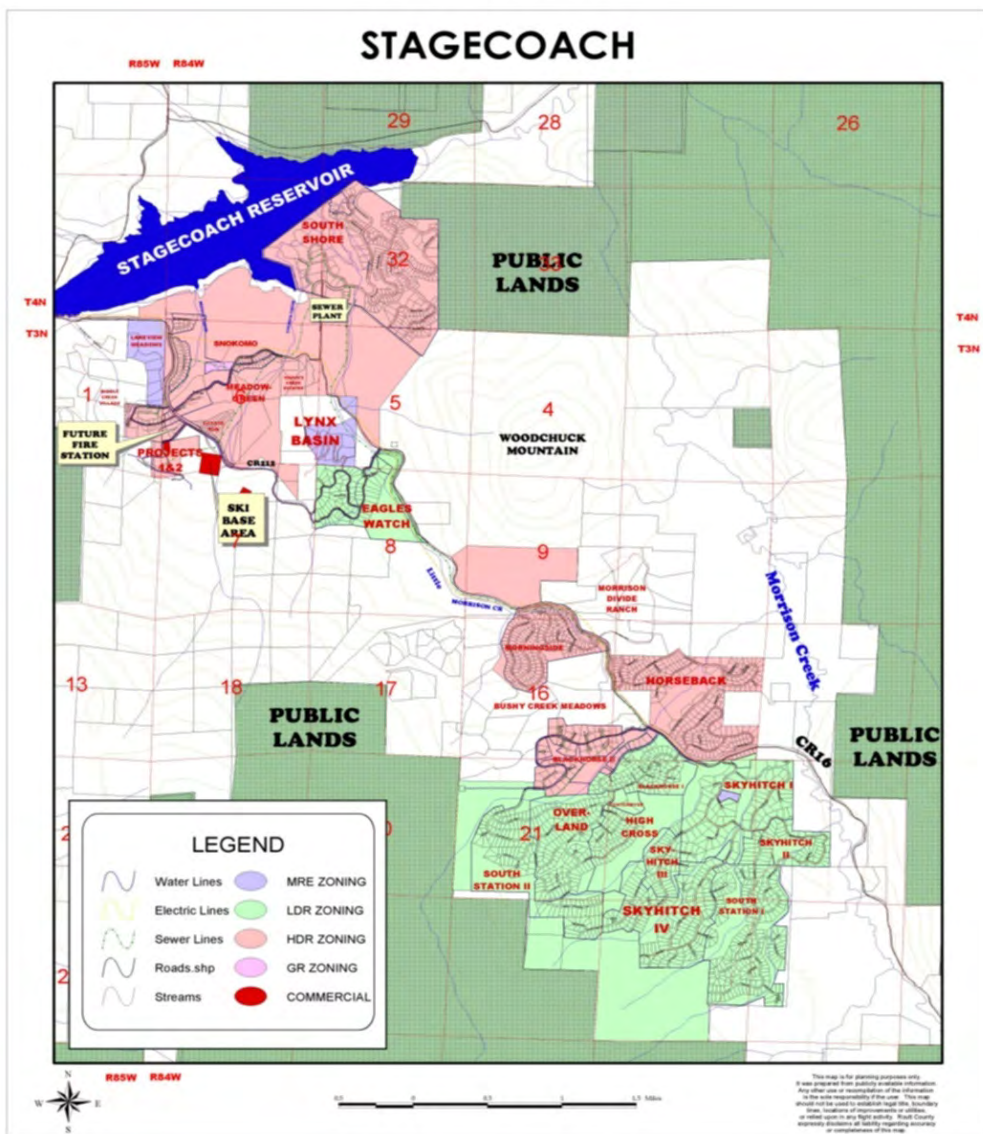
¹⁷ *Stagecoach Community Plan*. Rep. Routt County, 1999. Print.

¹⁸ Although there are 1,796 platted single family home sites, this doesn’t necessarily mean that there will be 1,796 housing unit upon buildout of the Southshore Community. Some property owners and brokers have succeeded in assembling smaller lots into 5-acre tracts, rezoning those tracts into the MRE (Mountain Residential Estate) zone district, requesting vacation of internal utility easements, and obtaining permission to develop them on a well-and-septic basis.

master plan recommends that Routt County, Colorado State Parks, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and SPOA coordinate to see where such trails could be located to provide the maximum benefits with minimum impact on the environment, and to determine who would maintain the trails after construction.

In summer 2010, SPOA had contacted Routt County about the need to update the 1999 Stagecoach Area Master Plan, which would provide guidance for future development in the area. SPOA has indicated to Routt County that a fresh approach to developing the area is warranted since water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure and roads were never extended to many of the subdivided parcels in the area. Also, residents have expressed that some additional commercial zoning in the Stagecoach community is desirable.¹⁹ Once Routt County fills its long-range planner position, the Stagecoach Area Master Plan will be updated and many of these issues will be considered.

Figure 1. Stagecoach Community Map



Source: Stagecoach Community website: <http://www.stage-coach.com/area.php>

¹⁹ Zach, Fridell. "Stagecoach Master Plan in Limbo." 08 Aug. 2010. Web. 21 Sept. 2010.

Regional Recreation and Tourism Trends, Needs, and Opportunities

The Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest makes up a large portion of Routt County. This includes the Mt. Zirkel and Sarvis Creek Wilderness areas. Routt County also has the highest number of state parks in the state and includes Stagecoach Reservoir, Steamboat Lake, Elkhead Reservoir, and Pearl Lake State Parks. These public lands provide residents and visitors with a wide diversity of recreational opportunities. Some of the federal lands are also leased for grazing and logging.²⁰

The area is probably best known for its world-class skiing at Steamboat Springs, dubbed “Ski Town, USA” for its focus on the ski industry and the numbers of successful competitive skiers that have originated from the area. In fact, during the 2009-2010 winter skiing season, Steamboat provided \$16 million for on-mountain skiing enhancements and nearly \$30 million since the 2006-2007 winter season. An additional \$23 million is expected to be spent over the next three years to improve the Ski Time Square area.²¹

Other local winter opportunities include ice fishing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and ice hockey. Summer activities include boating, fishing, rafting, mountain biking, hiking, alpine slides, signature events like an annual marathon, hot air balloon festival, and an arts festival. Horseback riding, wildlife watching, and nearby hot springs can be enjoyed year-round as well as can many indoor activities like yoga, bowling, and quilting.

Occasionally, parts of the Yampa River experience dangerous low-flow water conditions and the City of Steamboat Springs and CDOW may close portions of the river to some or all recreational uses.

Population Trends

The Colorado State Demography Office (SDO) estimates the total population of Routt County at July 1, 2009 to be 24,115 persons, which is an annual rate of change of 2.2% since the year 2000.²² By comparison, the SDO estimates the state-wide population at July 1, 2009 to be 5,074,528 persons²³ with a 1.8% annual rate of change since the year 2000. The Colorado State Demographer’s Offices also provides population projections for Routt County at 35,495 and 6,700,765 persons for the entire state by the year 2025.²⁴

²⁰ Yampa Valley Information Center.

http://yampavalley.info/centers/natural_resources_%2526_environment

²¹ Steamboat trip planning website. <http://www.steamboat.com/mountain/summer.aspx>

²² Colorado State Demographers Office. Estimates finalized in September 2010.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

3.0 Park Setting & Resources

This section provides an overview of the current condition of park resources and other issues that affect park management efforts at Stagecoach State park. Also outlined in this section is a detailed description of current land use and land ownership within the park, park administration and special functions, visitation, existing recreation opportunities, natural and cultural resources, and other elements that directly or indirectly influence the management of the park. When considered together, this information provides: 1) a contextual framework for understanding management needs and constraints, and 2) a “baseline” from which to identify Enhancement Opportunities and Implementation Priorities (highlighted in Sections 5.0 and 6.0).

Park Land Ownership

The park is owned by the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD), which also owns the water storage rights in the reservoir. State Parks does not own any land in the park (Map 3). The park is operated pursuant to a lease between the UYWCD and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Colorado State Parks) (see *MOUs, IGAs or Other Agreements* later in this section). The park started operation in 1989 after the UYWCD completed construction on the reservoir.

Even though Stagecoach Reservoir is the key feature of the park, there are no water rights owned by the State of Colorado that are appurtenant to the park. The water level in the reservoir typically fluctuates annually about eight feet as it fills in the spring and early summer and is drawn down in summer to supply water for downstream irrigation. Reservoir water levels are ultimately dependent on annual snowpack and water demands.

Natural Resources

Stagecoach State Park is located in a scenic valley of the upper Yampa River, with diverse habitats including wetlands, riparian systems, semi-desert montane shrublands, and, further from the park, montane and subalpine forests. The surrounding area is a mix of aspens, lodgepole pine and Douglas fir on the north facing slopes while the southern exposures are treeless. The predominant physical features in the area include the Flattop Mountains to the southwest, and the rimrock outcrop on Blacktail Mountain to the north. Greenridge is directly to the south and Thorpe Mountain rises to the northwest. Morrison Mountain borders Morrison Creek drainage to the east. The following sections summarize some of the key natural resources that occur at Stagecoach. A more extensive description of the natural resources of the park is available in the *Stagecoach State Park Stewardship Plan*.

The Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan reports that park resources vary widely in condition ranging from poor to good. Significant impacts can be observed from past and current land use activities, construction of the reservoir and wetland mitigation, and from current issues such as weed invasion, nutrient levels in the reservoir, and residential development on adjacent parcels.

Wildlife

The park provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife species. Frequently observed mammals at the park include mule deer, elk, Wyoming ground squirrel, least chipmunk, deer mouse,



Welcome sign as seen near the park entrance.

golden-mantled ground squirrel, and red fox. Less frequently seen mammals include badger, striped skunk, mountain cottontail, white-tailed jackrabbit (on the decline), porcupine, raccoon, long-tailed weasel, and coyote.²⁵ Beaver and muskrat can be found along the Yampa River and the smaller tributaries. Occasionally, park staff receives reports of mountain lion, black bear, and moose sightings.²⁶

Critical winter range for elk is located just north of the park on Adams State Wildlife Area, which serves as a concentration ground for a herd of about 250 to 300 elk. Mule deer use this area for fawning and for summer range.

Lynx have been documented about six miles southeast of the park at the edge of the Routt National Forest. It is doubtful that lynx use the park in any meaningful way due to the absence of extensive stands of subalpine forest, their preferred habitat. Northern river otters, listed by the CDOW as a threatened species, have also been reintroduced in the region and are successfully reproducing, and as of 2010 they were within 10 miles of the park. Northern river otter sightings have been confirmed downstream of the park at Lake Catamount and unconfirmed reports have been documented at the nearby Sarvis Creek SWA. There is a historical record of wolverine 11 miles away, but again, it is unlikely that this species would be found in the park even if it is reintroduced to Routt County in the future.

Maps 4 and 5 display the many wildlife significant features at the park as well as major habitat and wildlife ranges. Refer to Appendix B for a complete list of wildlife species at Stagecoach.

Birds

Over 189 species of birds have been spotted and documented within the park and numerous bird species can be found at the park year-round.²⁷ There is a higher breeding bird count and a higher number of rare and sensitive species at this park than at many other State Parks (including Roxborough, which has some of the higher numbers of occurrences of breeding birds and rare and sensitive bird species within the park system). In addition, the park lacks any of non-native birds such as starlings present at most parks. Despite this, relatively few birders visit the park and this may be due to the fact that this bird diversity has not been advertised as much as it could be.²⁸

Many waterfowl species can be found seasonally at the reservoir and wetland areas including mallard, gadwall, American widgeon, green-winged teal, common merganser, northern shoveler, and up to 100 ring-necked ducks. One hundred or so white-faced ibis stop over each spring for a couple of weeks during migration to feed at the wetlands and its edges.²⁹ Additionally, white pelicans (perhaps 50 or so) summer on the reservoir. Osprey sightings are rare in this part of the county; however, osprey are seasonally observed at the park. Bald eagles winter in the vicinity of the park and nest very near the park. Bald eagles frequently forage inside the park and it is common for them to use the osprey platform as a hunting perch. Yellow warbler, Wilson's warbler, white-crowned sparrow, and other songbirds breed in willows and riparian areas. The most important breeding areas for waterfowl are on the western side of the reservoir and in the wetlands preserve area.



Columbian sharp-tailed grouse

²⁵ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Harvey et al. 1999, Fitzgerald et al. 1994, Armstrong 1972). p34.

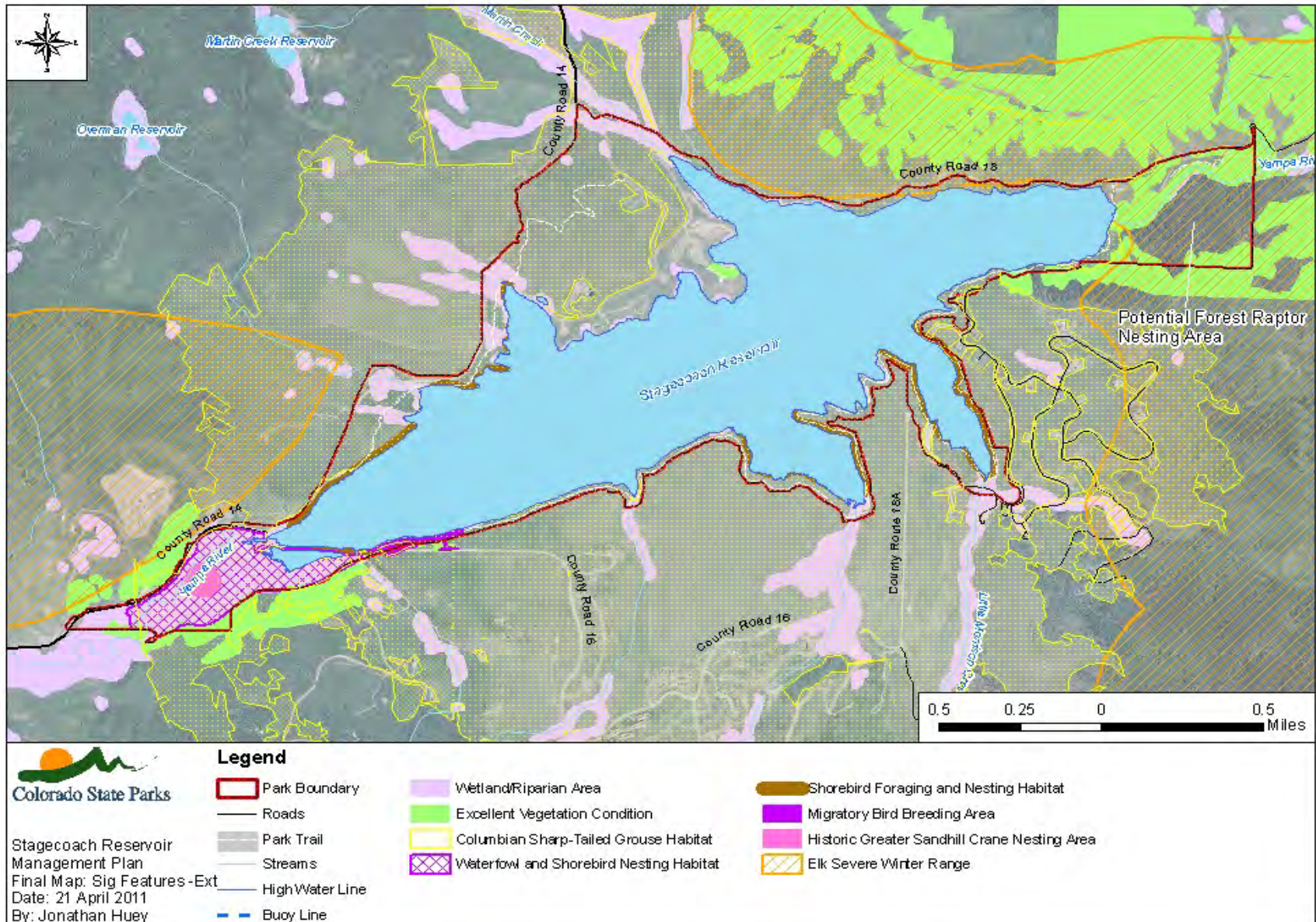
²⁶ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Bruce Sigler, pers. comm.). p34

²⁷ Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. *Draft Stagecoach State Park Management Plan*. 2000. Print.

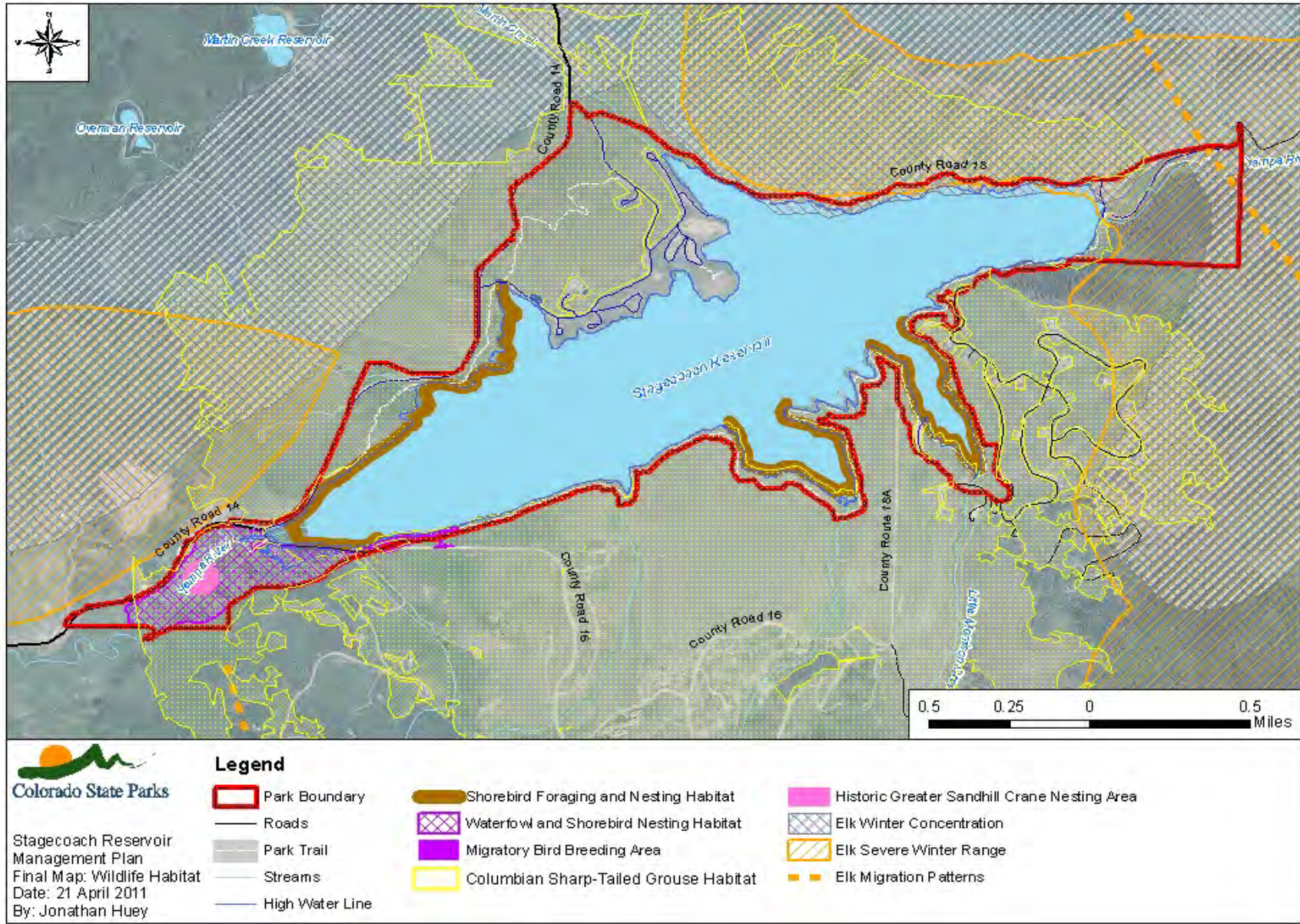
²⁸ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (D. Falkner, R. Stevens, pers. comm.). p36

²⁹ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (M. Miller, pers. comm.). p36.

Map 4. Significant Features



Map 5. Wildlife Habitat



Sagebrush and scrub oak communities located on the lower slopes of nearby hillsides provide important habitat for many breeding songbirds and for the grouse species that occur at Stagecoach. Blue grouse also occur in the aspen and timbered areas of Blacktail Mountain and the Adams State Wildlife Area. The sharp-tailed grouse utilize the sagebrush shrublands, grassland patches, riparian willow, aspen forests, and mountain shrub communities within the valley. They occur on the north and south sides of the reservoir and have habitat within the park that is important within the region for this species. The raising of the dam and pool elevation by four feet inundated some important habitat of the sharp-tailed grouse. In order to mitigate this loss, UYWCD has conducted vegetation manipulation through strategic mowing and revegetation in order to improve habitat above the new water line. Disturbed upland areas were seeded with a sharp-tail grouse-friendly seed mixture.³⁰

Blue grouse are common in the area and are a popular game species. Sage grouse may have been present prior to inundation according to reports from that time, but breeding in this area has never been confirmed. Although they were reported occasionally by private landowners in the 1990's and early 2000's, sage grouse have not been seen recently in this valley. Also, several species of songbirds nest in the high quality sagebrush habitat. This includes the rare Brewer's sparrow, which is on the federally sensitive list as well as being listed as imperiled by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program and Audubon watchlisted, as well as the Savannah sparrow and other species of sparrow.

The forested area in the south eastern corner of the park is also important bird habitat and is one of the higher diversity areas for breeding songbirds in the park. Surveys in 2010 were unable to confirm nesting owls or other forest raptors, but there are likely several larger birds nesting in this forested area.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Amphibians and reptiles are not as common in montane regions as they are at lower elevations due to both climate and the reduced availability of atmospheric oxygen at higher elevations to egg-laying species.^{31,32} However, eight species of amphibians and reptiles are possible within the park including western rattlesnake, western terrestrial garter snake, smooth green snake, prairie/plateau lizard, sagebrush lizard, tiger salamander, western chorus frog, and rare northern leopard frog.³³ Snakes are certainly present in the region, although very few have been sighted within the park in the last 10-15 years. Lizards have not been sighted within the park. Northern leopard frogs were confirmed by CDOW personnel in the wetland preserve area in the early 2000's and may still be present. Northern leopard frogs are now a Species of State Concern given threats from habitat loss, fungus, invasive species and other factors. The presence of Northern leopard frogs here reflects the quality of the wetland areas at this park.

Fish

Stagecoach Reservoir is well established as a top cold-water sport fishery. An abundant crawfish supply supports fast-growing rainbow trout and a healthy northern pike population. As of 2010, the reservoir supported the current state record for a northern pike catch (2006, 46.5" and 30 lb. 11 oz.).

³⁰ UYWCD and CDOW Wildlife Mitigation Agreement. 2010.

³¹ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Hammerson 1999.). p34

³² Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Guillette et al. 1980.). p34

³³ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Livo et al. 2000.). p34



Tom Engle (Stagecoach PRT) with pike caught in April 2007.

Whirling disease appeared in the park in the early 2000's and is currently present in both the reservoir and the Yampa River. According to CDOW, the level of infectivity remains relatively high.

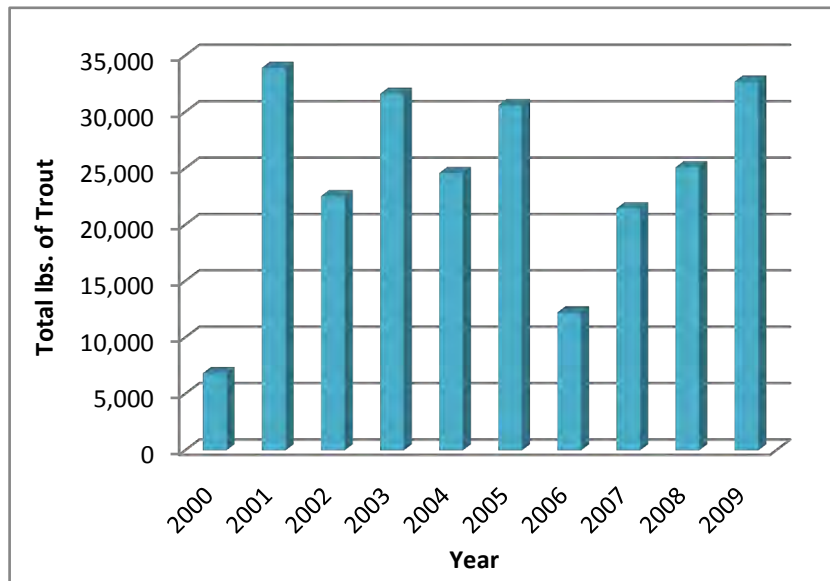
Since trout do not reproduce in the reservoir, anglers are dependent on fall stocking by CDOW. One successful strategy CDOW has used in managing the fishery is to stock catchable (close to 12-inch) trout in early winter. The rationale for this is that a pike's metabolism is lower this time of year, giving the newly stocked trout a better chance of survival. While of significant added expense to the State, this technique of stocking larger trout has proved to be successful in maintaining a trout fishery in the presence of an apex predator (northern pike).

Creel (netting) surveys conducted by CDOW each year indicate that the reservoir has a healthy Rainbow Trout population that averages fish measuring about 13 to 14 inches. Since 2001, CDOW has stocked an average of 24,000 lbs of rainbow trout every fall. The average size of stocked rainbow trout during the last eight years was approximately 11.1 inches. Splake and kokanee were stocked in Stagecoach Reservoir in 2000, but have not been stocked since, and there are no future plans to stock splake or kokanee again.

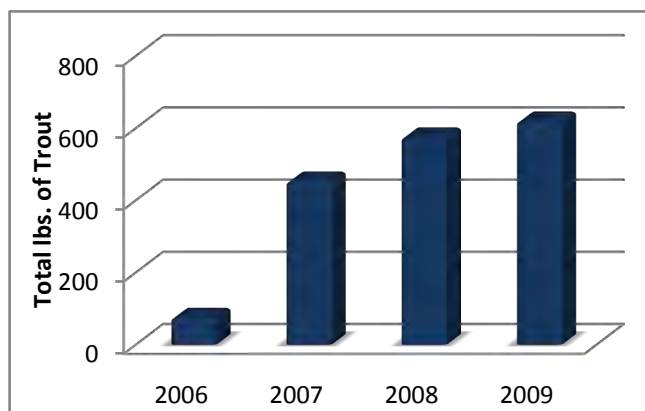
While northern pike are a popular sport fish at this reservoir, they were illicitly introduced in the early 1990's and are significant predators on rainbow trout and native species like mountain whitefish. Due to the incompatibility of northern pike with other fish species throughout the Yampa River corridor, including threatened and endangered fish, CDOW (as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) is working to reduce and/or eliminate northern pike throughout much of the Upper Yampa River Basin. As a result of CDOW's management strategies on the reservoir, northern pike numbers appear to have declined somewhat, allowing for a sustainable trout fishery. However, many northern pike are caught each year, with some as large as 40 inches.

Walleye pike also exist in the reservoir as a result of an illicit introduction. An increasing number of these non-native fish have turned up in recent surveys. CDOW is currently monitoring this population closely and will continue with mechanical removal of this undesired species, due to concerns of impacts to the reservoir fishery as well as native species throughout the drainage.

Another potential threat to the Stagecoach fishery is the rusty crayfish, an aquatic invasive invertebrate species. Rusty crayfish inhabit lakes, ponds, and both pool and fast-water areas of streams, which makes many areas in Colorado (including Stagecoach) potentially suitable habitat. They are considered opportunistic feeders and will eat a variety of aquatic plants, benthic invertebrates (like aquatic worms, snails, leeches, clams, aquatic insects, side-swimmers and waterfleas), detritus (decaying plants and animals including bacteria and fungi), fish eggs, and small fish. To protect aquatic wildlife resources, the Wildlife Commission passed a Yampa River Basin – Crayfish Collection Closure in April of 2010 and followed that up by passing a new fishing regulation stating that “in all waters west of the Continental Divide – all crayfish must be returned to the water of origin immediately or killed and taken into possession immediately upon catch with kill being effected by separating the abdomen from the cephalothorax (tail from body)” in 2011.

Figure 2. Reservoir Rainbow Trout Stocking Summary (2000-2009)

The Yampa River both above and below the reservoir holds rainbow, brook trout, and brown trout. Available to spin- and fly-anglers year round, the Stagecoach Tailwater, just below the reservoir, is frequently mentioned as one of the top tailwater fisheries in the State. The first 0.6 miles of the Yampa River below the dam is managed with catch and release regulations to protect the trophy trout component of the fishery.³⁴ The section of the Yampa River extending from the Stagecoach Dam to Lake Catamount is now incorporated in a large scale rainbow trout rehabilitation research project utilizing Whirling Disease (WD) resistant rainbow trout. In the first half of the 2000 decade, the river experienced significant year-class failure and a population collapse in 2006. Rehabilitation efforts, including aggressive stocking of whirling disease resistant trout since 2006, and closure of sections of stream during rainbow trout spawning periods have shown positive results.³⁵ As of 2010, fish surveys revealed the rainbow trout population had fully recovered to pre-2003 levels, yet adequate natural reproduction to sustain the population has not been realized.

Figure 3. Yampa River Below Stagecoach Dam Rainbow Trout Stocking Summary (2006-2009)

³⁴ Email communication with Bill Atkinson, CDOW Fisheries Biologist, September 20, 2010.

³⁵ Email communication with Bill Atkinson, CDOW Fisheries Biologist, September 20, 2010.

Vegetation

Stagecoach exhibits the characteristics of an area that historically has been used for ranching and cultivation of hay meadows. The park is mostly sagebrush shrubland, with wetlands scattered along the reservoir shoreline, along the Yampa River upstream and downstream of the reservoir, and along tributary streams. Small areas of forest occur near the dam. However, the general appearance of the park is open, with few trees.

A variety of native plant communities occur at Stagecoach including: wetland marshes and shrubland, mixed mountain shrubland, western slope grasslands, sagebrush bottomland shrublands, southern riparian forests, lower montane willow carrs, mesic aspen forests, scrub, Douglas fir forests, and lodgepole pine forest (Map 6). For a complete vegetation species list, please refer to Appendix C.

Mountain pine beetle has dramatically affected forests in the region, rapidly sweeping through even aged stands of lodgepole pine and leading to large scale death of mature trees. Although a comparatively small area of the park, lodgepole forest stands in the southeastern portion and Tailwater Area of the park exhibit evidence of mountain pine beetle, including the typical browning of pine needles. A five acres forest management project was conducted in 2010 along the trail in the southeast corner of the park to reduce hazards from dead or dying trees.

Riparian areas have a large blue spruce component. Sagebrush bottomland shrublands are the predominant vegetation community and in good condition with good diversity, particularly on the higher and steeper areas. The wetland marsh and wetland shrub areas are the second largest vegetation communities and are in very good condition and are generally restricted to the reservoir margin and the inlet areas of the Yampa River and its tributaries. The largest wetland area occurs at the western end of the reservoir and features an 80-acre wetland habitat preserve and seven ponds. The area referred to as the “wetland preserve,” which is located near the Yampa River inlet, was originally established by UYWCD as mitigation for wetlands lost due to initial construction of Stagecoach Reservoir.

With the raising of the dam and pool elevation by four feet in 2010, portions of the wetlands preserve, and other adjacent wetland areas were inundated. To mitigate this loss, UYWCD created a new 7.1 acre wetland/waterfowl mitigation area between CR 14 and the reservoir in the upland area located in the northwest portion of the park.³⁶ UYWCD salvaged wetland soils and mature willow plants from inundated areas and transplanted them to the new wetland mitigation project area. At the time that this plan was developed, it was not possible to comment on the relative success of this mitigation effort.

Invasive Weed Species

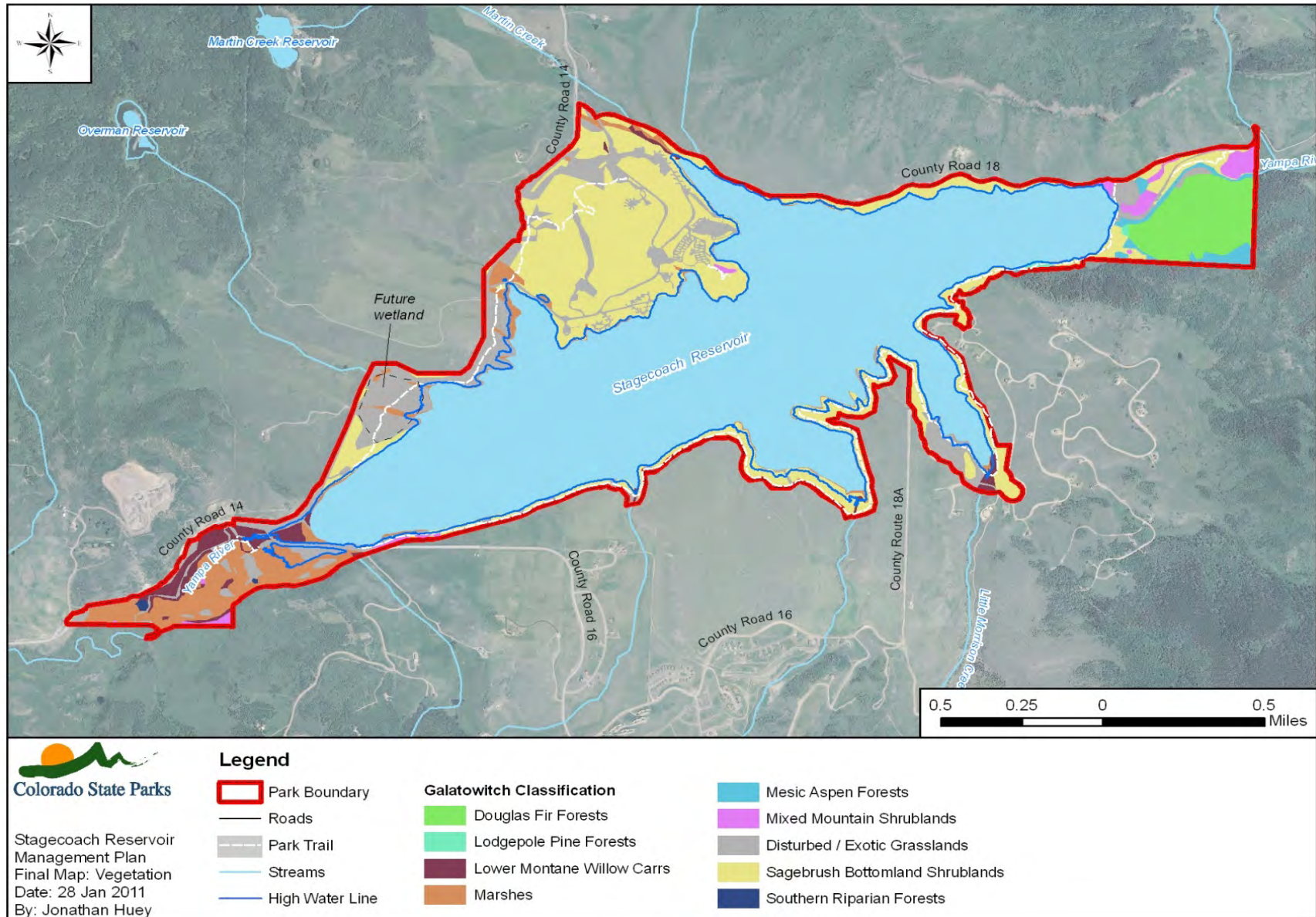
Twenty-six species of noxious weeds were mapped in the 2008 noxious weed survey of the park along with several other aggressive non-native species (Table 3). Smooth brome and Canada thistle are fairly widespread in the park, but the rest of the invasive species are fairly new and occur only in very small patches. The most aggressive species have been



Wetland marsh and wetland shrub areas

³⁶ Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (2009). *Environmental assessment non-capacity amendment of license*. Department of Energy, Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance, Office of Energy Projects. p. 12.

Map 6. Vegetation Cover



eradicated, such as leafy spurge and diffuse knapweed, which were once found in the Pinnacle campground. Overall, the park is relatively weed free, but it can be expected that species such as musk thistle, toadflax, scentless chamomile and tarweed will increase along the along roads and trails, and in parking areas and campgrounds. If staff aggressively treats these species, they can be controlled and eradicated.

Table 3. Noxious weed species that occur at Stagecoach State Park.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Total Acres Infested	Noxious Weed List
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	One patch	Routt, B
Diffuse knapweed	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>	One plant	Routt, B
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>	One plant	Routt, B
Ox-eyed daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	One plant	State B
Scentless chamomile	<i>Matricaria perforata</i>	0.0007	State B
Hoary cress, Whitetop	<i>Cardaria draba</i>	small patches	State B
Bull thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	0.07	State B
Yellow toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	0.14	Routt, B
Tarweed	<i>Madia glomerata</i>	0.76	Noxious, but not listed
Common mullein	<i>Verbascum Thapsus</i>	0.25	State C
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>	1.06	State B
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	10% of park land	State B
Kochia	<i>Kochia scoparia</i>	One plant	Noxious, but not listed
Field bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	One plant	State C
Pigweed	<i>Amaranthus spp.</i>	0.0006	Noxious, but not listed
Shasta daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>	0.03	Noxious, but not listed
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola iberica</i>	0.07	Noxious, but not listed
Biennial Mustard	<i>Berteroa biennis</i>	small patches	Noxious, but not listed
Houndstongue	<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>	0.61	Routt, B
Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	0.03 (underest)	State C

Source: Stagecoach Weed Management Plan, 2010

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

Rare species are those identified by the State of Colorado as endangered, threatened, or of special concern (Table 4). While there are no Federally-threatened or endangered animal species known to occur at Stagecoach, potential habitat exists for a number of state-listed species. Rare animal species potentially occurring at Stagecoach Reservoir are listed in Table 5.

Several other rare species could be present in the park but have not been confirmed. There is remote chance that a lynx could be sighted moving through this area in summer, but there is no suitable habitat within the park.

Table 4. Rare Animal Species Occurring at Stagecoach Reservoir.^{37,38}

<i>Animal Species</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Occurrence</i>
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	De-listed as a threatened species by the State of Colorado in 2009. Now designated as a State Species of Special Concern. Also protected under the 1940 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668d)	Lakes, reservoirs, and riparian corridors.	Present; no nests or roosts within the park, but nesting/roosting nearby. Winter forage near inlet, winter range northern inlet.
Greater sandhill crane (<i>Grus canadensis tabida</i>)	State Special Concern	Mudflats, wet meadows, and agricultural areas. Breed in grassy hummocks and watercourses, ponds lined with willows or aspens. Nest in wetlands.	Present: was documented nesting in wetland preserve in early 2000's, but in recent years only seen foraging.
Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus</i>)	State Species of Concern and Federally Sensitive	Sagebrush/grass shrublands, willow riparian areas, and nearby mountain shrublands and aspen forests.	Critical habitat within the park, tracked by CDOW
Northern leopard frog (<i>Rana pipiens</i>)	State Special Concern, Federally Sensitive	Banks and shallows of marshes, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams, and irrigation ditches, as well as wet meadows.	Confirmed in the wetland preserve in early 2000's.
American White Pelican	Federally Sensitive	Lakes, reservoirs, marshes	Summer resident
Brewer's sparrow	Federally Sensitive	Sagebrush shrublands	Confirmed breeding

Table 5. Rare Animal Species That Could Potentially Occur at Stagecoach Reservoir.^{39,40}

<i>Animal Species</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Habitat</i>	<i>Occurrence</i>
Smooth Green snake (<i>Liochlorophis vernalis</i>)	Federally sensitive	shrubby vegetation along mountain and foothill streams and meadow habitats adjacent to riparian vegetation	Possible but not seen in the park
Greater Sage grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	State Concern, Federally Sensitive	Sagebrush	Was seen prior to dam construction, but has not been seen in the park in recent years.
Northern River Otter	CDOW Threatened Species	Rivers	Sightings confirmed downstream of the park at Lake Catamount and unconfirmed reports have been documented at the nearby Sarvis Creek SWA
Barrow's Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala islandica</i>)	State Concern	Tree cavity nester in Flat Tops, could come to the park for wintering.	Not documented but possible. Suitable habitat upstream of reservoir.
Boreal Toad (<i>Bufo boreas boreas</i>)	State Endangered	Marshes, wet meadows, streams, beaver ponds, and lakes in subalpine forest above 7,500 feet in elevation.	Not present but suitable habitat is upstream of the reservoir.

No federally-protected plants have been identified inside Stagecoach State Park, and there are none likely to occur. However, there are three rare plant species, as well as seven rare plant communities, that are known to occur within six miles of the park (Table 6).

³⁷ U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Environmental Assessment. *Stagecoach Hydroelectric Project - Project No. 9202*. Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance, 2009. Print.

³⁸ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. pp. 37 and 41.

³⁹ U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Environmental Assessment. *Stagecoach Hydroelectric Project - Project No. 9202*. Division of Hydropower Administration and Compliance, 2009. Print.

⁴⁰ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. pp. 37 and 41.

Table 6. Rare plant species and communities near Stagecoach State Park.

<i>Plant species and communities</i>	<i>Global Rank</i>	<i>State Rank</i>
Broad-leaved twayblade (<i>Listera convallarioides</i>)	G5	S2
Canyon bog-orchid (<i>Limnorchis ensifolia</i>)	G4G5T4?	S3
Cottonwood riparian forest (<i>Populus angustifolia/Cornus sericea</i>)	G4	S3
Geyer’s willow/mesic graminoid (<i>Salix geyeriana-mesic graminoid</i>)	G3	S1
Geyer’s willow–Rocky Mountain willow/mesic forb (<i>Salix geyeriana–Salix monticola/ mesic forb</i>)	G3	S3
Lower montane willow carr (<i>Salix drummond/Calamagrostis canadensis</i>)	G3	S3
Montane riparian forest (<i>Abies lasiocarpa–Picea engelmannii/Mertensia ciliata</i>)	G5	S5
Purple lady’s slipper (<i>Cypripedium fasciculatum</i>)	G4	S3
Riparian willow carr (<i>Salix boothii/mesic graminoid</i>)	G3	S3
Thin-leaf alder–mixed willow species (<i>Alnus incana–mixed Salix species</i>)	G3	

Source: Resource Stewardship Team, 2003; Colorado Natural Heritage Program, 2003.

Hydrology

The main hydrological features of the park are Stagecoach Reservoir, the Yampa River, and tributary streams that empty into the reservoir. Groundwater also exists under the park and supports substantial areas of wetlands.

Stagecoach Reservoir was built from 1988 to 1989 by the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District. The dam that creates the reservoir is a concrete structure that rises 145 feet above the former channel of the Yampa River at the upstream end of a steep-walled canyon. The dam has a hydroelectric generation facility with an 800-kilowatt generator. There are three locations in the dam where water can be pulled from the lake, thereby allowing water temperature and dissolved oxygen levels to be managed. The reservoir provides 36,460-acre feet of storage which are allocated largely to industrial, agricultural, irrigation, municipal, hydropower and augmentation uses. Conditions imposed when the reservoir was originally approved create limitations on the usability of approximately 15,000 acre feet of stored water. The surface area of the reservoir is 819 acres during maximum elevation. Just below the spillway is a boulder aeration field to aerate flow releases.

The Yampa River originates as the Bear River in the Flat Tops Wilderness southwest of the park. It flows east and north through the Town of Yampa before reaching Stagecoach Reservoir. The upper Yampa River valley has traditionally been used for agriculture, mostly for growing grass for hay. After leaving the park, the river flows north into Lake Catamount and on to the City of Steamboat Springs. Like most mountain streams, it is fed largely by snowmelt and typically crests during spring runoff in June each year. The Yampa River is dammed shortly after it exits the Flat Tops Wilderness by the Stillwater and Yamcolo Reservoirs. The presence of these two reservoirs substantially reduces potential flooding at the park.

Four streams empty into the reservoir, Martin Creek, Middle Creek, Little Morrison Creek, and Taylor Creek. These streams originate in the hills near the park and typically flow year round. There are wetlands along the creeks where they empty into the reservoir, as well as in the Yampa River floodplain upstream of the reservoir. Treated effluent from the Morrison Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant (which serves Stagecoach Village) empties into Morrison Creek before entering the park. The annual inflow hydrograph for Stagecoach Reservoir is typical of most rivers and streams in the upper Colorado River Basin, with high inflow in the spring and early summer, caused mostly by snowmelt runoff, and diminishing inflows in late summer. Inflows normally remain relatively low during the fall and throughout the winter when most of the precipitation falls as snow.

Under the current license conditions, the minimum flow released from Stagecoach Reservoir is 40 cfs or inflow, whichever is less, between December 1 and July 31, and 20 cfs between August 1 and November 30.

Groundwater

Groundwater in the area consists of two aquifers with potable water, alluvial aquifer and the Browns Park Formation aquifer. Typically, groundwater levels follow the local topography, with the water table declining in depth away from the stream channel. Descriptions of the soils and vegetation indicate that water tables are close to or at the ground surface in the Yampa River floodplain upstream of the reservoir and along the tributary streams.

There are no water rights appurtenant to the park. This means that the park is severely limited in its ability to control water levels in the reservoir. Before the 2010 dam raise, the reservoir surface fluctuated about four to six feet (primarily during the winter). Following the dam raise, fluctuations are expected to be eight to ten feet each year, with drawdown typically starting around Labor Day and extending through the winter months.

Geology & Soils

Stagecoach State Park is located in the Rocky Mountains on the western side of the Park Range in a valley of the upper Yampa River. Valley sands and gravels conceal a major fault that runs through the park. The park is mostly covered with loamy soils (Map 7), although there are rock outcrops at the developed area (Pinnacle Peak) and in the Yampa River canyon downstream of the dam.⁴¹ Loam consists of a mixture of clay, sand, gravel, silt, and organic matter. The parent material of colluviums and alluvium were derived from sandstone and shale. Generally speaking, the land is sloping with elevation ranging from 7,144 to 7,800 feet.

There are three geologic units mapped at the park, the Brown's Park Formation, modern alluvium, and Pre-Cambrian granitics. The Brown's Park Formation consists of sandstone, ash, and silt layers overlain by basalt, granite, and gneiss. Sedimentary layers (sandstone and silt) resulted from sediments eroded from the Park Range 7 to 16 million years ago. The ash layer came from volcanic activity in the area occurring up to 24 million years ago, after the tilting and formation of the Browns Park Formation.⁴² Remnants of this volcanic activity contributed to the ash and lava found in the area, and unusual volcanic rock formations protruding from Blacktail Mountain that appear as vertical stone columns referred to as the Rimrock Outcrop. Pinnacle Peak is a prominent knob adjacent to the Pinnacle Campground that rises about 200 feet above the reservoir and consists of granite porphyry. Modern alluvium occurs mostly at the western end of the park on the bottom of the Yampa River valley. Pre-Cambrian granitics outcrop at and downstream of the dam.

⁴¹ The Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005 outlines each soil type on pages 49 through 53.

⁴² Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Draft Stagecoach State Park Management Plan. 2000. Print.

With the recent dam elevation increase and the re-contouring of the reservoir, erosion is a concern until shoreline vegetation has time to reestablish. The amount and type of boat traffic may also influence shoreline erosion in certain areas and is a concern. There are a number of undesignated boat pull off areas along the reservoir where erosion is also an issue. In addition, erosion is occurring along the many social trails created below the dam. To mitigate the problem, a permanent trail was created in 2007 to give anglers access from the parking lot to the popular Tailwater area. While the new trail has diminished the amount of erosion occurring along the hillside, the nature of river fishing makes the use of a single trail difficult. Along the river, there are a myriad of social trails that bring anglers to multiple points along the river. When anglers return to their cars, they often do not return to the designated trail and instead make their own way along the old social trails. Beyond human impact, some erosion in the tailwater section is occurring because of the existing streambed structures and river morphology.

Cultural Resources

A variety of historic influences have affected Stagecoach State Park's past. Paleo and Native American usage of the area was primarily nomadic. There is extensive evidence indicating that there was a trail system used by the Native Americans and later expanded upon to become way roads and now, parts of what we use as County Roads 18 and 14. Early European explorers and settlers found northwest Colorado attractive for its mining and agricultural potential, though the area remained isolated and sparsely settled. Settlement in the Stagecoach area began during the late nineteenth century. The earliest permanent European settlers came to the valley first to find their fortune as miners and then, reverting back to their heritage, turned to ranching and farming.

The Ute Indians frequently passed through the Stagecoach area en route to their northern territory. The area was also used as summer hunting grounds and the hot springs of Steamboat Springs were known to be sacred.

Eleven historical sites have been identified on park property or within a mile of the park including: homesteads, stage and wagon routes, and institutional buildings. The Park sits along an old mail and stage route that ran north from the rail terminal at Wolcott, over Lynx Pass and down Little Morrison Creek, past Stagecoach to Steamboat Springs and beyond Hahn's Peak. Overlooking this historic route and along the Yellow Jacket Pass (now County Road 14), sits the over 100 year-old Diamond Window Cabin. In 2005, this iconic cabin of Stagecoach was placed on the Routt County Register of Historic Places. The nearby Yellow Jacket Schoolhouse, once located near the south of the park, was used until 1958. Local historians can't agree on how Yellow Jacket Pass was named; however, some claim the pass was named for the wasps in the area, while others tell tales of an outlaw wearing a yellow jacket who hid out on the pass.

Abandoned coal mining operations dot the area around Oak Creek. Small operations began in the area during the late 19th century and expanded with the arrival of the railroad at the turn of the century. The coal industry has fluctuated, with market prices hitting lows in the 1940s and 1950s, then booming in the 1970s. At that time, Routt County, claiming some of the cleanest burning coal in the United States, produced over seven million tons of coal annually from 10 different mines. Currently only four mines continue to operate in the area.



Remains of the Old Schoolhouse

Timbering took place in the Routt National Forest just east of Stagecoach in the early part of the century – from 1912 to 1916. A five-mile flume was built to move logs down Sarvis Creek to holding ponds along the Yampa River. The logs ended up at the Sarvis Timber Mill just south of Steamboat Springs.

Additionally, 12 archaeological sites have been identified along County Road 18, indicating that the area is relatively rich in archaeological and historical artifacts. Many of the sites are bi-cultural, indicating that what Native Americans considered a good place was also considered by the first white settlers as a good homestead. The need for further study, documentation and development of these sites will be considered for future preservation.

Scenic Resources

Stagecoach State Park features expansive scenic views of the sagebrush basin, Blacktail Mountain with its rimrock outcroppings, as well as the snow-capped Flat Top Mountains to the southwest, and Greenridge to the south and to the north. Stands of aspen, old growth scrub oak, lodgepole, and spruce/fir forests can be seen in the distance on various lands within and outside of the park. One of the most prominent scenic resources is the views of the night skies. On a clear night, an umbrella of stars and the Milky Way can be seen expanding the length of the sky.

Wildlife is another important scenic attraction. Animals try to stay out of sight, but walking the trails in the park’s wetlands, shrublands, and meadows offer visitors numerous signs of wildlife. Footprints and scat, a tree rub or a nibbled branch are all common signs of animal residents. Much of the south side of the reservoir is currently undeveloped and has a rural mountain beauty, but this could change with further planned development in this area.



















Recreation Resources

Trails

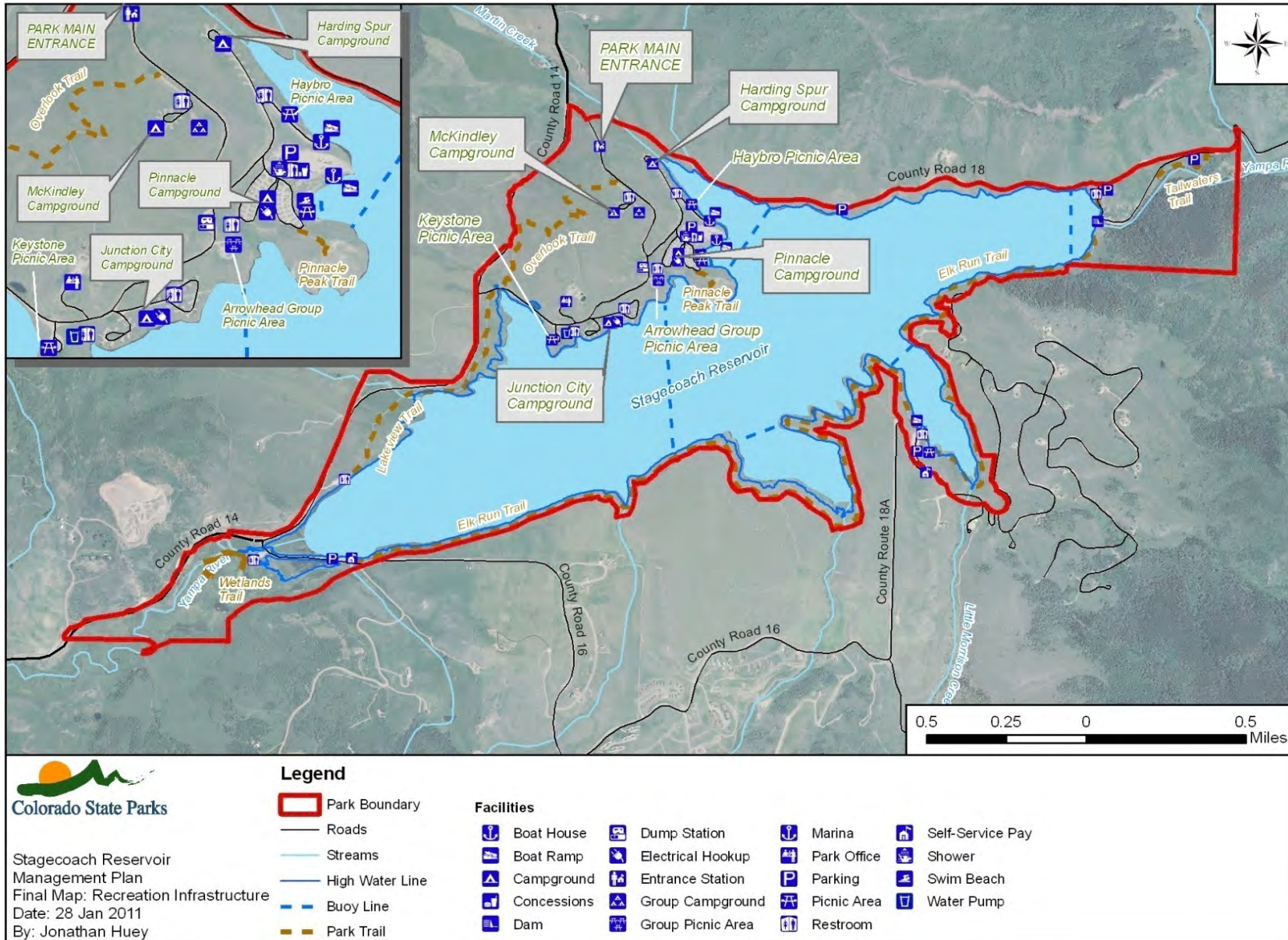
Stagecoach State Park has approximately eight miles of trail that surround all but the northeast boundary of the reservoir. All trails are considered easy, with minimal elevation gain. Most trails are 6-foot wide crusher fine, multi-use trails allowing for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use. It is possible to complete the loop around the lake, or the "Grand Traverse" of Stagecoach Reservoir by using the county road along the north and around the western corner. This is accomplished, by linking the Elk Run Trail with CR 18, to the Overlook Trail and then the Lakeview Trail (Map 8).

In the winter months some of the trails are groomed to allow for snowshoe and cross-country skiing opportunities. Each trail at Stagecoach has its own “personality” and unique opportunity as listed below.

Table 7. Stagecoach State Park Trails

Trail	Miles	Type	Summer Uses	Winter Uses
Wetlands Trail	0.33	moderate, ADA accessible		closed
Pinnacle Peak Trail	0.25	moderate		
Lakeview	1.0	moderate	  	 
Overlook	1.0	easy to moderate	  	closed
Elk Run	5.0	easy to moderate	  	 
Tail Waters	1/4	moderate		
Total	8.0			

Map 8. Recreational Facilities and Infrastructure



Wetlands Trail

The Wetlands Trail is an ADA-accessible trail that starts at the parking lot at the junction of CR 14 and CR 16 and is an easy walking trail. The trail starts as a fine gravel pathway and extends along floating walkways through the park’s western “wetlands preserve” area via a 0.33- mile system of boardwalks (comprised of recycled plastic called “Superdeck”). The trail showcases a riparian-type wetland that is driven by the rise and fall of the Yampa River and features two waterfowl viewing blinds, two river overlook decks, and interpretive signs for guidance.⁴³ The overlooks and boardwalks in this area have deteriorated over time and staff is in the process of repairing some structures in this area. The riparian wetlands provide wildlife with rich food and habitat resources and are home to the highest concentration of wildlife. The trail is on the western end of the reservoir.

Pinnacle Peak Trail

The Pinnacle Peak Trail is a moderate, fine gravel pathway located in the heart of Stagecoach State Park, available for foot traffic only. The 0.25-mile ascent up Pinnacle Peak rises approximately 200 feet to a summit that offers an excellent 360 degree view of the valley (See photo). A fairly brisk but short trek, the Pinnacle Peak Trail is designed for everyone to enjoy and is located adjacent to the marina and the Pinnacle Campground.



View west from Pinnacle Peak.

Lakeview Trail

The Lakeview Trail extends between the Disabled Fishing Access area that is located near the westernmost terminus of the Main Park Road all the way to the parking lot off CR 14. This moderate one-mile gravel trail provides great hiking and biking in the summer. It is groomed in the winter for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

Overlook Trail

The Overlook Trail is approximately one mile in length and begins just inside the park entrance. The trail wraps around the North side of the reservoir and has a bench at the peak to view the beautiful mountain panorama. Following the path brings visitors to the Lakeview Trail. The Overlook Trail may be seasonally closed for sensitive wildlife issues.

Elk Run Trail

The Elk Run Trail offers an easy to moderate five-mile tour of Stagecoach State Park and features an eight-foot wide gravel surface and one-mile stretch of incline. The trail traverses the entire southern shore of the reservoir, cutting in and out of coves, making it ideal for mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian uses. Visitors can access the Elk Run Trail from the western end of the reservoir at a parking area on CR 16, located just after the turnoff from CR 14 and the wetlands parking lot. At approximately the mid-point of the Elk Run Trail, access is available via the Morrison Cove parking lot/boat ramp area on CR 18A. From the eastern end, access is available by crossing the dam from the upper dam parking area on CR 18.

Tailwater Trail

This moderate 0.25-mile trail is the newest addition to the trail system, linking the parking area in the Tailwater Area to the Yampa River below. The trail has recently been improved and several social trails have been closed for revegetation. Visitors can use the improved trail to



View of the Tailwater Area.

⁴³ As of 2010, these fishing access areas were in disrepair and sloughing into the Yampa River.

access the river and try their luck at fly-fishing nationally recognized waters or just enjoying one of the most scenic areas of the park.

Camping

Stagecoach State Park offers a variety of camping opportunities with its four campgrounds and 92 campsites. All campsites have a picnic table and fire ring/grill. The Junction City and Pinnacle campgrounds border the reservoir and feature 30 amp/125 volt electrical hookups, water, showers, flush toilets, and a dump station that is located just west of Pinnacle campground. The Harding Spur campground is a basic campground with water and flush toilets. The McKindley campground has primitive sites with vault toilets and can also accommodate group camping (for up to 45 people). The McKindley Campground also offers 6 picnic tables and a grill. In total, Stagecoach offers 65 improved electric, 17 basic, and 10 primitive camp sites (Table 8).

Table 8. Total Campsites by Campground (2010).

Campground	Primitive	Basic	Electric	Total Campsites
Junction City (sites 1-27)	0	0	27	27
Pinnacle (sites 28-65)	0	0	38	38
Harding Spur (sites 66-82)	0	17	0	17
McKindley (sites 83-92)	10*	0	0	10
Total	10	17	65	92

*The McKinley Campground also includes a large group camping area that accommodates 45 people.

Between FY 2006 and FY 2010, total numbers of overnight use participants increased about 43 percent from 9,078 people in FY 2006 to 12,828 people in FY 2010 (Table 9). Electric campsites accounted for about 64 percent of total annual overnight use during this time period.

Table 9. Total Overnight Use Participation by Campsite Type (FY2006 – FY2010).

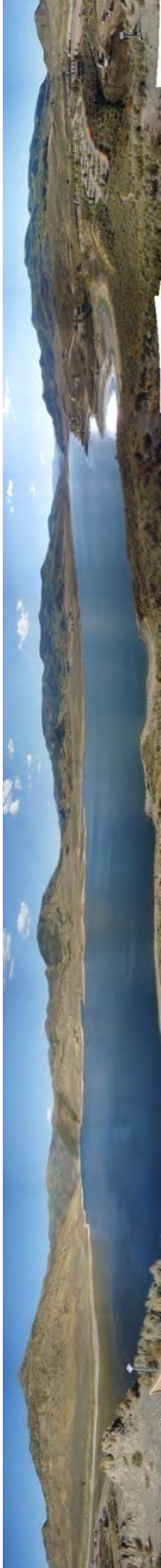
Campsite Type	Overnight Use Participants					Grand Total
	FY 2006 ⁴⁴	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	
Basic	2,204	3,079	3,461	3,331	3,331	15,406
Primitive	960	1,434	1,466	1,417	1,206	6,483
Electric	5,914	9,429	8,328	7,779	8,390	39,840
Group	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grand Total	9,078	13,941	13,255	12,528	12,828	61,630

Stagecoach sees a consistently higher percentage of overnight participation than the Division as a whole. According to the 2009 Corona Insights Visitor Intercept Survey, about 67% of park visitors stay overnight compared to a Division-wide average of 38% percent. Further, RV campers comprise about 60 percent of all overnight visitors. The average length of stay for overnight visitors was 2.4 days.⁴⁵

In FY 2010, camping accounted for about 40 to 46 percent of total park revenues, which is about equal to the percent of revenues accounted for through sale of daily and annual passes. FY 2006-2007 saw a sharp increase in camping revenue. This can be at least partially

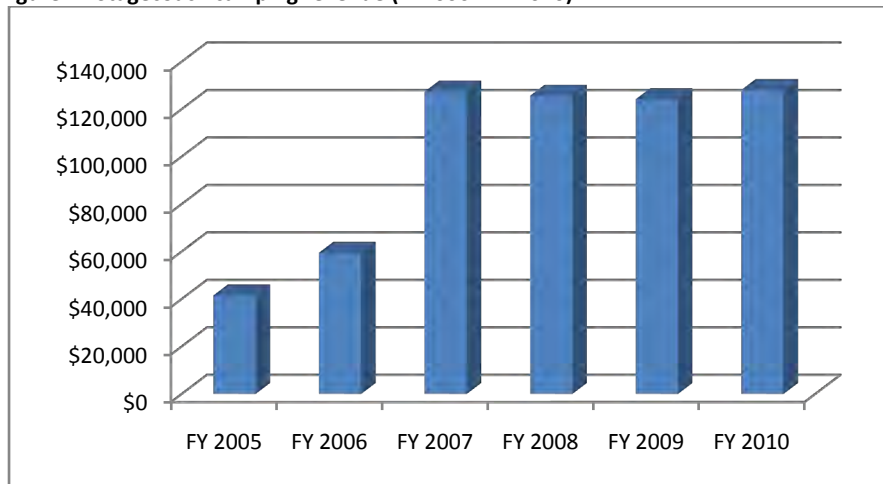
⁴⁴ FY 2006 does **not** include online participation data for the months of July through September 2005. ORMS was not operational until October 2005.

⁴⁵ "Visitor Intercept Survey Report". Corona Insight Marketing Assessment 2008/2009.



attributed to an increase in campsite and camping registration fees that went into effect in September 2007, as well as the online registration system that went into effect in late fall 2005 (early FY 2006).

Figure 4. Stagecoach camping revenue (FY2006 – FY2010)⁴⁶



Source: Colorado State Parks, internal camping revenue report.

Picnicking

Three major picnic areas serve day-users on the North side of the reservoir. All picnic sites at Stagecoach offer a picnic table and fixed grill. Keystone Day-use Area is located on the point below the office and has 18 picnic sites. This area is a popular shoreline fishing spot so most people using this area come to fish and are picnicking as a secondary activity. There is a vault restroom and a trail system linking the picnic sites.

Haybro Day-Use Area is along the shore below the Marina Parking Lot, adjacent to the Harding Spur Campground. This area is also a popular shoreline fishing area and offers a flush restroom in the vicinity. Haybro Day-Use area has eight picnic sites.

Arrowhead Day-Use Area is between Pinnacle and Junction City Campground along the shore line. The area consists of seven picnic sites, one Group Picnic Area shelter, two horseshoe pits, and the “Yampatheater.” Because this area is outside of the wakeless zone, it is more popular with boaters using it as a shoreline base camp. Visitors often set up their own shade shelters along the shore to spend the day rotating people in and out of their boats to tube or waterski.

Arrowhead Group Picnic Area (GPA) has a concrete floor with a wooden shelter. There are ten tables and two oversized grills accommodating up to 60 people. There is a trail system linking the various Arrowhead amenities as well as the Pinnacle restroom, which is just a short walk away.

In contrast to the park’s campgrounds, most day picnic sites at Stagecoach State Park are underutilized. People come to these areas for other activities such as shoreline fishing or boating access and use the sites as sitting areas or staging areas rather than for picnicking. However, the GPA has become more popular over the years with a record 16 reservations in

⁴⁶ Note: Overnight use participation was generated based on reported overnight revenues. Because FY 2006 does **not** include online revenue data for the months of July through September 2005, revenues may be lower than actual.

the summer of 2010 (June – August). Currently, there is no fee for using the GPA, only for making a reservation.

Angling

Fishing is the most popular activity at the park.⁴⁷ Each year, thousands of visitors travel from near and far to fish at Stagecoach, making use of three distinct fishing opportunities: the inlet, the reservoir, and the river below the dam. The CDOW recognizes these three distinct cold-water fisheries at the reservoir, and manages them accordingly. At the reservoir, most anglers fish for trout and pike from the shore while others try their luck in boats. As of 2010, belly boats have increased in popularity as well. In addition, large rainbow trout can be caught at the inlet, where they come to spawn and feed on the insects, crustaceans, and small fish that occur near wetlands. These productive wetlands were created as mitigation for the inundation of the valley both at the time of original construction in 1989 and the raising of the dam in 2010. Ice fishing, mostly for trout and some pike, is growing in popularity and occurs from mid-December to March.

Fishing on the river below the dam is very popular with fly-fishermen and can be fished year-round. This area is a catch-and-release fishery for rainbow trout. The large size and number of trout caught has caused some to suggest it warrants Gold Medal designation. Mountain whitefish, brook trout and brown trout are also present in low numbers.⁴⁸ Both Park and CDOW staff are concerned about the heavy use of this area. Some of the concerns include damage to the riparian vegetation and trout scarred from multiple captures and releases.⁴⁹ Annual monitoring by CDOW is an important fishery management tool to maintain and enhance existing population dynamics in this stretch.

Stagecoach Reservoir is stocked with larger catchable rainbow trout (approximately 12”) in late fall. The trout are stocked in the fall when the northern pike are less active in an effort to give the trout time to establish themselves and avoid predation from the pike.⁵⁰ In 2008, over 36,000 fish (or 25,096 pounds) were stocked in the reservoir.⁵¹ During the years 2000-2010, about 49,000 fish or 1,700 pounds of fish were stocked in the Yampa River below the Stagecoach Reservoir.⁵²

Boating

Boating is second only to fishing as the most popular activity at Stagecoach State Park. Popular boating opportunities include water skiing, tubing, wake boarding and wake surfing. About 40% of the reservoir is designated wakeless and this area is always busy with popular non-motorized boating activities such as kayaking, canoeing, bellyboating, and windsailing. In the non-wakeless zone, boaters are required to operate their boats at a minimum of 150 feet from shore.

Stagecoach Reservoir offers two boat ramps, one on the south side off the Morrison Cove Parking Lot, and one on the north side fed by the Marina Parking Lot. The Morrison Cove Boat



Boat tied to dock near the main boat ramp.

⁴⁷ “*Visitor Intercept Survey Report*”. Corona Insight Marketing Assessment 2008/2009.

⁴⁸ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (Sarvis Creek Area Plan 1996). p38

⁴⁹ Stagecoach Natural Resources Stewardship Plan, June 1, 2005. (B. Atkinson, pers. comm.). p38

⁵⁰ Email communication with Bill Atkinson, CDOW Fisheries Biologist, September 20, 2010.

⁵¹ Email communication with Bill Atkinson, CDOW Fisheries Biologist, September 20, 2010.

⁵² Email communication with Bill Atkinson, CDOW Fisheries Biologist, September 20, 2010.

Ramp is a two lane, concrete boat ramp which is mainly used by local residents in the Stagecoach Area. The Marina Boat Ramp is much busier; most overnight visitors staying in park campgrounds and day visitors coming down from Steamboat Springs use this boat ramp. Starting in the summer of 2008, the Marina Parking Lot began filling on holiday weekends and by summer of 2010 staff occasionally saw it fill on non-holiday weekends. Part of the issue is that this is a gravel parking lot and parking spaces are not clearly delineated. Unless this area is staffed to assist with parking, people don't park correctly, thus decreasing the number of vehicles and trailers that will fit in to the parking lot. Park staff has tried using cones and paint to delineate parking spaces and this helps, but a staff member still needs to be in the area to monitor the parking situation on busy days.

A marina concession is centrally located just above the swim beach between the Pinnacle Campground and the Marina Parking Lot. The marina holds 31 boats and provides an additional 4 smaller slips for PWCs or small fishing boats. There are also 39 dry storage spaces available for boats or RVs. The marina store building, which also houses shower facilities, is owned by the State. This concession came under new ownership in spring 2010. The new owners have maintained the rental fleet of 4 pontoons, 2 fishing boats and other opportunities like canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats. They are also excited about potentially expanding previous operations at Stagecoach State Park. They have already added a powerboat subcontractor to take clients out waterskiing, tubing or wake surfing. Other ideas they are exploring are to provide increased food services, mooring balls, and increase winter operations such as renting cross-country skis, snowshoes and ice fishing equipment. The marina operators also run a very popular dog sled operation on some of the trails here during the winter.

In January of 2008, zebra mussels (an "aquatic nuisance species") were discovered at Lake Pueblo. In an effort to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic nuisance species to Stagecoach Reservoir, strict boat inspection procedures were implemented in the summer of 2008 (consistent with many other state parks having large water bodies). Under these inspections, all trailered boats are subject to inspections prior to launch or departure from state parks waters. Presently, boaters may be denied access and their boats may be placed under quarantine if inspection and/or decontamination are refused. New in 2009, again in an effort to minimize the spread of ANS, Stagecoach State Park implemented a seasonal closure to trailered boats from November 1st through May 1st. However, hand-launched vessels including canoes, kayaks, and belly boats, can be launched during our closure for fishing and hunting opportunities. Currently, boat inspection stations are set up at each boat ramp and are staffed by a trained ANS inspector between May 1st and October 31st. Stagecoach uses the pre-inspection policy which means that if the boat is inspected by park staff and received an ANS seal, it may launch outside of inspection station hours.

Hunting

Beginning the Tuesday after Labor Day through the Friday prior to Memorial day, hunting is allowed only in the west half of the reservoir during legal waterfowl and small game hunting seasons. Hunters must be at least 100 feet from any developed area including parking lots, campgrounds, picnic areas, boat ramps, and the wetland trail. Dogs must be leashed unless actively retrieving.

Interpretation and Environmental Education

As part of its recreational development, the park has also invested in interpretive infrastructure including trails, bulletin boards, a watchable wildlife kiosk, and an amphitheater. The marina deck and Arrowhead picnic area also provide sites for interpretive activities.

Great Outdoors Colorado

The Great Outdoors Colorado grant program has provided funding for one seasonal interpreter at Stagecoach, and a small operating budget. During the 2010 season, the GOCO interpreter hosted 81 programs, and had over 1300 contacts with park visitors, and the public. The GOCO interpreter also assisted with calendar updates on the park's website, newspaper publications, news releases, and advertisement within the community.

Interpretive Facilities

Many of the park's buildings and infrastructure include elements that facilitate interpretive activities including:

Park Headquarters

Consisting of a small visitor center, park offices, and a 3-bay garage or shop, the park headquarters provides a space and materials for interpretive activities. The park office/visitor center provides materials such as brochures and maps, while the shop offers a flexible space for school groups to have lunch breaks, and classes during the winter season. Visitors can also check-out family activity backpacks from the park office at no charge, for a self-guided experience.

Interpretive Opportunities along Trails

Overlook Trail – This one-mile trail offers beautiful views, and a bench to rest and soak up the natural setting. This trail may be seasonally closed for sensitive wildlife.

The Elk Run Trail – This five-mile trail provides excellent reservoir and surrounding views, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking, and dog sledding. The interpretive signs along the Elk Run Trail are out-of-date and no longer applicable.

Lake View Trail – This two-mile trail runs alongside the reservoir and offers bird viewing opportunities, waterfowl hunting, and tracking.

Tailwater Trail – This short half-mile scenic trail winds along the Tailwater below the Stagecoach Dam, providing excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and world-class fishing.

Pinnacle Peak Trail – The short but steep quarter-mile trail takes visitors to the top of Pinnacle Peak. At the top awaits benches, interpretive signs, and spectacular 360 degree views. The interpretive signs are old and in need of updating.

Wetlands Trail – A short floating boardwalk trail through the wetlands offers multiple spots to view wildlife, at the bird blind, decks over the river, and benches. There are many interpretive signs providing information along the way. At the time of writing, the decks for fishing and wildlife viewing were roped off due to not being structurally sound.

Watchable Wildlife Kiosk at the Marina Store – features 3 panels on ecosystems, birds, and wildlife.



Dog sledding on the Elk Run Trail.

The “Yampatheater” is located down the trail from the Arrowhead Group Picnic Area. The amphitheater offers seating for 48 people and a fire ring, making it an excellent place for interpretive programs during the day and evening.

Interpretive Programs

The primary focal points of interpretation and environmental education at Stagecoach include the history of the reservoir, wildlife, and outdoor safety and recreation. The program season generally begins Memorial Day and ends Labor Day weekend. Frequent program topics include the following:

Junior Ranger Program – Junior Ranger Programs are offered for children ages 6-12. The Junior Ranger Program is offered at the park, as well as at the annual “Taste of South Routt” festival in the neighboring town of Oak Creek. Junior Ranger Programs provide children and their guardians with a meaningful experience that helps promote stewardship at an early age.

Winter Studies Days – Winter Studies Days are held annually during the winter season for local schools. At Winter Studies Days, Park Staff assists with a variety of programs including snow cave building, orienteering, winter survival, and campfires. The day includes a chili cook-off, and closes with a “cardboard” classic competition.

Tracks and Scat – Animal tracking is an important skill to have if you live or recreate in the Rocky Mountains. The Tracks and Scat program teaches people of all ages how to tell if they are hiking in bear country, or if they could potentially run into wildlife while camping.

Boat Safety – Boat Safety classes and certificates are available for children between the age of thirteen and sixteen. Completion of the Boat Safety class and receiving a certificate allow these young boaters to safely participate in recreational boating.

Aquatic Insects –The Wetlands trail serves as a location for local school groups to meet for educational programs about aquatic insects. This hands-on opportunity for students allows for them to study the natural world in an outdoor classroom.

Although Park Staff present the majority of interpretive programs, we are fortunate to work with other entities and local experts in a variety of subjects to supplement staff programs. Historic Routt County!, Yampatika, Colorado Mountain College in Steamboat Springs, Tracks and Trails Museum, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Yampa Valley Birding Club, as well as volunteers offer special knowledge and have both presented and/or contributed to an array of program topics.

Stagecoach State Park is dedicated to further developing the Interpretive Program. All Park Staff members assist in making interpretive contacts with park visitors, hosts programs, and they played a part in the construction of the “Yampatheater” which was completed in fall of 2009. Having the Yampatheater to use as a gathering place for evening programs has proved to be an essential part of building family traditions, enjoyment, and education opportunities.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Stagecoach State Park buildings inventory includes the following facilities listed below. Please refer to Appendix D for a more detailed inventory of park facilities and infrastructure. Most facilities at Stagecoach date back to 1989 (when the reservoir was initially constructed), making many of these buildings outdated, overused, and energy inefficient. Over the last



Interpretive programs add value to overnight visitors with children.



Park staff at the Yampatheater.

twenty years, park staff have done a good job of maintaining and caring for all buildings around the park but staff is continuously challenged with increased time and costs associated with maintenance and upkeep of these facilities.

Park Office/Maintenance Shop

The park office/maintenance shop building combines a very small customer reception area along with six work stations and a three – bay garage and maintenance shop. This facility was constructed in 1989 and has a gross area of approximately 2,500 square feet. Originally, this building had three offices and a larger customer reception area, but was remodeled in the late 1990's to add a fourth office. Until 2007, when the drinking water plant was moved to maintain compliance with Colorado Department of Health and Environment regulations, this building also housed both the drinking water and waste water facilities. It currently still houses the wastewater plant.

Upstairs there are two seasonal apartments which can accommodate up to four seasonal workers at one time. Each apartment bedroom is furnished with a bunk bed and various dressers, a kitchen with a refrigerator, sink, and range, and a full bathroom with a tub/shower and a sink. This building consists of a concrete foundation with wood walls and a metal roof. In 2010, Propanel steel siding was added to the exterior of the building. This facility is heated with electric baseboard heat in the individual offices and apartments, and propane forced air in the open shop/garage area. This facility is utilized and maintained year round.



View of marina looking southeast.

Marina & Camper Services Building

This facility is located between the Marina Parking Lot and the Pinnacle Campground just above the swim beach area. This facility serves as both the Marina Store and the Camper Services building. This building was constructed in 1989 on a concrete foundation with concrete block walls and a metal roof. The Marina Store lies within the interior of the building and is used by the Marina concessionaire to sell ice, food, drink, and basic camping and fishing supplies. On either side of the store are the two shower facilities containing pay showers, sinks and restroom. Along the back of the building is the “plumbers alley” used for servicing showers and plumbing. Out front there is a covered concrete porch with a deck extending out, overlooking the lake and swim beach area. The original wood deck was replaced with Trex deck materials in 2006. It is approximately 2,650 square feet in size and uses a combination of electric forced air and baseboard heat. This is a seasonal facility, closing in early October and reopening in early April.

Campground Flush Facilities

There are three campground flush facilities in each of the Harding Spur, Pinnacle and Junction City campgrounds. These are all the same design – built in 1989 on concrete foundations with concrete block walls and metal roofs. Each has a sink and two toilets on the women's side and a sink, one urinal, and one toilet on the men's side. Each facility is 483 square feet in size and uses electric forced air heat. All three restrooms are seasonal facilities that are closed in winter months.

Entrance Station

This building is located on the main park road just off of County Road 14 and was constructed in 1989. It is constructed on a concrete foundation with concrete block walls and a metal roof. This facility is used during the summer as a central point of pass sales and customer service as people enter the park. It is approximately 77 square feet and uses electric forced air heat.

Shop Vehicle Shed

This building is located in the shop compound behind the Park Office/shop facility and was constructed in 2008. It is a four-bay garage with four oversized garage doors, a concrete foundation, Propanel style steel panel walls, and a metal roof. This facility is used year-round to store various park vehicles and pieces of large equipment. It is 1,653 square feet and is not heated.

Drinking Water Plant

This building is located off the main park road adjacent to the Arrowhead Group Picnic Area and was constructed in 2007. It is a prefabricated building with concrete foundation, walls and roof. This facility treats water pumped directly from the reservoir per CDPHE regulations. It is 200 square feet in size, and is heated with electric forced air.

Arrowhead Group Picnic Facility

The picnic shelter is located off the main park road between the Pinnacle and Junction City Campgrounds. It is an open shelter with a concrete foundation and a metal roof. It is approximately 1,680 square feet in size.

Tailwater Vault Restroom

This building is located at the Tailwater Parking Lot just off of CR 18 about a half a mile below the dam and was constructed in 2004. It is a prefabricated building with concrete floor, walls and roof and has one restroom seat. It is 120 square feet in size and is a year-round facility with no associated heat or electricity.

Keystone Vault Restroom

This building is located at the Keystone Day Use Area below the office next to west end of Junction City Campground and was constructed in 1989. It is constructed with a concrete floor, concrete block walls, a metal roof, and has two restroom seats, a male side and a female side. It is approximately 91 square feet in size. This is a year-round facility, and has electric forced air heat.

Mckindley Vault Restroom

This building is located in the Mckindley Campground and was constructed in 1989. It is constructed with a concrete floor, concrete block walls, a metal roof, and has two restroom seats, a male side and a female side. It is approximately 91 square feet in size. This is a year-round facility, and has electric forced air heat.

Angler's Trail Vault Restroom (AKA – Wetlands Restroom)

This building is located at the Wetlands Parking Lot off of CR 16 at the west end of the park and was constructed in 1997. It is constructed with a concrete floor, brick walls, a metal roof, and has two restroom seats, a male side and a female side. It is approximately 144 square feet in size. This is a year-round facility with no associated heat or electricity.

Lot 14 Vault Restroom

This building is located at Parking Lot 14 off of CR 14 at the west end of the park and was constructed in 1992. It is constructed with a concrete floor, concrete block walls, a metal roof, and has two restroom seats, a male side and a female side. It is approximately 75 square feet in size. This is a year-round facility with no associated heat or electricity.

Morrison Cove Vault Restroom

This building is located at the Morrison Cove Parking lot off of CR18A on the south side of the reservoir and was constructed in 1992. It is constructed with a concrete floor, concrete block walls, a metal roof, and has two restroom seats, a male side and a female side. It is approximately 75 square feet in size. This is a year-round facility with no associated heat or electricity.

In addition to the above listed buildings, there are several more smaller structures such as a few storage sheds, a footbridge, a viewing deck, and a deck type trail listed on the park's facility inventory.

Operations and Maintenance

The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District constructed most facilities here at Stagecoach State Park over twenty years ago when the dam was initially constructed. Since then, Colorado State Parks has added some infrastructure. Facilities currently include one shop/office facility with two seasonal apartments upstairs, one four-bay vehicle shed, two smaller storage sheds, and a bulk gas station. All of these facilities are within the area we call the shop/office and compound area. Outside of this area other facilities including a Marina Store/shower building, three flush restrooms, seven vault restrooms, the Arrowhead Group Picnic Area, the Yampatheater Amphitheater, a drinking water plant, about 8 miles of trail, 3 miles of road, 50 picnic sites and 92 campsites.

General Park Operations

All of the park's major facilities outside of the Park Office/Maintenance Shop are generally operational during our peak season, May through September. The shower building, dump station, and all flush facilities are closed October 1st through April 30th. The Park Office building is maintained through the winter months and has drinking water and flush facilities.

The Main Park Entrance is open and maintained year round. The entrance station is open as staffing allows, typically from mid-May through mid-September. When the entrance station is not staffed, park users can purchase self-serve day passes throughout the park or come to the Park Office to purchase Annual Passes. The Park Office is generally open every day from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

The Stagecoach swim beach is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. No lifeguards are on duty and swimming is permitted "at your own risk". Pets, glass containers, fires, and fishing are prohibited within the perimeter of the swim beach, as defined by signs, buoys, and a floating swim line. Water samples are taken at regular intervals and mailed to Quality Water Biolabs to monitor water quality.

Vehicles

Park operations require a wide variety of equipment and vehicles. The park has seven full-time fleet vehicles including four half ton pickups, a one ton dump truck, a Dodge Durango, and a one-ton utility pick up. Three of these are designated law enforcement and four are designated maintenance vehicles. Other equipment include a John Deere tractor, two boats, three snowmobiles, three mule/rangers, and various other trimmers, mowers and power equipment.



Swimbeach and Marina Store, as seen from Pinnacle Point.

Campgrounds

Camping is restricted to designated sites. Each campsite provides a fire ring with a grill, a picnic table, a site marker and a parking pad. From May 1st through September 30th most sites (minus two campground host sites and three “hold sites”) are reservable. Starting October 1st, we close the Junction City Campground, the Harding Spur Campground, and the McKindley Campground, leaving only the Pinnacle Campground available for drop-in use only. Once the snow accumulates to over about six inches, typically early December, the park blocks off most of the Pinnacle Campground but maintains (plows) four sites throughout the winter months. The park experiences occasional winter use but has never needed more than four sites.

Boating Access

Stagecoach Reservoir closes to all trailered vessels on November 1st of every year due to new ANS protocols implemented in 2008. Boat ramps are cabled off and remain in place until May 1st of each year. When boat ramps are closed, the park permits hand-launched boats such as canoes, kayaks, and belly boats, to launch from shore for fishing and hunting access. In season, Stagecoach Reservoir may be closed to boating when hazardous conditions exist, during emergency operations, or when its established carrying capacity is reached.

Picnic Sites

Although picnic sites are not officially closed, most are not maintained in the winter months. Each picnic site offers a high use pad, a grill, and a picnic table. A covered group picnic area is available for reservation. Picnic sites at Stagecoach are really a secondary type use area, meaning that people come to the sites because they are close to the water allowing for them to fish or boat. It is very rare for people come to the park only to picnic.

Road Access

Currently, the park maintains about 3.5 miles of gravel road. Annually, usually in mid-May, the park contracts to get the main sections of road graded and sprayed with Magnesium Chloride for dust suppressant. In the winter, park staff plows snow to maintain access to most parking lots and the Park Office. Staff does not maintain access to the Wetlands Parking Lot, Tailwater Parking Lot, or the Dam Parking Lot. Although it is plowed by the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District to maintain access to their hydro-electric dam facility, CR 18, which runs along the northeast side of the reservoir, is closed to all public motor vehicles as part of the Blacktail Mountain Conservation Easement Closure for Wintering Elk Habitat. This closure is from January 1st through March 31st each year. The Tailwater section of the Yampa River below the dam remains ice free and is a popular winter fly fishing destination. People wanting to use this area must park at the park entrance and walk, bike, ski or snowshoe the two miles to reach the river.

Trail Access

Most trails at Stagecoach are 6-foot wide crusher fine trails. Trails are generally maintained by park staff or volunteer groups. The edges of most of the trails are mowed back and weed spraying is performed at least once per year as time and budget allows. In the winter months, some sections are groomed with a snowmobile to maintain access for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing activity. In addition, the Marina Concessionaire maintains the Elk Run Trail for their dog sled operation but other non-motorized trail use is permitted

Trash and Waste Disposal

Trash is collected in dumpsters and disposed of by licensed disposal contractors. Likewise, vault toilet pumping is contracted for disposal. Wastewater generated by flush facilities, the dump station, and the shower facility is pumped into our park wastewater plant where it is disposed of in strict accordance with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment guidelines. Currently the dumpsters are somewhat wildlife resistant, but Colorado Division of Wildlife has suggested that the park purchase both Bearproof Dumpsters and trashcans for placement throughout the park. Stagecoach has not had any “bear issues” but bears are definitely present in the immediate area. By being proactive and getting bearproof dumpster we would potentially minimize future conflicts in addition to setting the example for neighboring communities on how to successfully coexist with wildlife in bear country.

Fencing and Wayfinding

The boundary fence has been constructed and maintained to delineate park property from private land owners and county right-of-ways. Appropriate signing has been erected at major park entrances advertising the various opportunities accessible from county roads around the park. The park’s brochure provides a map that reasonably depicts the boundaries of the park and highlights the importance of respecting the rights of private landowners adjacent to the park.

Noxious Weeds

Stagecoach State Park recently updated their Noxious Weed Management Plan and uses staff, volunteers, and contractors to incorporate an integrated management approach in their weed control efforts.

Information Technology

Much of the parks’ day-to-day business is currently conducted via web-based programs linked to external servers for various reporting functions, which require fast, stable internet connections. These reporting functions include revenue collection, visitation counts, budgeting and accounting, law enforcement queries, payroll and personnel management. Most of these administrative tasks are completed by staff working out of the Visitor Center & Park Headquarters, which is adequately served by a T-1 line that is part of the State’s MNT broadband network.

Computer hardware at the park consists of six stand-alone desktop computers and one laptop with standard network capabilities. The computers are linked to two printers. According to IT staff, four computers were due for upgrades in 2010.

Utilities

Electrical Service

Electricity in and around Stagecoach State Park is provided by Yampa Valley Electric Association. Stagecoach has two meters that monitor approximately 225,000 kilowatt hours of electrical use at the park during an average year. The highest usage occurs during the summer months (May – August), when the campgrounds are full.

Propane Tanks

Park buildings are heated by a combination of electricity and propane. Larger facilities like the Park Office/Maintenance Shop and the Marina/Camper Services buildings utilize propane while the smaller stand alone buildings like the flush restrooms in each campground use electric forced air heating. There is one 500 gallon propane tank located at both the Park Office and Marina Building. Annual consumption is approximately 1,475 gallons of propane in an average year. Water in the Marina/Camper Services building is heated with tankless, instantaneous hot water heaters designed to minimize propane consumption, while all other water facilities are heated with electricity.

Water Treatment

Stagecoach State Park uses a GE Hoespring Ultrafiltration System to filter water pumped directly from Stagecoach Reservoir. This system was installed in 2007 to replace an older, outdated water system that was not able to meet current Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regulations. Water is pumped from the lake, through a pre-filter, then through the Hoespring ultra filtration membranes. There are three of these set up in line. The water is then chlorinated, goes through three contact chambers, and is either pumped directly out into the field or up to the 8,000 gallon storage tank. This water is treated and monitored within accordance of CDPHE guidelines. The Hoespring System at Stagecoach was the first of these ultrafiltration membrane systems used by a Colorado State Park. Any Park Resource Technician working at Stagecoach State Park is required to maintain a Class D Operator's License.

Wastewater Treatment

There is no municipal wastewater system treatment facility or collection system in the vicinity of Stagecoach Reservoir. Consequently, the park must maintain a self-contained wastewater system. There are three lift stations throughout the park which pump waste into a series of three wastewater ponds located behind the Park Office/Shop. Once through the pond treatment the water is sprayed out into the wastewater irrigation area which is closed to the public. This system is over twenty years old and is in a constant state of repair. The park has replaced all four pumps in the lift stations in addition to replacing the aerators in the wastewater ponds in the last four years due to mechanical issues. This system services all flush facilities in the park minus the Park Office/Maintenance Shop building which has a separate vault and leech field system. In addition to flush facilities, the park has seven vault restrooms which are pumped an average of once per year depending on use patterns.

Wastewater treatment at Stagecoach State Park is regulated by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment. There are significant costs associated with operator certification, daily flow monitoring requirements, and discharge permits. Any Park Resource Technician working at Stagecoach State Park is required to maintain a Class D Operator's License for wastewater operations.

Circulation

The road system at Stagecoach State Park consists of entirely packed gravel roads. The circulation system is made up of primarily 3 roads: the Entrance Road, Main Road, and Office Road. The main entrance to the park is off of County Road 14 onto Entrance Road. Before the entrance station there is a turnoff onto County Road 18 which leads to the dam and Tailwater

parking lot. The Entrance Road is approximately 0.62 miles long. The Main Road is approximately 0.93 miles and runs from the entrance to Harding Spur Campground and Haybro Picnic area to the old entrance past the parking areas for visitors with limited mobility. The Office road including the back parking lot is approximately 0.23 miles and connects the park office with Main Road. The rest of the circulation system consists of small turn offs, circles, parking lots, and campground roads.

The most heavily used roads are Entrance Road and the section of Main Road that runs from Marina Court to Keystone Circle and accounts for approximately 1.15 miles of road. County Road 18 experiences heavy use during the summer months and offers anglers access to the Tailwater. The road is closed from January 1st through March 31st to protect wintering elk. This closure was agreed to by the CDOW, the UYWCD, and Routt County as part of the mitigation for loss and impacts to the elk winter range resulting from the Stagecoach Reservoir Construction. The following table offers a description, approximate length and condition of each road within the Park. County Road 18 was left out because it is not an official park road.

Table 10. Road Inventory

Name	Description	Miles	Surface	Condition ⁵³
Entrance Road	CR 14 to T-Intersection with Main Rd.	0.62	Gravel	Fair
Main Road	Harding Spur CG past Keystone Picnic Area	0.93	Gravel	Fair
Office Road	Main Rd to Park Office	0.23	Gravel	Fair
Keystone Circle	Loop to Keystone Picnic area	0.10	Gravel	Fair
Junction City Road	2 Loops, Sites 1-27	0.41	Gravel	Fair
Arrowhead Circle	Loop to Arrowhead Picnic Area	0.10	Gravel	Fair
Dump Station Trail	Pullover for Dump Station	0.06	Gravel	Fair
McKindley Circle	Access to Overlook TH, Loop to Sites 84-92	0.20	Gravel	Fair
Harding Circle	Loop, Sites 66-83	0.21	Gravel	Fair
Haybro Drive	Loop to Picnic and Boat Ramp	0.17	Gravel	Fair
Marina Court	Loop to Marina and Boat Ramp	0.28	Gravel	Fair
Pinnacle Trail	2 Loops, Sites 28-65	0.69	Gravel	Fair
Handicap Lane	Access to water with limited mobility	0.03	Gravel	Fair
Lakeside Circle	Access to Lakeside Trail	0.12	Gravel	Fair
Wetland Circle	Access to Wetlands Trail	0.09	Gravel	Fair
Southshore Court	Access to South Boat Ramp	0.25	Gravel	Fair
Dam Drive	Access to Dam parking area	0.17	Gravel	Fair
Total Miles		4.66		

Visitation

Fishing and boating, and other water-based recreation are the main attractions for visitors to Stagecoach State Park. Many visitors also use the park as a “home-base” to access the many nearby recreational activities outside the park, such as in the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. Hunters also overnight in the park during the fall big-game hunting season.

⁵³ Condition is consistent with the rating system outlined in the “Paser Gravel Road Manual” developed by the Wisconsin Transportation Information Center (2002).

Visitor Demographics

Stagecoach State Park attracts approximately 150,000 visitors annually. A 2008/2009 Marketing Assessment Study, conducted by Corona Insight, gathered 216 surveys, and provided extensive visitation data for Stagecoach State Park. Some of the key findings outlined in the Corona Insight visitor intercept survey are provided below:

Age

Stagecoach has a slightly higher than average number of visitors between the ages of 45-54 (25% compared to 22% division-wide), and visitors 65 and older (21% compared to 11% division-wide).

Stagecoach has lower than average number of visitors between the ages of 18-24 (3% compared to 7% division-wide) and 55-64 year olds (10% compared to 18% division-wide). An average number of 18-34 year olds frequent the park (37% compared to 38% division-wide).

Ethnicity

Eighty-three percent of visitors are white, nine percent Hispanic, three percent Native American, two percent other, and one percent Asian. These percentages are comparable to division-wide averages, with the exception of a slightly higher percentage of Native Americans and Hispanics than most parks.

Gender

Stagecoach had a higher than average percentage of visitors who were males compared to other state parks. Fifty-five percent of survey respondents were male and 36 percent of survey respondents were female.

Eighty-seven percent of visitors were comprised of one to three males per group.

Transportation

About two-thirds of visitors access the park via their own personal vehicle, which is slightly lower than the 74% division-wide average; 30% drive an RV/Camper to get to the park (higher than division-wide average of 17%); five percent claimed they use "other".

Group Size

Almost half of all visitors to the park came with at least two people in their vehicle (48%), which is slightly higher than the division-wide average of 43%. The mean number of persons in a vehicle was 2.91, compared to the division-wide average of 2.69.

Distance from Home

Over half (55%) of visitors traveled between 100-249 miles one-way to get to the park from their home. This is significantly farther than most visitors travel to reach a state park (17% division-wide traveled 100-249 miles one-way to access a park).

Only 20 percent traveled less than 25 miles one-way to visit Stagecoach (compared to 41% division-wide).

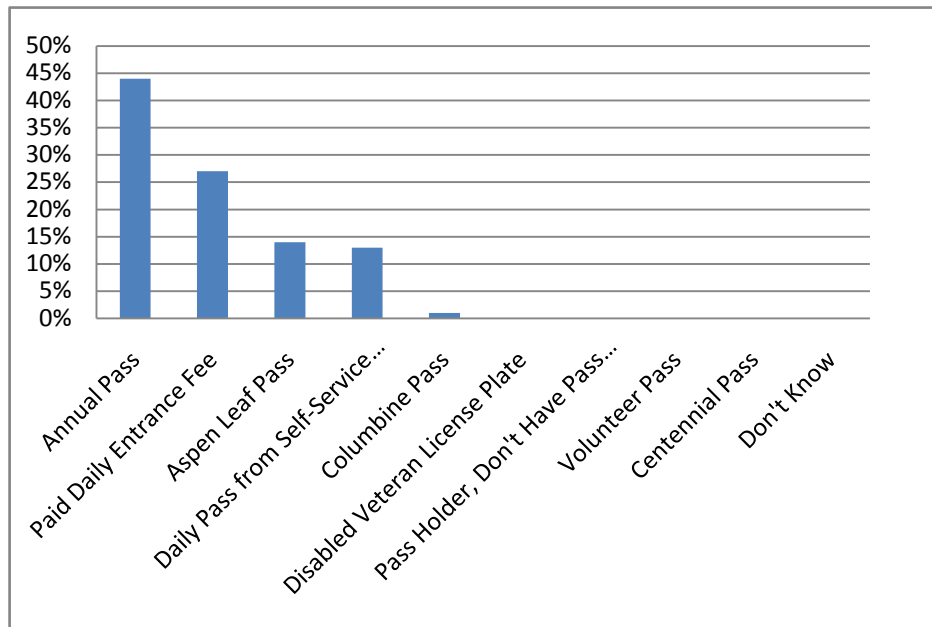
Visitors to Stagecoach live a median distance of 165 miles from the park, compared to the division-wide average of 35 miles.

Ninety-one percent of Stagecoach’s visitors are Colorado Residents; 8% are out of state visitors.

Type of Entrance Pass Used

The majority (44%) of visitors use an annual pass to visit the park. This is 10% more than the division-wide average of 34%. Similarly, 14% of all visitors use an Aspen Leaf pass to access the park, compared to the Division-wide average of 9%.

Figure 5. Type of Entrance Pass Used



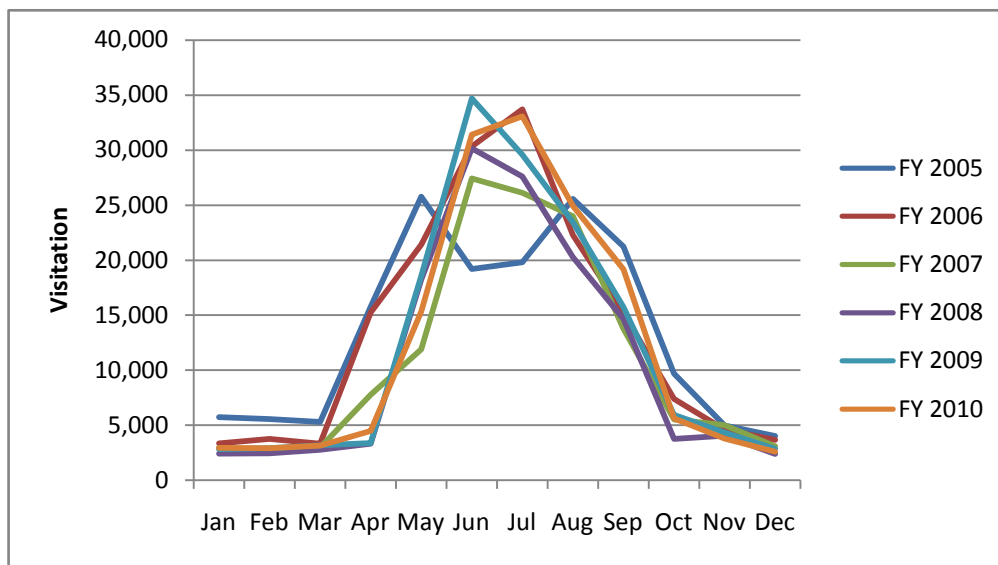
Just over one quarter (27%) of visitors use a daily pass to enter the park. This is a lower than average percentage compared to visitors who pay daily entrance fees at most parks (41% Division-wide).

Visitation Trends

Annual and Monthly Visitation

Since 2002, visitation trends have fluctuated at Stagecoach. Annual visitation averaged approximately 148,000 visitors per year at the park from FY 2005-2010, and peaked in 2006 with just over 164,000 visitors (Figure 6). May through August attract the highest number of visitors to the park, with visitation dropping off significantly beginning in September. December, January, and February typically have the lowest visitation numbers at the park.

Figure 6. Annual Park Visitation



Importance of Park Features

According to the 2008/2009 Market Assessment Study, 92 percent of Stagecoach’s visitors rate their overall quality of experience at the park as “excellent” or “good” (ranked 27th out of 42 state parks).⁵⁴ Visitors surveyed in 2002 and 2008/2009 ranked important park features fairly consistently over time (Table 11). Cleanliness, scenery/surroundings, and safety ranked as the top three park features for both years. While still important, trails, information, and signage, and customer service ranked the lowest in both years, although all of these features gained in importance since 2002. Visitors also indicated facilities and recreational amenities as increasingly important features of Stagecoach State Park.

Table 11. Importance of Park Features 2002-2009 (Very Important or Somewhat Important)

Park Feature	2002 (%)	2008/2009 (%)	% Difference
Cleanliness	100	100	0
Scenery/Surroundings	96	98	2
Safety	93	96	3
Recreational Activities	91	94	3
Facilities	87	92	5
Customer Service	75	88	13
Information and Signage	84	87	3
Trails	81	82	1
Marinas	52	64	12
Park Programs	48	36	-12

Sources: Price Waterhouse Cooper’s “Market Assessment Study” (2002) and Corona Insight’s “Park Visitor Intercept Survey Report” (2008/2009).

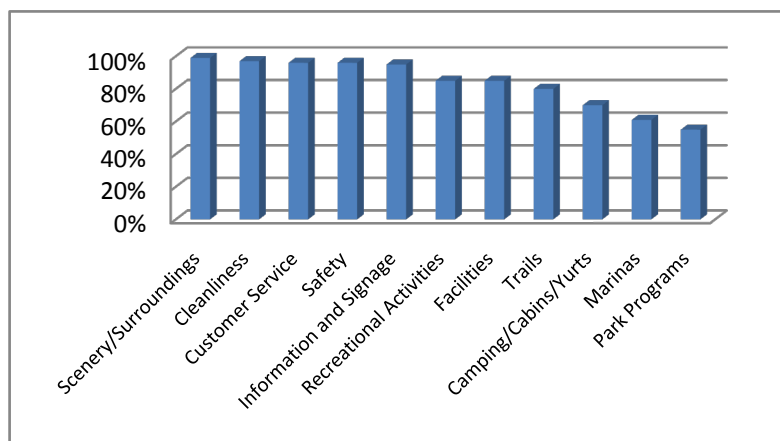
⁵⁴ “Visitor Intercept Survey Report”. Corona Insight Marketing Assessment 2008/2009.

Visitor Preferences

In addition to visitor trend data, the visitor intercept survey conducted by Corona Insight in 2009 provided details about visitor preferences. Several key findings about visitor preferences at Stagecoach are outlined below:

- Compared to other state parks, Stagecoach visitors ranked their satisfaction with “park features” as average to poor. Visitor satisfaction with recreational activities at the park ranked the highest (19 out of 42 state parks), scenery and surroundings were ranked 26 out of 42 state parks, and safety ranked 26 out of 42 state parks. About 61 percent of visitors were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the marina at Stagecoach (ranked 9 out of 12 state parks with marinas).
- Visitors who participated in an interpretive or environmental program were less than satisfied with the quality of that program compared to programs at other state parks (ranked 37 out of 42 state parks).
- Over half of visitors (53%) preferred more “amenity-oriented” parks than “backcountry-oriented” parks (31%).
- About 50% of visitors would greatly increase or slightly increase the number of times they visit Stagecoach if the park had more campsites with plumbing and electricity (ranked 13 out of 42 state parks).
- One in three visitors would greatly increase or slightly increase the number of times they visit Stagecoach if the park had more programs aimed at youth and kids.
- About one in four visitors came in contact with a State Park employee or volunteer during their visit.
- Customer service ranked high at Stagecoach State Park, with 95% of visitors rating the customer service at the park as very good or good.
- Visitors were about evenly split on whether it would be beneficial to have contact with Colorado State Park staff or volunteers (49% said yes, 51% said no).

Figure 7. Satisfaction with Park Features (Very Satisfied or Somewhat Satisfied)



The following is a summary list of potential park improvements that were suggested multiple times (more than once) in the 2009 Stagecoach Visitor Intercept Survey:

- Fish cleaning station
- More shore fishing access
- Better/more trails
- Plant more trees
- More electrical campsites
- Place campsites farther apart
- Improve grounds maintenance, enforce trash and pet waste pick-up
- A visitor center
- Stock more fish
- Numerous comments concerned the quality or perceived lack of potable water in the campgrounds and around the park.⁵⁵

Park Administration and Special Functions

FTE and SWP Staffing

There are currently five full-time employees assigned to the park. These include a park manager (PMV), senior ranger (PMIII), ranger (PMII), maintenance technician (Tech IV) and administrative assistant (AAllI) positions. An organizational chart and the job-related duties of the full-time staff are included in Appendix E.

Stagecoach State Park also employs approximately 12-15 temporary workers during the summer months. These employees occupy essential front-line positions as seasonal rangers, entrance workers, interpreters, and maintenance workers. Additionally, Stagecoach has a crew of temporary workers that educate boaters and perform vessel inspections looking for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) including Quagga and Zebra mussels.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of basic operations, and special projects at the park. Because of continued budget cuts, the importance of volunteers at Stagecoach has increased dramatically in recent years. Volunteers contributed over 5,400 hours from 2008 to 2010. Volunteers help with a countless number of tasks; they have managed reservations, built and maintained trails, built a new amphitheater, and much more.

Stagecoach has accommodations for either two individual, or two couples to host the campgrounds from May through September. Two camp sites with full hook-ups are specifically used by campground hosts through the duration of their stay at no charge. Hosts generally perform light maintenance duties including picking up litter, cleaning fire pits, and



Volunteer camp hosts often return year after year.

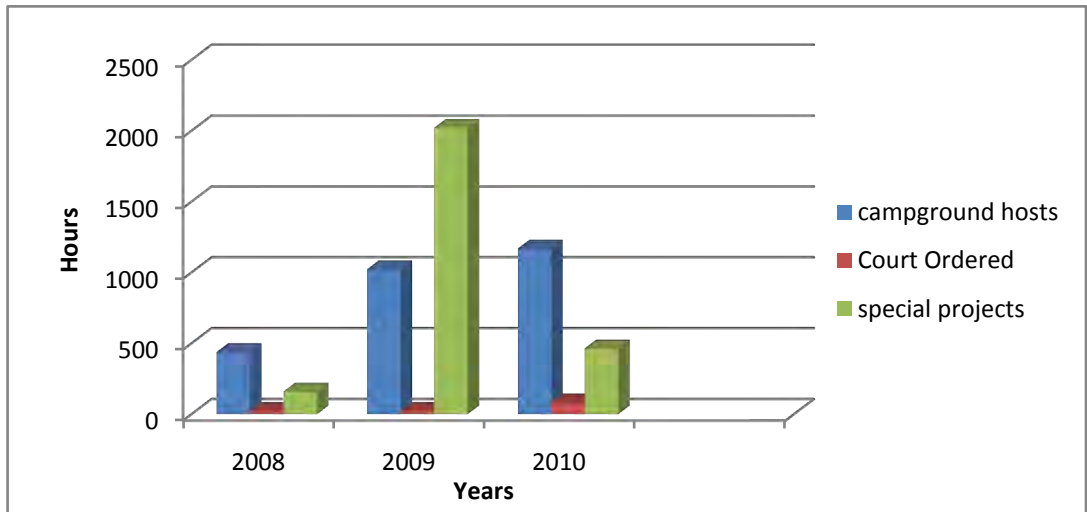
⁵⁵Stagecoach State park had a new water filtration system installed in the park on December 27, 2007. The park has tested water regularly and although the water can be discolored, it does in fact meet code specifications and is safe to drink.

restroom upkeep. Hosts provide information for park visitors, additional security, and have a welcoming presence.

Although unpaid, volunteers attend trainings just as paid staff, and are eligible to receive certain incentives including an annual Volunteer Park Pass after completing 48 hours of service. Additionally, Stagecoach volunteers are recognized each year at an “appreciation luncheon.”

The hours contributed annually by volunteers fluctuates, however, records show the volunteer program at Stagecoach growing significantly. In 2009, a large project on National Public Lands Day contributed 1,242 hours to the total. With extensive construction at the park in 2010, large-scale fall volunteer projects were put on hold.

Figure 8. Volunteer Hours by Type



A future attainable goal for the Stagecoach Volunteer Program is to participate annually in a multitude of volunteer and community service-related holidays. National Public Lands Day, Colorado Cares Day, and Earth Day are a few specific holidays that promote stewardship and can be committed to accomplishing park projects.

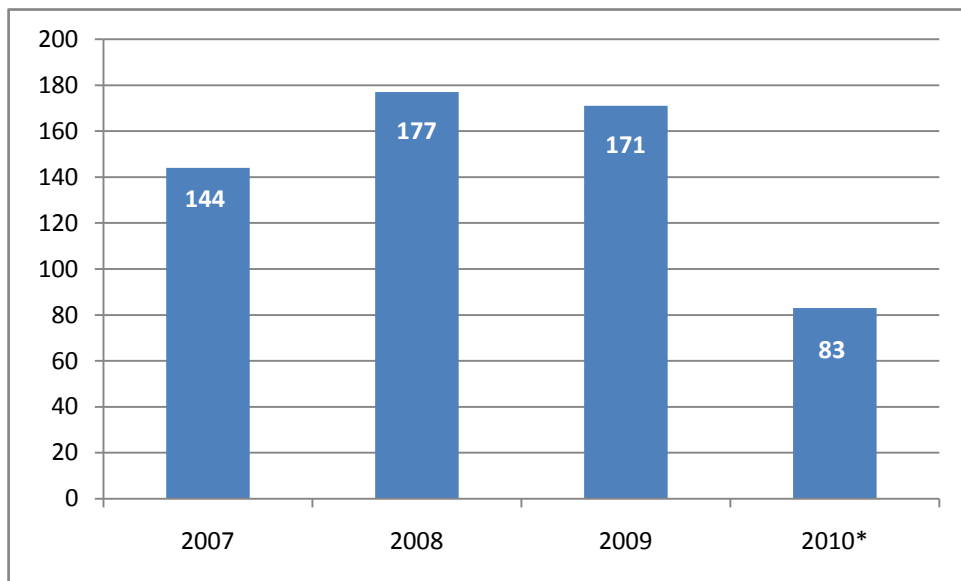
Enforcement, Public Safety, & Emergency Response

Enforcement issues at Stagecoach State Park are less significant than they are at other marina-based parks that accommodate overnight use. In calendar year 2009, Stagecoach issued 171 citations (Figure 9). [For comparison, Chatfield State Park issued 747 citations and North Sterling State Park issued 127 citations in FY 2007-2008.] When enforcement is necessary, park rangers’ actions are guided by three priorities (ranked highest to lowest):

- Ensure the safety and well-being of the public
- Protect personal property and the park’s natural and man-made resources
- Enforce administrative functions, such as issuing fees or permits

In 2009, the two most common enforcement issues at Stagecoach concerned enforcing valid park passes and dogs off leash. In terms of medical assists and/or injuries, Stagecoach has about two to ten per year. (See Appendix F for complete citation and medical assist data).

Figure 9. Total Citations by Year (2007-2010)



*2010 figures are for January 1, 2010 through July 18, 2010 only.

MOUs, IGAs or Other Agreements

UYWCD

The original lease agreement was signed by the UYWCD and the State of Colorado on December 11, 1987, giving Colorado State Parks “exclusive use, control of and responsibility for the Reservoir Property for the management, administration and maintenance of permitted public recreational purposes and any facilities existing thereon or constructed therefore as it deems necessary for the use of this Reservoir Property by the general public for recreational activities only.” At the time this lease was signed, construction of the dam and infrastructure was underway but not complete; this agreement was for fourteen years after completion, expiring May 1, 2004. An extension was agreed upon by both parties in April of 2004 as it was apparent that a new lease would not be possible by the May 1 expiration date. On August 25, 2004, a twenty-year lease agreement was agreed upon, making the current agreement valid through May 1, 2024 (Appendix A).

CDOW

On March 16, 1990, State Parks and CDOW signed a Memorandum of Understanding that highlights the cooperative management and enforcement responsibilities of each agency for lands designated for recreation and wildlife conservation (Appendix A). Per the agreement, CDOW is responsible for management of the wildlife and the fishery (and hunting). State Parks

is entrusted with managing boating, signing and maintenance of trails, and regulating use of snowmobiles. Law enforcement is shared jointly by State Parks and CDOW.⁵⁶

Partnerships

Stagecoach State Park partners with many local, state, and federal governments, quasi-governmental entities, organizations, and foundations (Table 12). These groups offer vital partnerships with the park that offer mutual benefits on conservation, restoration, funding, education, and other tasks. The following table illustrates some of the major partnerships with Stagecoach State Parks.

Table 12. Stagecoach State Park's Partnerships

Partner	Nature of Partnership
LOCAL	
Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District (UYWCD)	The park is operated pursuant to a lease between the UYWCD and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, giving Colorado State Parks "exclusive use, control of and responsibility for the Reservoir Property for the management, administration and maintenance of permitted public recreational purposes and any facilities existing thereon or constructed therefore as it deems necessary for the use of this Reservoir Property by the general public for recreational activities only."
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps	RMYC engages the strength and potential of youth and young adults to make a difference in themselves and their community through meaningful service opportunities, educational experiences, and group recreational activities. This group has been and will continue to be used on the park to assist on various trail and resource management projects.
Routt County	Stagecoach staff works in partnership with several County departments, including Planning, Cooperative Extension, and Road & Bridge departments.
Routt County Sheriff Office and Routt County Communications	The Sheriff's office assists Park Managers with law enforcement and the Routt County Communications assists with emergency dispatch.
Stagecoach Property Owners Association (SPOA)	Stagecoach staff continues to work with SPOA on advertising special events at the park and as an avenue to solicit thoughts and ideas on various management issues. We are currently working with them to investigate the potential to put together a Stagecoach Friends group.
Steamboat Conservation Youth Corps	The Steamboat Conservation Youth Corps has completed rehabilitation projects in the park.
Local School Districts: Sorocco Schools	In partnership with SOROCO educational and interpretive programs are offered throughout the year including a Winter Skills Day and an aquatic insects program at the wetlands here at the park.
STATE	
Colorado Division of Wildlife	CDOW manages the fisheries at Stagecoach both in the reservoir and the river below. Stagecoach staff also work with them on other law enforcement and wildlife issues in and around the park.
Colorado State Forest Service	Park staff works with the Colorado State Forest Service on wildland fire matters and forestry issues.
Colorado State Patrol	The Colorado State Patrol helps with law enforcement and emergency dispatch.

⁵⁶ Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of Stagecoach Reservoir; Division of Wildlife and Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. March 16, 1990.

FEDERAL	
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)	Stagecoach shares a boundary with USFS land, where the two agencies work together on resource management and recreational issues.
U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Stagecoach staff works with BLM on resource management issues such as controlled burns and weed management on the adjacent BLM land.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Stagecoach staff works with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on endangered species management on an as needed basis.

Special Uses

Here at Stagecoach, park staff allocates Special Use Permits, or Short-Term Concession permits primarily for outfitters wanting to guide fisherman along the Tailwater section of the Yampa River. Because of the small size of the area, there is a potential to over use this very valuable yet fragile area. For this reason, State Parks issues a maximum of six permits that contain some fairly unique mandates. Each permit has a \$300 annual administrative fee associated with it in addition to a quarterly 5% gross fee. Through these permits, Park Staff is able to manage the amount of commercial use at the Tailwater.

There is a guiding moratorium on Tuesdays and Saturdays to assure the resource has a break from the extreme pressure received from guided trips. In addition, these moratorium days give the general public a couple of days each week where they do not have to worry about the crowds resulting from guided trips. Outfitters are also limited on the number of days they can be on the water during each quarter. In 2007, to come up with this quota, park management, along with CDOW, looked at historical data acquired from guide accounting forms collected to track outfitter use. In line with this data, and also taking into account environmental, biological, and recreational issues previously identified with this area, each outfitter was assigned a specific number of days per quarter. Each quarter is different depending on use patterns and resource concerns.

In addition to issuing permits to outfitters guiding on the Tailwater, park management has in previous years issued permits for other commercial uses such as photography, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

Concessions

The only long-term concession used here at Stagecoach State Park is our Marina concession. The concession came under new management in the early spring of 2010. Tom and Tami Thurston, local Oak Creek Residents, now run the Marina store and associated opportunities here at Stagecoach. This is a 10-year lease with a 5-year extension option. They pay a \$1,000 annual fee, 6% gross fee, and utilities associated with the Marina Store. They own and manage the dock system and run the state-owned store and dry storage area. Although they generate revenue via sale of goods from the marina store, the majority of their profit comes through the rental of boats, wet slips, and dry storage.

The Thurstons also run a dog sled operation on the Elk Run Trail during the winter months. They have talked about expanding winter operations to include renting ice-fishing gear and snowshoes.

Park Budget and Finances

Stagecoach relies on annual appropriations for “personal services” funding and for three other annual budget allocations to manage the park (i.e., operating, utilities, and temporary worker allocations). Larger expenditures for items such as road repairs, facilities upgrades, capital equipment, and other enhancements must be requested annually through the Rocky Mountain Region’s “Major Repairs and Minor Improvements” budget line (currently referred to as LSP allocations), which compete with similar request from other parks in the region on a priority basis.

Sections below highlight FY 2006 through FY 2010 budget expenditures for each of the primary budget categories. It should be noted that the FY 2009 and FY 2010 were financially challenging years for the Division due to the single largest recession in recent history, which led to over \$3.0 million reduction in Colorado State Parks General Fund support (taxpayer dollars). All parks and programs made subsequent reductions to operating budgets, including Stagecoach.

Operating Expenses

Between FY 2007 and FY 2010, Stagecoach State Park was allocated about \$27,700 to \$32,500 for its “Operations” budget. This budget covers the day-to-day expenses associated with maintaining the park’s facilities, and managing various functions associated with the work unit. Much like other state recreation areas, the largest portion of the park’s operating budget goes toward fleet vehicles (about \$12,000/year per FY 2010 budget figures). Trash removal and fuel comprised about 15% and 16% of the total operating budget in FY 2010, respectively.

Table 13. Operating Expenses (FY2007 - FY2010)

Expenditure	FY2007	% of Total	FY2008	% of Total	FY2009	% of Total	FY2010	% of Total
Boat	\$0	0.0%	\$308.91	1.0%	\$172.5	0.5%	\$1,033.73	2.2%
Cleaning Supplies	\$1,712.94	5.1%	\$1,156.15	3.6%	\$1954.41	5.4%	\$2,149.83	4.5%
Copier Rental	\$437.68	1.3%	\$387.3	1.2%	\$371.7	1.0%	\$476.68	1.0%
Fuel	\$852.93	2.5%	\$12,44.18	3.9%	\$5,404.77	15.0%	\$7,087.28	14.9%
Trash Removal	\$4,062	12.1%	\$8,317.2	26.2%	\$5,720.53	15.9%	\$7,456.52	15.7%
Law Enforcement	\$1,155.09	3.4%	\$435.44	1.4%	\$661.14	1.8%	\$1,830.85	3.9%
Maint. Supplies	\$4,666.98	13.9%	\$1,614.49	5.1%	\$1,874.13	5.2%	\$5,135.28	10.8%
Fleet	\$14,853.95	44.2%	\$12,517.02	39.4%	\$13,785.33	38.3%	\$11,946.44	25.1%
Misc. Purchases	\$782.82	2.3%	\$507.19	1.6%	\$1,004.35	2.8%	\$1,431.82	3.0%
Office Supplies	\$1,202.31	3.6%	\$673.38	2.1%	\$1,030.65	2.9%	\$2,912.42	6.1%
Phone and fax	\$2,130.23	6.3%	\$1,984.64	6.2%	\$1,969.11	5.5%	\$2,528.10	5.3%
Postage	\$360.97	1.1%	\$356.65	1.1%	\$472.06	1.3%	\$516.45	1.1%
Travel	\$617.03	1.8%	\$1,142.25	3.6%	\$1,570.61	4.4%	\$287.48	0.6%
Water	\$753.75	2.2%	\$1,160.60	3.6%	\$1,537.34	4.3%	\$2,756.94	5.8%
Total	\$33,588.68	100%	\$31,805.4	100%	\$35,991.29	104%	\$47,549.82	100%

Vegetation management and Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) inspections include additional park operating expenditures; however, these are administered through the Resource Stewardship and Natural Areas Program. Vegetation management dollars are typically expended on weed management and other expenses tied to vegetation management. In FY 2009, the Resource Stewardship and Natural Areas Program allocated \$4,000 in vegetation management funding to Stagecoach. In FY 2010, this amount was decreased to \$2,375.

ANS inspections have been in place at Stagecoach since spring 2008. The last two years of ANS expenses are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. ANS Expenses (FY 2009 - FY2010)

Expenditure	FY 2009*	FY 2010
ANS Temp Staff	\$827	\$22,704
ANS Operating Expense	\$415	\$8,171

*In FY2009 Stagecoach only conducted ANS inspections on weekends and at the main boat ramp. Many of the charges were also inadvertently billed against the park operating budget and not the ANS budget. In FY 2010, inspections were expanded to the Morrison Cove Boat Ramp along the South Shore, also contributing to increased costs.

Utilities

Stagecoach’s “Utilities Budget” covers the annual costs for electricity, toilet pumping, water expenditures, and propane. Electricity accounts for about 70% of the parks utilities budget (per FY 2009 and FY 2010 figures). According to the 2009 State Parks Technical Energy Audit, RV pads account for about 47% of total energy usage at Stagecoach. Camper Services and the Park Office/Maintenance Shop account for the remaining energy usage, accounting for 30% and 23%, respectively.⁵⁷

Propane, which accounts for about 17% of the utilities budget, is used to heat the Park Office and Maintenance Complex, and also water used in the shower facilities. Water expenditures correspond to the purchase of water (which occurred in FY 2008) as well as water treatment. Toilet pumping costs include the annual pumping of vault toilets.

Table 15. Utility Expenses (FY 2007 - FY 2010)

Expenditure	FY2007	% of Total	FY2008	% of Total	FY2009	% of Total	FY2010	% of Total
Toilet Pumping	\$5,786	18.7%	\$4,331	10.8%	\$3,565	11.7%	\$3,598	11.1%
Water Expense	\$4,839	15.6%	\$13,871*	34.6%	\$2,180**	7.2%	\$2,757	8.5%
Electricity	\$15,050	48.6%	\$17,940	44.7%	\$20,019	65.7%	\$21,101	65.1%
Propane	\$5,272	17.0%	\$3,966	9.9%	\$4,697	15.4%	\$4,943	15.3%
Total	\$30,947	100%	\$40,108	100%	\$30,461	100%	\$32,399	100%

*In FY2008 Stagecoach was working on upgrading its Water Filtration System and had to purchase water for most of the second half of the summer which came out of utilities.

**In FY2009 the water filtration system was fully operational.

⁵⁷ Colorado State Parks Technical Energy Audit Report. EMC Engineers. 2009.

Personal Services

Personal Services account for the single largest component of Stagecoach’s operating budget. In FY 2010, Stagecoach expended \$227,981 in personal services (salary for 5 FTE which include a Park Manager, Park Manager III, Park Manager II, Park and Resource Technician, and Tourist Assistant). These expenditures were generally consistent with FY 2009 expenditures.

Temporary Workers

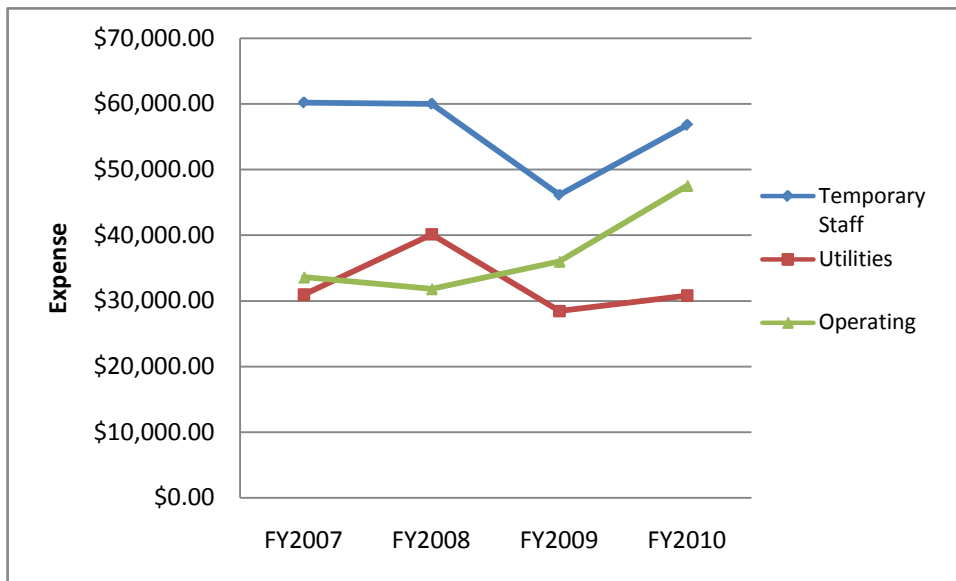
In addition to the park’s five full-time employees, Stagecoach hires an additional 12 to 15 temporary employees during the summer months to work as rangers, gate attendants, and maintenance workers. A breakdown of temporary staff budget allocations and expenditures is provided below.

Table 16. Temporary Staff Expenditures (FY 2006-2010)

Year	Allocation	Expenditures
2006	\$64,768	\$59,213.46
2007	\$70,748	\$60,203.29
2008	\$66,748	\$60,010.49
2009	\$66,748	\$46,152.21*
2010	\$63,673	\$56,799.35

*In FY 2009, expenditures were relatively lower due to three temporary staff leaving mid-season and staff had difficulty filling these positions.

Figure 10. Operating, Temporary Staff, and Utility Expenses (FY 2007 - FY 2010)

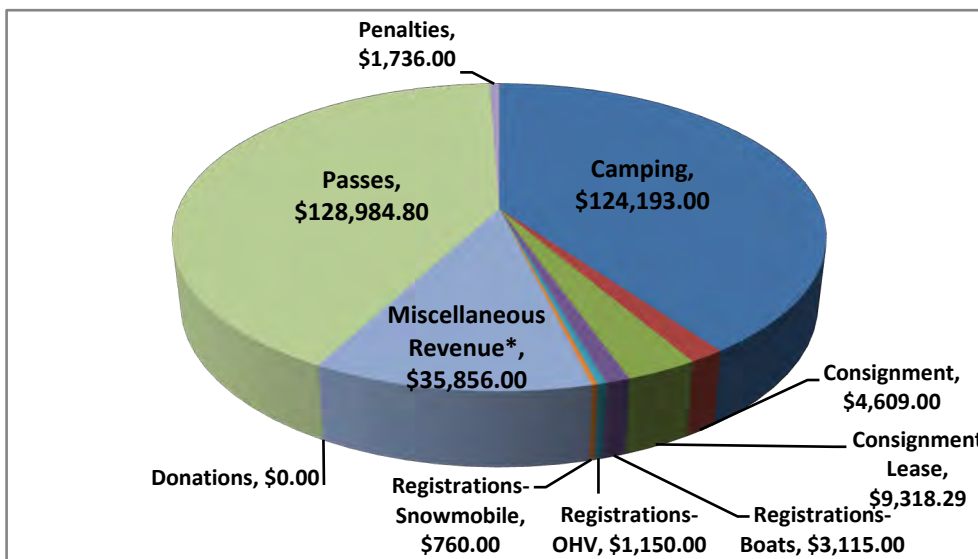


Overall Budget Trends

Revenue Trends

State Parks is required by C.R.S. 33-12-100.2 to be financially self-supporting to the extent possible.⁵⁸ This has implications not only for any new venture or facility, but also existing operations. Consequently, State Parks monitors park self-sufficiency over time. At Stagecoach State Park, the overall self-sufficiency level (revenue divided by personnel, operating, utility and temporary staff expenditures) was approximately 86% for FY 2010.⁵⁹ Summary revenue tables for FY 2009 and FY 2010 are provided below, as well as a revenue summary over the past six fiscal years.

Figure 11. FY 2009 Revenue Breakdown

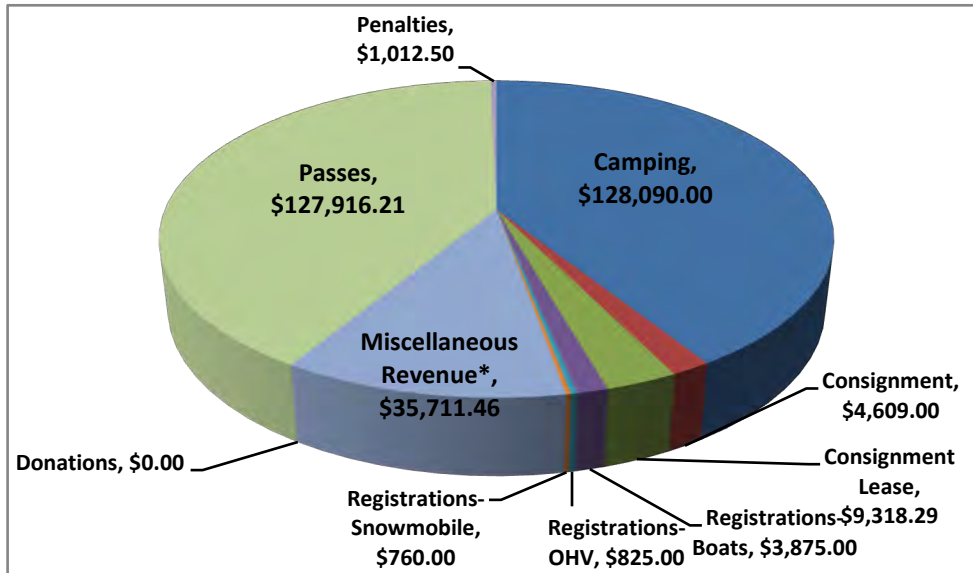


*Miscellaneous revenues include UYWCD's annual operating allocation of approximately \$35,000.

⁵⁸ C.R.S. 33-12-100.2 state specifically that... "Because of the nature and operation of such state parks and recreation areas, the system can be largely self-supporting, and the users of such resources can help fund the system's operation and maintenance. The General Assembly declares and intends that as a matter of state policy the system of state parks and state recreation areas should be financed as much as reasonably possible through revenues derived from the users of such system."

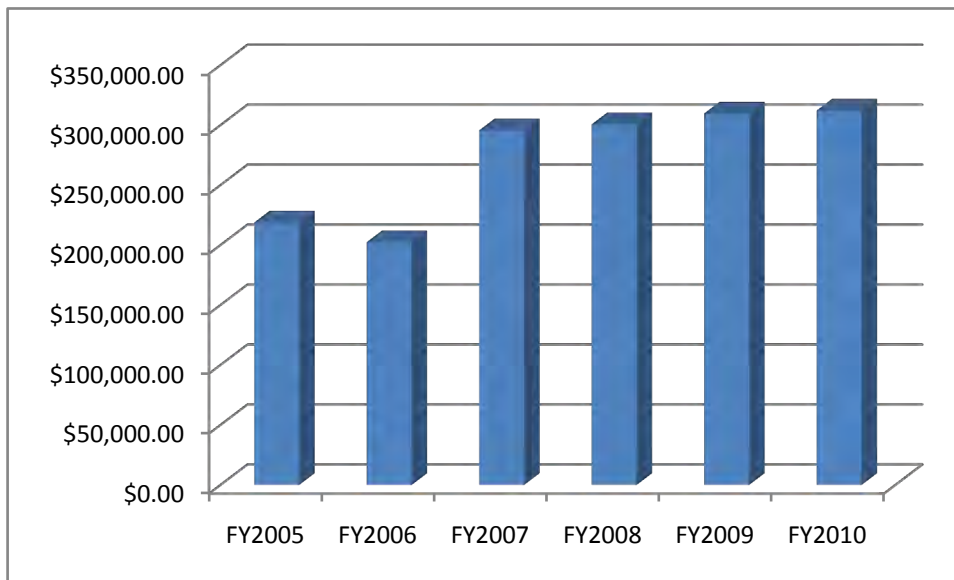
⁵⁹ Total self-sufficiency is based on direct and allocated indirect operating expenses from all sources, and total revenue from direct and allocated revenue sources.

Figure 12. FY2010 Park Revenues



*Miscellaneous revenues include UYWCD's annual operating allocation of approximately \$35,000.

Table 17. Revenue by Fiscal Year



Economic Value

Stagecoach State Park has a positive impact on the economy of neighboring communities such as Oak Creek, Haden, Steamboat Springs, and Yampa. Annual salaries associated with the park's 5 full-time and 12 to 15 seasonal temporary employees contribute over \$284,000 to the local economy in direct payroll. Additionally, a large percentage of the park's overall operating budget is spent locally.

In addition to visitor trend data, the visitor intercept survey conducted by Corona Insight in 2009 provided details about visitor spending. Several key findings about visitor spending in and near Stagecoach are outlined below:

- Visitors spent an average of \$221.58 per vehicle within 50 miles of Stagecoach, which is higher than the division-wide average of \$125.17 per vehicle.
- According to Corona Insight, all visitors who responded to the survey contributed a total of over \$10.8 million in total annual expenditures to Stagecoach State Park and the surrounding communities within a 50-mile radius of the park.
- Local residents who visited the park spend much less per vehicle on average than non-local visitors (\$25.78 vs. \$247.36).

Methodology for Determining Management Zones

The management zoning scheme adapted specifically for Colorado State Parks provides a framework to identify areas that provide an array of visitor experiences and recreation opportunities, based on the resource constraints that occur within the park. Within each management zone, suitable types of facilities and land uses are also identified, along with the suggested visitor experience and management focus.

By providing specific zones that account for resource constraints and are established to meet different types of visitor experiences and recreation opportunities at Stagecoach State Park, visitors can select areas that most closely meet their desires and expectations, and minimize long-term impacts to the resources. In addition, management zoning helps park managers avoid conflicts amongst visitors seeking different types of activities, identify management needs, sustainably manage the unique resources at the park, and more effectively plan future park development.

The first step in establishing management zones at Stagecoach State Park entailed compiling all of the mapping data necessary to establish management zones. Specific maps used in the mapping overlay process included: 1) Ecological Sensitivity Zones (from the Stagecoach Park Stewardship Plan); 2) Land Ownership (Map 3); 3) Recreation Infrastructure and Facilities (Map 8); and; 4) Engineering Suitability (Map 9) that depicts development suitability based on slope, wetlands and floodplains, and access to utilities.

Description of Management Zones

Using the above zoning scheme, a zoning map was developed for Stagecoach State Park that identifies appropriate management zones (Map 10). As a reservoir park, the majority of the park acreage is submerged. Much of the land-based zoning is limited to the northernmost portion of the park, and near the western and eastern boundaries. Most of the areas zoned “Development” are located near the park entrance, along the park entrance road in the northernmost section of the park. The “Passive Recreation” zoning is concentrated near existing campgrounds and other areas that serve as transition zones between developed and natural zones. Areas zoned “Natural” dominate much of the western wetlands preserve, and the Tailwater area.

Map 9. Engineering Suitability

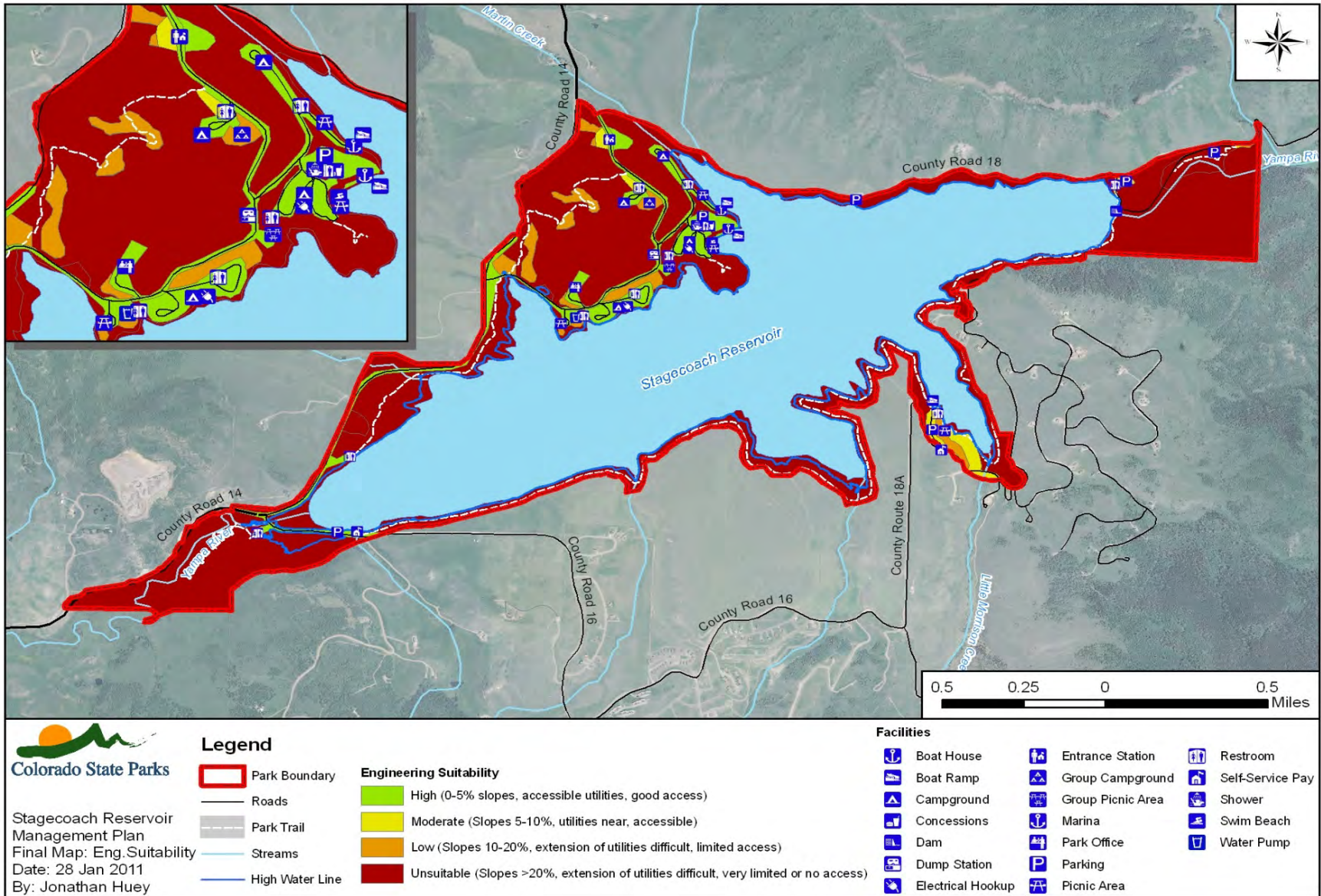
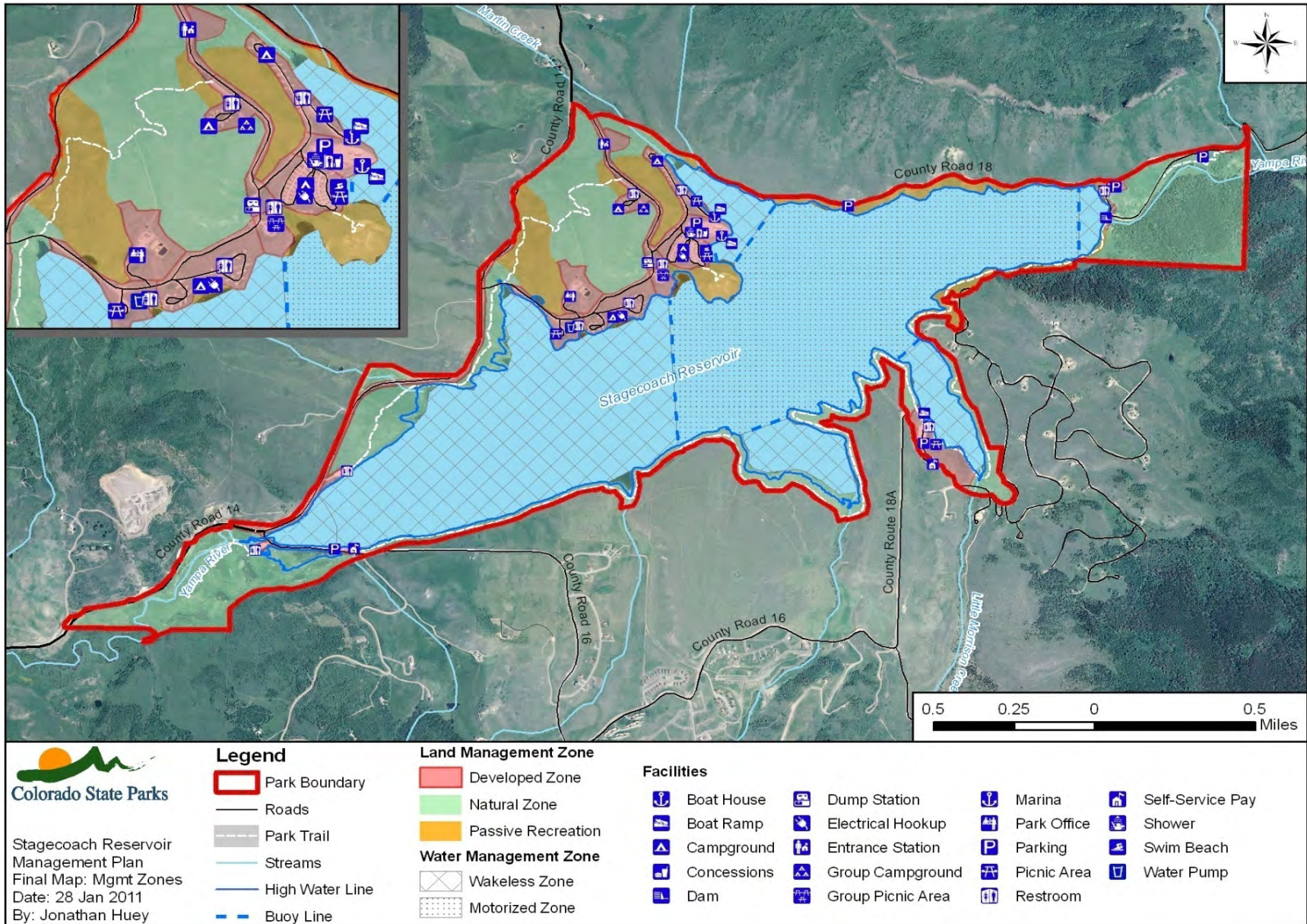


Table 18. Management Zone Classification Scheme and Characteristics

<i>Zone Classification</i>	<i>Visitor Experience</i>	<i>Recreation Opportunities</i>	<i>Potential Facilities</i>	<i>Management Focus</i>
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High social interaction ▪ Low opportunity for solitude ▪ Low opportunity for challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High-density recreation ▪ Emphasis on providing opportunities that rely on motor vehicle access via roads such as picnicking, and at some parks could include RV and tent camping, and potentially motorized uses in designated areas. ▪ Some fishing, boating, equestrian use, mountain biking, hiking, and watchable wildlife may occur in this zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically parking areas, paved or high-use roads, utilities, group picnic areas, visitor services, restrooms, concessions, and interpretive facilities and at overnight parks, developed camping areas. ▪ Less typically this could include marinas, motorized use areas, and dog off leash areas at some parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intense management needs ▪ Manage to provide sustainable recreation and aesthetic qualities ▪ Prevent weed spread, erosion, or other degradation ▪ Intense fire prevention mitigation ▪ Revegetate with natives where possible or with non-invasive landscaping
Passive Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate social interaction/low opportunity for solitude ▪ Moderate degree of interaction with the natural environment ▪ Moderate opportunity for challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium-density recreation ▪ Emphasis on providing hiking, fishing, equestrian use, mountain biking and other dispersed recreation. ▪ Some picnicking or backcountry camping, canoeing and other non-motorized boating, watchable wildlife, interpretive opportunities are likely to occur in this zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically trails and interpretive facilities and individual picnic areas. ▪ Less typically this could include dirt roads or light use roads, limited motorized uses (in larger parks only), hike-in campgrounds, or yurts ▪ Minimize utilities to the extent possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate to High management needs ▪ Manage to maintain the natural character and provide sustainable recreation ▪ Actively manage weeds in order to eradicate or suppress, and prevent erosion or other degradation ▪ High level of fire prevention ▪ Revegetate with native species
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low social interaction/moderate opportunity for solitude ▪ High degree of interaction with the natural environment ▪ Moderate to high opportunity for challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium- to low-density recreation. ▪ Emphasis on providing low impact, non-motorized and dispersed recreation. ▪ All recreation opportunities in the Passive Recreation Zone are likely to occur here with the exception that there is more of an emphasis on providing non-motorized dispersed recreation. ▪ Hunting also permissible at some parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primarily trails and some interpretive facilities ▪ Minimize utilities to the extent possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate to low management needs ▪ Manage to maintain the natural character, the native flora, the wildlife habitat, and the ecological functions ▪ Actively manage weeds for eradication, prevent erosion or other degradation ▪ Moderate to high level of fire prevention ▪ Revegetate with native species
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically unmodified natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None, or heavily restricted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Least intense management needs ▪ Preservation of very sensitive resources or restriction of visitor use for legal or safety reasons.

Map 10. Management Zoning



Area Descriptions that Influence Park Zoning

In addition to natural resource, land ownership, and engineering suitability mapping, other factors influencing park zoning included historical activities, established land uses, and acquisition history. At Stagecoach State Park, 10 distinct areas were identified in the plan (these are depicted on Map 11). A brief summary of these areas and key considerations that were taken into account during the park zoning process are highlighted below:

Morrison Cove & Pike Cove Areas

The Little Morrison Creek converges with Stagecoach Reservoir at Morrison Cove. This area abuts the South Shore community (which currently includes about 20 residences) and features the Morrison Cove Boat Ramp. This boat ramp serves as the only boating access point on the south side of the reservoir and is primarily used local by residents, and to a lesser extent visitors from the surrounding region. The close proximity of some residences to the park boundary has led to some management challenges, including off-leash dogs and beaching of boats near homes.

Middle Creek converges with Stagecoach State Park at Pike Cove. While there is little if any residential development currently adjacent to this area, future residential and commercial development could dramatically alter the landscape (including another marina). Much of the property is owned by a single landowner. At the time of the writing of this management plan, efforts were underway to determine if/whether an easement might be mutually beneficial to both Colorado State Parks and the landowner. Columbian Sage Grouse is known to be active and have important habitat in this area.

Wetlands featuring willows and chokecherry are located immediately adjacent to both Little Morrison Creek and Middle Creek. This area supports breeding or foraging of spotted sandpiper, tree swallow, yellow warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, green-tailed towhee, song sparrow, Lincoln sparrow, red-winged blackbird, western meadowlark, brewer's blackbird, brewer's sparrow and several species of duck. Blue grouse are also thought to be active in this area. Waterfowl often concentrate along the shoreline of this area.

The Elk Run trail extends through both Morrison and Pike Cove Areas. Recreational trails are eventually planned through the Stahl property that link up with the Elk Run Trail. While these trails have yet to be sited, preliminary Landscape and Recreation Master Plans indicate that 4-foot wide compacted trails with crusher fine surfacing are recommended within a 10-foot wide trail easement.⁶⁰

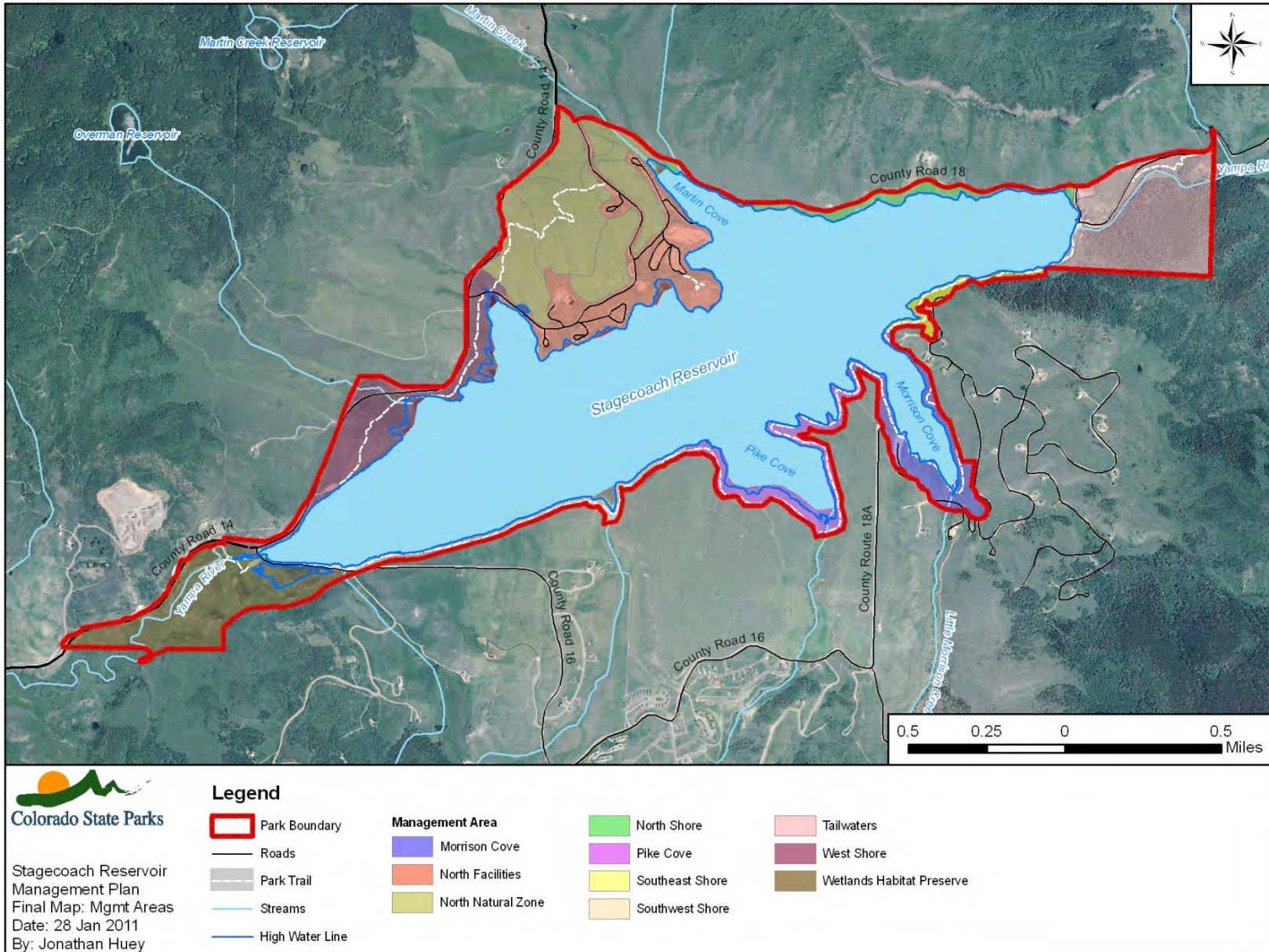
North Facilities & North Natural Areas

Over 90 percent of the park's recreation infrastructure lies within the North Facilities Area, including each of the four campgrounds, park office, the main park road, picnic areas, and the Stagecoach Marina. The primary natural feature in this area is Pinnacle Point, which is the park's highest point and offers 360 degree scenic views.

The North Natural Zone is a hundred or so feet higher in elevation from the existing shoreline and features the Overlook Trail. This trail extends through big sagebrush and silver sagebrush

⁶⁰ "South Shore at Stagecoach Landscape and Recreation Master Plan." Map. Produced by Integrated Design Workshop. Oak Creek, 2007. Print.

Map 11. Management Areas



shrubland that features pockets of native grasses and forbs but is dominated by smooth brome.

North Shore Area

The North Shore Area spans between County Road 18 and the northeast boundary of Stagecoach Reservoir. The shoreline is relatively steep in this area, and other than one access point from County Road 18 and a bit of the shoreline near Martin Cove where boaters sometimes recreate, this area experiences limited use. This is the only area surrounding the park that does not currently have a trail extending through it. It is dominated by sagebrush and likely supports breeding of green towhee, spotted towhee, Western meadowlark, Vesper sparrow, Brewer's sparrow and Savannah sparrow.

Southeast Shore Area

The Southeast Shore Area is predominantly big sagebrush shrubland with the easternmost portion comprising silver sagebrush and lodgepole pine. Some of the vegetation in this area is in excellent condition. This area is the edge of elk winter range, and an elk cow/calf pair was observed here during early summer of 2010. While the Elk Run Trail extends through this area, minimal use occurs here, as much of the surrounding lands are private. There is one area where the public is using a social trail and walking in regularly, and there is one part of the shoreline where boaters often set up a day area on the shore.

The 2010 breeding bird survey detected the third highest diversity of bird species out of 15 total sites at Stagecoach. The following species were active in this area during breeding season: great horned owl, poorwill, common loon, buteo sp., Williamson's sapsucker, northern flicker (breeding in park), hammond's flycatcher, cordilleran flycatcher, warbling vireo, American crow, tree swallow (breeding in park), mountain chickadee, house wren (breeding in park), ruby-crowned kinglet (breeding in park), American robin (breeding in park), yellow warbler, and yellow-rumped warbler, and black-headed grosbeak in this area.

Southwest Shore Area

The Southwest Shore Area is another relatively narrow band of park land that extends between the Wetlands Area and Pike Cove. The area is bordered to the south by private land (that as of 2010 had not yet been subdivided). The Elk Run Trail extends along the shoreline and through big sagebrush habitat used by the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. The western edge of the shoreline is valuable as shorebird foraging and nesting habitat. In early spring this area of the reservoir serves as foraging habitat for many flocks of migratory birds.

During the May 2010 bird inventory, ring-necked ducks, lesser scaups, gadwalls, mallards, American white Pelicans, Western grebes, eared grebes, spotted sandpipers, killdeer, Franklin's gulls, and ring-billed gulls were viewed in this inlet area. In June of the same inventory, a female cinnamon teal with young were viewed, along with large numbers of Gadwalls, mallards, American White Pelicans, and California gulls.

There is also a small Aspen/shrub woodland nestled between the reservoir and County Road 16 is very valuable nesting habitat and contains some of the only forest in Stagecoach. There are many songbird nests in this area. Nesting birds in this area likely include: raven, crow, cedar Waxwings, Eared Grebe, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, tree swallow, swallows, black capped chickadee, house wren, American robin, yellow warbler, black-headed grosbeak, and Brewer's blackbird.

Tailwater Area

The Tailwater Area is best known for the excellent trout fishing that occurs in the .45 miles of the Yampa River that span below the dam east to the park boundary. This relatively small stretch of fishable river can be accessed from two parking areas that are situated along CR 18. This stretch of road is open about 9 months of the year, April through December. While the area is mostly used by anglers, some hikers walk the Tailwater trail to enjoy the scenery, wildlife, and bird-watching. Wetlands border much of the river corridor, although gambel oak, service berry, snowberry, and Douglas fir dominate much of the uplands. The southern edge of the Yampa River also features some lodgepole and blue spruce as well.

Despite some challenges in this area with social trails and erosion along the river shoreline, and signs of Mountain pine beetle infestations, much of the vegetative condition of this area is considered excellent. The forested hillside south of the stream is important winter habitat for elk and is very likely support several nesting raptors. Birds active or breeding in this area in 2010 included: broad-tailed hummingbird, northern flicker, western wood-peewee, cordilleran flycatcher, American dipper, ruby-crowned kinglet, American robin, gray catbird, yellow warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, Western tanager, green-tailed towhee, song sparrow, brown-headed cowbird, and pine siskin.

West Shore Area

The West Shore Area features the Lakeview Trail, newly-created wetlands following the 2010 dam raise, and a handful of shoreline fishing access opportunities. Fishing primarily occurs just north of the parking area, Sedges, rushes, and cattails stretch along much of the shoreline. Uplands generally include big sagebrush, timothy, smooth brome, and Kentucky bluegrass. This area has a fair amount of birds and will have a wetland mitigation area intended to provide bird nesting habitat that will require some protection to be successful. This area of the park currently has good diversity and numbers of migrating shorebirds, but this density should increase with the new wetland area. In spring 2010 ring-necked duck, lesser scaup, gadwall, mallard, American white pelican, western grebe, eared grebe, spotted sandpiper, killdeer, Franklin's gull, California gull, ring-billed gull, gadwall, mallard, and breeding cinnamon teal with young were in this area.

Wetlands Habitat Preserve Area

The Wetlands Habitat Preserve was established by the UYWCD when the reservoir was created in 1989. This impressive wetland area is bisected by the Yampa River, and includes a raised interpretive trail comprised of a plastic "super deck" and offers visitors opportunities to watch and learn about wildlife with the aid of viewing blinds, interpretive panels, and several river access points. The area is a popular for waterfowl hunting in the fall, and attracts a variety of

wildlife and bird species throughout much of the year. This area of the park experiences relatively low visitation but is used regularly by school groups. Interpretation and environmental education and fishing access are the primary visitor attractions.

This area has the best shorebird/waterfowl habitat in the park. This area has supported breeding or foraging of many waterfowl including: Sandhill crane (which appear to have stopped nesting there in the last few years), Canada goose, gadwall, American wigeon, mallard, cinnamon teal, blue-winged teal, white-faces ibis, possibly Virginia rail. Also many songbirds depend on the willow habitat here for nesting including: willow flycatcher, several species of warblers, Brewer's blackbird, and red-winged black bird.

Carrying Capacity Considerations

Balancing visitor use with natural resource protection is a core tenet of Colorado State Parks' mission. Establishment of carrying capacities for park resources is also an important consideration in Goal Two of Colorado State Parks' 2010 Strategic Plan. More importantly, determination of carrying capacities helps ensure that park resources can be enjoyed by park visitors in perpetuity.

Land-based Capacity

Carrying capacity can refer to the capacity of the natural resources, the experience or the infrastructure to support the number of visitors. Because maintaining the natural resources and the wildlife habitat is an important part of the goals for the park and managing our habitat for wildlife within the park is also part of our legislative mandate, members of the Stagecoach Planning Team developed GIS models to analyze the density and distribution of visitors within the park, and how those numbers of people intersect with the natural resources. Stagecoach has a high diversity of birds as well as several sensitive species of breeding birds, so these species were used as the focus for these impact models. A breeding bird survey was conducted in 2010 and habitat was mapped and modeled for several species and several guilds of species. The focal groups were Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, sagebrush nesting birds, and waterfowl.

The models of visitation used were based on visitation numbers during a peak use day in 2010, Father's day, as well as estimations for the maximum visitation based on all parking areas filling up. Numbers were estimated as visitors per day and then applied to the areas to provide a statistic of visitors per acre per day (Map 12). Using these models densities of visitors within the park were determined and natural resources staff analyzed how many acres of habitat was available for use by these various bird species and how many acres were within close proximity to high densities of visitors where breeding activities were likely to be disturbed.

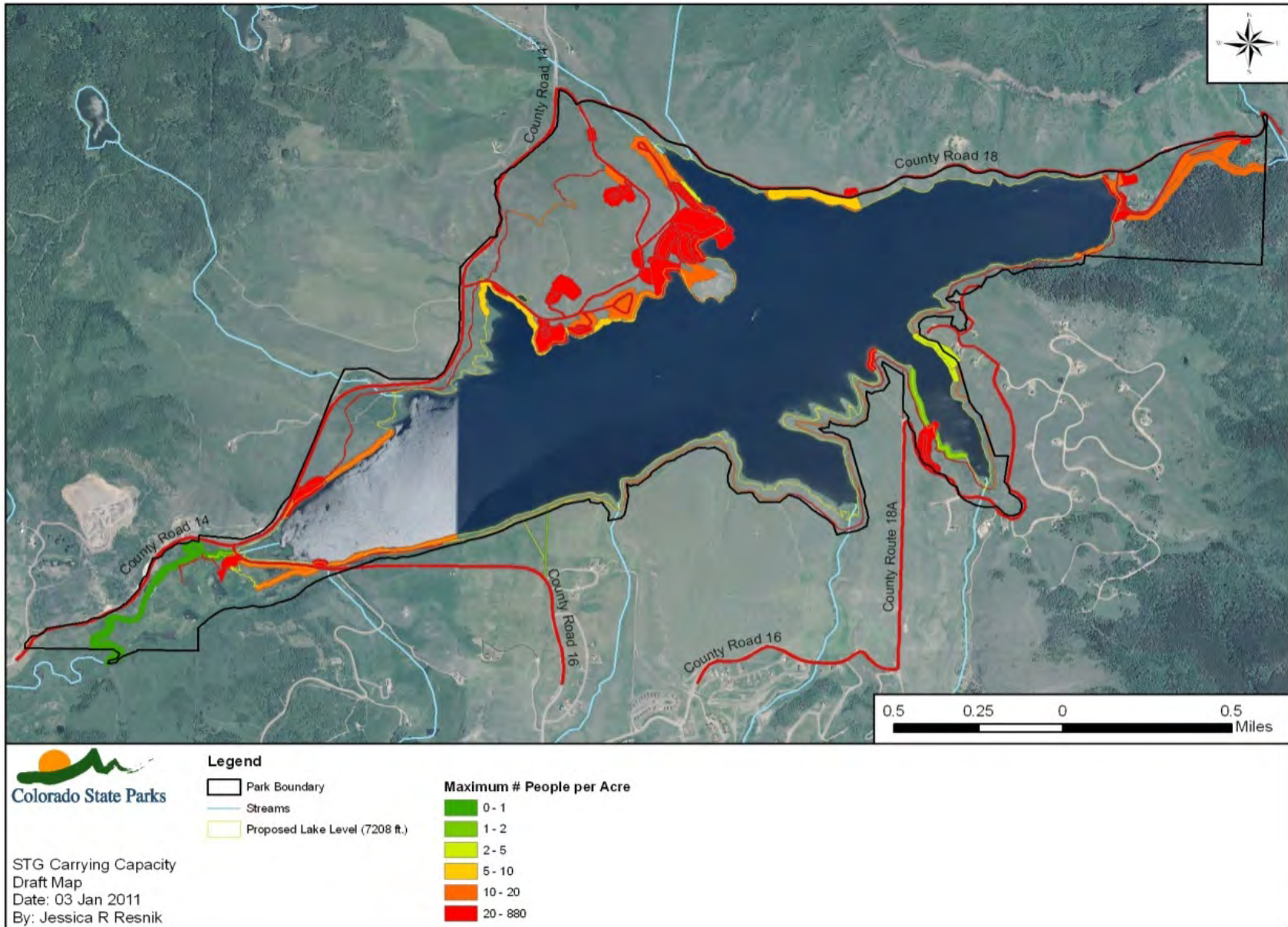
This analysis is still underway as of spring 2011, and will be refined and will be finalized through the fall of 2011. The preliminary results of this natural resource carrying capacity model support the need to evaluate use of the Overlook trail during bird breeding season as well as the need to look for opportunities for habitat conservation beyond the park boundaries.

Boating Capacity

The Stagecoach Planning Team also considered boating capacity on the reservoir and determined that as of 2011, the reservoir is at or near boating capacity (Appendix G). There is a moderate level of concern that an increase in boating activity would negatively affect boater satisfaction, safety, and shoreline resources.

While current boater levels have not necessarily exceeded the overall boating capacity at the reservoir, any future management decisions that may potentially affect boating capacity elements should be carefully considered prior to being implemented. Additional facilities to accommodate boating (i.e. parking or an additional marina), could result in heightened impacts to shoreline resources, affect the visitor experience, and reduce boater safety. Altering the reservoir's buoy line should also be considered within the context of subsequent impacts to spatial, facility, social, and ecological capacity, which are four key elements that factor into Stagecoach's overall boating capacity. Preliminary research conducted in 2010 regarding possible expansion of wake zone by 55 acres would actually reduce the optimal number of boats in use at one time, due to the additional acreage requirements needed to maintain safe operating areas for motorboats and personal watercraft, and the reduced area available for non-wake boating (e.g., canoes, belly boaters, and trolling boaters).

Map 12. Visitor Density and Distribution Model



5.0 PARK ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Park enhancement opportunities include significant park improvements or efforts that are needed to help each park fulfill its full potential (as defined by a park's vision and goals). Some enhancement opportunities include park improvements that are significant in terms of their spatial scale and effort needed to implement them, and some may warrant considerable financial resources. Enhancement opportunities are also substantial enough to warrant supporting documentation to help clarify rationale, potential contribution, and overall value to the park.

Park enhancement opportunities for Stagecoach State Park were developed based on suggestions from the public, professional knowledge and experience learned from operating other parks, and discussions with key partner agencies such as CDOW and UYWCD. Park enhancements are described in detail in this section and include:

- Major rehabilitation or improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure;
- New facilities and infrastructure;
- Natural resource rehabilitation and restoration efforts projects; and
- Management initiatives critical to the long-term operational success of the park.

While all potential park enhancements that have been identified for Stagecoach are described in this section and highlighted in Map X, those that may potentially impact park visitation, operations, and/or revenues are further evaluated in the *Stagecoach State Park Financial Assessment* in Appendix G. The financial assessment highlights estimated capital expenditures, operating costs, and associated enhancement revenues (if any).

This section provides detailed information on recommended park enhancements, notes their relative priority level, and also discusses relevant design parameters and potential funding strategies. It is important to note that park enhancement opportunities and initiatives are not necessarily "commitments." Also, new development should be balanced with maintaining and preserving what we already have and major new facility investments should be balanced with resource enhancements. Finally, implementation is contingent on the park securing adequate financial and human resources and must be considered or weighed within the context of other Division-wide needs.

Existing Facilities & Infrastructure

EO1. Road Improvements. Roads that exceed 200 vehicles per day for the majority of the year typically require paved surfacing. During June, July, and much of August, this threshold is regularly exceeded along the main park road. There are also major drainage issues (particularly in the vicinity of Junction City Campground), that need to be addressed. While vehicular traffic is significantly reduced during winter months, intensive snow removal efforts and the spring time mud season severely rut roads. Periodic grading occurs once annually in late April or early May. In late May to early June, this is followed up with a less extensive grading and chemical treatments (MgCl) to avoid washboarding and dust.

- **EO1(a) Priority Road Maintenance (High Priority).** While the existing roads are presently in fair condition, additional road maintenance (aside from basic road grading and application of gravel) is needed to improve the park entrance road. Priority road maintenance work envisioned as part of this enhancement includes sub-grade

preparation, re-establishing the road crown, compaction, providing four inches of new road base, and other minor drainage improvements. Although addressing the drainage issues is necessary to keep roads intact and to avoid erosion, it will only provide a short-term fix and will not reduce the periodic maintenance costs associated with grading and application of gravel dust suppressant.

- **EO1(b) Paving from Park Entrance to Junction City Campground (Medium Priority).** Paving the 1.04 miles of park road between the park entrance and the Junction City Campground will provide a long-term solution to the road maintenance issue. At this time, it is anticipated that a 4-inch asphalt overlay would be necessary. While paving requires a higher capital investment, it will reduce staff time and money spent on road maintenance, enhance accessibility year round, reduce visitor complaints, and improve the park's appearance. [Note: basic road preparation steps described under EO1(a) would still be necessary prior to any paving.]

EO2. Replace/Update Electrical Infrastructure (High Priority). Stagecoach State Park's electrical infrastructure remains unchanged from when it was initially installed in the late 1980s, and the electrical system has been somewhat problematic from the start. Over the last few years, numerous issues have been uncovered that present problems for the Stagecoach maintenance staff. In addition, electrical demand has increased, primarily due to heightened electrical needs associated with more sophisticated Recreational Vehicles (RVs) that operate higher-ampere amenities (e.g., televisions, air conditioning, etc.). Future facility upgrades at the park may require increased electricity and substantial investments in the existing electrical infrastructure (including possible campground renovations). Key elements of the electrical infrastructure that need to be upgraded include the primary transmission line and transformer; however, additional infrastructure upgrades are likely necessary.

New Facilities & Infrastructure

EO3. Convert Keystone Picnic Area to Overnight Dry Cabins or Yurt (High priority).

Diversification of overnight facilities available at Stagecoach would offer another option for park users to enjoy Stagecoach, and provide additional park revenue during the off season. The Stagecoach Planning Team considers cabins as a viable recreation amenity at Stagecoach State park, pending such an investment covers annual operations and maintenance costs (see Appendix H).

The existing Keystone Picnic Area, which is located just past the Junction City Campground, is the area of the park that is most suitable for up to three overnight yurts or cabins. Unique features of this area include expansive views to the south, as well as shoreline access. While the area is fairly popular as a parking site for accessing shoreline fishing, picnic facilities in the area are underutilized.

In FY 2009, average annual occupancy of the Division's yurts was about 40%, while dry cabins were 44%. At parks like Sylvan Lake, Pearl Lake, and Golden Gate Canyon, average occupancy is as high as 85% to 90% percent during peak summer months, and 19% to 31% during peak winter months.^{61,62} It is expected that yurt or cabin occupancy at Stagecoach would be comparable to these numbers during the summer, and likely higher than average

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Sylvan Lake State Park's yurts were not operational during winter months in FY 2009 and therefore, no occupancy was recorded.

during winter (due to the popularity of ice fishing and the proximity of the accommodations to the reservoir).

EO4. Fish Cleaning Station (*Medium Priority*). One of the more frequently cited visitor suggestions at Stagecoach State Park is the addition of a fish cleaning station. Visitors to the park currently use areas along the shoreline, picnic tables or whatever area they can find to gut/clean their fish before throwing the entrails either back into the water,⁶³ in the bush/grass, or in bathroom trash cans. There are numerous problems associated with this practice, ranging from environmental, odor, and sanitation issues.

Conventional fish cleaning stations like those found at many existing parks grind up the fish waste and use water to send the waste to the water treatment facility. Installation of a conventional fish cleaning station is not currently feasible at Stagecoach, as it would increase the biological oxygen demand (BOD) of the wastewater and thus, hinder existing wastewater treatment needs. Upgrading the park's wastewater treatment facility to handle this increased load would also be a large capital investment (likely over \$300,000).

The Stagecoach Planning Team evaluated a number of possible options to address this issue and concluded that, currently, a fish composting facility is the best option (and is more affordable). This option would be similar to a conventional fish cleaning station. However, it would divert the fish waste to an underground composting unit that is linked to a 1,250 gallon septic tank, and an infiltrator absorption system. Current park management at Stagecoach believe this type of facility would work well at the park, and that proper training and oversight associated with operating such a unit should not be a problem. Typical daily maintenance during the summer is about 15 minutes per day between April and October, and could easily be performed by a trained seasonal staff. Solid waste produced from the unit would be odorless and could be used as a nutrient-rich fertilizer.⁶⁴ County approval of this facility would be necessary.⁶⁵

EO5. North Shore Trail Linkage (*Medium Priority*). Trails currently span around three-quarters of the reservoir. Between the dam and the park's main entrance, visitors typically walk along the county road, where on busy weekends there can be substantial numbers of vehicles (likely over 200 vehicles per day). An additional 1.2 miles of trail along the northwest shoreline below County Road 18 would help provide a contiguous trail system encircling the entire reservoir, and provide safer and more enjoyable hiking, mountain bicycling, or horseback riding experiences.

EO6. Campground Rehabilitation and Improvements (*Med Priority*). Stagecoach presently offers 65 "improved" campsites that provide 30-amp electrical hookups at Junction City, Pinnacle, and McKindley campgrounds. These campsites accommodate about 64% of all annual overnight visitation, or about 79% of total overnight revenue.⁶⁶ The layout and configuration of Stagecoach's campsites were designed to accommodate smaller RVs and camping trailers that are increasingly being replaced by larger RVs and trailers with higher electrical demands (50 amps and up). In addition, many of the existing campsites do not have clearly delineated boundaries and are thus susceptible to erosion and expansion over

⁶³While rarely enforced, CDOW prohibits the disposal of fish entrails or other byproducts into any body of water. CDOW (2010). 2010-2011 *Fishing Regulations Brochure*. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Fishing. P. 37.

⁶⁴According to Kem Davidson, Reservoir Operator at Wolford Reservoir, the fish composting unit has only had to be unloaded three times in the last 15 years.

⁶⁵Conversations with the Routt County Department of Health revealed that the County would likely support this type of concept, and would likely waive the ISDS permitting fee.

⁶⁶Babcock, Scott. *Detailed Overnight Use Revenue & Participation Trends (FY06-FY09)*. Rep. Colorado State Parks, 2009.

time. While these facilities are suitable for current visitor use, the need for improving and rehabilitating these facilities only increases with time.

Implementing this park enhancement will be contingent on completing a campground rehabilitation master plan for Stagecoach State Park to more accurately determine an appropriate number of electrical campsites at each campground given electrical and vehicle size constraints, and any needed campground configuration changes. It is expected that any new campsites would be slightly larger, spaced farther apart, and have clearly-delineated boundaries. All existing electrical campsites would likely be targeted for upgrades from 30 amps to 50 amps, while other campsites would be completely redeveloped with new 50 amp electrical infrastructure.⁶⁷ A minor reduction in the total number of campsites may result from this enhancement due to accommodating slightly larger average-size vehicles and changes to the spatial configuration of campsites.

Key elements associated of this park enhancement are likely to include:

- *Campsite Rehabilitation.* Existing campsites would be graded, improved, and clearly delineated. All campsites in the Junction City, Pinnacle, and McKindley campgrounds would be upgraded to facilitate 50-amp hookups. Additional landscaping vegetation may be necessary.
- *Campground Road Rehabilitation.* Existing campground roads would need to be rerouted and improved, as needed.
- *New, ADA Accessible Camper Services Building.* A new, stand-alone ADA-accessible camper services building managed by Colorado State Parks would be included as part of this enhancement. The current camper services building, which is incorporated within the Stagecoach Marina building, is nearing the end of its 30-year life cycle. Frequent repairs and maintenance are limited in their effectiveness. Once completed, Colorado State Parks could work with the Stagecoach Marina concessionaire to evaluate options for possibly expanding the existing retail operations.

EO7. Visitor Center (Low Priority). The park entrance station currently serves as the park's primary point of contact for park visitors. Visitors seeking to purchase annual passes, talk to staff, or learn more detailed information about the park and park programs are directed to the Stagecoach Park Office, which serves primarily as a park maintenance and storage facility and secondarily as office space and, seasonal housing. A small 72-square foot entrance area at the Park Office doubles as a visitor reception area. The visitor reception area is not welcoming to visitors, and hinders the ability of park staff to interface with the public. In addition, there is no space for retail and interpretive purposes.

A new visitor center, modeled after the Highline State Park Visitor Center, would benefit the park and significantly enhance the visitor experience. This facility would house the park entrance station, two to three park offices, retail space, and interpretive/educational displays, while the existing Park Office would continue to be used for park maintenance, storage, and seasonal housing. This building would also be energy efficient, and built from materials that require minimal maintenance. Several locations were explored for locating a visitor center, but the relatively level area just east of the existing entrance station is likely the best option. An adjacent parking area designed to accommodate up to 25 vehicles would also be included as part of this enhancement.

⁶⁷ The National Electric Code (NEC) currently requires that at least 20% of all campsites be equipped with 50-amp service pedestals.

Rehabilitation & Restoration Efforts

EO8. Restore the Tailwater Area to Maintain a High Quality Fishery (*High Priority*). Increasing use and popularity of the Tailwater area requires that park staff partner with CDOW to more intensively manage and restore the Yampa River and the upland river corridor. Within the river, continued efforts are needed to monitor and compare data on rainbow trout populations, and restrict access to spring spawning beds to ensure their long-term reproductive success. Visitor survey data should also be gathered to track and monitor angler catch rates, satisfaction, species caught, and perceptions on issues like crowding. If needed, Stagecoach staff should restructure special use permit allocations for angling outfitters and/or implement a permit system for other public users of the Tailwater area. This could be done via a “check-in” or reservation system administered by the park.

Stream quality is typically linked to conditions upstream and land use of adjacent lands. For this reason, restoration of the river shoreline through planting of native willow and wetland vegetation along the stream banks to prevent erosion and stream habitat loss is also a high priority. Some upland areas may need to be temporarily blocked off to visitors and anglers for up to several years or until restoration efforts are completed. During and after restoration efforts, Colorado State Parks and CDOW should partner to provide detailed educational/interpretive signage to help minimize future resource impacts associated with visitor use of the Tailwater area.

EO9. Protect and Restore Shoreline and Upland Bird Habitat (*High Priority*). Stagecoach Reservoir’s shoreline wetlands and adjacent uplands provide refuge and breeding grounds for a variety of bird species. The upland sage habitat provides important forage and breeding areas for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. State Parks staff may need to consider seasonally closing portions of trails as well as working with adjacent landowners on neighboring lands to ensure this species does not disappear from the area. Implementing this park enhancement will entail partnering with CDOW and possibly other land trust organizations to pursue conservation easements with adjacent landowners and working with local communities (such as the South Shore community) and park visitors to educate them on the importance of protection and restoration of shoreline and upland bird habitat.

EO10. Establish a Formal, Comprehensive Park Policy Pertaining to Dogs (*High Priority*). Park staff should aggressively enforce existing dog off leash laws to reduce threats to nesting birds and prevent degradation of shoreline habitat. In addition, park staff should consider more conservative approaches to managing dog use within the park, given historical impacts to breeding birds. This will likely involve prohibiting dogs in several key habitat areas to protect sensitive wildlife and key recreational experiences.

EO11. Plant and Restore Native Vegetation Near Park Office and Other Key Interpretive Areas (*Medium Priority*). Native vegetation should be planted near the visitor center and in any disturbed areas. Wherever possible, interpretive signage should be sited at these locations to educate the public on native plant species and communities found at the park, plant adaptations in the sagebrush upland habitat, and the importance of these areas to various species of wildlife.

Management Initiatives

EO12. Maintain and Enhance Stagecoach Reservoir in Collaboration with UYWCD and CDOW (*High Priority*). Stagecoach Reservoir is one of northwest Colorado’s most productive trout and northern pike fisheries. Three related actions tied to this enhancement include:

- Working closely with CDOW to maintain trout stocking levels in the reservoir, and reaching out to anglers by participating in regular Angler Roundtables where CDOW biologists examine biological and social data from state waters and gauge angler concerns and issues.
- Working closely with CDOW to obtain regular creel census and other fishery data that will enable CDOW and the park to evaluate trends in fish populations and angler satisfaction.
- Working with UYWCD to monitor water quality and ensure that reservoir operations do not deleteriously affect trout populations.

EO13. Establish a “Friends of Stagecoach State Park” group (*High Priority*). Establishment of a 501(c)(3) non-profit “Friends of Stagecoach State Park” would provide further financial and stakeholder support for the park. This group would be comprised of both local and seasonal residents who have a common interest in promoting and maintaining Stagecoach State Park. In addition to assisting the park with fundraising efforts, members of such a group could help with:

- Environmental education/Interpretive programs
- Tree planting
- Trail maintenance and monitoring
- Campsite improvements
- Staffing "Friends" booths at community events
- Beautification projects including maintaining the park’s many flower beds
- Road and park cleanups
- Other construction projects as needed

EO14. Reduce energy consumption and promote efficiency in the operation of park facilities, vehicles, and equipment (*High Priority*). The Park Office/Maintenance Shop and Camper Services buildings were constructed in the late 1980s, before the current emphasis on energy efficiency. Recommendations from the December 2009 energy audit should be implemented to reduce utility costs. Specifically, the Energy Audit recommended converting T12 tubular lighting to T8, installing occupancy sensors, and converting incandescent bulbs to CFL. Likewise, the park’s vehicle fleet needs to reflect a growing importance on reducing energy consumption. Stagecoach staff should consider fuel efficiency and the full range of alternative vehicles available when looking to address the park’s future transportation needs.

EO15. Evaluate Possibility of Implementing a Walk-In Fee (*Med Priority*). As the surrounding residential communities expand and grow in population, it is in the park’s long-term best interest to manage and control access. Stagecoach should consider implementing a walk-in fee as a possible management tool. Such a fee should apply not only at the park’s main entrance, but other more remote access points (possibly with use of an iron ranger or self-serve station). There are significant logistical challenges with enforcing a walk-in fee at more remote access points, but these challenges must be met to ensure that trail use from outside the park’s boundaries is properly managed, monitored, and controlled over time.

EO16. Develop a Community Connections Plan (*Med Priority*). Stagecoach State Park staff should work with the Volunteer Program staff to develop a formal Community Connections Plan (CCP). Appendix J has been set aside for inclusion of this plan once completed. The scope of

the CCP is to recommend programs and media that engage and connect the community with the Stagecoach in ways that: 1) increase visitors' appreciation of and sensitivity to the Park's historic, cultural, and natural resources and promote stewardship of those resources; 2) identify partnership opportunities appropriate for potential funders, outdoor education organizations, and other recreation/open space providers in the area; and to 3) help staff set goals and prioritize interpretation, education and outreach program development.

EO17. Consider Boating Capacity and Potential Impacts to Shoreline Anglers Prior to Any Adjustment of the Boating Wakeless Zone (*Med Priority*). Within a year or two of completion of UYWCD's raising of the dam, Stagecoach State Park staff should more closely evaluate the viability of reducing the portion of the boating wakeless zone that bisects the reservoir from north to south (primarily in response to surrounding community and local park constituent desires). In particular, park staff should evaluate whether altering the boundary will negatively affect spatial, facility, ecological, and social capacities (as defined in Appendix G). In particular, park staff should evaluate shoreline vegetation conditions following the dam level raise to determine whether vegetation has stabilized, whether waterfowl and other shorebirds have adapted to increased water levels. Finally, park staff should carefully consider whether displacement of shore anglers is likely to result as a consequence of altering the wakeless zone area.

EO18. Improve Existing Information Technology Resources (*Med Priority*). Access to computers and information technology are critical to the daily business of running the park. Staff increasingly depends on technology to manage park resources, communicate with one another, and meet the growing needs of our customers. Any new construction or building/facility relocation should make provisions for up-to-date Information Technology resources, to include:

- Upgrade to Voice Over Internet Protocol [VoIP] phone system, which will allow voicemail and standard business call features like hunt group and forwarding at the main Park Office.
- Extend the existing T-1 to the entrance stations and Camper Services locations throughout the park. Currently this expense is approximately \$5,000 per wireless LAN segment; assuming line of sight exists between the locations. This segment would have Motorola Canopy antennas at both ends [Visitor Center and extension location] with proper router and workstation at the extension end.

Proper backup system for all electronic files and information; after proper evaluation, this could include a server on location, or other less costly solution. A server solution currently costs \$3,500 for each lifecycle of the equipment, every four years.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES SUMMARY

This section highlights priority management actions that have been established by the Stagecoach Planning Team to help address important needs and issues at Stagecoach State Park, help effectively plan future park development, and protect and maintain Stagecoach State Park's unique resources. Implementation priorities are based on park goals, influences on park management, and other management considerations identified in Section 1.0. This section also incorporates park enhancement opportunities discussed in Section 5.0. All stated management actions have been reviewed and are supported by Division Leadership.

Table 19 provided on the following page, is intended to serve as a quick reference for the Stagecoach State Park Manager and staff responsible for implementing this plan. Included in Table 19 is a breakdown of each management action, the "category" or type of management action, applicable management zone, applicable Enhancement Opportunity numbers (as reflected in Section 5.0) and corresponding priority level. Criteria for determining priority levels are as follows:

High priority actions are considered extremely important to maintaining the quality of recreation experience and protecting natural resources in the park. These actions are central to preserving, maintaining, and enhancing park resources and the visitor experience.

Medium priority actions are considered important, but not urgent, and meet a combination of other resource goals and objectives. Many park enhancements that include new capital infrastructure are assigned medium or low priority status.

Low priority actions are considered important, but not critical. Low priority actions do not need to be completed in the immediate future. Many park enhancements that include new capital infrastructure are typically assigned medium or low priority status.

Implementation Considerations

Implementation priorities are a reflection of Stagecoach's greatest needs as of spring 2011, and the respective "level of priority" for each management action may change over time depending on a variety of factors. Also, implementation priorities highlighted in this section should be viewed in the context of Stagecoach only, and any actions that are dependent on additional funding or staffing must first be considered or weighed within the context of other Division-wide needs with the help of Colorado State Park Leadership. Effective implementation of the priorities listed in Table 19 is contingent on the park maintaining adequate financial and human resources necessary to initiate and follow through with recommendations outlined in this section.

Using the Implementation Plan

The implementation priorities will be used by park staff to guide future management efforts at Stagecoach State Park. This section of the management plan is to be reviewed by the park manager and other park staff annually to evaluate and monitor implementation progress. Specifically, park staff will refer to the plan to:

- Guide future park budget allocations and annual funding requests.

- Guide overall park management planning, including management of existing resources and possible upgrades to or the creation of new park facilities, improvements to recreation infrastructure, etc.
- Guide development of annual work plans. By tasking specific park staff with implementation of various management plan actions in annual work plans, and tracking implementation over time through regular performance reviews, the plan provides a useful accountability tool for park managers.

Table 19. Priority Management Actions at Stagecoach State Park

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
LAND OWNERSHIP					
Work with adjacent landowners to preserve wildlife habitat, trail use, and natural setting.	Land Ownership	NA	High		
Depending on if and whether a conservation easement can be negotiated for all or part of the 400 or so unplatted acres along the South Shore, annually check in with adjacent landowners to discuss the latest updates and issues associated with possible development of this area (and proposed Marina).	Land Ownership	NA	High		
Work with partners (e.g. public agencies and nonprofit land trusts) to conserve key parcels adjacent to or near the park to protect viewsheds and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and sensitive wildlife habitat.	Land Ownership	NA	High		
Per Stagecoach Lease Agreement, State Parks shall meet at least semi-annually with UYWCD to discuss issues of mutual concern to the parties.	MOU/IGA	NA	High		
NATURAL RESOURCES					
CDOW has suggested that the park improve the wildlife resistant trash facilities to minimize small nuisance wildlife issues and be proactive to avoid any bear issues. Getting more resistant dumpsters would decrease potential for smaller wildlife getting into the dumpsters.	Wildlife	All	High		
If future redevelopment of the campgrounds occurs, three-wall enclosures for the dumpsters should be included in the design/construction to reduce the chances of bears knocking the dumpsters over and getting into the trash.	Wildlife	All	High		
Protect wetland features important to the park for wildlife, diversity of vegetation communities, as well as other important functions served by wetlands.	Vegetation	Natural	High		
Maintain examples of the existing native plant communities in the park, especially the less common ones (mesic sagebrush shrublands, scrub oak, aspen woodland, and lodgepole pine forest).	Vegetation	Natural; Passive Rec	High		
Develop a plan for increasing the native plant diversity of western slope grasslands in the park. Re-seed disturbed areas as needed with desirable, perennial, and competitive native plant species.	Vegetation	Natural; Passive Rec	High		
Continue to work with Routt County and/or contractors, and conduct weed control activities in a timely manner in accordance with the updated noxious weed management plan.	Vegetation	Natural	High		
Eradicate yellow toadflax; suppress houndstongue, Canada thistle, musk thistle, bull	Vegetation	All	High		

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
thistle, and common mullein in the park; and prevent the establishment of new noxious weed species (e.g., leafy spurge).					
Restore the Tailwater Area to maintain a high quality fishery.	Fishery	Natural	High	EO8	
Continue communication with CDOW on their plans for future spawning management (including potentially restricting angler access to spring spawning beds) in Tailwater Area to ensure their long-term reproductive success.	Fishery	Natural	High	EO8	
Protect and restore shoreline and upland bird habitat	Wildlife	Natural; Passive Rec	High	EO9	
Establish a formal, comprehensive park policy pertaining to dogs that may limit dog access in the westernmost portion of the park to protect wetlands.	Dogs	All	High	E10	
Establish a vegetation monitoring program and conduct field work every five years.	Vegetation	All	High		
Consult with CDOW about seasonal closures of wetlands around breeding grounds of Greater sandhill cranes. Consider seasonal trail closures within ¼ mile of eagle winter roost sites to ensure the birds don't abandon the area.	Wildlife	Natural; Passive Rec	High		
Monitor shoreline erosion related to recreational boating, especially around critical wildlife habitat, and compare wakeless zone to wake zone.	Soils/Water Quality	Natural; Passive Rec	High		
Monitor erosion along Tailwater, especially along Angler's Trail and the many social trails. Intervene/close/re-route trails when appropriate.	Soils	Natural	High		
Update signs along Angler's Trail when necessary and include signs for anglers going uphill as well as downhill.	Soils	Natural	High		
Protect high quality and diverse vegetative communities in the park.	Vegetation	All	High		
Conduct inventories of breeding birds, reptiles, amphibians, selected invertebrate groups (aquatic insects, butterflies, spiders) in order to develop a complete list of those species that use the park [could be done with aid of volunteers].	Wildlife	Natural; Passive Rec	Med		
Plant and restore native vegetation near park office and other key interpretive areas	Vegetation	Developed; Passive Rec	Med	EO11	
CULTURAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCES					
Interpret significant cultural, geological and paleontological features at the park.	Paleontological	All	High		
Partner with the Colorado Historical Society and other entities to research historical features in the Park and offer interpretive opportunities.	Cultural	All	Med		

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
SCENIC RESOURCES					
Employ "context sensitive design" practices along with new park development.	Scenic	All	High		
RECREATION RESOURCES					
If needed, restructure special use permit allocations for angling outfitters and/or implement a permit system for other public users of the Tailwater area. Implement Tailwater Visitor Survey and regularly review CDOW fish catch surveys to support determination.	Angling	Natural	High	E08	
Work with UYWCD and CDOW to maintain and enhance the Stagecoach Reservoir trout fishery	Angling	Reservoir	High	EO12	
Work closely with CDOW to maintain trout stocking levels in the reservoir, and reach out to anglers by participating in regular Angler Roundtables where CDOW biologists examine biological and social data from state waters and gauge angler concerns and issues.	Angling	Reservoir	High	EO12	
Work closely with CDOW to obtain regular creel census and other fishery data that will enable CDOW and the park to evaluate trends in fish populations and angler satisfaction.	Angling	Reservoir	High	EO12	
Work with UYWCD to monitor water quality and ensure that reservoir operations do not deleteriously affect trout populations.	Angling	Reservoir	High	EO12	
Complete trail linkages to have a trail that circumnavigates the entire reservoir	Trails	Passive rec	Med	EO5	
Enhance and maintain the Stagecoach State Park fishing webpage to provide timely, accurate information needed to stimulate public interest and involvement with the fishery.	Public Outreach	NA	High		
Patrol trails as needed to encourage visitors to follow park regulations and minimize visitor impacts on park resources.	Trails	All	High		
Volunteer monitoring of raptors, breeding birds and wildlife sightings coordinated with the Stewardship program and CDOW.			High		
Monitor and track camping trends throughout the year (e.g. % capacity)	Camping	Developed	Med		
Monitor and track parking trends throughout the summer. (e.g. % capacity)	Parking	Developed	Med		
Monitor and track the mix and count of vessel types used at the reservoir.	Boating	Reservoir	Med		
Track how many boats are moored offshore on a daily basis.	Boating	Reservoir	Med		
Track how many boat trailers are parked at campsites on a daily basis.	Boating	Reservoir	Med		

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
Monitor and track approximate wait times at both ANS inspections and at boat ramps.	Boating	Developed	Med		
Consider boating capacity and potential impacts to shoreline anglers prior to any adjustment of the boating wakeless zone.	Boating	Reservoir	Med	EO17	
Provide educational resources both on the internet and at the park to teach anglers proper fishing and fish cleaning methods.	Angling	NA	Med		
Consider surveying angler catch rates, satisfaction, species caught, and perceptions on issues such as crowding (on the reservoir).	Angling	Reservoir	Med		
Work with the local media to encourage an active interest in the fishery. Update the press, broadcast stations, and the Chamber of Commerce on a variety of appropriate information about the status of the fishery to encourage visitation, particularly during weekdays and shoulder seasons.	Public Outreach	NA	Med		
Develop partnerships with local commercial angling businesses that provide mutually beneficial relationships and ultimately benefit the public.	Public Outreach	NA	Med		
Update photo-monitoring appendix on an annual basis to keep track of the condition of park resources	All Recreation	All	Med		
Monitor trail widths over time and manage accordingly	Trails	All	Med		
Work with the marina to keep their website up to date and with accurate links to Colorado State Parks website.	Marina	NA	Med		
Monitor the condition of the beach and work with UYWCD to replace sand or structures when needed.	Beach	NA	Med		
Reach out to and encourage local anglers to participate in regular Angler Roundtables where CDOW biologists examine biological and social data from State waters and gauge angler concerns and issues	Angling	NA	Low		
Support the marina concessionaire's efforts to provide value-added visitor services and assure that proper tackle, bait and other equipment are available for purchase to assure successful outings for anglers.	Angling	Developed	Low		

INTERPRETATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION					
Continue to offer worthwhile interpretive programs to visitors	Interp	All	High		
Formally institute a walk-in fee at park entrance and other remote access points such as along the South Shore.	Trails	Passive rec; Natural	High		
Partner with CDOW to provide detailed educational/interpretive signage to help	Fishery	Natural	High	E08	

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
minimize resource impacts associated with visitor use of the Tailwater area					
Coordinate and lead school/scout/outreach programs	Env. Ed	All	Med		
Work with the Volunteer Program to create and offer Jr. Ranger Program	Env. Ed	All	Med		
Develop targeted marketing materials for kids and parents.	Public Outreach	NA	Med		
Provide educational resources both on the internet and at the park to teach anglers proper fishing and fish cleaning methods.	Public Outreach; Env. Ed	NA	Med		

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE					
Priority Road Maintenance – Address existing drainage issues along the main park road by restoring the road crown, application of gravel, and adding culverts where necessary.	Roadways	Developed	High	EO1a	
Regularly monitor for numbers of vehicles traveling park entrance road per day to support need for future paving of this road.	Roadways	Developed	High	EO1b	
Replace/Update Electrical Infrastructure	New Facilities	Developed	High	EO2	
Expand signage that explains rules and benefits to the rules (e.g. no dogs, why to stay on trail, etc.).	New Facilities	All	High		
Construct an environmentally friendly fish cleaning station (ideally a composting unit that does not impact wastewater treatment facility)	New Facilities	Developed	Med	EO4	
Paving from Park Entrance to Junction City Campground	Roadways	Developed	Med	EO1b	
Campground rehabilitation and improvements	New Facilities	Developed	Med	EO6	
Improve information technology resources.	IT	Developed	Med	EO18	
Construct a new Visitor Center	New Facilities	Developed	Low	EO7	

VISITATION					
Make sure that park visitation tracking equipment is operating appropriately and use the most reliable techniques available	Visitation	NA	High		
Evaluate and monitor need for implementing a walk-in fee.	Revenue Enhancement	NA	High	EO15	

PRIORITIES	Category	Applicable Area or Management Zones	Priority (high, med, low)	Enhancement Opportunity Number (if any)	Date Completed or Timeframe (if recurring)
PARK ADMINISTRATION AND SPECIAL FUNCTIONS					
Distribute regular newsletters and emails to keep volunteers informed.	Volunteers	NA	High		
Establish a "Friends of Stagecoach State Park" group.	Volunteers	NA	High		
Reduce energy consumption and promote efficiency in the operation of park facilities, vehicles, and equipment	Energy Efficiency	Developed	High		
Maintain radios and first aid kits for emergency readiness	Public Safety	All	High		
Develop a Community Connections Plan	Volunteers & Interpretation	NA	Med	EO16	

PARK BUDGET AND FINANCES					
Train staff to handle and report revenue accurately to ensure that CUR revenue reports and PARKs data entries are accurate.	Revenue Enhancement	NA	High		
Consider other funding sources for implementing park enhancements and needed improvements (i.e. GOCO, private donors, historical society, etc.)	Revenue Enhancement	Varies	High		

7.0 CONCLUSION



Situated about 20 minutes south of Steamboat Springs and about 2.5 hours from Denver, Stagecoach State Park is a unique gem within the Colorado state park system. Many visitors return year after year to take advantage of the high-quality trout fishing opportunities on the reservoir and along the Yampa River Tailwater Area. Others may come to boat, water ski, and camp under an umbrella of stars. One thing is for certain, those that frequent the park will tell you that it's a special place; affording visitors ample opportunity to renew the spirit, connect to the outdoors, and take home lasting memories.

Stagecoach State Park was constructed as a water storage project in the late 1980s and aside from the relatively small, four-foot dam level raise in 2010, the park has seen relatively little change. A major challenge for park staff is that many of its facilities are nearing the end of their functional life, and will inevitably require significant re-investment in the coming decade. In addition, redevelopment and reconfiguration of some park facilities (such as campgrounds) may be needed to better serve visitor needs. Additional amenities, such as cabins or yurts, or a new visitor center to facilitate additional interaction with the public, should also be considered if financial resources come available. In the meantime, park staff will need to do their best to maintain existing facilities and infrastructure in light of increasingly tight budgets.

Stagecoach State Park is positioned in a part of the state that is likely to see added population growth both locally and regionally over time. As this occurs, Stagecoach will only increase in popularity. Stagecoach park staff will continue to work with local and state partners to continue to maintain the quality of the Stagecoach fishery, provide opportunities that the public desires, and balance recreational use with natural resource preservation. Of course, any new investments in the park will be carefully weighed and balanced alongside necessary resource conservation and suggested restoration enhancements.

Park staff recognizes that much of the park's future will hinge on sustaining and building on existing partnerships. Colorado residents owe much of the park's existence to the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District's support. Fortunately, Stagecoach State Park staff has cultivated a strong working relationship with UYWCD. Other continued partnerships with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Stagecoach Property Owners Association will be critical to the park's long-term future as well.