

SECTION 3 OUTDOOR RECREATION TRENDS



3.1 Overview

This section highlights national and statewide outdoor recreation trends including information related to: activity participation, licenses, registrations, and visitation. Tourism trends are also included because of the inherent connection between tourism and Colorado’s great outdoors. Data included in this section are presented from a broad representation of industry, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations (Table 13).

Outdoor recreation opportunities significantly contribute to the high quality of life enjoyed by Colorado residents and are a major attraction for visitors. Better understanding participation and visitation trends ensures that outdoor recreation resources are managed proactively and that providers are prepared to respond to the changing needs and demands of recreation enthusiasts. Statewide, recreation demand continues to increase, impacting local, state, and federal agencies as well as private entities and partners that support outdoor recreation. Among local providers who responded to the 2007 Local Government Survey, “the capacity to serve a growing population” was among the greatest concerns.¹

Despite many managers conveying an increase in outdoor recreation, capturing the actual demand for recreation opportunities is difficult because each agency records visitation differently. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Colorado Division of Wildlife don’t track visitation annually. For this reason, estimating the demand for recreation is best portrayed by examining participation rates for specific activities, visitation trends at public lands, and engagement in volunteerism and environmental education programs.

3.2 Methodology

Because each industry or organization study often uses unique analysis methods and defines “outdoor recreation” by different activities, it is essential to examine a variety of research to accurately estimate a true assessment of trends. Table 13 outlines the public, private, and non-profit sectors that provided outdoor recreation trend information which was incorporated into this section.

Table 13: Outdoor Recreation Trends – Sources of Information

Industry	National Information and Data	Colorado Information and Data
Public Sector Sources	U.S. Department of Interior	Colorado State Parks, Colorado State Trails Program, Colorado Division of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Public Survey (conducted by University of Colorado), Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State University, Colorado Department of Revenue, Colorado Tourism Office
Private Sector Sources	National Survey on Recreation and the Environment	National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, Colorado Ski Country USA, Longwoods International, Recreational Vehicle Industry Association
Non-profit Sector Sources	Outdoor Industry Foundation	Outdoor Industry Foundation, Colorado Snowmobile Association, Colorado River Outfitters Association, Colorado Youth Corps Association, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education

¹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



3.3 National Outdoor Recreation Trends (by Source)

3.3.1 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) is an ongoing survey that was initiated by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) and is considered one of the more comprehensive surveys on national and statewide recreation trends because it has been ongoing since 1960.¹ Today, the survey is administered by the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service). The NSRE has several focus areas, including participation in 85 outdoor recreation activities among people in the U.S. aged 16 and older. Please visit www.coloradoscorp.org for additional information on the NSRE including supplementary data, methodologies, demographic comparisons, and regional market analysis.

Table 14: Participation Rates for the Some of the Most Popular Activities in the U.S. (2006)

Activity	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (Millions)
Walk for pleasure	83%	189
View/photograph natural scenery	61%	138
Visit nature centers, etc.	56%	129
Picnicking	54%	123
Driving for pleasure	53%	120
Sightseeing	52%	119
View/photograph wildlife and nature	46%	104
Visit historic sites	45%	103
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	42%	96
Swimming in an outdoor pool	42%	95
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	39%	89
Bicycling	39%	89
Boating (any type)	37%	83
Fishing (any type)	34%	78
Running or jogging	33%	74
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	32%	74
Day hiking	32%	74
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	29%	65
Developed camping	27%	61
Snow/ice activities (any type)	26%	59
Mountain biking	21%	47
Visit prehistoric/archeological sites	21%	47
Drive off-road (any type)	19%	43
Golf	16%	37
Primitive camping	16%	36
Basketball outdoors	14%	33
Hunting (any type)	11%	26
Backpacking	10%	24
Rafting	10%	23
Softball	10%	22
Canoeing	10%	22
Horseback riding (any type)	10%	22

Source: NSRE, 2007

Table 14 overviews some of the most popular activities in the nation by number of participants. Respondents were considered “participants” if they indicated they participated in the activity at least once during the previous year.

Nationally, 83% walked for pleasure during the past year, which makes it the most popular outdoor recreational activity in the country. Nearly 75% of Americans attended a family gathering and just over half of people picnicked or went driving for pleasure. Approximately 39% bicycled and 10% of respondents went horseback riding.

Walking was reported as the most popular outdoor pursuit in 1995, 2002, and 2006, according to the NSRE.



¹Between 2002 and 2007, the National Survey of Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) was accomplished by interviewing approximately 90,000 Americans aged 16 and over in random-digit-dialing telephone samplings. The NSRE has yielded over 1,300 total surveys for Colorado during this period. The survey was implemented in both English and Spanish.



Of the activities that are considered “nature-based” that take place in relatively undeveloped, natural character settings (typically with trails), 32% of Americans visited a wilderness or primitive area or went day hiking during the last year, making these the most popular nature-based activities. One in five went mountain biking (21%) or went driving off-road (19%). About 11% indicated they went hunting and 10% of Americans backpacked last year.

Just over one-fourth of American residents participated in snow or ice activities within the past year. Of these activities, 14% went sledding, which can often be done close to home, making it the most popular winter activity. In contrast, less than 10% of the country participated in any of the remaining activities. This may be attributed to the relatively high cost of specialized winter sports equipment, and the fact that some winter sports require training to ensure safety, specialized skills, and lengthy travel distances. The least popular activities were cross-country skiing (4%), snowshoeing (2%), and ice fishing (2%).

While only 26% of Americans participate in snow or ice-based activities, 38% of Coloradans enjoyed these sports.



The most popular outdoor team sports in America in 2006 were basketball (with 33 million participants) and volleyball (with nearly 25 million participants).

Nearly 74 million Americans, or one-third of the population, jog or run outdoors, making it the most popular individual sport.

--NSRE National Summary, 2007.



3.3.2 Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF)

Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF) is a non-profit organization established by the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) that conducts its own, independent research on “active, human-powered” outdoor recreation.³ The mission of OIF is to encourage active outdoor recreation for all Americans. OIF conducts research not just on participation but also on frequency of outings per year, which is pertinent when assessing overall recreation trends. Information included in this section is primarily from the eighth annual edition of the OIF’s outdoor recreation participation study, which tracks participation levels nationwide for Americans 16 and older. Nearly three quarters of Americans age 16 and older (or 162 million people) participated in an outdoor activity in 2005, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation.⁴ Participation in 22 active outdoor activities increased between 2004 and 2005, adding another two million Americans considered as outdoor recreationists. Other key findings of OIF’s research are highlighted below.

- While the number of people engaging in outdoor recreation has expanded, the total number of outings declined (from 8,271 in 2004 to 7,329 in 2005) among survey respondents.
- On average, outdoor enthusiasts went on 45 different excursions in 2005, down from 51 in 2004.

In today’s multi-tasking, overscheduled world, Americans perceive they have little or no leisure time available to devote to outdoor activities. Therefore, there is more interest in activities that are perceived as “low commitment” meaning they can be learned quickly, are low-cost, and don’t require intensive equipment or planning. People are also currently attracted to activities which can be completed in a day, and near their home.

The number of Americans who participate in snow sports each year is greater than the combined populations of Ireland, Costa Rica, New Zealand, and Mongolia.

--OIF, The Outdoor Active Recreation Economy, 2006.

Bicycles Are More Popular than Cars Worldwide

The world produced an estimated 130 million bicycles in 2007—more than double the 52 million cars manufactured. Bicycle and car production paralleled each other closely through the 1960s, but bike output rose sharply in 1970. Overall, since 1970, bicycle output has nearly quadrupled, while car production has roughly doubled.

--Earth Policy Institute, "Earth Policy News." Bicycles Pedaling Into the Spotlight

³“Active” is defined as 22 non-motorized activities including: bicycling, paddling sports, camping, wildlife watching, trail activities, snow sports, fishing, and hunting. Detailed activities are included in Table 15.

⁴Methodology: During 2005, 4,000 telephone interviews were conducted using scientific sampling and random digit dial methodology. The overall 2005 results are projectable to the American population, age 16 and over, with a margin of error of +/- 1.6% at the 95% confidence level. Surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish.



Some of these opportunities, which were also some of the most popular activities in 2005, include: snowshoeing, trail running, fishing, and hiking.⁵

- The largest segments of outdoor recreationists are Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964) and Millennials (born between 1978 – 2003)⁶

In Table 15, shaded cells represent a large percent growth or decline (greater than 20%).

Table 15: Human-Powered Activities, National Participation in 2005 and Percent Changes between 2004 -2005

Activity	Participation Rates 2005 (%)	Participants (Millions)	Total Number of Outings (Millions) ⁷	Participation Incidence % Change (2004 vs. 2005)
Human-Powered Activities - TOTALS	72%	161.6	7,329	0.7%
Backpacking	6%	13.5	81	0.1%
Bicycling - Any Type	38%	85.6	3,123	-1%
Bicycling - Paved Road	35%	78.5	2,197	-2%
Bicycling - Mountain				
Biking	22%	50.0	926	-3%
Bicycling - Single Track				
Dirt	17%	39.0	507	-2%
Bicycling - Wide Track				
Dirt	17%	38.1	419	-6%
Bird Watching	7%	15.6	188	3%
Camping - Any Type	30%	68.1	347	3%
Car Camping	23%	51.7	259	5%
Camping (Away from Car)	8%	17.7	89	0%
Climbing with Rope/Harness - Any Type	4%	9.2	51	23%
Climbing - Natural Rock	2%	5.0	15	10%
Climbing - Artificial Wall	3%	6.7	34	31%
Climbing - Ice	1%	1.0	2	-3%
Cross-Country/Nordic Skiing	5%	10.0	50	2%
Fishing - Any Type	35%	77.3	1,082	-5%
Fishing (Non-Fly)	33%	74.2	964	-4%
Fly Fishing	7%	14.7	117	-20%
Hiking	34%	76.7	844	1%
Paddlesports - Any Type	15%	34.3	191	7%
Canoeing	9%	20.8	83	-8%
Rafting	5%	10.6	21	11%
Kayaking - Any Type	6%	12.6	86	23%
Kayaking - (Non-Whitewater)	5%	11.9	82	25%
Kayaking - Recreation/Sit-on-Top	4%	9.0	54	22%
Kayaking - Touring/Sea	3%	5.6	28	-2%
Kayaking - Whitewater	1%	2.2	4	-3%
Snowshoeing	2%	5.5	22	14%
Telemark Skiing	2%	3.5	17	-4%
Trail Running	18%	40.4	1,333	1%

⁵Leisure Trends Group. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study for Year 2005. Outdoor Industry Foundation. Boulder, CO, 2006.

⁶State of the Industry Report (2006). Boulder, CO: Outdoor Industry Association, 2006. 11 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.outdoorindustry.org/research.php>>.

⁷Total outings for all summarized categories (total Activities, bicycling, camping, climbing, fishing, paddle sports, and kayaking) are calculated by summing total outings for the sub-categories.



Outdoor Recreation Trends Among American Youth

In 2007, the OIF published *The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants* to better understand outdoor recreation participation among America's youth, the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.^{8,9}

- Many Americans first participate in outdoor recreation experiences as youth, in fact, 90% of recreationists engaged in outdoor activities before the age of 18, however, participation declines exponentially as kids enter into adulthood.
- Decline in participation between the “child” age group (6 - 12 year olds) and the “teenage” group (13 -17 years) is *greater among girls than boys*.¹⁰
- Between 1998 and 2005, participation in outdoor recreation among young female adults (16 – 24 year olds) decreased from 43% to 36%.¹¹
- Male participation declines the most dramatically between the teenage years and young adulthood (18 - 24 years).
- As outdoor enthusiasts age, they take part in fewer activities.
- While the favorite activity among youth between the ages of 6 and 17 is bicycling, young adults (18-24 year olds) prefer running, jogging, or trail running.¹²

Table 16: The Most Popular Active Outdoor Activities Among Youth in 2006 (by Number of Outings Annually)¹³

Activity	Outings (2006)	Annual Outings per Youth
Bicycling (any type)	1.47 billion	78
Running/Jogging/Trail Running	1.17 billion	94
Skateboarding	581 million	66
Fishing (any type)	314 million	20
Wildlife Viewing ¹⁴	112 million	25

Source: OIF, 2007

⁸The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants. Outdoor Industry Foundation. Boulder, CO, 2007. 6 May 2007 <<http://www.outdoorindustry.org/research.social.php>>.

⁹Methodology: Between Jan. and Feb. 2007 60,169 individuals completed an online survey. The data was weighted to ensure it reflected the total U.S. population 6 years of age and older. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 274,110,000 for 2006 data; 271,362,000 for 2005; and 272,734,000 for the two-year (2005 or 2006) participation analysis.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Leisure Trends Group. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study for Year 2005. Outdoor Industry Foundation. Boulder, CO, 2006.

¹²The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants. Outdoor Industry Foundation. Boulder, CO, 2007. 6 May 2007 <<http://www.outdoorindustry.org/research.social.php>>.

¹³Among youth age 6-17, based on one year (2006).

¹⁴At least 1/4 mile from home or vehicle.



Participation in Outdoor Recreation Declines as Children Grow Older

Competing interests such as video games, the internet, and television are thought to be a significant factor in youth spending less time in the outdoors.

While 37% of 6-17 year-olds recreate outdoors twice a week, only 25% of young adults (18-24 years old) engage in outdoor activities twice a week or more, a 32% decrease.

Young adults (16 – 24 year-olds) recreated outdoors an average of 68 times in 2004 but went on just 60 outings in 2005.

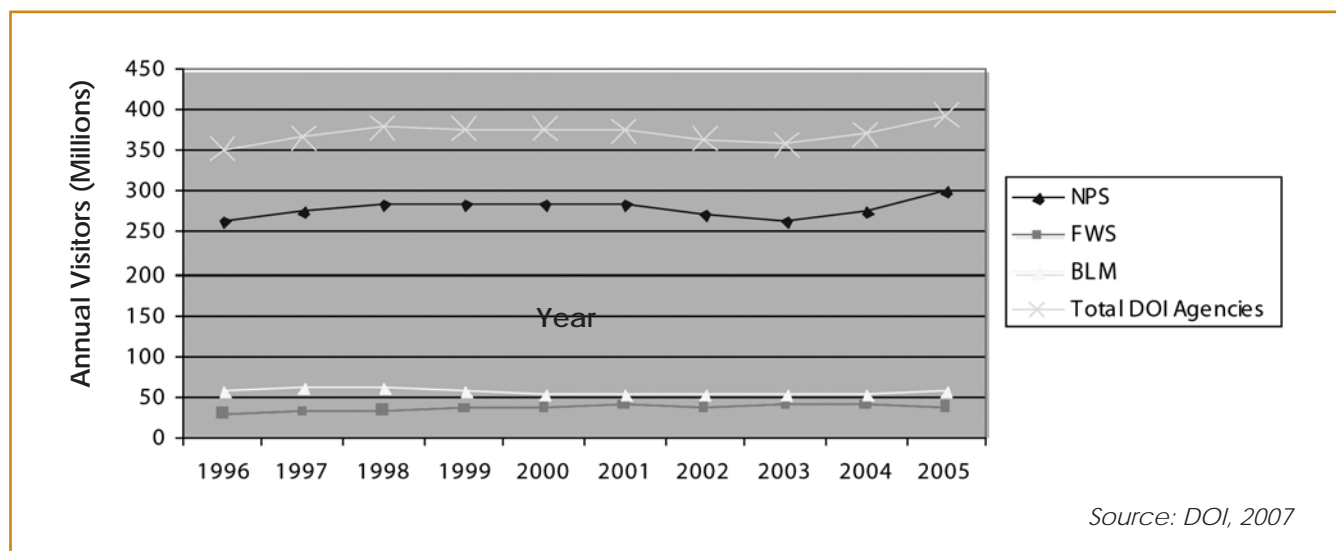
--OIF, *The Next Generation of Outdoor Participants*, 2007.

3.3.3 Visitation Trends at Department of the Interior (DOI) Sites

While examining specific participation levels for individual activities is useful, reviewing visitation trends on public lands also provides insight about the need for and supply of outdoor recreation activities because many outdoor sports occur on public lands.

In 2005, nearly 600 million visitors nationwide accessed sites managed by the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior (DOI). Between 1996 and 2005, the U.S. population increased by about 12% while visitation at DOI sites that track visitation annually (NPS, BLM, and FWS) increased proportionately, also 12%. A 10% rise in total NPS, BLM, and FWS visits was reported between 2003 and 2005 while the U.S. population increased by about 2% (Figure 11)^{15,16}

Figure 11: Visitation at NPS, BLM, and FWS Sites between 1996-2005*



*Forest Service visitation is not included because those data are tracked on the forest level and not updated annually, although an estimated 205 million people visited National Forests across the U.S. in FY 2005.

¹⁵“U.S. Population Estimates.” U.S. Census Bureau. 15 Aug. 2008 <www.census.gov/prod/1/pop/p25-1130/>.

¹⁶FY 2004 Recreation Fee Demonstration Program Summary Visitation, Revenue, Cost, and Obligations Information. Department of the Interior. 2006.



3.4 Colorado Outdoor Recreation Trends (by Source)

Methodologies for collecting and analyzing data often vary by source, therefore, participation rates will differ between studies. In addition, sample sizes for each survey fluctuate. Although no source is considered more reliable than the other, participation rates should be considered estimates rather than precise counts. This section gathers data from a variety of resources to provide a comprehensive analysis of statewide outdoor recreation trends.

Ranges for participation rates for some of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Colorado are presented in Table 17. Activities that were tracked by multiple surveys are displayed in the table. Following the comparison, detailed information by source is provided along with supplemental information on individual activities.

Table 17: Ranges for Colorado Participation Numbers

Activity	NSRE Participation #’s	OIF Participation #’s	FWS Natl. Survey of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation	Average Estimate for Participation #’s
Bicycling	1,670,000	1,212,400	n/a	1,441,200
Camping	1,642,000	962,690	n/a	1,302,345
Fishing (any type)	1,109,000	541,520	660,000	770,173
Hunting	526,000	156,287	259,000	313,762
Paddling Sports (Rafting, Kayaking,				

3.4.1 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

To effectively evaluate outdoor recreation trends, the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) annually tracks outdoor recreation activities nationally and statewide. A summary of Colorado-specific data is overviewed in this section.¹⁷ National data is provided in Section 3.3.

Data from 1995, 2003, and 2006 are displayed because while the survey is ongoing, comprehensive results are only compiled periodically. These years represent the most recent compilations of the survey and also provide valuable trendlines. Please visit www.coloradoscorp.org for more information on the NSRE including additional data, methodologies, demographic comparisons, and regional market analysis.

¹⁷State-specific NSRE data was derived by providing a minimum number of interviews for each state. There were 522 respondents in 1995, 1,011 respondents in 2003, and 1,331 respondents in 2006. The 1995 number of participants is based on an estimate of 2.86 million Coloradans 16 & older; 2003 = 3.3 million; 2006 = 3.615 million. All participant numbers and percent participating are presented at the 95% confidence interval.

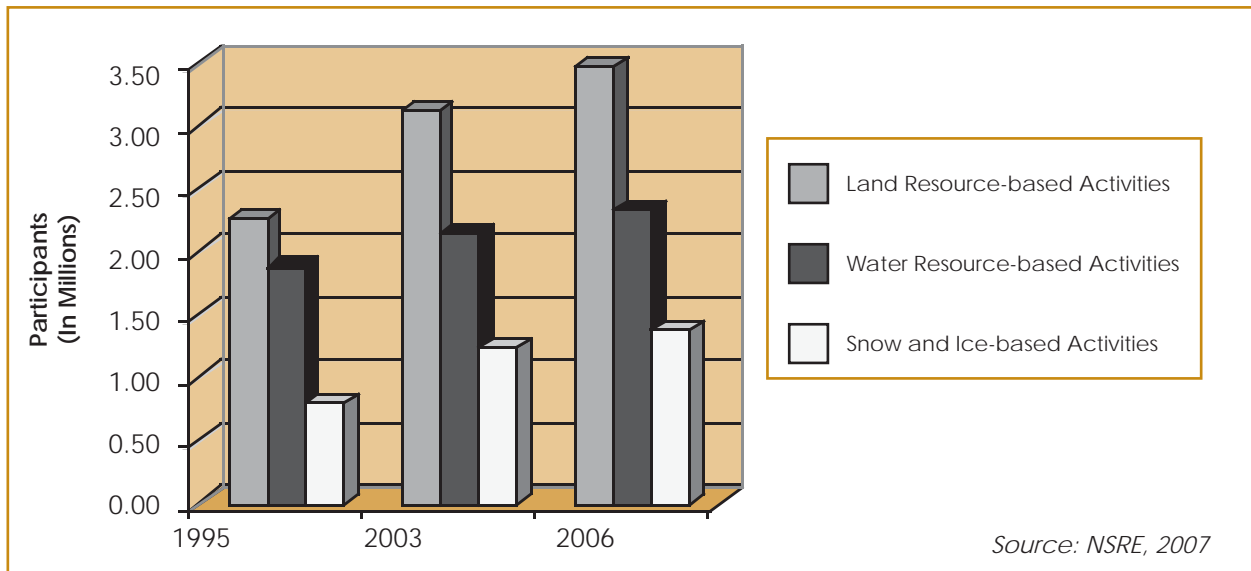


Activity by Resource Type

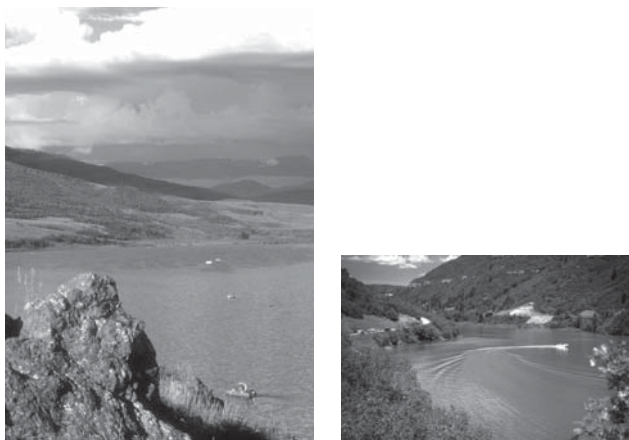
Land-based activities are generally favored by recreationists in Colorado, with 3.47 total million people participating in 2006 (Figure 12). Approximately 2.33 million enjoy water-based activities such as boating, swimming, or fishing. About 1.38 million engage in snow and ice-based activities.

While participation in all land, water, and snow-based activities increased between 1995 and 2006, land-based activities gained more enthusiasts than the other two recreation categories, increasing its number of participants by 53% between 1995 and 2006 (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Comparing Changes in Participation by Resource Type (1995-2006)



Many of the state's most popular activities involve few specialized skills or equipment (Table 18). These include walking for pleasure, attending family gatherings, visiting nature centers, and picnicking.



Participation rates should be considered in relation to population changes. Between 1995 and 2003, there was a 16% increase in population and 13% growth in Colorado's population between 2003 and 2006. Overall, Colorado's population increased by 68% between 1995 and 2006.

Source: Colorado State Demography Office, 2007



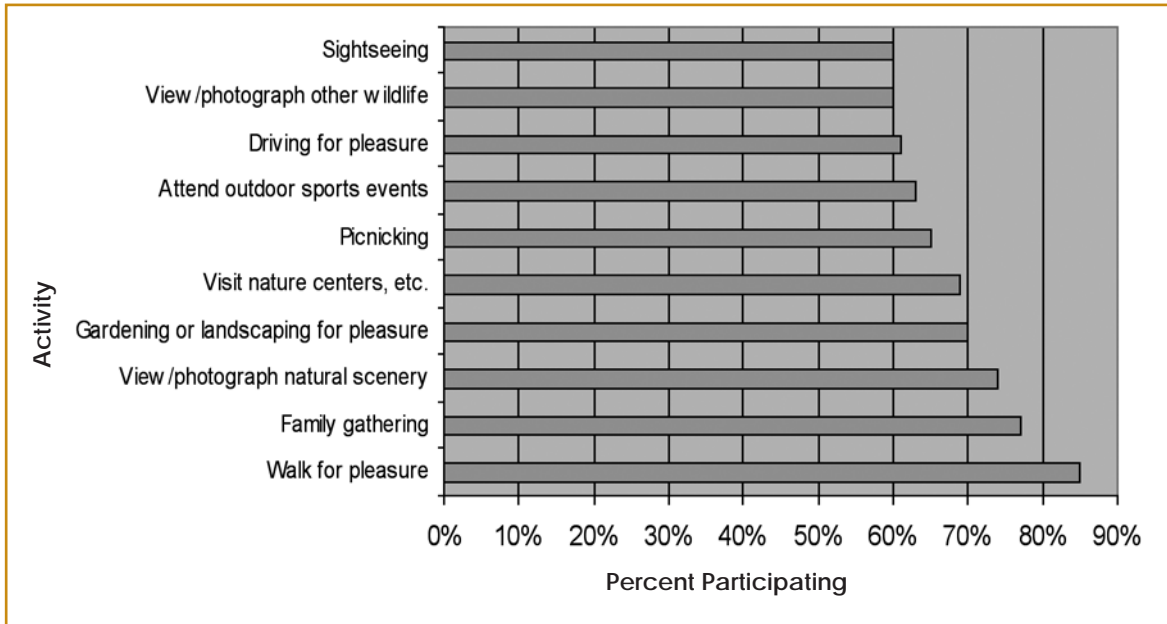
Table 18: The 30 Most Popular Activities in Colorado by Number of Participants (1995-2006)
(All Settings and Categories)

Activity	Millions of Participants (1995)	Millions of Participants (2003)	Millions of Participants (2006)	Percent Change in Participants (1995-2006)
Walk for pleasure	2.04	2.74	3.08	51%
Family gathering outdoors	1.81	2.54	2.79	54%
Visit nature centers	1.75	2.26	2.50	43%
Picnicking	1.68	2.14	2.35	40%
Attend outdoor sports events	1.59	2.09	2.28	43%
View wildlife (besides birds)	1.19	1.87	2.17	83%
Sightseeing	1.85	1.93	2.17	17%
Day hiking	1.28	1.59	1.85	45%
Visit historic sites	1.37	1.59	1.80	32%
Attend outdoor concerts, etc.	1.22	1.56	1.69	39%
Bicycling	0.96	1.51	1.67	75%
Yard games, e.g., croquet	1.09	1.45	1.59	46%
Pool swimming	1.12	1.17	1.33	19%
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	0.82	1.11	1.29	56%
Running or jogging	0.82	1.24	1.28	56%
Developed camping	0.81	1.14	1.27	58%
Coldwater fishing	0.77	1.00	1.15	50%
View birds	0.85	0.97	1.14	34%
Primitive camping	0.84	0.89	1.08	29%
Visit archeological sites	0.93	0.89	1.08	16%
Drive off-road	0.65	0.83	1.04	58%
Backpacking	0.48	0.69	0.80	68%
Golfing	0.45	0.66	0.80	76%
Motorboating	0.52	0.67	0.79	53%
Downhill skiing	0.53	0.66	0.72	37%
Sledding	0.33	0.59	0.63	90%
Warmwater fishing	0.34	0.55	0.62	81%
Softball	0.42	0.56	0.57	37%
Horseback riding	0.33	0.43	0.54	64%
Volleyball outdoors	0.44	0.48	0.52	18%

Source: NSRE, 2007



Figure 13: Colorado’s Ten Most Popular Activities in 2006 (as a Percentage of Population)



Source: NSRE, 2007

Land-based Activities

Within the NSRE, land-based activities are divided into two categories: “nature-based” settings and “developed” settings. Day hiking is the most popular activity in the nature-based land activity category for Colorado residents with over 50% of residents indicating they participated in a day hike at least once within the last year. Similarly, the second most popular activity in this category is visiting a wilderness or primitive area, with 49% of residents participating.

Among land-based pursuits that occur in developed settings, walking for pleasure is the most popular activity with over three million residents enjoying this pursuit. Family gatherings (77%), photographing natural scenery (74%), and driving for pleasure (61%) are other popular activities enjoyed in developed settings on land.

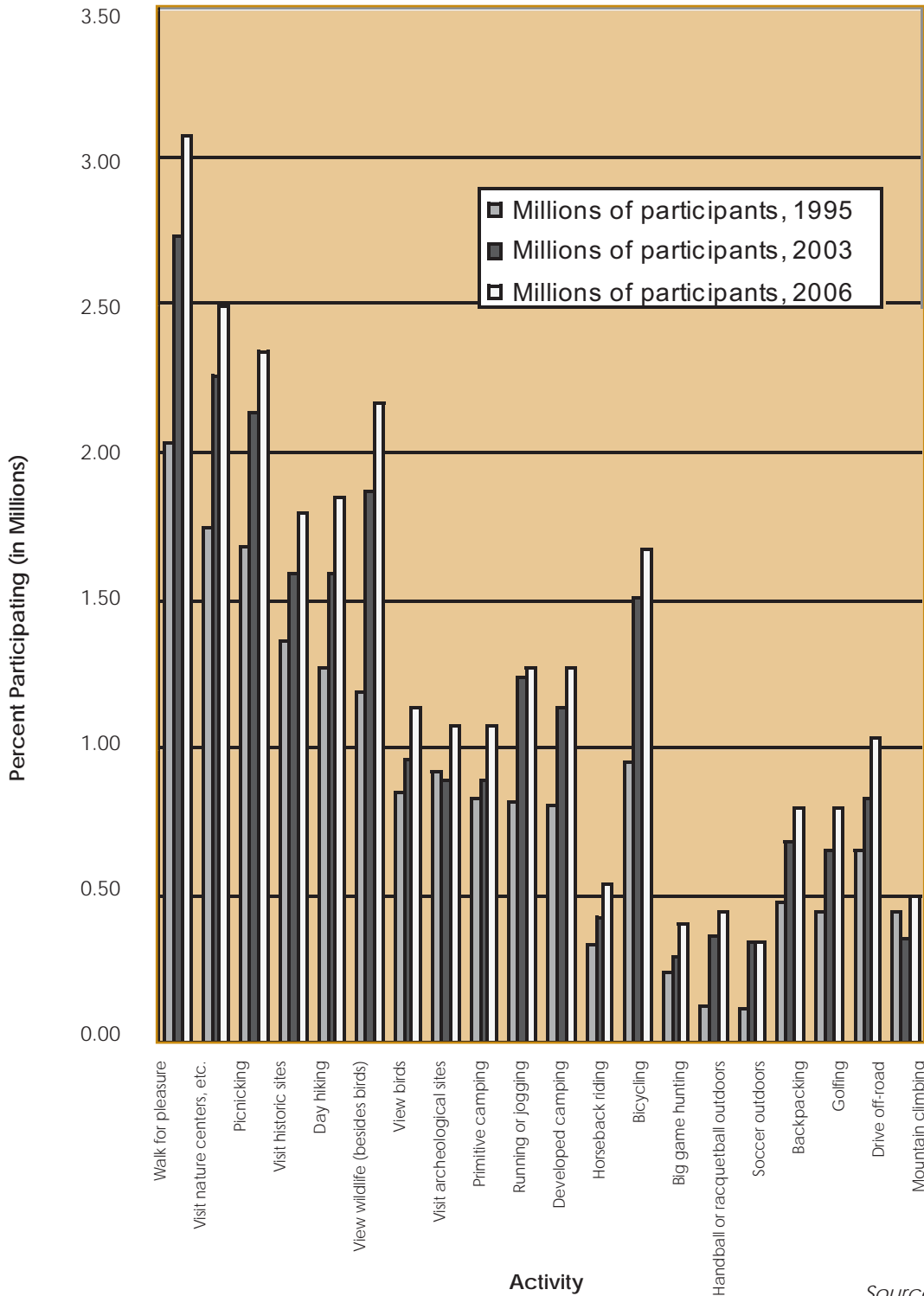
Almost 14% of Colorado residents indicate they actively participate in hunting. Of the hunting categories, big game hunting is the most popular (11%), followed by small game hunting (8%), and migratory bird hunting (4%).



“Walking for pleasure” is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Region, and the U.S. Therefore, it is important that residents and visitors can easily access information about pedestrian-friendly areas and opportunities for walking in conjunction with other activities such as driving for pleasure, touring, and sightseeing.



Figure 14: Changes in Land-based Activities from 1995 to 2006



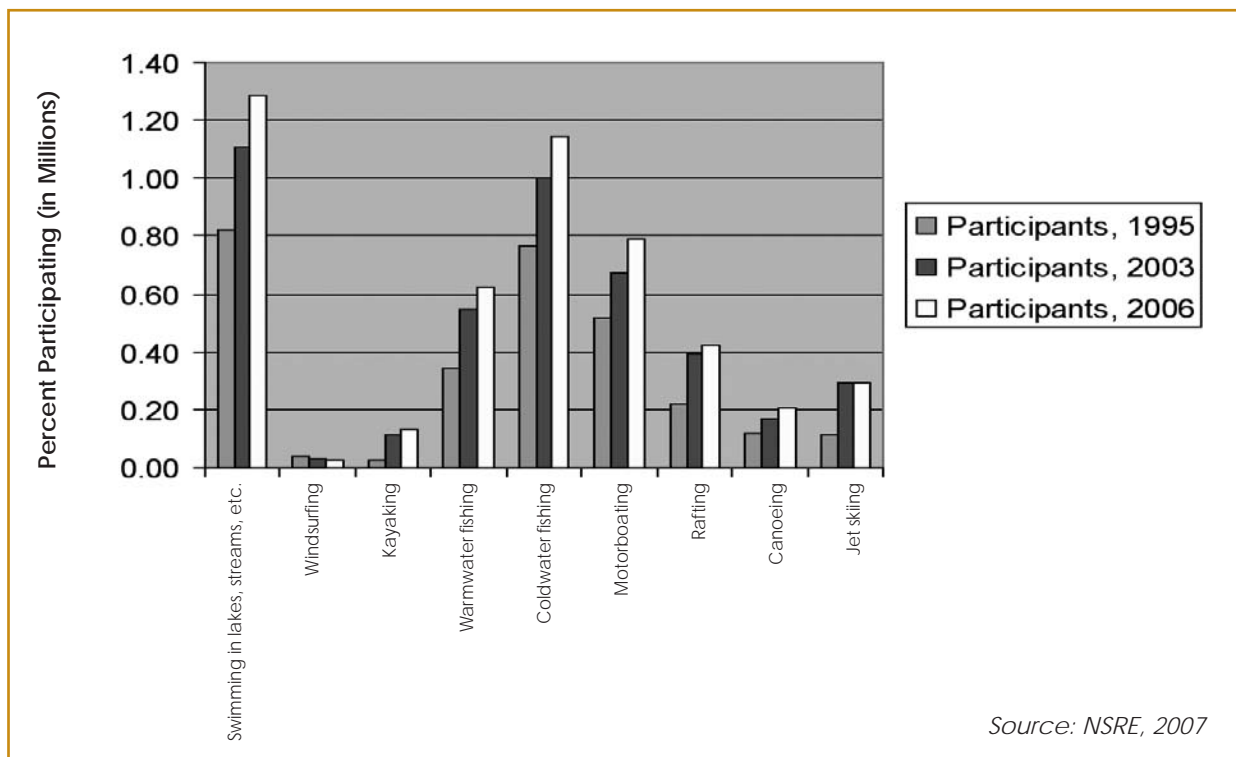
Source: NSRE, 2007



Water-based Activities

The most popular water-based activities in Colorado are freshwater fishing and swimming in an outdoor pool, with 37% of residents indicating they went swimming and fishing within the last year. Swimming in lakes and streams and soaking in hot springs is the state’s third most popular water-based activity (36%) followed closely by boating with 34% of Coloradans heading out in a canoe, raft, sailboat, or motorboat. Among anglers, most preferred coldwater fishing (32%), likely because of high-quality trout fisheries throughout the state, followed by warmwater fishing (17%). The most popular type of boating is motorboating (22%), followed by rafting (12%), canoeing (6%), sailing (4%), and kayaking (4%).

Figure 15: Changes in Water-based Activities from 1995 to 2006



Snow and Ice-based Activities

When queried about pursuits that take place on or in snow or ice, 38% of Coloradans reported that they enjoy some type of snow or ice-based activity at least once a year. The most popular snow or ice-based activity is downhill skiing with about 20% of Colorado residents hitting the slopes. Over 17% of people responded that they had sledged in the last year and nearly 9% snowboarded. Snowmobiling ranked fourth among these activities with over 300,000 residents enjoying the sport (about 8% of the population). Almost 6% of Coloradans snowshoe, equating to about 206,000 people who hit the trails or seek quiet access to the backcountry.¹⁸

¹⁸Trend information for snow and ice-based activities is available at www.coloradoscorp.org



3.4.2 Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF)

The Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF) offers another useful analysis of Colorado’s outdoor recreation trends. In 2005, the OIF conducted a survey of over 5,100 respondents who engaged in “active” outdoor recreation including: non-motorized activities such as bicycling, paddling sports, camping, wildlife watching, trail activities, snow sports, fishing, and hunting in Colorado. Respondents were considered qualified if they also purchased a retail item or pass related to the activity in the last year. This OIF survey is valuable for examining these specific activities and is comprehensive because it captures the preferences of over 5,100 respondents.¹⁹

Coloradans enjoy an active lifestyle and often pursue more than one outdoor activity. According to the OIF, trail-related activities are the most popular outdoor pursuits among Coloradans with over 1.4 million folks who trail run or day hike on an unpaved trail, backpack, and rock climb (Table 19). Approximately 35% of residents bicycle, 33% watch wildlife, and 28% camp. Shaded cells in Table 19 indicate activities that at least one-third of Coloradans participate in.

Table 19: Participation in Active Outdoor Recreation Activities (2005)

Activity (in alphabetical order)	# of Colorado Participants	% of Population Participating ²⁰
Bicycling (paved and off-road)	1,212,400	35%
Camping (RV, tent, and rustic lodging)	982,690	28%
Fishing (all types)	541,520	15%
Hunting (all types)	156,297	4%
Paddling (kayaking, rafting, and canoe)	392,451	11%
Snow Sports Downhill skiing, including telemark Snowboarding Cross-country or Nordic skiing Snowshoeing	743,263	21%
Trail Trail running on an unpaved trail Day hiking on an unpaved trail Backpacking Rock climbing (natural rock or ice)	1,405,329	41%
Wildlife Viewing Bird watching Other wildlife	1,190,000	33%

Source: OIF, 2007

¹⁹Methodology: Outdoor Industry Foundation conducted a survey for bicycling, camping, paddling, snow sports, and trail activities in October of 2005. A total of 13,907 respondents completed the survey with 5,150 respondents determined to be “qualified respondents” - by both participating in one of the activities and making a purchase related to the activity within the past year. A total of 408 respondents from Colorado completed the survey with about 85 of the Colorado respondents determined to be “qualified.”

²⁰Wildlife-based participation is based on 3,659,733 Colorado residents 16 years of age and older, in 2005 (U.S. Census, 2005). Non wildlife-based participation is based on 3,464,517 Colorado residents 18 years of age and older, in 2005 (U.S. Census, 2005). Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select more than one activity..



3.4.3 A Survey of Colorado Recreation Trends, Issues, and Needs

In Summer 2007, the Business Research Division in the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado at Boulder conducted a Survey of Colorado Recreation, Trends, Issues, and Needs (Public Survey). The Public Survey examined recreational activity, demand, facility and service preferences, and expectations. In addition, the study assessed public perception about existing funding levels for recreation resources and various funding strategies for local, state, and federal lands.²¹

Outdoor recreation was defined as any form of outdoor activity pursued during leisure time that provides personal enjoyment and satisfaction. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to, camping, hiking, biking, swimming, boating, mountaineering, picnicking, outdoor team sports, horseback riding, and off-road motorized vehicle use.²²

Detailed results including methodology, demographics and a complete report are included in Appendix A.

Frequency of Outdoor Recreation Activities

According to the Public Survey, more than 75% of Coloradans participate in outdoor recreational activities on a weekly basis (Table 20). Other key findings are summarized below.

- More than 32% engaged in outdoor recreation two to four times per week and approximately 20% participated more than four times per week.
- Within the past 12 months, respondents used trails, open spaces, or parks more often than recreation centers in their communities. Approximately 47% used trails, open spaces, or parks one to four times per week in the past year, compared to 24% that used community recreation centers.
- A total of 48% of respondents never used a recreation center and 7% did not use trails, open spaces, or parks.
- On average, respondents used trails, parks, and open spaces approximately 1.5 times per week, and used community recreation centers less than one time per week.
- Looking toward the future over the next five years, 46% of respondents envisioned spending about the same amount of time recreating and 44% thought they would likely spend spending more time active in the outdoors.²³

The average respondent to the Colorado Public Survey spends approximately \$121 on passes, permits, and fees annually.



²¹Methodology: A telephone survey was conducted of Colorado residents age 15 and older; a total of 300 surveys were completed. The survey was only administered in English. Compared to the characteristics of the overall state population, survey respondents were more likely to be female and of white ethnic background. Survey interviews were conducted according to a population quota in which a proportionate number of surveys were gathered from each of the metropolitan statistical area and from the rural community. The survey population had an annual household income more than \$10,000 higher than the state average of \$50,652.

²²Horvath, G., C. DiPersio, and C. Hickey. A Survey of Colorado Recreation, Trends, Issues, and Needs. Leeds School of Business, Univ. of Colorado At Boulder. Boulder, CO, 2007.

²³Ibid.



Table 20: Frequency of Outdoor Recreation During the Past Year

	Recreated Outdoors	Used Parks, Open Space, or Trails	Used Community Recreation Centers
Never	0%	7%	48%
Less than once per week	24%	36%	25%
Once per week	24%	22%	11%
Two to four times per week	32%	24%	12%
More than four times per week	19%	10%	3%
Don't know/no response	0%	1%	0.3%

Source: Colorado Public Survey, 2007

Distance Traveled to Recreate

Clearly, the majority of recreation occurs near the home, particularly during the week but outdoor enthusiasts are willing to travel much further on weekends.

- More than 45% of respondents travel fewer than four miles from home to recreate Monday through Thursday, and 66% stay within 10 miles of home (Table 20).
- The average distance traveled to recreate outdoors was 17 miles during the week while average distance traveled on the weekend increased to 41 miles.
- Approximately 54% of people typically travel at least 20 miles on the weekends to get outdoors and nearly 20% travel more than 100 miles on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday.
- Caucasians tend to travel approximately nine miles further than Hispanic/Latino respondents to recreate during the week, and nearly 14 more miles on weekends.



Information Resources

Approximately 44% of those who participated in the Colorado Public Survey learn about outdoor recreation activities from friends or family, and one-third find out about opportunities from magazines or newspapers. Nearly 20% use the internet to obtain recreation information. Many respondents also reported they gathered information from living in the area and through personal experience.



Table 21: Distance Traveled to Recreate*

	Weekday**	Weekend
0-4 Miles	45%	20%
5-9 Miles	21%	9%
10-19 Miles	14%	16%
20-49 Miles	9%	20%
50-99 Miles	4%	16%
100 Miles or more	6%	18%
No response	0.7%	1%

*Sum may not equal total due to rounding.
 **"Weekday" was considered Monday through Thursday and "weekend" was defined as Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Source: Colorado Public Survey, 2007

Outdoor Recreation Destination Preferences

Survey participants were asked to rank five outdoor recreation destinations—wilderness areas with little to no development; large parks with a wide range of camping, trails, boating, and fishing opportunities; forests and/or lakes with limited trails, camping, boating, and fishing opportunities; rivers with boating and fishing opportunities; and community trails and/or parks with ball or soccer fields and recreation center opportunities (on a scale from 1-5, where “1” equaled where they least prefer to visit and “5” equaled where they most prefer to visit).

- Coloradans apparently enjoy the full spectrum of recreation destinations present in the state because respondents were nearly evenly divided between the types of destinations they prefer (Table 21). Approximately 52% of respondents ranked “large parks with a wide range of camping, trails, boating, and fishing” as the type of destination that they most prefer while 51% ranked “wilderness areas with little to no development” as their first choice. Roughly 50% of respondents ranked “forests and/or lakes with limited trails, camping, boating, and fishing opportunities” as their preferred destination.
- Approximately 80% of Hispanic/Latino respondents indicated that community trails or parks with ball fields are their most preferred destinations, while only 40% of white respondents reported that these were their favored recreation sites.
- Nearly 45% of respondents indicated that “community trails and/or parks with ball or soccer fields and recreation center opportunities” are their most desired destinations, amenities which are close to home.²⁵

²⁵Ibid.



Table 22: Outdoor Recreation Destination Preferences

Destination	Least Prefer (1)	(2)	No Preference (3)	(4)	Most Prefer (5)	Highest Preference (4&5)
Large parks with wide range of camping, trails, boating and fishing	15%	9%	24%	21%	31%	52%
Wilderness areas with little to no development	21%	12%	16%	19%	32%	51%
Forests and/or lakes with limited trails, camping, boating, and fishing	14%	11%	25%	23%	28%	50%
Community trails and/or parks with ball or soccer fields and recreation center opportunities	21%	9%	25%	21%	24%	45%
Rivers with boating and fishing	27%	13%	21%	18%	20%	38%

³Responses were recorded on a 1-5 scale where 1 means least prefer to visit and 5 means most prefer to visit.
Source: Colorado Public Survey, 2007.

Preferences for Level of Services

- Nearly half of Coloradans seem to prefer recreation sites with basic services, which consist of toilets, shelter, water, and picnicking areas (Table 23).
- More than 25% desire moderate services, and 15% like to visit full-service areas, which include basic and moderate services, plus guided tours or education programs, a visitor center, food and drink concessions, etc.
- Women tend to desire more services when recreating outside; 18% want full services, while only 12% of men prefer full services. Similarly, 64% of men, compared with 53% of women, want either no services or basic services.²⁶

Table 23: Preferences for Services at Outdoor Recreation Destinations

Service Type	Percentage of Respondents
No services	8%
Basic services. For example, toilets, shelter, water, and picnic areas	49%
Moderate services, which include the basic services plus washroom and self-guided information	26%
Full service, which includes the basic and moderate services plus guided-tours, visitor center, snack bar, or food and drink concessions	15%
Don't know/no response	1%

³Sum may not equal total due to rounding.
Source: Colorado Public Survey, 2007.



²⁶Ibid.



3.5 Colorado Outdoor Recreation Trends (by Activity)

Information presented in this section was developed primarily by private industry organizations. A comprehensive effort was made to gather current, relevant statistics for all of Colorado's outdoor recreation activities, however, not every industry has compiled this information.

For details on where to find spaces to enjoy these activities, along with training classes and special events, please visit the Outdoor Recreation Information Center (ORIC) at the Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) Flagship Store in Denver or log on to: www.oriconline.org.

3.5.1 Ascending Colorado's Fourteeners

The 54 peaks in Colorado that exceed over 14,000 feet are termed "fourteeners." At 14,433 feet, Mt. Elbert it is the tallest mountain in Colorado and the second highest peak in the contiguous U.S., next to Mt. Whitney. Whether leisurely hiking up a gentle slope or taking on some of the most technical climbs in the state, seeing the views from atop a fourteener is a thrilling experience.

- Estimating hikers on fourteeners is difficult because actual numbers are not tracked at every mountain, however, estimates suggest that each year about 10,000-20,000 people climb fourteeners along the Front Range Region and at least 500,000 ascend these mountains across the state every year.²⁷
- Ascents of fourteeners have roughly tripled since the early 1990's.²⁸
- More than two-thirds of people visiting fourteeners stated that the peaks were the sole purpose of their trip from home.
- Estimates suggest that approximately one-third of those ascending fourteeners are visiting from other states.²⁹

3.5.2 Boating, Off-Roading, and Snowmobiling

- Colorado has witnessed an ever-increasing demand for motorized access to Colorado's landscapes. Since 1991, when Colorado State Parks first began managing the Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Registration Program, registrations have increased from nearly 12,000 to almost 131,000 in 2007, a 154% increase (Figure 16).³⁰
- Of the 254,000 total motorized recreation vehicles registered through Colorado State Parks which include OHVs, boats, and snowmobiles, OHVs comprise nearly half of all registrations.³¹

Sales of snowmobiles have risen nearly 10% since 2001, according to the Colorado Snowmobile Association. --"Colorado Snow Scoop," Colorado Snowmobile Association, Vol. 27, Number 6. Nov. 2007.

Across the U.S. each year, 11.5 million visits to national forests involve off-road vehicle use. And since 1995, the number of off-road vehicles sold per year has tripled. --High Country News, "Two Weeks in the West," June 9, 2008

²⁷Keske, C., and J. Loomis. The Economics of Colorado Fourteeners Research Summary. Colorado State University, Dept. of Ag. and Resource Economics. Ft. Collins: CSU, 2007. 13 Nov. 2007 <<http://dare.colostate.edu/pubs/edr07-19.pdf>>.

²⁸Woodbury, R. "Peak Season." Time Magazine 4 July 1999. 20 May 2008 <www.time.com/time/magazine/>.

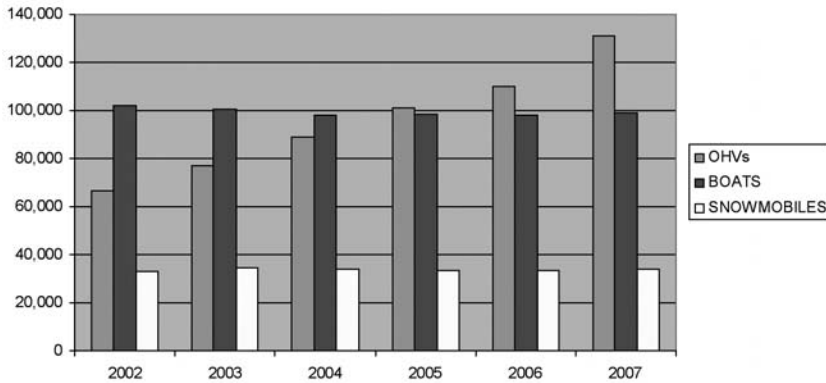
²⁹Keske, C., and J. Loomis. The Economics of Colorado Fourteeners Research Summary. Colorado State University, Dept. of Ag. and Resource Economics. Ft. Collins: CSU, 2007. 13 Nov. 2007

³⁰Metsa, T. "2007 Registrations for OHV, Boat, and Snows." Email to the author. 9 Apr. 2008.

³¹Ibid



Figure 16: Colorado OHV, Motor Boat, and Snowmobile Registrations (2002-2007)



Source: Colorado State Parks 2007



3.5.3 Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding

Gliding down snow-covered slopes at Colorado's ski resorts, or seeking untouched powder in the backcountry, are quintessential winter pastimes for both residents and visitors of all ages. Skiing and snowboarding are not only popular activities, they are a fundamental part of Colorado's tourism economy.

- Nearly 12.6 million skier visits were recorded in 2006-07 at the 26 member resorts represented by Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA).³²
- In 2006-07, CSCUSA resorts hosted 13% more skiers than the 2001-02 season.³³
- Skiing numbers are down across the U.S., however, Colorado's 2006-07 numbers showed continued growth with about 30,000 skier visits more than 2005.
- Colorado captured 38% of world's total ski club business, compared to Europe which hosted 14% of the 3,000 ski clubs and ski councils worldwide.
- Colorado's share of the ski market jumped to 23% in 2006, an increase of 10% from 2005, ranking it the number one ski destination in America.³⁴
- A February 2007 issue of 5280 Magazine stated that while Colorado has a 28% minority population, only about 9% participate in snow sports. Some ski resorts offer "free days" to local youth to introduce them to snowsports hoping to gain lifetime customers, however, it is estimated that only 15-20% of those first-time skiers ever return to the slopes.³⁵

Overnight travelers in Colorado spent \$434 million on ski-related expenditures.

--Longwoods International, 2006.

The 26 member resorts of CSCUSA:

- Hosted over 26.6 million skier days in the 2006-07 season. (A skier day is a person who skis or snowboards at a resort for any part of the day)
- Offer nearly 40,000 skiable acres
- Boast almost 300 inches of annual snowfall (over a ten-year average)
- Offer over 2,300 trails and 317 lifts
- Provide powder cat or heli-skiing at nine areas

³²Skier visits are the measure used to track participation in skiing and snowboarding. A skier visit represents a person skiing or snowboarding for any part of one day at a mountain resort

³³"Current News." Colorado Ski Country USA. 15 Apr. 2008 <<http://media-coloradoski.com/CurrentNews/>>.

³⁴Colorado Travel Year 2006. Colorado Tourism Office, Office of Economic Development and International Trade. 2007. <http://www.colorado.com/static.php?file=industry_partners>.

³⁵Douglas, J. "Downhill Run." 5280 Denver's Mile High Magazine Feb. 2007: 24.

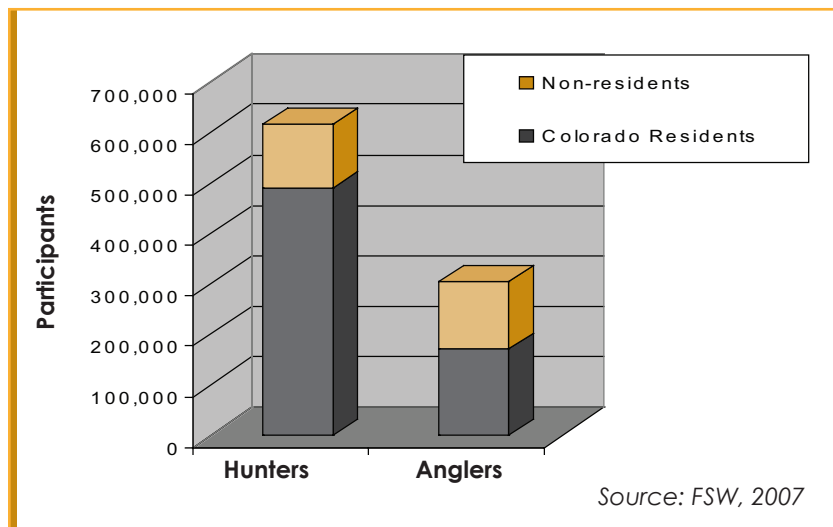


3.5.4 Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are part of Colorado’s heritage and an important contributor to the economy, generating nearly \$1.6 million in fishing and hunting-related expeditions in 2006 and nearly one million resident and non-resident license holders.^{36,37} Whether fishing for trout in Gold Medal trout streams or seeking bass or pike in warmwater reservoirs, Colorado’s high-quality fisheries provide many chances to catch “the big one.” View the regional maps in *Section 5* to view all of Colorado’s Gold Medal waters. The *Colorado Wetlands and Water Resources* map in *Appendix D: Wetlands Component*, also illustrates many of the habitats that provide ample opportunities for hunting and fishing.

- According to the NSRE, almost 14% of Colorado residents indicate they in hunting each year. Of the hunting categories, big game hunting is the most popular (11%), followed by small game hunting (8%), and migratory bird hunting (4%).³⁸
- Long-term trends indicate that fishing and hunting licenses have remained fairly consistent throughout the years, declining less than 1% since 1985.⁴⁰
- Nearly one million people (both residents and non-residents) purchased a hunting or fishing license in 2007. Of those, 681,000 held fishing license and 304,000 people purchased licenses (Figure 17).
- In 2006, hunters spent nearly 2,400,000 days in Colorado hunting big game, small game, and migratory birds.^{41,42}

Figure 17: Hunters and Anglers in Colorado (2006)³⁴



³⁶2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of the Interior, 2007. May-June 2008 <<http://federalaid.fws.gov>>.

³⁷“License and Registrations.” Email from H. Turner. Colorado Division of Wildlife. 21 July 2008.

³⁸Green, G., W. Gosnell, C. Betz, and H. Ken Cordell. Colorado and the Colorado Market Region (National Survey on Recreation and the Environment). Pioneering Research Group, Southern Research Station. Athens, Georgia: USDA Forest Service, 2007.

³⁹2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of the Interior, 2007. May-June 2008 <<http://federalaid.fws.gov>>.

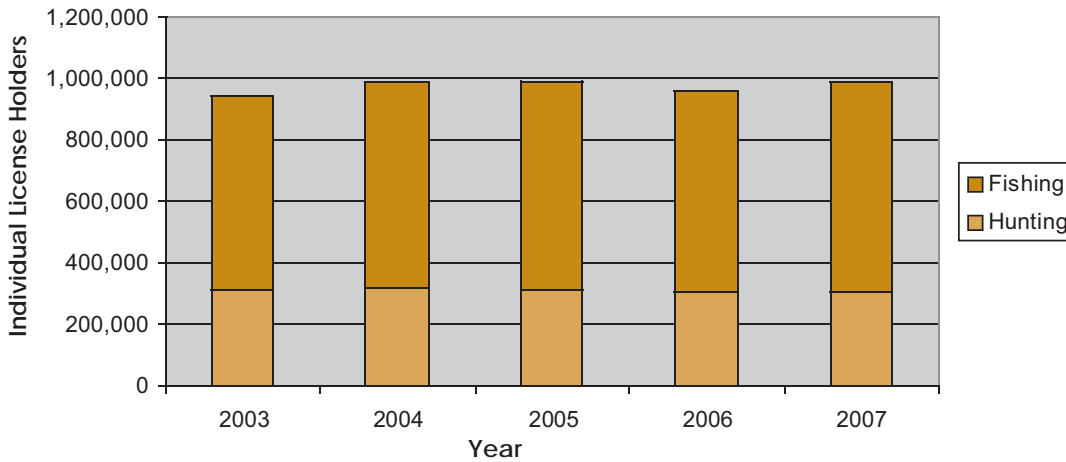
⁴⁰“License and Registrations.” Email from H. Turner. Colorado Division of Wildlife. 21 July 2008.

⁴¹“Days” are defined as any portion of a day where one person engages in the activity.

⁴²2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of the Interior, 2007. May-June 2008 <<http://federalaid.fws.gov>>.



Figure 18: Hunting and Fishing License Holders (2003 – 2007)



Source: CDOW, 2008

3.5.5 RVing and Camping

Whether pitching a tent or enjoying the comforts of a recreation vehicle (RV) or camper-trailer, which can be hauled behind a vehicle, camping is an excellent way to explore Colorado’s scenic areas and natural environments.

- Nearly one million Coloradans are campers, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation.⁴³
- The typical camper has five excursions each year although one-third of campers only went on one overnight excursion in 2005.⁴⁴
- Just over 35% of Coloradans camped in developed areas in 2006, while 30% camped in primitive areas.⁴⁵
- Although motorhome registrations in Colorado increased only 2% between 2006 and 2007, camper-trailer registrations grew by 43% during the same period (Figure 19).⁴⁶
- Nationally, the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) predicts long-term growth in RVing across the U.S. However, this prediction was made prior to escalating fuel costs experienced throughout the nation in 2008.
- Campground revenues, both private and public, increased between 2000 and 2006, by about \$5 million for each sector, earning an additional \$10 million in revenue since 2000.⁴⁷
- Campers in Colorado spent approximately \$317 million at campgrounds across the state in 2006 (Figure 20).⁴⁸

⁴³State by State Active Outdoor Recreation Economy Report. Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2006. Jan.-Feb. 2007 <<http://outdoorindustry.org/research.html>>.

⁴⁴Leisure Trends Group. Outdoor Recreation Participation Study for Year 2005. Outdoor Industry Foundation. Boulder, CO, 2006.

⁴⁵Green, G., W. Gosnell, C. Betz, and H. Ken Cordell. Colorado and the Colorado Market Region (National Survey on Recreation and the Environment). Pioneering Research Group, Southern Research Station. Athens, Georgia: USDA Forest Service, 2007.

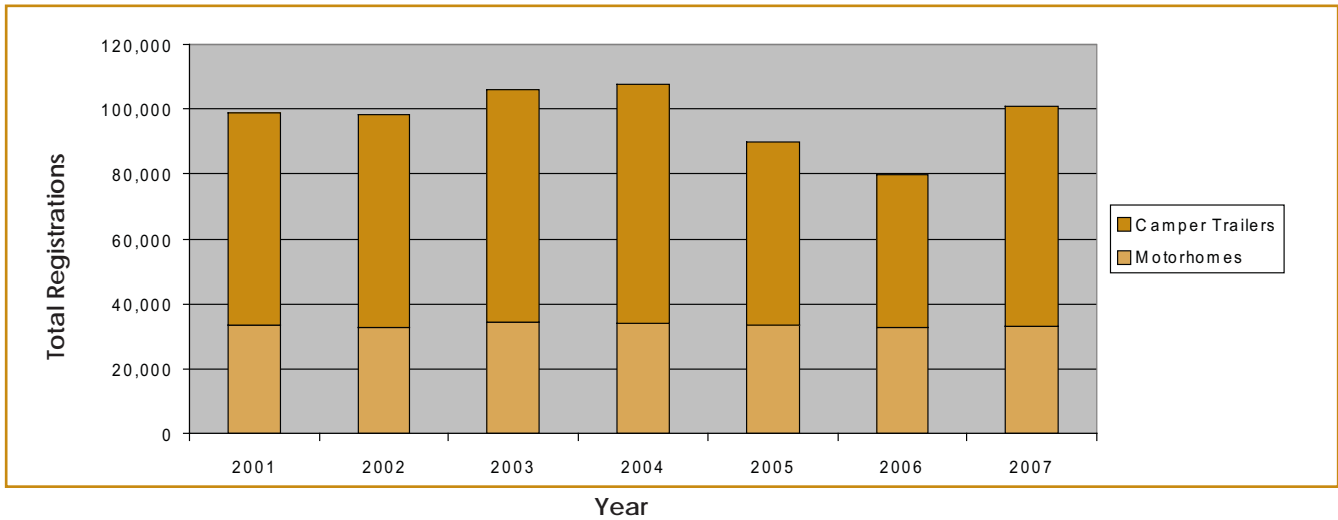
⁴⁶Spriggs, S. “Camper-Trailer and Motorhome Registrations.” Telephone interview. Colorado Department of Revenue Executive Director’s Office. 15 Aug. 2008. Interview conducted by the author.

⁴⁷The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006. Colorado Tourism Office. Office of Economic Development and International Trade (CTO EODIT). 2007: Dean Runyan Assoc. Dec. 2007 <http://www.colorado.com/static.php?file=industry_partners>.

⁴⁸Ibid.

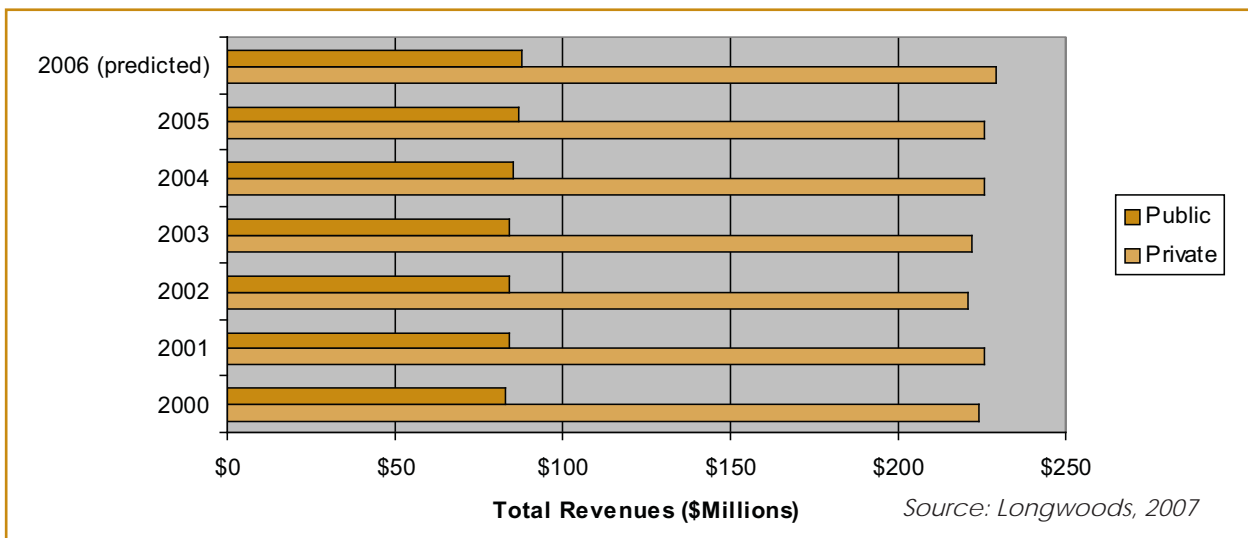


Figure 19: Motorhome Registrations Remain Steady while Camper-Trailer Registrations Rebound in 2007



Source: Colorado Department of Revenue, 2008

Figure 20: Revenues at Private and Public Campgrounds are Increasing



Source: Longwoods, 2007



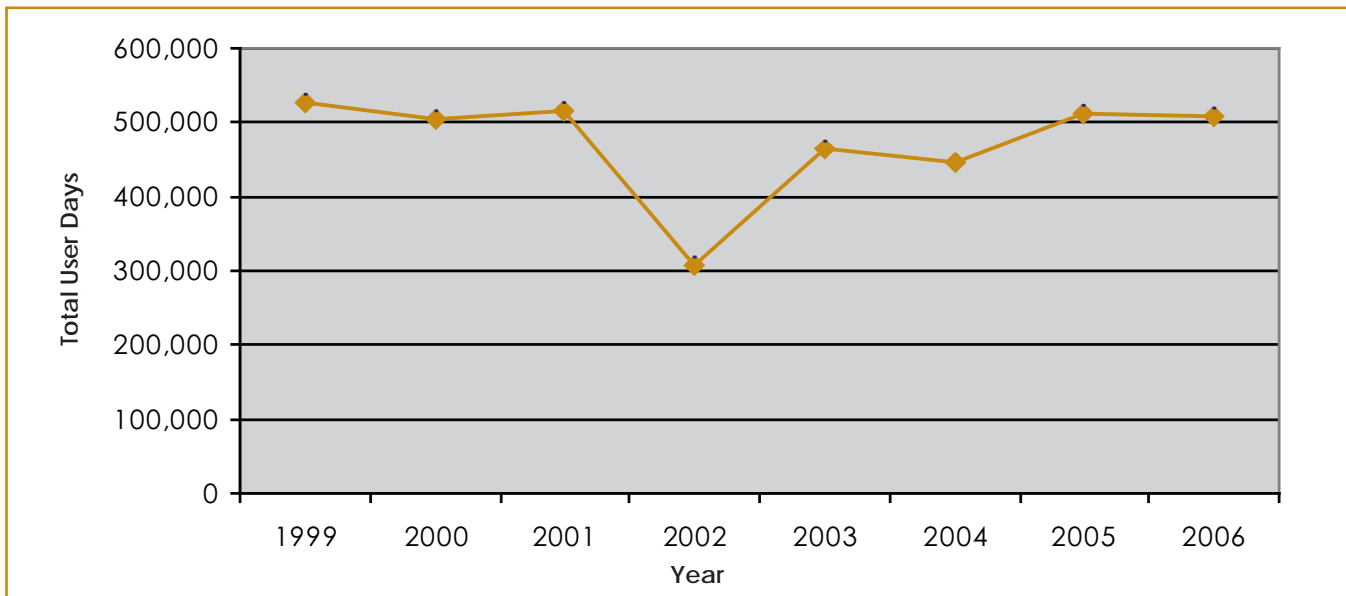
3.5.6 Whitewater Rafting

Whether on a meandering family float trip assisted by professional guides or plying your skills on a thrill-seeking Class V trip, river rafting is an excellent way to experience Colorado’s deep canyons and remote scenery. Contributing over \$153 million to Colorado’s coffers each year, it is a substantial economic driver.

- Colorado’s river rafting industry experienced phenomenal growth between 1988 and 1998, with annual increases of up to 23% per year.
- Growth leveled between 1999 and 2001 with a serious decline in 2002 due to significant drought, wildfires, and September 11. The industry recovered from this decline between 2003 and 2006. In 2006, over 510,000 people experienced the whitewater rivers of Colorado guided by a licensed rafting company (Figure 21).
- The number of Colorado rafters remained steady between 2005 and 2006, which mirrors the national trend.⁴⁹

The fluctuations in Colorado’s rafting industry are also reflected in the river outfitter licenses managed by Colorado State Parks (Figure 22). The number of outfitters grew steadily until the sharp decline in rafting participants in 2002. Proceeding that decrease, licenses dropped to 170 in 2003. Overall, the number of licensed outfitters in Colorado has increased by about 72%, to 167, since State Parks began managing the program in 1985 when approximately 120 outfitters were registered.

Figure 21: Commercial Rafting User Days

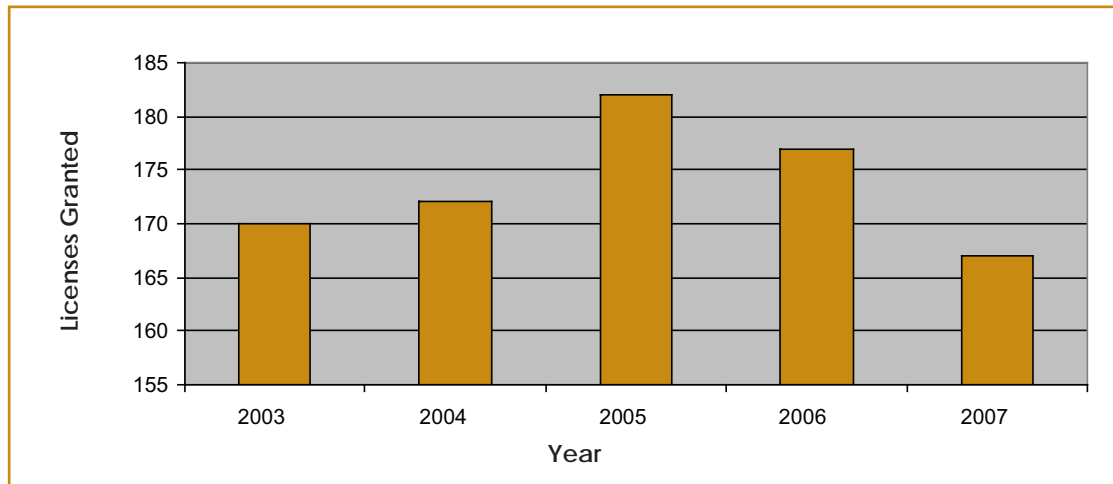


Source: CROA, 2007

⁴⁹Commercial River Use in the State of Colorado. Colorado River Outfitters Assoc. 2007. Nov. 2007 <www.croa.org>.



Figure 22: River Outfitter Licenses through the Colorado State Trails Program



Source: Colorado State Parks, 2007

3.5.7 Wildlife Viewing and Birding

Increasing numbers of nature enthusiasts continue to pursue glimpses of Colorado’s abundant wildlife. Wildlife viewing is a favorite pastime among Coloradans according to the NSRE, OIF, Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), and FWS, with more Coloradans pursuing wildlife watching than skiing and snowboarding, bicycling, or hiking.

- Over 9.4 million days of wildlife watching were reported in Colorado in 2006, which contributed \$1.4 billion to the state’s economy through trip-related costs and equipment.^{50,51}
- Over 1.8 million residents and visitors viewed wildlife in Colorado in 2006, including birders. Most people view wildlife around the home (1.4 million), while 873,000 travel more than a mile from their home to spot wildlife (and nearly 450,000 people do both).
- Wildlife festivals are gaining popularity in Colorado, with thousands of participants enjoying the Monte Vista Crane Festival, High Plains Snow Goose Festival, and many other events throughout the state.
- To enable greater access to Colorado’s birding and wildlife watching opportunities, CDOW and numerous other partners have launched the Colorado Birding Trail, a network of over 30,000 acres of public and private sites. The first phase of this statewide project was launched in southeast Colorado in February 2007 and plans are currently underway to launch “trails” in the southwest next.⁵³

The definition of wildlife watching, according to the FWS, refers to people who either take a “special interest” in wildlife around their homes by maintaining habitat gardens or birdfeeders or take a trip (more than one mile from their home) for the primary purpose of viewing wildlife. Secondary wildlife watching, such as incidentally observing wildlife while driving for pleasure or enjoying another outdoor activity, is not included.

⁵⁰A wildlife watching day refers to a day in which a person spends any portion of that day intentionally observing wildlife.

⁵¹2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of the Interior, 2007. May-June 2008 <<http://federalaid.fws.gov>>.

⁵²Colorado Division of Wildlife. 4 Apr. 2008 <Colorado Division of Wildlife>.

⁵³Colorado Birding Trail. CDOW, Colorado Audubon, RMBO, Colorado Field Ornithologists, Colorado State Parks, and Playa Lakes Joint Venture. 6 Apr. 2008 <www.coloradobirdingtrail.com>.



3.5.8 Touring Colorado's Scenic Byways

Colorado's 25 scenic byways are more than a transportation route, they offer travelers an opportunity to travel through the state's most scenic areas, enjoy learning opportunities through roadside interpretation, and become familiar with points of interest and history along the way. The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways program is a statewide partnership intended to provide recreational, educational, and economic benefits to Coloradans and visitors through a designated system of touring these scenic and historic routes.⁵⁴ Of Colorado's 25 byways, 10 are nationally-designated as America's Byways, recognized for their exceptional scenic and historic assets.⁵⁵ Over 3,100 miles of designated scenic byways provide many opportunities for scenic driving in the state.

A study conducted by the Colorado Scenic Byways Program calculated that in 2002 nearly 2.6 million daily vehicle miles traveled (DVMT)⁵⁶ were logged on just eight of Colorado's byways, demonstrating the popularity of these scenic routes.^{57,58}

3.6 Participation in Volunteerism and Environmental Education & Interpretation Activities

Engaging in volunteerism, stewardship projects, and environmental education programs are additional ways of experiencing Colorado's outdoors. While these activities may not be typically recognized as traditional outdoor recreation, they are an increasingly important part of connecting people to our state's outdoors heritage. For more details on the significance of volunteerism in Colorado, review the *Funding Shortfalls* summary included in *Section 6: Priority Recreation Issues and Influences*.

3.6.1 Volunteerism

Volunteers not only help build and maintain trails, parks, and facilities, remove invasive species, and provide visitor services, they also become personally invested and connected to the natural resources to which they have donated their time. They assist land managers by improving the quality of recreation experiences for all, and also help offset funding shortfalls.



⁵³Colorado Birding Trail. CDOW, Colorado Audubon, RMBO, Colorado Field Ornithologists, Colorado State Parks, and Playa Lakes Joint Venture. 6 Apr. 2008 <www.coloradobirdingtrail.com>.

⁵⁴Colorado Scenic Byways. Colorado Department of Transportation. 3 Sept. 1008 <www.coloradobyways.org>.

⁵⁵Colorado, the Official Guide to the Scenic and Historic Byways. Colorado Dept. of Transportation, Weaver Multimedia Group, Et. Al., 2007.

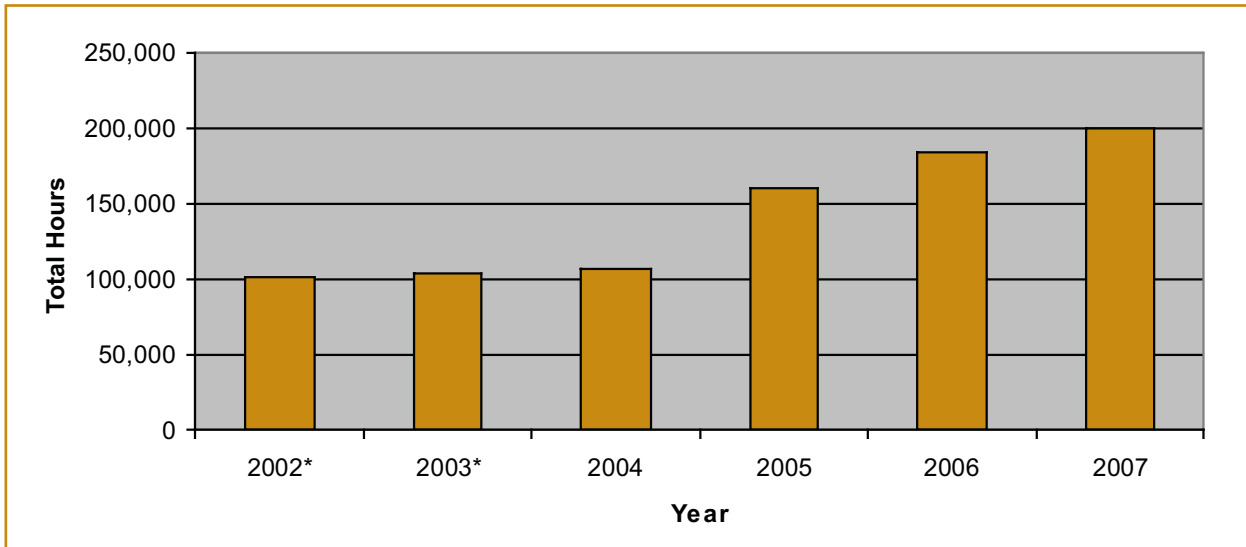
⁵⁶According to CDOT, DVMT is the best measure of traffic flow over time and is calculated by multiplying the segment length by the annual average daily traffic (AADT) divided by average daily traffic (ADT).

⁵⁷Includes: Dinosaur Diamond, Frontier Pathways, Gold Belt Tour, Grand Mesa, Santa Fe Trail, San Juan Skyway, Top of the Rockies, and Trail Ridge Road.

⁵⁸America's Scenic Byways Report, the Colorado Report. The America's Byways Resource Center. 2004.

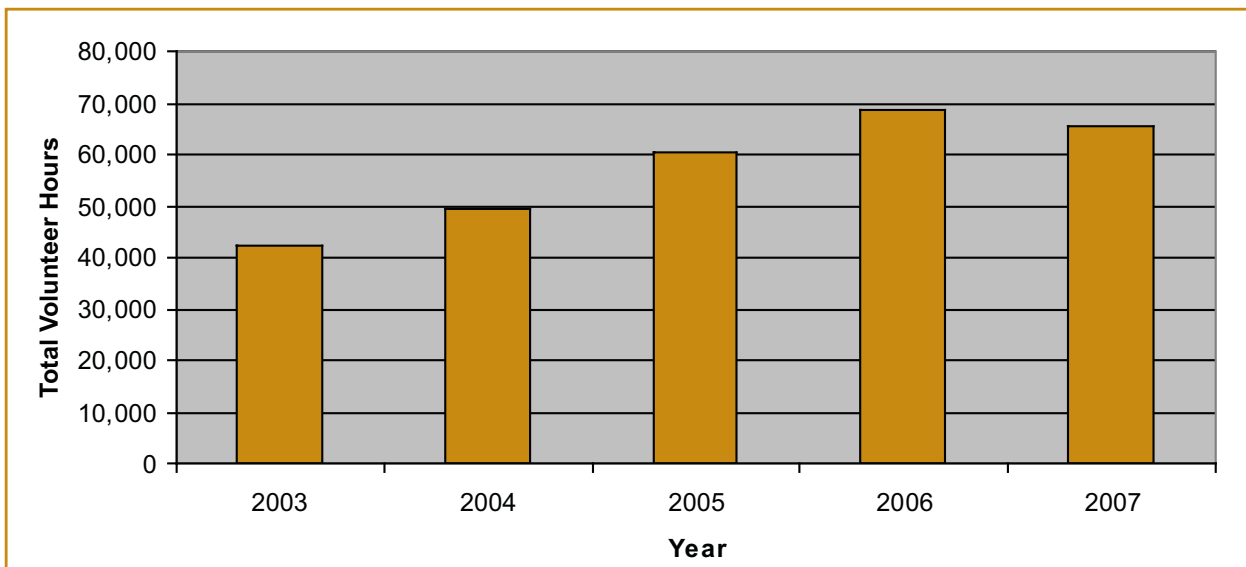


Figure 23: Volunteer Hours at Colorado State Parks⁵⁹



Source: Colorado State Parks, 2007

Figure 24: Volunteer Hours at CDOW^{60,61}



Source: CDOW, 2007

Compiling data on volunteer contributions for the multitude of local, state, and federal agencies who engage volunteers is a monumental task, and not all agencies track volunteer contributions. For the purposes of the 2008 SCORP, only data from the largest volunteer organizations were incorporated. Agencies such as Colorado State Parks (State Parks) and CDOW depend heavily on volunteer contributions (Figures 23 and 24). In 2007, volunteers offered over 137,000 hours of their time to State Parks and CDOW benefited from over 65,000 volunteer hours.^{61,62}

⁵⁹*2002 numbers are a baseline estimated prior to inception of Statewide Volunteer Program which was officially formed in March 2003. Hours were not compiled in 2003 since volunteer database was not yet implemented. Shown for 2003 is 103,495 volunteer hours and is an approximation based on the average of hours in 2002, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

⁶⁰Does not include volunteer hours associated with the Hunter Education Program.

⁶¹Sanchez, J. "CDOW Volunteer Hours." 7 Feb. 2008. Koeltzow, F. "SP Volunteer Info for SCORP." 27 July 2007.

⁶²Baker-Easley, A. "VOC Info for SCORP." 27 Aug. 2007.

In addition to these state agencies, many local governments across Colorado also use volunteers regularly. The 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey revealed that of the 140 respondents:

- Local governments utilize volunteers for over 283,000 hours annually
- 21% of local governments use volunteers for visitor services
- 39% use volunteers for maintenance and construction projects

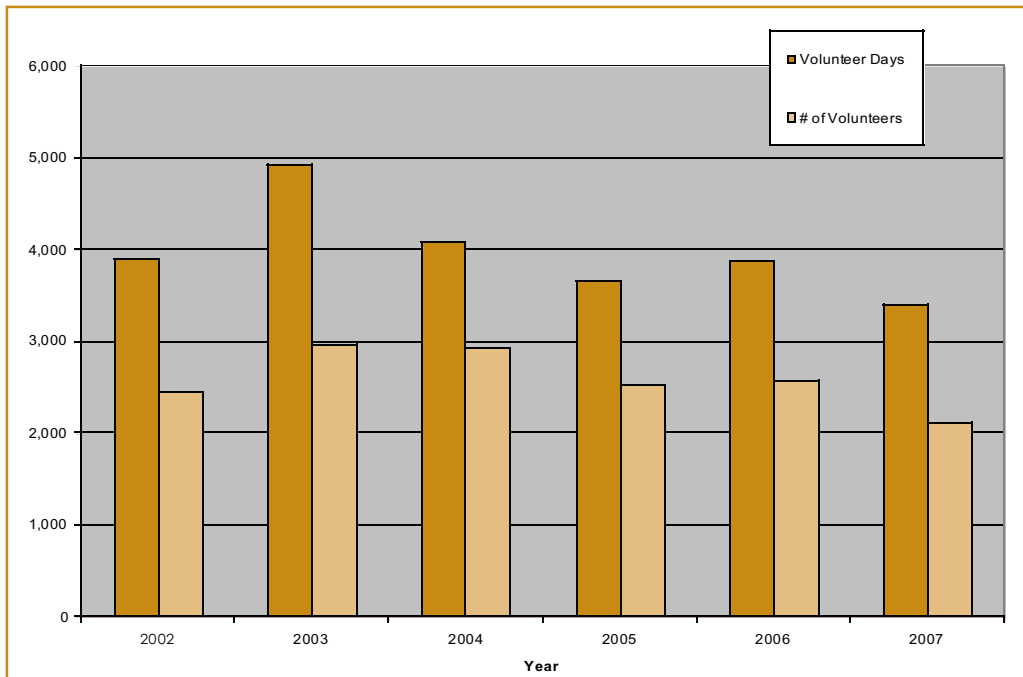
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) is recognized as a statewide leader in promoting and coordinating Coloradans in outdoor volunteerism. Established 25 years ago, VOC encourages citizens of all ages to be active stewards of the land by building and maintaining trails, planting trees and shrubs, and removing invasive plants. Trends in recent years have suggested that the need for volunteers has risen but the actual number of volunteers has remained relatively stable. Competing interests in how leisure time is spent is one factor affecting volunteer involvement. VOC is making significant programmatic modifications to meet this and other changing demands including offering smaller, less time-intensive family-friendly projects; creating a year-round outdoor stewardship leadership program for high school students; and, providing corporate teams with opportunities to volunteer in outdoor stewardship projects.⁶²

- In 2007, VOC recruited and mobilized over 2,100 volunteers (Figure 25) to accomplish 24 stewardship projects ranging in size from 50 to 1,000 volunteers. These projects contributed over \$1 million in volunteer labor.
- To date, VOC has worked with more than 50,000 Coloradans to complete 286 trail and habitat projects valued at over \$15 million.⁶³

More information on VOC is included in *Section 2: Outdoor Recreation Providers and Partners in Colorado* and *Section 6: Priority Recreation Issues and Influences*.

Figure 25: VOC Volunteer Trends (2002 - 2007)



Source: VOC, 2008

⁶²Baker-Easley, A. "VOC Info for SCORP." 27 Aug. 2007.

⁶³"Mission Statement, History, & Goals, Etc." Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. Mar.-Apr. 2008 <www.voc.org>.

Get Outside through V Outdoors! www.voutdoors.org

V Outdoors is a comprehensive online database of stewardship activities across the state helping folks who want to get their hands dirty and experience Colorado in a different way. V Outdoors helps match volunteers with the numerous agencies and organizations that engage and manage volunteers.

There are 233 agencies listed on V Outdoors including Colorado's most significant land managers (BLM, Forest Service, NPS, Colorado State Parks, etc.)

664 opportunities were posted in 2007 and 6,941 people registered for those activities

Some of the agencies actively using V Outdoors to post projects and recruit participants include:

- *BLM, Forest Service, NPS, & Colorado State Parks*
- *Local recreation departments*
- *Colorado Fourteeners Initiative*
- *Continental Divide Trail Alliance*
- *San Juan Mountains Association*
- *And many others*

Log onto to www.voutdoors.org and get outside.

Colorado Youth Corps

- There are 11 youth corps in the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) network serving 1,200 young people annually.
- Of those 1,200 youth corps members, 150 were trained as crew leaders in 2008 (which enables them to manage corps teams).
- Since its inception in 1997, the youth corps network has grown substantially, with double the youth corps groups throughout the state and serving six times as many youth and young adults.
- Between just 2003 and 2008, youth corps members have increased by 67% (Figure 26)⁶⁴
- Approximately 25% of the agencies who submitted responses to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey engaged youth corps for maintenance or construction work. These 35 agencies estimated that youth corps provide 344 crew weeks of service annually which equates to 111,456 hours of labor.⁶⁵ Many state and federal agencies also utilize youth corps, as well. More details on CYCA are provided in *Section 2: Outdoor Recreation Providers and Partners in Colorado*.

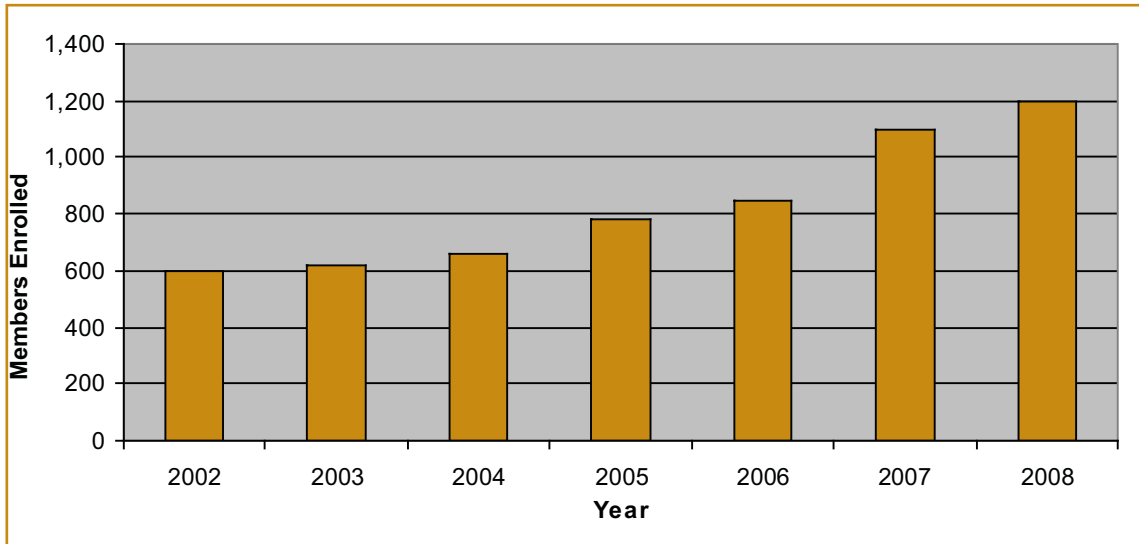


⁶⁴Freeman, J. "CYCA Info for SCORP." 8 June 2008.

⁶⁵2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



Figure 26: CYCA Youth Corps Participants



Source: VOC, 2008

3.6.2 Environmental Education and Interpretation Activities

Environmental education and interpretation activities are an integral part of the visitor experience at many Colorado recreation sites, and learning-based activities are one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities in Colorado.⁶⁶ These types of education activities provide a direct connection to the natural world, improve physical and emotional well-being, and foster natural resource stewardship ethics.⁶⁷ The following section highlights some of the organizations and agencies that provide or support environmental education and interpretation activities in Colorado including Colorado State Parks, Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE), and local governments.

- Colorado State Parks is one of the few government agencies that track environmental education and interpretation activities (Figure 27). Environmental education and interpretation is repeatedly mentioned as one of the more enriching elements of a visitor’s stay at state parks. These programs also ensure that visitors not only experience what each park has to offer but also learn something new about the natural world.
- The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) is comprised of over 250 member organizations which list over 1,000 programs offered throughout the state each year in the CAEE directory.⁶⁸
- Of the 140 local agencies and schools that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey, 24 agencies provide environmental education and interpretation activities to nearly 440,000 people annually.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Green, G., W. Gosnell, C. Betz, and H. Ken Cordell. Colorado and the Colorado Market Region (National Survey on Recreation and the Environment). Pioneering Research Group, Southern Research Station. Athens, Georgia: USDA Forest Service, 2007.

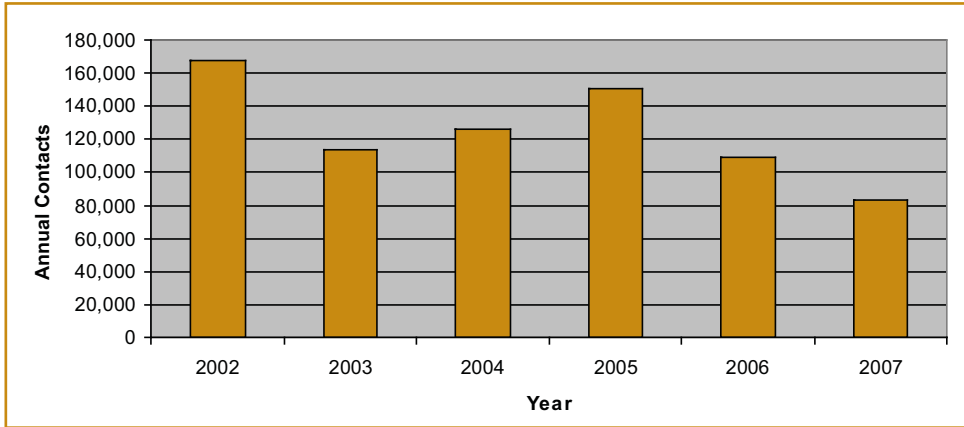
⁶⁷Chawla, L., and D. Flanders Cushing. Benefits of Nature for Children’s Health. Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design. Denver, CO: University of Colorado At Denver and Health Sciences Center, 2007. Apr. 2007 <www.cudenver.edu/cye>.

⁶⁸Sweeney, A. “CAEE Info for SCORP.” 26 July 2007.

⁶⁹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



Figure 27: Environmental Education and Interpretation Activities at Colorado State Parks⁷⁰



Source: Colorado State Parks, 2007

Overnight travelers in Colorado spent \$742 million on recreation-related expenditures.

-- Colorado Travel Year 2006, Longwoods International, 2006. (A study commissioned by the CTO).

3.7 Colorado Tourism Trends

In Colorado, tourism is closely linked with its unique outdoors appeal. Our expansive public lands and dramatic landscapes are an “outdoor playground” not just for citizens but visitors from around the country and the world. Tourists often participate in different types of activities during their adventure in Colorado. For example, some may visit museums to explore art and history, walk along the 16th Street mall, and then head to Rocky Mountain National Park to view wildlife. Understanding that visitors often combine several types of experiences into one trip is important for recreation managers. Because of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and outdoor recreation, travel trends must be considered when evaluating outdoor recreation comprehensively. Key contributions of tourism and recreation to Colorado’s economy are provided below.

- In 2007, Colorado’s tourism industry continues to play a significant role in the state’s economy, generating about \$9.8 billion in travel revenues, according to a Longwoods International report commissioned by the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO).^{71,72}
- Outdoors trips, touring trips, and skiing trips accounted for about seven million overnight visitors (about 30% of the all overnight visitors) in 2006.⁷³
- Colorado’s popular tourism market is evidenced by the 50 million people flying in and out of Denver International Airport in 2007. It is the fifth busiest airport in the U.S. and the tenth busiest in the world.⁷⁴

Colorado’s natural resources are a major attractant for visitors from other states and across the world. Leisure travelers reported they are primarily interested in experiencing Colorado’s “beautiful mountain scenery, wilderness and rural areas,” as well as “the natural environment,” and come to “participate in outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, mountain climbing, and off-road biking.”

--Colorado Travel Year 2006, Longwoods International. (A study commissioned by the CTO).

⁷⁰Total interpretive contacts made includes formal programs, hikes, and demonstrations as well as non-formal contacts on trails, in campgrounds, and at visitor centers.

^{71,72}Aguilera, E. “2007 Jump 4th in Row.” The Denver Post 18 June 2008, sec. 7B. “Industry Partners.” Colorado Tourism Office. 17 Aug. 2008 <www.colorado.com>.

⁷³“Colorado Travel Year 2006.” Colorado Tourism Office. Longwoods Intl. 09 July 2008 <http://www.colorado.com/data/docs/CO%202006%20Final%20Report%20Online%20Version.ppt>.

⁷⁴“Press Releases, News, and Media.” Denver International Airport. DIA. 3 Jan. 2008 <www.flydenver.com>.



3.7.1 Outdoor Trips and Vacations

Outdoor trips rose from 2.1 to 2.8 million between 2005 and 2006, making it the largest group of “marketable” visitors to the state (Figure 28). (Nationally, outdoor vacations were stable until 2003 when they rose slightly, but Colorado’s outdoor segment has been growing steadily). Figure 29 shows what recreation activities overnight visitors pursue while on a pleasure trip to Colorado. Skiing and hiking or backpacking are by far the most popular pursuits.⁷⁵

Figure 28: Outdoor Trips between 2005 and 2006.

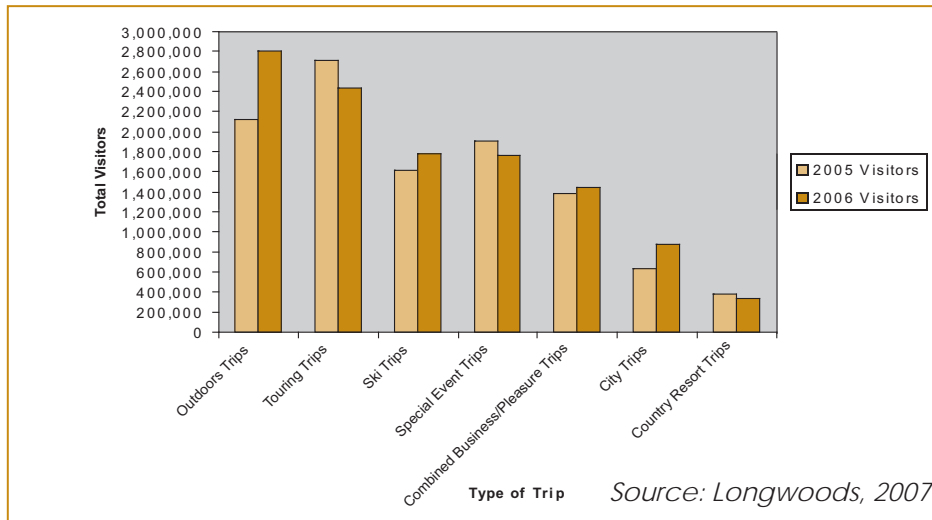
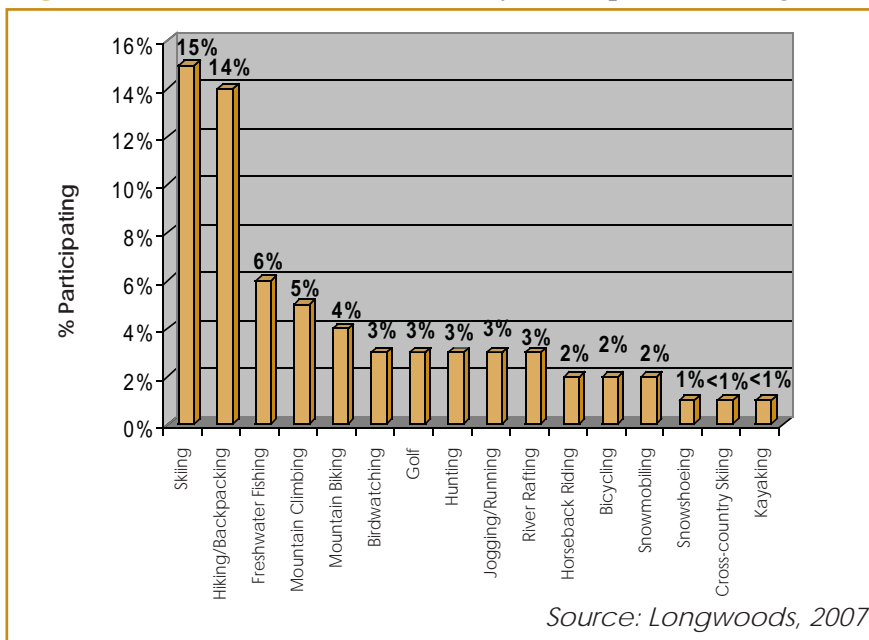


Figure 29: Outdoor Recreation Activity Participation Among All Overnight Pleasure Trip Travelers



⁷⁵“Colorado Travel Year 2006.” Colorado Tourism Office. Longwoods Intl. 09 July 2008 <<http://www.colorado.com/data/docs/CO%202006%20Final%20Report%20Online%20Version.ppt>>.



- Outdoor trips are now the largest segment among those visiting Colorado on leisure trips, and Colorado stands 9th in the nation as a destination for this type of travel with a 4% share in 2006.
- Most outdoor vacationers in the state are Colorado residents, and are primarily driving trips.⁷⁶
- When Colorado residents travel specifically for the purposes of pursuing outdoor recreation, the majority prefer to stay in a hotel or motel (42%), while 56% camp in a tent or RV (Table 24).⁷⁷

Table 24: Accommodation Preferences for Overnight Stays

Accommodation Type	Percentage of Responses*
Hotel/motel	42%
Tent camping	34%
RV camping	22%
Cabin/yurt	17%
Luxury accommodations	8%
Bed and breakfast	6%
Other	<1%
Did not stay overnight	11%

*Sum will not equal 100% because multiple responses were accepted.
Source: Colorado Public Survey, 2007

3.7.2 Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism is a significant portion of Colorado’s tourism and is growing dramatically. Heritage tourism is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural, and natural resources.”⁷⁸ To respond to the rising trend in heritage tourism, CTO launched the Heritage Tourism Program in 2005, and in 2006 partnered with the State Historical Fund to fund four pilot projects to further develop heritage tourism in the Southwest, Southeast, San Luis Valley, and Park County.

- Heritage travelers comprise a significant portion of Colorado’s visitors and because they spend money in areas typically “off the beaten path,” heritage travelers help spread economic benefits to rural areas.⁷⁹

“Colorado’s splendor—gorgeous mountains, aspen forests and grassy plains—makes for great photos and great memories, but for many travelers Colorado’s most remarkable endowments are its heritage resources. Museums, cultural institutions, scenic byways, uninterrupted vistas, physical remnants of past communities—historic towns, ranches and farms, worksites where miners, railroaders and others toiled, and the silent remains of ancient societies—all offer ways for visitors to steep themselves in Colorado’s rich heritage. Tending these heritage resources reinforces Colorado’s distinctive character. Sharing them with visitors offers Centennial State residents and their communities real economic benefits.”

--A Strategic Plan for Colorado Heritage Tourism Enhancement, CTO, 2008.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Horvath, G., C. DiPersio, and C. Hickey. A Survey of Colorado Recreation, Trends, Issues, and Needs. Leeds School of Business, Univ. of Colorado At Boulder. Boulder, CO, 2007.

⁷⁸National Trust for Historic Preservation. 20 May 2008 <www.nationaltrust.org>. A Strategic Plan for Colorado Heritage Tourism Enhancement. Colorado Tourism Office, Office of Economic Development and International Trade. 2 May 2008

⁷⁹A Strategic Plan for Colorado Heritage Tourism Enhancement. Colorado Tourism Office, Office of Economic Development and International Trade. 2 May 2008



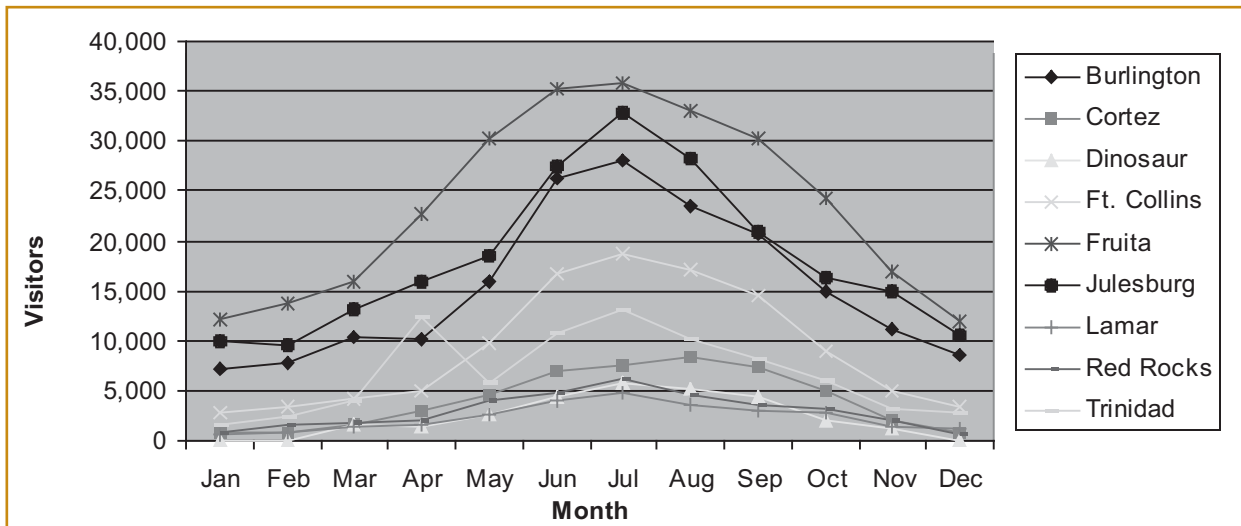
- About 57% of Colorado visitors participated in a cultural heritage activity, including 46% who visited a historical site and 41% who engaged in a cultural activity. Approximately 8.6 million visitors to Colorado stated that they were “interested in cultural heritage” in 2006.⁸⁰

3.7.3 Colorado Welcome Centers

Colorado’s Welcome Centers are spread across the state and strategically located at gateways to the state such as in Lamar in Southeast Colorado, Trinidad on the New Mexico border and Fruita on the Western Slope. They offer printed information such as brochures and maps and are also staffed to provide travelers with information on recreation activities, sightseeing, restaurants, and accommodations.

- In 2007, over one million people sought out information at Colorado’s nine Welcome Centers, with the summer months being the most popular (Figure 30).
- Studies have shown that travelers who visit Colorado Welcome Centers stay approximately 2.2 days longer in Colorado than people who do not stop into Welcome Centers for information.⁸¹

Figure 30: Visitation at Colorado Welcome Centers (2007)



Source: CTO, 2007

3.7.4 Eisenhower Tunnel Traffic

As evidenced by long lines of traffic extending to and from the Eisenhower Tunnel on busy weekends, traffic to the high country is increasing steadily. Because the Eisenhower Tunnel is the gateway to many ski resorts and outdoor destinations, it is one gauge of people from the Front Range accessing Colorado’s mountain areas for recreation purposes.

- Between 2000 and 2006, traffic passing through the Eisenhower Tunnel on I-70 continued to increase from 10,296,755 cars annually to 11,092,693, an 8% increase.⁸²

⁸⁰Colorado Travel Year 2006. Colorado Tourism Office, Office of Economic Development and International Trade. 2007. <http://www.colorado.com/static.php?file=industry_partners>.

⁸¹“Colorado Tourism Office.” Office of Economic Development and Trade. 12 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.state.co.us/oed/tourism/index.cfm>>.

⁸²“Traffic Data.” Colorado Department of Transportation National Park Service. 1 June 2007 <http://www.dot.state.co.us/app_dtd_dataaccess/Traffic/index.cfm?fuseaction=TrafficMain>.



3.8 Visitation at Public Lands

This section describes visitation trends among state and federal agencies. Not all agencies track visitation in a standardized method, which creates difficulty when trying to compare trends among all land management agencies.

Information has been compiled from agencies that track visitation using comparable methods which include the Bureau of Land Management Field Offices, National Park Service units, and Colorado State Parks. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service assess visitation periodically and not annually, therefore, those agencies are outlined separately. For more information on visitation trends in relation to budget and revenue, review the *Funding Shortfalls* summary in *Section 6*.

3.8.1 Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Colorado State Parks, and Colorado Division of Wildlife

Figure 30 shows visitation trends between 2002 and 2006 for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Offices, National Park Service (NPS) units, and Colorado State Parks (State Parks) because these agencies each provide annual estimates of visitation. Key visitation trends for these agencies are provided below and are also portrayed in Figure 31.

- Nearly 5.8 million visitors were recorded at 17 BLM Field Offices in Colorado in 2006, a 14% increase from 2002. The Glenwood Springs Field Office received almost 1.4 million visitors in 2006, making it the most popular field office statewide.⁸³
- Overall, visitation at the 11 NPS sites in Colorado rebounded in 2003 (after September 11) but has since declined slightly. In total, nearly 5.4 million people experienced NPS's varied cultural, historical, and recreation sites. Rocky Mountain National Park is the most popular NPS site in the state, with over 2.7 million people exploring the park in 2006.⁸⁴
- Nearly 11.2 million people sought the outdoor amenities at Colorado's 44 state parks in 2006-07.⁸⁵ Between 2002 and 2006, visitation has fluctuated between 11.1 and 11.4 million people, with the largest number of people recorded in FY 2002-2003. Since then, just a 2% decline has occurred.⁸⁶
- While CDOW does not have a method of counting visitors to State Wildlife Areas, because there are no traffic counters or entrance fees, a Habitat Stamp is now required to access these sites, which provides an indicator of the approximate number of people enjoying these areas. Nearly 750,000 Habitat Stamps were purchased in 2007, less than 2% of which were purchased separately from a fishing or hunting license. These sales contributed nearly \$3.8 in CDOW revenues.⁸⁷



⁸³Bruns, D. "BLM Info for SCORP." 30 Aug. 2007.

⁸⁴"NPS Stats." Public Use Statistics Office. National Park Service. 1 June 2007 <www.nature.nps.gov/stats>.

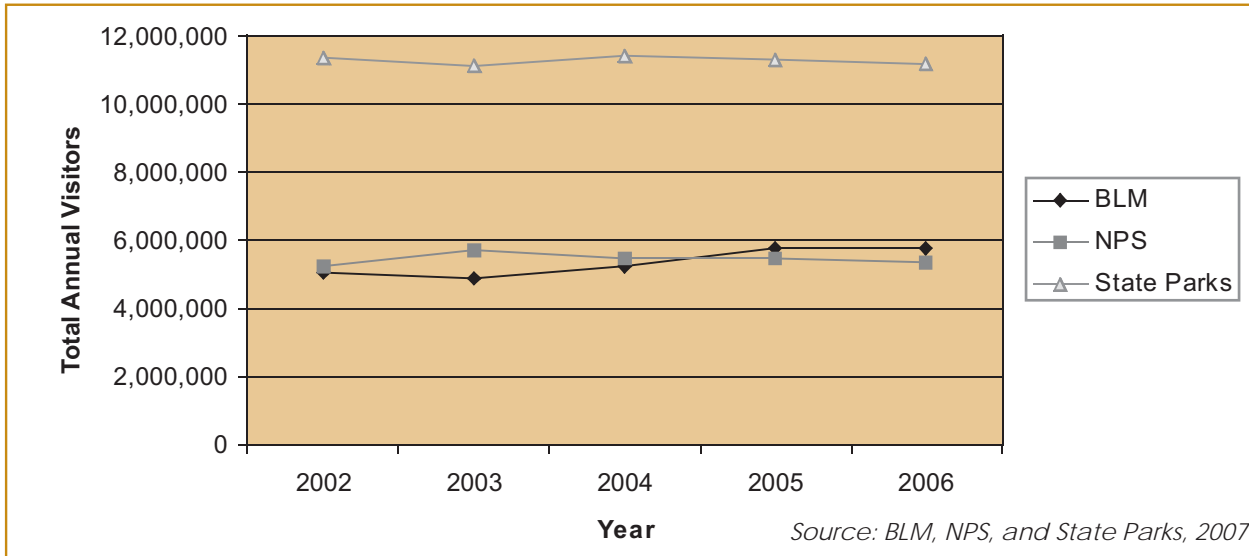
⁸⁵Visitation at State Parks is tracked on a Fiscal Year (FY) schedule not a calendar year. Two parks, Staunton and Lone Mesa State Parks, are not yet open to the public.

⁸⁶Colorado State Parks Fact Sheets. Colorado State Parks. Denver, CO, 2007.

⁸⁷Turner, H. "Habitat Stamp Sales." 18 July 2008.



Figure 31: Visitation Trends for BLM, NPS, and State Parks in Colorado (2002 – 2006)



3.8.2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Colorado contains over 146,000 acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) protected lands with the recreation emphasis on wildlife watching, birding, hunting, and fishing. These lands are protected at eight National Wildlife Refuges, as well as the Leadville and Hotchkiss National Fish Hatcheries. In total, FWS estimates that about 122,000 people enjoy Colorado’s refuges and hatcheries annually (Table 25).

Table 25: Annual Visitation at FWS Sites in Colorado

National Wildlife Refuges	Estimated Annual Visitation
*Alamosa and Monte Vista NWRs	26,700 ⁸⁸
Arapaho NWR	7,710 ⁸⁹
Baca NWR	Not currently open to the public
Brown's Park NWR	10,000 ⁹⁰
Rocky Flats NWR	Not currently open to the public
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR	18,000 ⁹¹
Two Ponds NWR	15,000 ⁹²
Total	78,162
National Fish Hatcheries	Estimated Annual Visitation
Leadville National Fish Hatchery	36,000 ⁹³
Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery	7,500 ⁹⁴
Total	43,500

Source: FWS, 2008

⁸⁸U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Alamosa - Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Sept. 2003. <http://library.fws.gov/CCPS/Alamosa_montevista_final03.pdf>.

⁸⁹Foley, R. "Arapaho visitation." August 6, 2007.

⁹⁰U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Browns Park National Wildlife Refuge. Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Sept. 1999. 7 May 2008 <http://library.fws.gov/CCPS/brownsark_final.pdf>.

⁹¹Armitage, S. "Visitation Records." 7 May 2008.



3.8.3 Visitation at U.S. Forest Service Areas

The U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) monitors visitation by National Forest periodically but not annually. Table 26 overviews the estimated 25.5 million visits to National Forests and National Grasslands in Colorado. The White River National Forest is by far the most popular, with 9.5 million visitors in 2002.⁹⁵

Table 26: National Forest Visitation in Colorado

National Forest (NF) Name	Fiscal Year (FY) Visitation was Compiled	Total Visits
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison NFs	FY2003	3,265,000
Routt NF (also managed in conjunction with Medicine Bow)	FY2001	1,493,000
Rio Grande NF	FY2005	810,000
Arapaho NF	FY2005	4,499,000
Pike & San Isabel NFs and Cimarron & Comanche National Grasslands	FY2006	4,649,000
San Juan NF	FY2006	1,301,000
White River NF	FY2002	9,462,000
Total for Colorado		25,479,000

Source: Forest Service, 2007



⁹⁵English, D. "USFS Visitation by forest." 20 Nov. 2007.