

NORTHEAST REGION

Introduction

Many locals refer to the Northeast as “Colorado’s Outback” or “The Other Colorado.” The expansive grasslands and wide-open wheat fields of the northeast encompass approximately 11.3 million acres of Colorado. While the area is not typically a recreation destination, warmwater reservoirs and the South Platte River, the largest in northeast Colorado, attract many boaters, anglers, and campers. Hunters and wildlife watchers pursue prairie species such as antelope, white tail and mule deer, geese, ducks, pheasant, quails, and wild turkeys. Abundant blue heron and white pelicans draw many birders.

Interstates 76 and 70 are gateways to Colorado and major transportation corridors for instate travelers.

Rich in pioneer heritage, the northeast region contains emigrant trails, historic buildings, and abandoned settlements that attract many heritage travelers. Summer weekends in the area are often devoted to celebrating this heritage with rodeos, gunfight reenactments, draft-horse pulls, and antique carriage parades.

Physiographic Description

Colorado’s northeastern plains region is fairly homogenous, consisting primarily of flat grasslands, with large stretches of short-grass prairie and occasional

shrublands. Elevations in this area are typically below 5000 feet, although there are some low hills and bluffs. This region is fairly arid, averaging between 12 and 18 inches of rain a year; most of this occurs during the winter and spring, and summers are typically dry and very hot. The South Platte River and its tributaries peak during the spring runoff, and for the rest of the year meander slowly through this region.

Major Recreation Attractions

US Forest Service Lands: Pawnee National Grasslands

State Wildlife Areas: There are 35 SWAs in the Northeast Region

State Parks: Jackson Lake State Park, North Sterling Reservoir, Bonny State Park

Scenic and Historic Byways: Pawnee Pioneer Trails, South Platte River Trail

Cultural and Historic Sites: Fort Sedgwick Depot Museum, Overland Trail Museum, Burlington Old Town

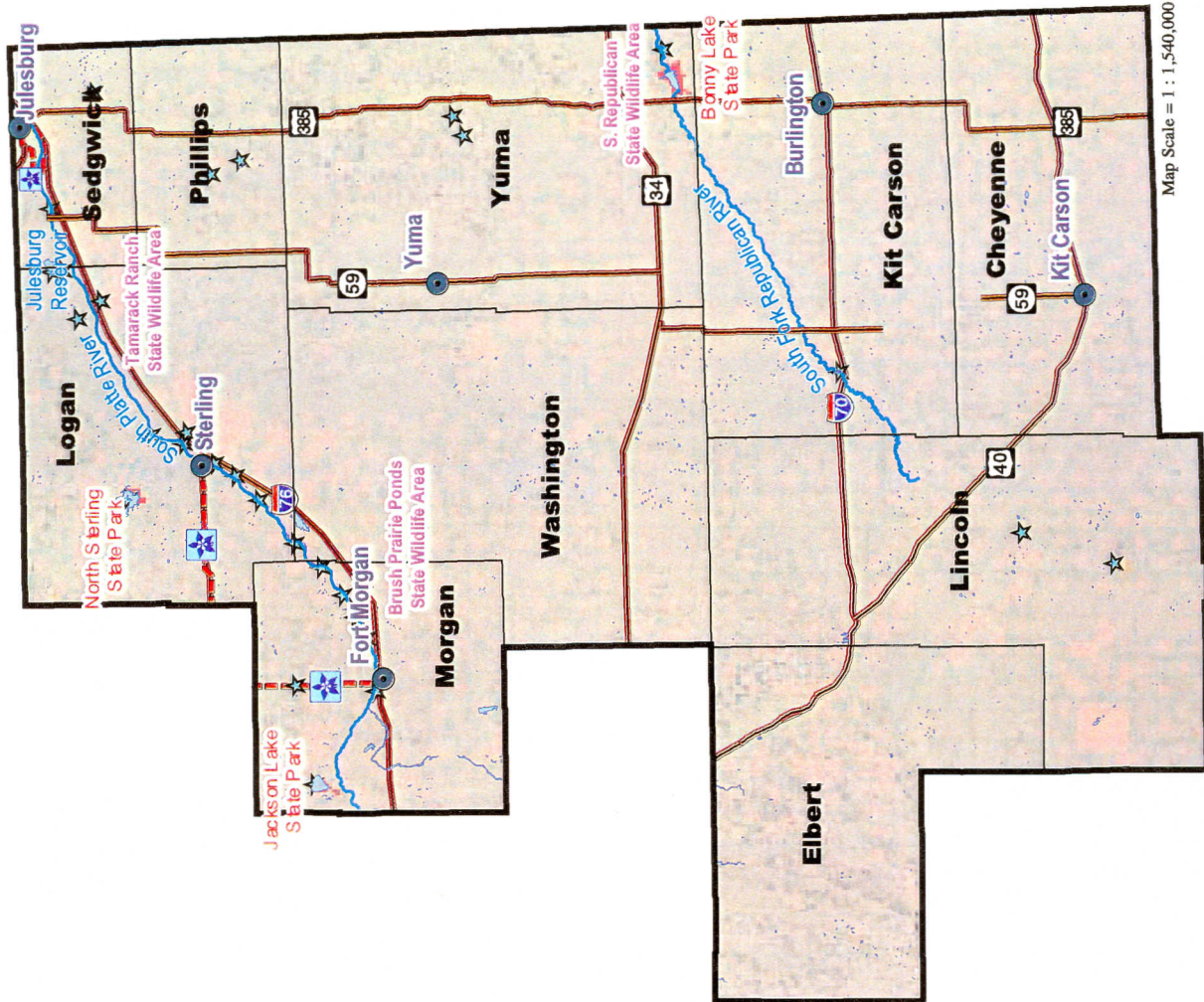
Points of Interest: Pawnee Buttes

Table 45: Projected Population Estimates and Percent Changes for the Region

County	July - 2002	July - 2005	July - 2010	July - 2015	% Change 2002 - 2015
Cheyenne	2,201	2,121	2,030	1,974	-11.5%
Elbert	22,031	23,850	28,607	33,814	34.8%
Kit Carson	8,032	8,100	8,175	8,250	2.6%
Lincoln	6,143	6,200	6,400	6,600	6.9%
Logan	21,891	22,195	23,518	24,726	11.5%
Morgan	27,835	28,083	29,049	30,128	7.6%
Phillips	4,530	4,580	4,660	4,710	3.8%
Sedgwick	2,762	2,810	2,860	2,910	5.1%
Washington	4,895	4,915	4,935	4,955	1.2%
Yuma	9,900	10,150	10,350	10,570	6.3%
Regional Totals and Percent Changes	110,218	112,974	120,584	128,637	14.3%

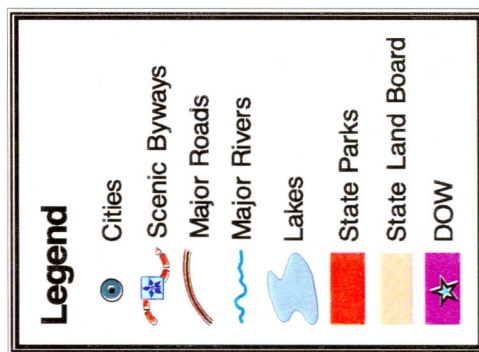
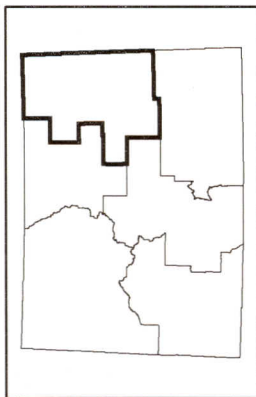
Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2003.

Map: 13 Northeast Recreation Attractions



Map Scale = 1 : 1,540,000

Location Map:



Source, Colorado State Parks GIS, 2003.

Local Profile

Major Communities

The Northeast region consists of ten counties: Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma.

Major towns and cities within these counties include Burlington, Fort Morgan, Holyoke, Julesburg, Limon, Sterling, and Wray.

Population and Demographic Characteristics

Table 46: 2000 Census Data by County

Median Household Income	
Cheyenne	\$37,054
Elbert	\$62,480
Kit Carson	\$33,152
Lincoln	\$31,914
Logan	\$32,724
Morgan	\$34,568
Phillips	\$32,177
Sedgwick	\$28,278
Washington	\$32,431
Yuma	\$33,169
Regional Average	\$35,795
Colorado Average	\$47,203

Median Age	
Cheyenne	37.9
Elbert	37.2
Kit Carson	37.4
Lincoln	37.8
Logan	38.1
Morgan	33.5
Phillips	39.8
Sedgwick	43.2
Washington	40.2
Yuma	37.3
Regional Average	38.2
Colorado Average	34.3

Persons Below Poverty Level (%)	
Cheyenne	11.10%
Elbert	4.00%
Kit Carson	12.00%
Lincoln	11.70%
Logan	12.20%
Morgan	12.40%
Phillips	11.60%
Sedgwick	10.00%
Washington	11.40%
Yuma	12.90%
Regional Average	10.94%
Colorado Average	9.30%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Sub-region Descriptions

Because the counties of the Northeast Region are similar economically and in terms of tourism, dividing the area into sub-regions is not necessary.

Economic Profile

The economy of the northeast plains of Colorado is dominated by agribusiness. Other than households spending out-of-area income, agribusiness is the largest industry supplying over 16,000 jobs. Unlike many other regions in Colorado, tourism is not a major employer, providing only 1,200 jobs across ten counties.

Median household income across most of the northeast sub-region runs 20% to 40% below the state average. The exception is Elbert County, now strongly influenced and

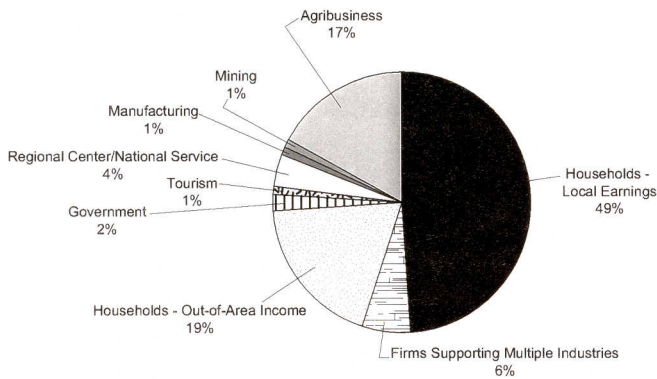
within commuting distance of the Denver Metro area. The cost-of-living indexes across the sub-region vary between 86% and 94% of the statewide average, although Elbert County's cost of living is slightly higher than the Colorado average.

Economic Profile of Tourism

Residents of the Northeast Plains live in the area because it is an affordable place to live with large expanses of farms. Population density is relatively sparse compared to more urban areas of Colorado, another major factor in the quality of life for people here. Recreation opportunities, primarily hunting and fishing, attract residents and tourists alike.

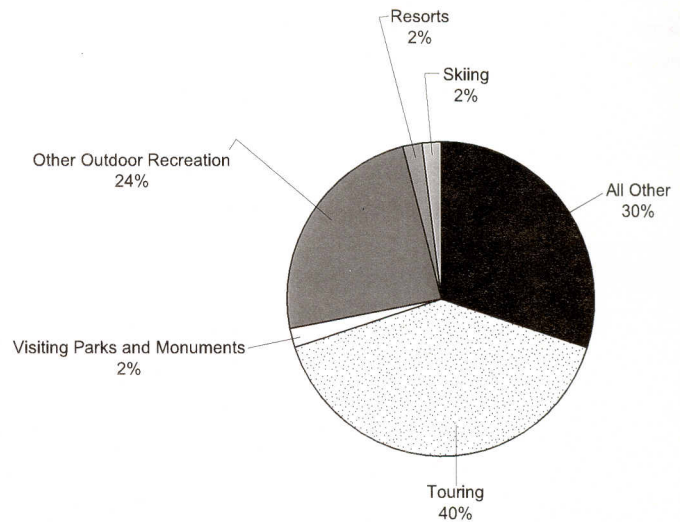
While tourism in the Northeast Plains is not a major draw, the industry is strongly oriented toward outdoor

Figure 41: Northeast Region Employment Shares by Major Industry & Household Groups, 2001



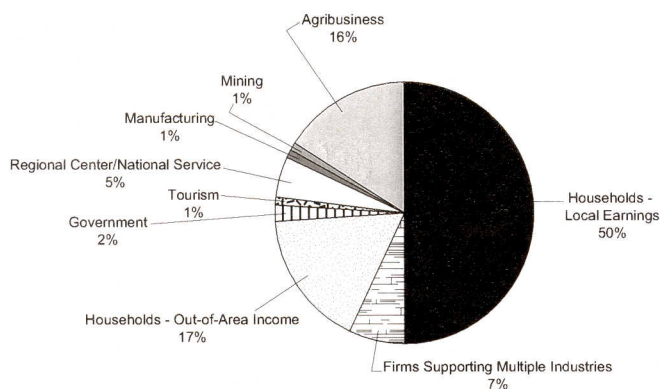
Source: DOLA Demography Section, 2003.

Figure 43: Northeast Region Employment Shares Generated by Tourism & Travel Categories, 1999



Source: Center for Business & Economic Forecasting, Inc., DOLA, Demography Section, 2001.

Figure 42: Northeast Region Income Shares by Major Industry & Household Groups, 2001



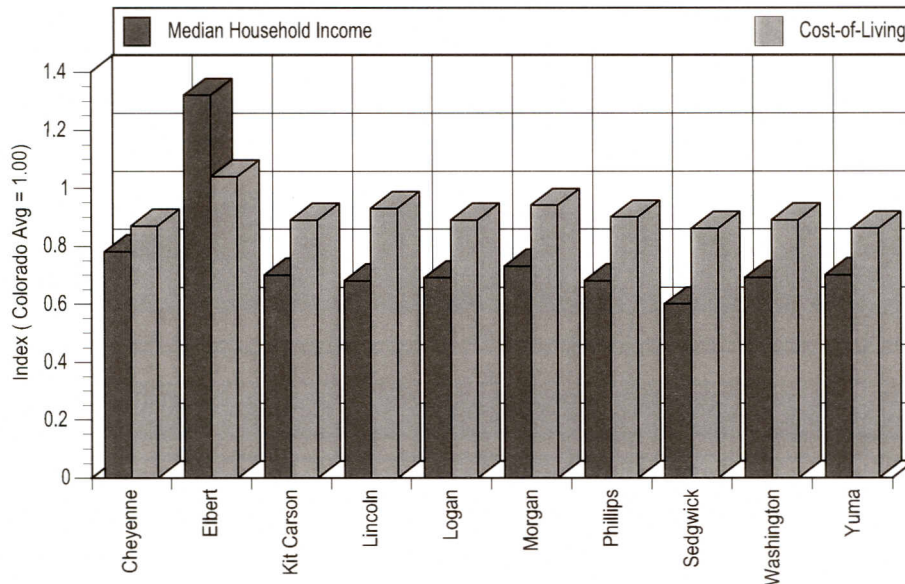
Source: DOLA Demography Section, 2003.

recreation. About two-thirds of all tourism jobs in the region are a result of outdoor recreation activities. A few tourism jobs are reported under skiing because skiers from the Midwest travel through the area on their way to the mountains spending money on food and lodging.

Since the area is a gateway into Colorado, counties with interstate highways collect more tourism-based local taxes than those without interstates. Logan County (Sterling), Morgan County (Ft. Morgan), Lincoln County (Limon), and Kit Carson County (Burlington) collected from \$300,000 to \$550,000 in taxes generated by tourism sales. These tax collections ranged from 5% to 10% of total county tax revenues. The tax collections in other counties were very small, amounting to less than \$100,000 each.

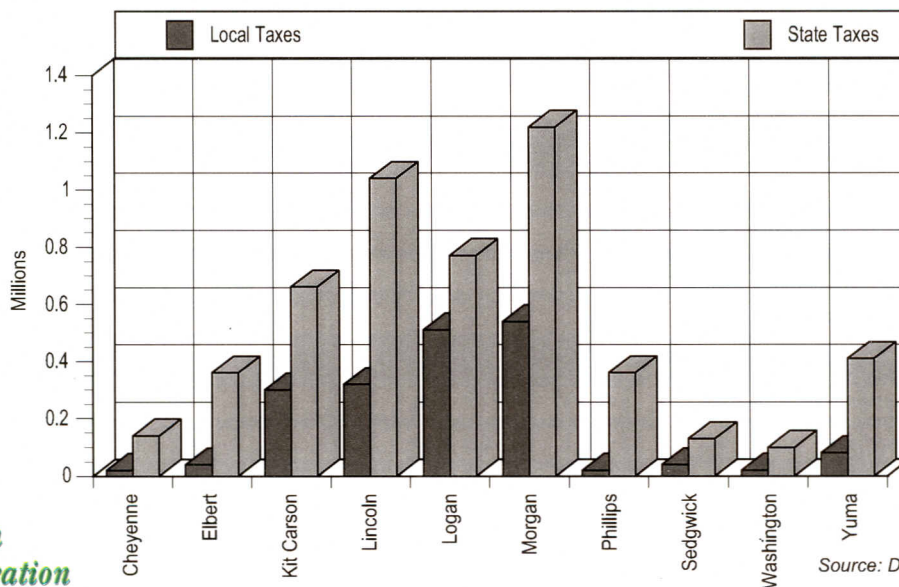


Figure 44: Northeast Region Median Household Income and Cost-of-Living Indices by County, 2001



Source: CSU Cooperative Extension, 2002.

Figure 45: Northeast Region State and Local Taxes Generated by Tourism & Travel, 2000



Source: Dean Runyan and Assoc., 2001.

Regional Tourism and Visitor Recreation

Visitor Profile

Information provided in this section is gathered from the Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study completed by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The following tables

depict information on the demographics of survey respondents, preferred outdoor recreation destinations and activities, and increased visitation on the basis of proposed features. While this information was gathered

for State Parks' visitors, the answers demonstrate user preferences relevant for other recreation managers.

Distinguishing between visitors and local residents helps characterize the similarities and differences in activities,

preferences, and needs. Visitors were defined as those that travel more than 50 miles to the area and locals are considered residents living in the region.

Table 47: Demographic Profile of State Parks Visitors

	Northeast Region totals (%)	Local Residents (%)	Tourists (%)
Gender			
Male	39	40	36
Female	61	60	64
Age			
18 to 24	9	13	2
25 to 34	18	16	22
35 to 44	30	32	24
45 to 54	20	19	24
55 to 64	12	10	18
65 and older	10	11	9
Educations			
High school or less	33	38	24
Some college	34	31	39
College graduate	22	17	30
Post-graduate	12	14	7
Marital status			
Single, no children	12	17	2
Single, children	8	7	9
Married/living with partner, no children	10	10	9
Married/living with partner, children	70	66	79
Gross Annual Income			
Under \$19,999 per year	12	14	7
\$20,000 - \$49,999 per year	40	42	35
Over \$50,000 per year	48	44	58
Ethnicity			
White	96	94	99
Hispanic	4	5	<1
Black	<1	<1	<1
Asian	<1	<1	<1
Other	<1	1	<1

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=135)

(N=91)

(N=44)

Table 48: Why Locals and Tourists Visit State Parks

Reason for Visiting State Park	Northeast Region totals (%)	Local Residents (%)	Tourists (%)
To unwind/relax	21	17	29
Spend time with family and friends	40	42	37
Spend time on my own/get away from crowds	1	1	1
To stay fit/exercise	1	1	1
To blow off steam	1	1	1
To be close to nature	2	2	2
View the scenery	5	5	5
To participate in a recreational activity that I love	21	21	23
To do something different	3	4	3
To get away from the usual demands of life	7	8	5

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=135)

(N=91)

(N=44)

Table 49: What People Plan to do During State Park Visit(s)

Activity	Northeast Region totals (%)	Local Residents (%)	Tourists (%)
Hiking/walking for pleasure	39	38	41
Fishing	43	29	72
Hunting	1	1	<1
Picnicking	44	44	46
Photography	17	11	30
Dog walking	23	19	30
Looking at visitor center exhibits	13	13	13
Swimming	39	40	37
Motorized boating	34	33	33
Bicycling	5	4	7
Horseback riding	3	2	4
Rock climbing	1	1	<1
Non-motorized boating	4	5	<1
Naturalist-led programs	5	7	2
Running	2	3	<1

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=135)

(N=91)

(N=44)

Table 49: What People Plan to do During State Park Visit(s) (Cont.)

Activity	Northeast Region totals (%)	Local Residents (%)	Tourists (%)
Rollerblading	1	1	<1
Nature/wildlife observation	26	26	28
Camping	33	24	52
Dirt bike riding	2	3	<1
Off-road vehicle activities	<1	<1	<1
Spending time with friends and family	1	2	<1
Rest/relaxation	1	2	<1
Work-related activity	<1	<1	<1
Attending special events/activities	<1	<1	<1
Other	1	1	<1

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=135)

(N=91)

(N=44)

Table 50: Information Sources Used When Planning Leisure Activities

(State Parks users and non-users)

Information Source	Statewide (%)	Northeast (%)
Recommendation from family/friends	87	83
Newspapers	62	45
Television	43	41
Radio ads	37	35
Internet	40	19
Entertainment magazines	20	20
Billboards	18	20

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Table 51: First Choice Outdoor Recreation Destinations

(State Parks users and non-users)

Preferred Destination	Statewide (%)	Northeast (%)
Wilderness areas with little or no development	29	15
Large parks with a wide range of camping, trails, boating and fishing	27	34
Forests and lakes with limited trails, camping, boating and fishing	21	17
Rivers with boating and fishing	16	24
Community trails and community parks with ball fields and recreation centers	8	10

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Table 52: Participation in Leisure Activities

(Average number of times per month)
(State Parks users and non-users)

Activity	Statewide Respondents	Northeast
Surfing the internet	11.3	8.6
Participating in recreational activities for exercise	8.7	4.7
Working in the garden	8.7	11.2
Go to the gym/ indoor fitness activities	5.6	3.7
Outdoor leisure activities like camping, fishing, hunting	2.8	2.1
Go for dinner	5.3	5.3
Off-road driving	1.9	1.9
Go to shopping mall	2.6	1.4
Play team sports	1.5	1.0
Go to bar/night club	1.1	0.6
Go to movies	1.3	1.1
Casino, racetrack, or other gaming venture	0.4	0.2
Go to museum/art gallery	0.9	0.4
Go to concert or live theater	0.7	0.2

Source: Colorado State Parks
Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Table 53: Outdoor Recreation Activities Participated in During the Last 2 Years

(State Parks users and non-users)

Activity	% of Statewide Respondents	% of Northeast Respondents
Picnicking	82	79
Trail recreation (hiking, biking, etc.)	74	50
Water recreation (swimming, sailing, etc.)	61	51
Tent camping	59	50
Fishing	53	61
Visiting historical sites	62	50
Motorized water recreation	29	33
RV/car camping	37	36
Bird/wildlife watching	52	39
Hunting	20	31
Winter sports (skiing, snowboarding, etc.)	36	16
Ball sports (golf, baseball, tennis)	44	40
Motorized trail recreation	31	32
Motorized winter sports	16	13

Source: Colorado State Parks
Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Table 54: Increased Visitation to State Parks on the Basis of Proposed Features

(State Parks users and non-users)

Feature	% of Statewide Respondents	% of Northeast Respondents
Smaller crowds	83	74
More backcountry parks with minimal development	70	61
Better quality facilities	70	61
More trail opportunities	67	47
Greater range of recreational options	60	43
More educational programs	57	55
More advertising	55	52
Theme parks	35	43
Lodges/conference centers	34	40
Golf courses	19	17

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Table 55: Motivation for Choosing Out-of-home Leisure Activities

(State Parks users and non-users)

Motivation	% of Statewide Respondents	% of Northeast Respondents
Unwind/Escape (average)	82	82
Give my mind a rest	82	83
Release tensions and anxieties	83	88
Get away from demands of life	86	86
To relax	92	95
Experience peace and calm	89	88
Get away from crowds	83	81
Be alone	54	57
To be close to nature	85	81
Self-fulfillment (average)	70	67
Learn about new things	74	72
Develop my skills and abilities	56	59
To exercise and keep fit	72	55
Experience new and different things	77	83
Thrill-seeking (average)	51	49
To take risks	32	27
To experience thrills and excitement	48	48
To experience new challenges	58	51
Be my own boss	64	69
Socialize (average)	68	77
To spend time with my family	88	95
Be with friends	79	93
To meet new people	38	44

Source: Colorado State Parks Market Assessment Study, 2003

(N=1613)

(N=310)

Grant Allocations

The following table is a summary of total grant allocations since each grant program's inception. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants are awarded by Colorado State Parks with authority from the National Park Service. Both Off-Highway

Vehicles (OHV) and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails) are administered by Colorado State Parks. Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants are a portion of lottery proceeds automatically distributed to local governments on the basis of population.

Table 56: Grant Information by County

County	GOCO grant total value	LWCF grants total value	OHV grants total value	Trails grants total value	CTF grants total value	County total
Cheyenne	86,907	8,587	0	0	319,226	414,720
Elbert	339,799	22,112	0	0	1,815,852	2,177,763
Kit Carson	376,521	113,844	0	0	1,009,295	1,499,660
Lincoln	179,443	68,419	0	27,000	765,698	1,013,560
Logan	1,008,898	38,103	0	0	2,548,600	3,595,601
Morgan	1,935,797	255,276	0	2,400	3,332,063	5,523,136
Phillips	436,370	14,000	0	0	608,479	1,058,849
Sedgwick	41,636	0	0	0	375,812	417,448
Washington	99,487	80,331	0	0	706,361	886,179
Yuma	2,062,101	2,011,948	0	0	1,284,943	5,358,992
Region Total	\$6,566,959	\$2,612,620	\$0	\$29,400	\$12,766,329	\$21,945,908

Source: Colorado State Parks, 2003.

Local Government Survey Results

The following table is the summary for all local governments responding to the survey within the region.

There were 24 respondents in this region, the majority of which are jurisdictions with larger populations that provide substantial recreation services to the public.

Table 57: Land and Facilities by SCORP Region

Percent of Colorado's population within region (2002) = 2.5%

Recreation Facility	Northeast	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities within Region
Public parks	60	2,592	2.3%
Acreage public parks	773	99,299	0.8%
Open space areas	307	1,853	16.6%
Acreage open space (fee title)	217	183,272	0.1%
Acreage open space (easements)	15	92,789	0.0%
Golf courses managed by your agency	5	75	6.7%
Acreage golf courses	440	11,090	4.0%
Baseball/softball fields	53	1,467	3.6%
Basketball courts	24	656	3.7%

Table 57: Land and Facilities by SCORP Region (Cont.)

Percent of Colorado's population within region (2002) = 2.5%

Recreation Facility	Northeast	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities within Region
Multi-use courts or gyms	4	193	2.1%
Picnic shelters	75	1,232	6.1%
Playgrounds	38	1,528	2.5%
Soccer fields	6	1,081	0.6%
Swimming pools	12	176	6.8%
Tennis courts	25	882	2.8%
Campsites	45	1,093	4.1%
Miles of multiple use paved trails	8	1,507	0.5%
Miles of multiple use gravel or soft surface trails	13	1,231	1.1%
Miles of pedestrian only (hiking) trails	12	269	4.5%

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2003.

Table 58: Agency Characteristics by SCORP Region

Characteristic	Summary of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services	10	42%
Of the agencies with a plan, those recreation plans subject to public review and comment	10	42%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that have the outdoor recreation plan formally adopted by their overseeing government (e.g., city council, county commissioners, board of directors, etc.)	9	38%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	5	21%
Outdoor recreation plans that address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	7	29%
Agencies offering Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs	2	8%
Number of people attending interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	100	NA
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	3	13%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	9	38%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	3,049	NA

Table 58: Agency Characteristics by SCORP Region (Cont.)

Characteristic	Summary of Responses	Percent of Respondents
Agencies utilizing youth conservation corps crews for maintenance or construction work	1	4%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	2	NA
Agencies with dedicated funding sources (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) aside from lottery dollars, specifically for park, open space and trail investments	4	17%
Estimated total dollar value of capital improvements (such as land, facilities, trails) planned by agencies in the region for the five year period of 2003-08	\$9,760,000	NA
Estimated dollar amount that can be funded by existing resources for proposed five year capital improvements	\$1,888,010	NA

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2003.

Table 59: Ranked Priority Issues for Local Governments

Issue	Northeast	State Rank
Year to year stability of your agency's budget	1	2
Monitor natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, weeds, water quality)	2	6
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	3	1
Liability protection for your agency	4	4
Vandalism	5	9
Offer recreation programs for youth	6	7
Access for people with disabilities	7	5
Need to create a dedicated funding source for acquisitions and facilities	8	12
Provide public information about facilities and programs	9	10
Recreation programs and opportunities for seniors	10	15
Graffiti control	11	16
Strategies for public/private cost-sharing for recreation	12	23
Capacity to serve growing population	13	8
Coordination/cooperation with other outdoor recreation agencies	14	13
Funding for partnerships with volunteer and/or youth organizations	15	24

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2003.

Table 60: Ranked Priority Needs for Local Governments

Need	Northeast	Statewide
Picnicking	1	2
Playgrounds	2	3
Baseball and football fields	3	8
Swimming pools	4	16
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	5	13
Skateboard parks	6	12
Outdoor in-line skate hockey rinks	7	20
Soccer fields	8	10
Community trail system	9	1
Toilets and showers	10	17
Car/RV camping	11	37
Acquisition of natural open space	12	7
Acquire water for recreation	13	11
Archery/shooting ranges	14	36
Acquisition of parklands	15	9

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2003.

