
SECTION 5 SCORP REGIONAL PROFILES



5.1 Introduction

Colorado’s residents and visitors enjoy many different recreation opportunities and experiences in various regions of the state. Virtually every outdoor activity imaginable can be pursued in the mountains, valleys, and plains of Colorado, whether land, water, snow or ice-based; adventure seekers can find it all.

Each of the six SCORP regions are unique and contain recreation assets that positively influence the quality of life of local residents and visitors alike. Recreation also contributes significant economic benefits to communities and businesses. Understanding some of the regional characteristics and local recreation infrastructure illustrates the distinctive qualities of the state and fosters more targeted planning. Examining this information helps recreation managers better serve local residents and their visitors. Information displayed in this section can be integrated into grant applications and master plans.

The six SCORP regions (Front Range, Northeast, Northwest, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest) are based on the tourism regions established by the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). For the purposes of the SCORP, the Denver and Front Range CTO Regions were combined to create the SCORP Front Range Region, to streamline data analysis. Within this section is a comparison of the six SCORP regions followed by more detailed descriptions of each region which include:

- A map depicting significant recreation attractions, major cities and towns, counties, transportation corridors, land management, and topographic and hydrologic features
- A brief summary of recreation opportunities
- Population trends and major communities
- Estimates of travel and tourism economic impacts
- Recreation and open space grant allocations
- Regional results of the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey



5.1.1 Population and Demographic Trends

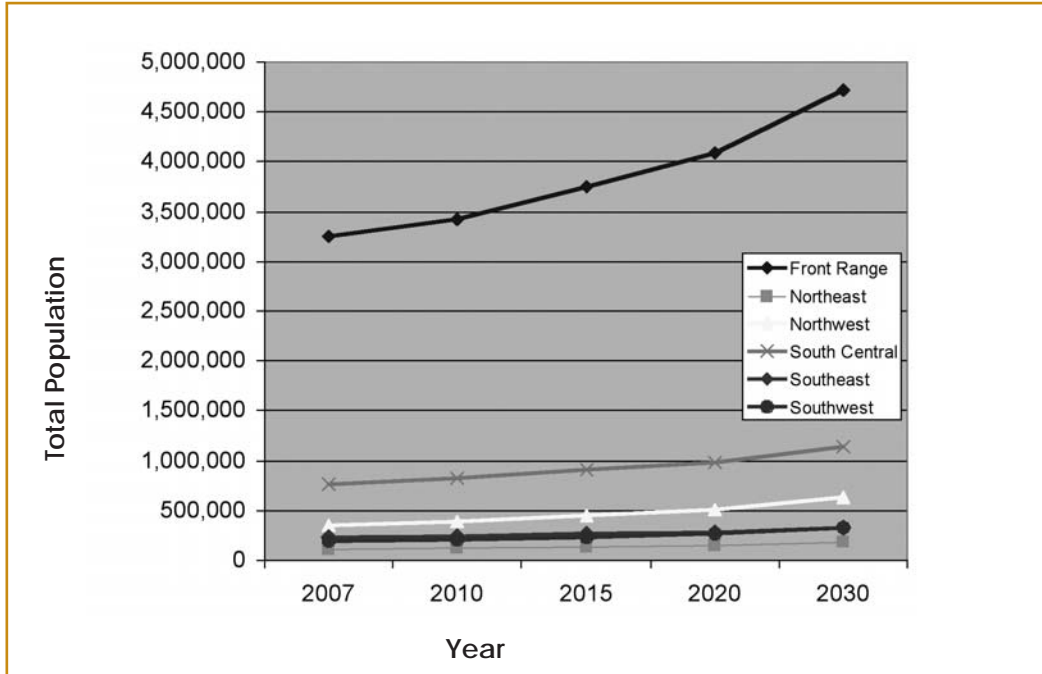
Recreational use is heavily influenced by population and demographic trends, which vary greatly from county to county and across regions. Existing population levels and projected trends for each region are provided in Figure 32, and are discussed in more detail in subsequent sections for each region.¹ Maps 2 and 3 also detail existing population totals and density by county.

Understanding current population distribution and density helps convey the character of the region while anticipating future growth will help estimate the increasing demand for facilities and services. Each regional description also includes population totals for the largest cities.

¹Population data is originally derived from the Census 2000, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Colorado State Demography Office uses this census data to generate forecasts for current population and projected growth. All information presented is the most current and accurate available and projected increases are based on the best available estimates. Municipal population information was most recently completed by Colorado State Demography Office in 2006 while county-level population and growth projections were estimated in 2007.



Figure 32: Regional Comparison of Projected Population Growth (2007-2030)



Source: State Demography Office 2007

The City of Denver is the largest city in the state with over 580,000 residents. Other cities with a population greater than 50,000 include: Colorado Springs (391,000), Aurora (308,000), Lakewood (143,000), Ft. Collins (130,000), Thornton (110,000), Pueblo (105,000), Arvada (102,000), Centennial (100,300), Boulder (98,000), Greeley (90,000), Westminster (61,000), Loveland (60,000), and Grand Junction (51,000).²

Between 2000 and 2007, Colorado's population increased by over half a million, making it the eighth fastest growing state in the country. The state's population is anticipated to exceed 7.3 million by 2030, adding an additional 2.4 million people, or 49% from 2007 (Table 28).³

Population growth is anticipated to be more concentrated in specific areas and will occur at different rates within each region.⁴ While the Northwest Region is expected to expand the most rapidly, the Front Range Region will have the greatest increase in total residents (Figure 32). For more details on population growth and demographic characteristics in Colorado, visit *Section 6: Priority Recreation Issues and Influences*.

²State Demography Office. Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 1 Sept. 2007 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/demog/index.html>>.

³Ibid

⁴State Demography Office. Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 1 Sept. 2007 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/demog/index.html>>.

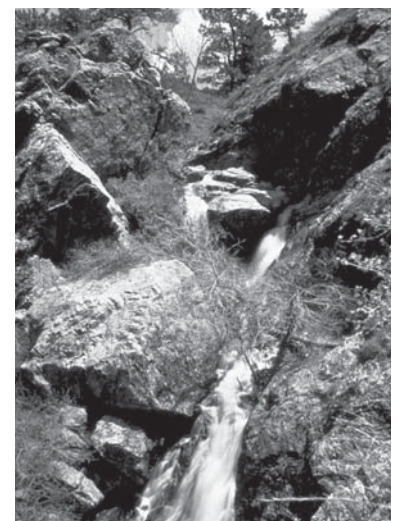


Table 28: Projected Population Growth for Colorado (by Region)

SCORP Region	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Front Range	3,255,688	3,426,305	3,746,779	4,721,451	45%
Northeast	112,975	119,238	133,341	182,999	62%
Northwest	350,828	384,678	443,214	629,974	80%
South Central	765,737	827,268	908,614	1,135,672	48%
Southeast	232,868	244,132	261,043	325,422	40%
Southwest	190,056	204,907	234,866	324,401	71%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

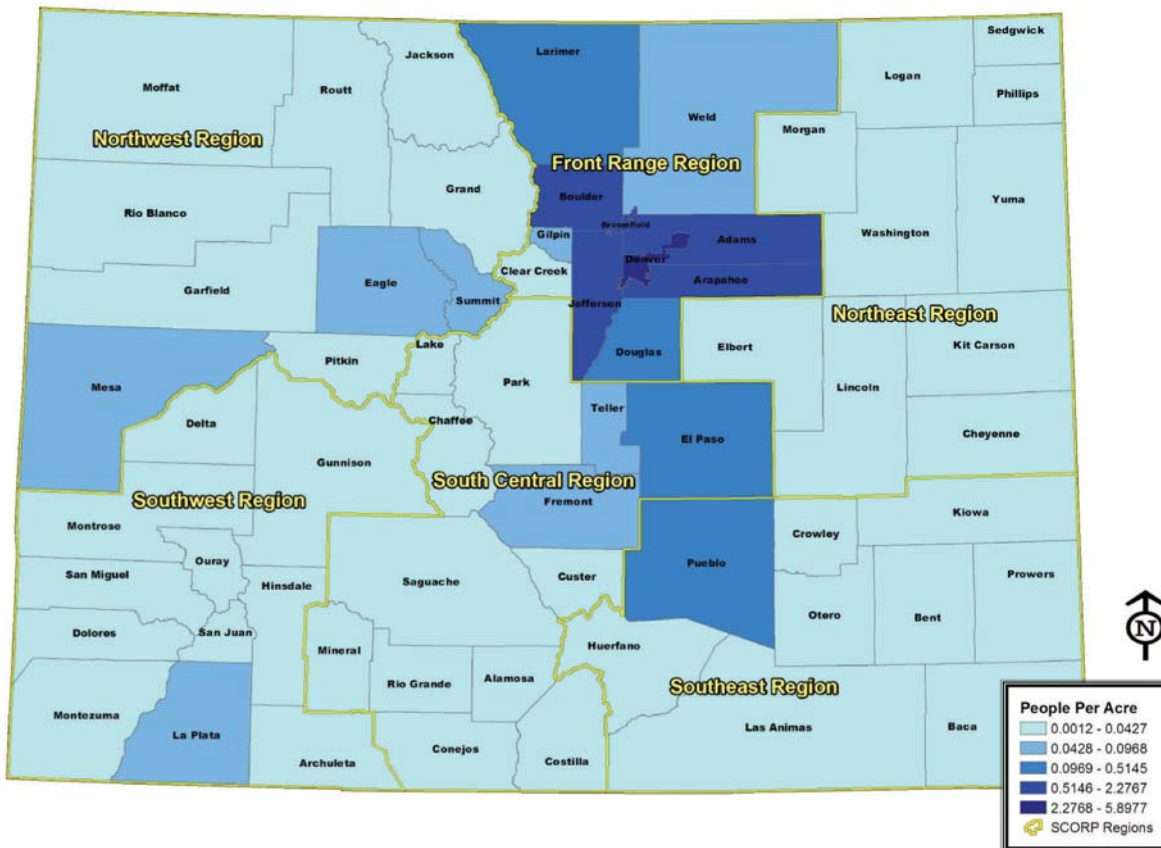
Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2008

As of 2007, the majority of the state’s population is concentrated in the Front Range Region (Map 2). Denver County is Colorado’s most densely populated, with nearly six persons per square acre. Broomfield is the second most densely populated county with 2.3 persons per acre. Conversely, the Northeast is Colorado’s least densely populated region with under 0.01 persons per acre.⁵

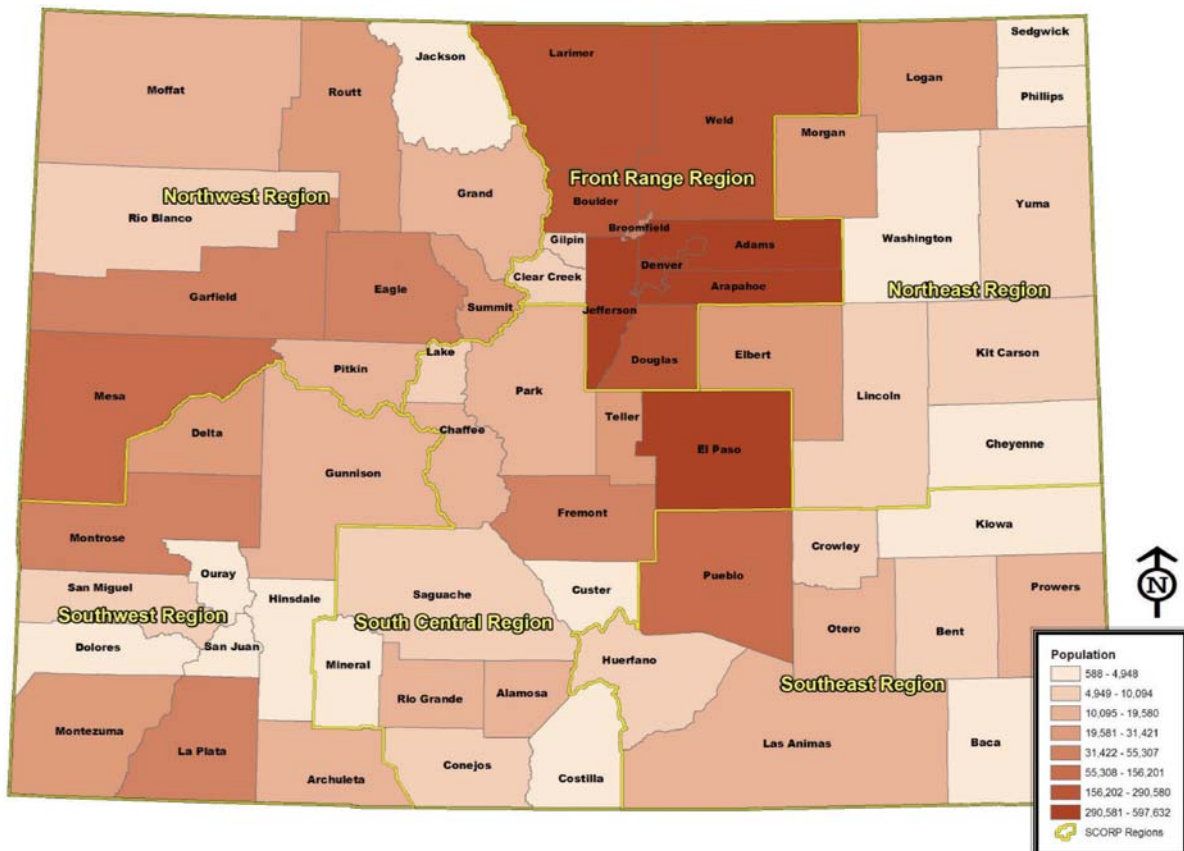


⁵ Ibid and Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

Map 2: Colorado Population Density (2007)



Map 3: Colorado Population Totals (2007)



Source: Colorado State Demography Office, 2007

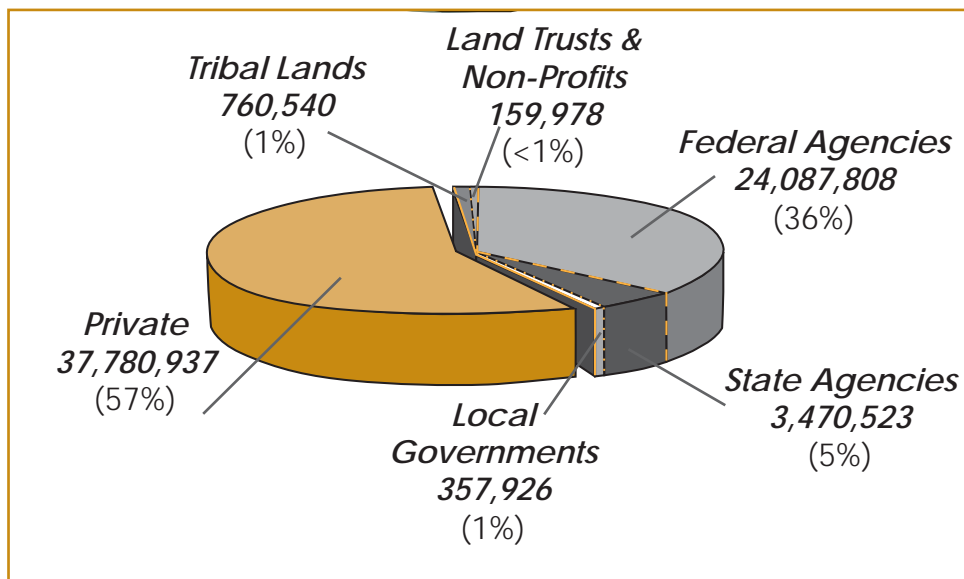


5.1.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

Public lands in Colorado are more than a scenic backdrop, they are valuable and diverse resources that contribute to local and state economies, characterize communities, provide abundant recreation opportunities, provide critical wildlife habitat, and greatly enhance the quality of life of residents while drawing visitors from across Colorado and the world. This section details the distribution of land management in the state as well as public land acreage per capita for each of the six SCORP regions.

Federal, state, local agencies, and in some instances, land trusts, manage unique recreation assets and serve different roles, or niches, that contribute to the active outdoors lifestyle enjoyed by residents and visitors. Approximately 57% of Colorado’s land is privately held while federal agencies manage over 24 million acres, or 36% of the state (Figure 33). State entities oversee 5%, and local governments, land trusts, and tribal governments each administer about 1% of the state’s lands. For more information on public land management agencies, visit *Section 2: Outdoor Recreation Providers and Partners in Colorado*.⁶

Figure 33: Land Management in Colorado (Acreages and Percentage of the State by Manager)



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

Colorado residents enjoy over 24 million acres of public land open to recreation, or 36% of the entire state, almost five acres of public land per person, a substantial foundation for year-round recreation activities.⁷ Distribution of these lands by region are displayed in Figure 34 and detailed in Table 29. By far, the Northwest Region contains the largest amount of public lands, with nearly 10 million acres (Figure 34) and the Southwest Region has the second greatest public lands base, about 5.8 million acres.⁸

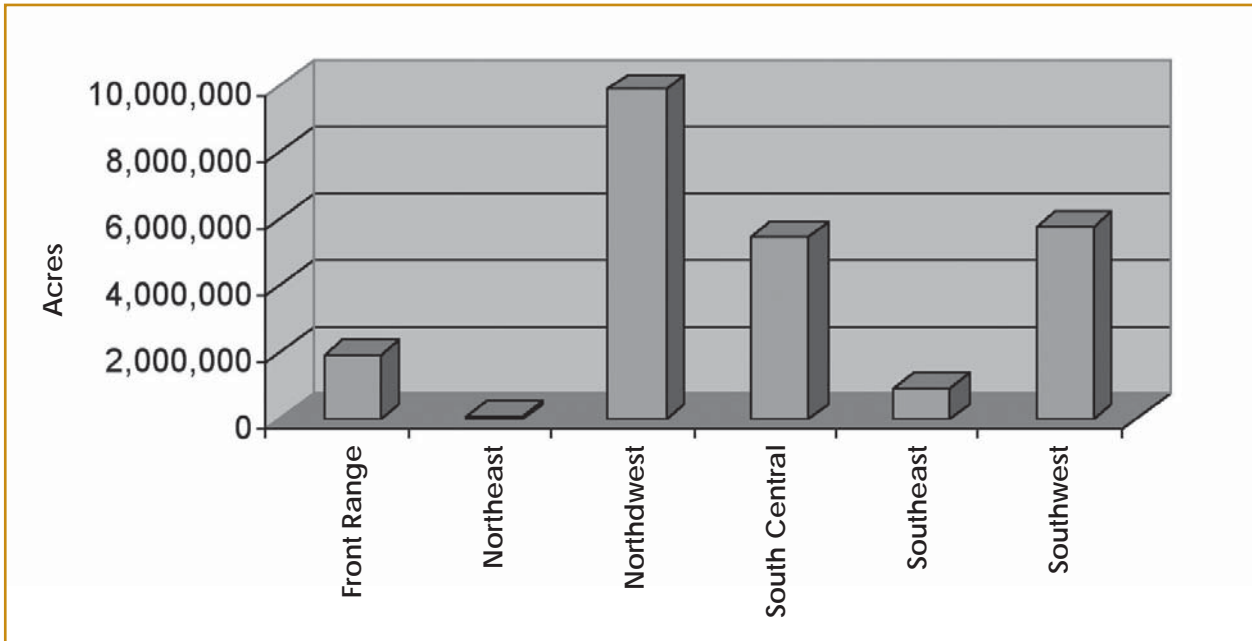
⁶Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

⁷Total excludes publicly-owned land for military use, areas protected for sensitive natural resources, public works projects, etc.

⁸Ibid.



Figure 34: Public Lands Open to Recreation Use (by Region)



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

When examining the lands which permit public use, the Northwest Region contains more acres than any other region, as shown in Figure 34. However, when acres are divided by the region's total population, the Southwest provides the most public land per person, or approximately 43.1 acres per resident. In great contrast, the Front Range Region, where the majority of the state's population resides, contains less than an acre of public land per person. Overall, Coloradans have nearly five acres of public land per capita⁹

Table 29: Public Land Acres (Open to Recreation Use) and Public Acres Per Capita (by Region)

SCORP Region	Total Acres	Public Land Acres (Open to Public Use)	Public Acres per Capita	Percent of Total Land (Open to Public Use)
Front Range	7,502,653	1,934,363	0.6	26%
Northeast	11,294,510	75,978	0.7	1%
Northwest	14,992,795	9,895,153	28.2	66%
South Central	10,730,063	5,442,082	7.1	51%
Southeast	11,750,123	917,496	3.9	8%
Southwest	10,347,567	5,765,365	30.3	56%
Colorado Totals	66,617,712	24,030,437	4.9	36%

⁹Ibid.

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007



5.1.3 Economic Profile of Tourism in Colorado

Colorado's tourism industry is tied to the unique landscapes, natural resources, and renowned recreation opportunities that international, domestic, and in-state travelers enjoy throughout the year. As highlighted in the 2003 Colorado SCORP, the tourism and outdoor recreation industries in the state are symbiotic, serving the same customers and performing complementary functions.¹⁰

Specific recreation-related economic activity for each of Colorado's counties is not available; however, travel revenues (or "impacts") are tracked and have been integrated into each regional description. Travel revenues are used because of the interconnection of tourism and outdoor recreation and their value in illustrating the impact of outdoor recreation-based tourism.

Each regional description contains the direct economic impacts of travel to and within each of Colorado's counties using the Regional Travel Impact Model (RTIM) developed by Dean Runyan Associates. Travel impacts include direct travel spending, tourism-related employment wages, and state and local taxes. A brief overview of tourism impacts for the state is discussed in this section along with a comparison of the six SCORP regions.

Map 4: Total Travel Revenues by County (2006) also displays the positive influence of tourism on each county.

Statewide Tourism Trends

Colorado's outdoors appeal and abundant recreation opportunities are significant components of the state's tourism industry. Overall, tourism is a major driver of Colorado's economy and is the second largest industry statewide with over 28 million people visiting the state in 2008.¹¹ A significant portion of Colorado's tourism economy is reliant on our outdoor recreation resources and public lands. Outdoors trips, touring trips, and skiing trips accounted for about seven million overnight visitors (about 30% of the all overnight visitors) in 2006.¹² The array of outdoor recreation opportunities contributes significantly to Colorado's overall economy (more than \$10 billion annually).¹³ In 2006, "outdoors trips" were the largest marketable segment of tourism in Colorado and recreation goods and services accounted for 15% of total tourism expenditures.¹⁴

According to the Dean Runyan Associates study *The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado (1996-2006)*; commissioned by the Colorado Tourism Office, total travel impacts in Colorado generated over \$16 billion in 2006 (Table 30). Revenues increased 21% between 2000 and 2006, rebounding after a visible decline in 2001 and 2002 due to September 11th and severe drought and wildfires. Nearly 124,000 jobs support tourism and recreation services in Colorado earning nearly \$3.5 billion in wages in 2006.¹⁵

¹⁰2003 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Colorado State Parks, 2004.

¹¹Aguilera, E. "2007 Jump 4th in Row." The Denver Post 18 June 2008, sec. 7B.

¹²"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>>.

¹³State by State Active Outdoor Recreation Economy Report. Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2006. Jan.-Feb. 2007 <<http://outdoorindustry.org/research.html>>.

¹⁴The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p. 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>.

¹⁵Ibid.



Table 30: Estimated Travel Impacts for Colorado (in Millions)^{16,17,18}

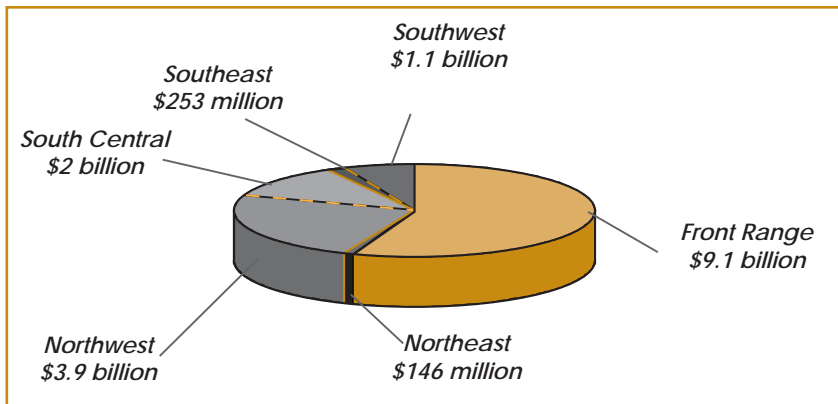
Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$10,127	\$9,723	\$9,489	\$9,893	\$10,845	\$11,434	\$12,312
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$2,940	\$2,957	\$2,985	\$2,956	\$3,193	\$3,245	\$3,546
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$271	\$260	\$251	\$252	\$270	\$289	\$325
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$246	\$233	\$227	\$228	\$247	\$258	\$282
TOTAL Travel Impacts in Colorado (\$Millions)	\$13,584	\$13,173	\$12,952	\$13,329	\$14,554	\$15,226	\$16,464
Employment (# of Travel-related Jobs)	125,200	117,140	112,510	111,640	119,930	121,420	123,890



Source: Runyan Associates, 2007.

*2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

Figure 35: Total Travel Impacts by Region (2006)



Source: Runyan Associates, 2007

While all six SCORP regions rely on and benefit from tourism, the Front Range receives more travel-based revenues than any other region. In 2006, Front Range Region earned over \$9.1 billion in travel revenues, 55% of Colorado’s total tourism contributions (Figure 35). A significant portion of this is attributed to overnight business trips as well as those seeking museums, galleries, shopping, and festivals. The 10 counties in the Northwest Region generate almost \$4 billion in annual tourism revenues, 24% of statewide totals, greatly influenced by visitors flocking to renowned ski areas. South Central Colorado’s economy is also heavily reliant on travelers, with nearly \$2 billion in tourism receipts in 2006. Travel impacts are the least substantial in the Southeast and Northeast regions; however, tourism revenues have increased 22% in the Southeast and 7% in the Northeast since 2000.¹⁹

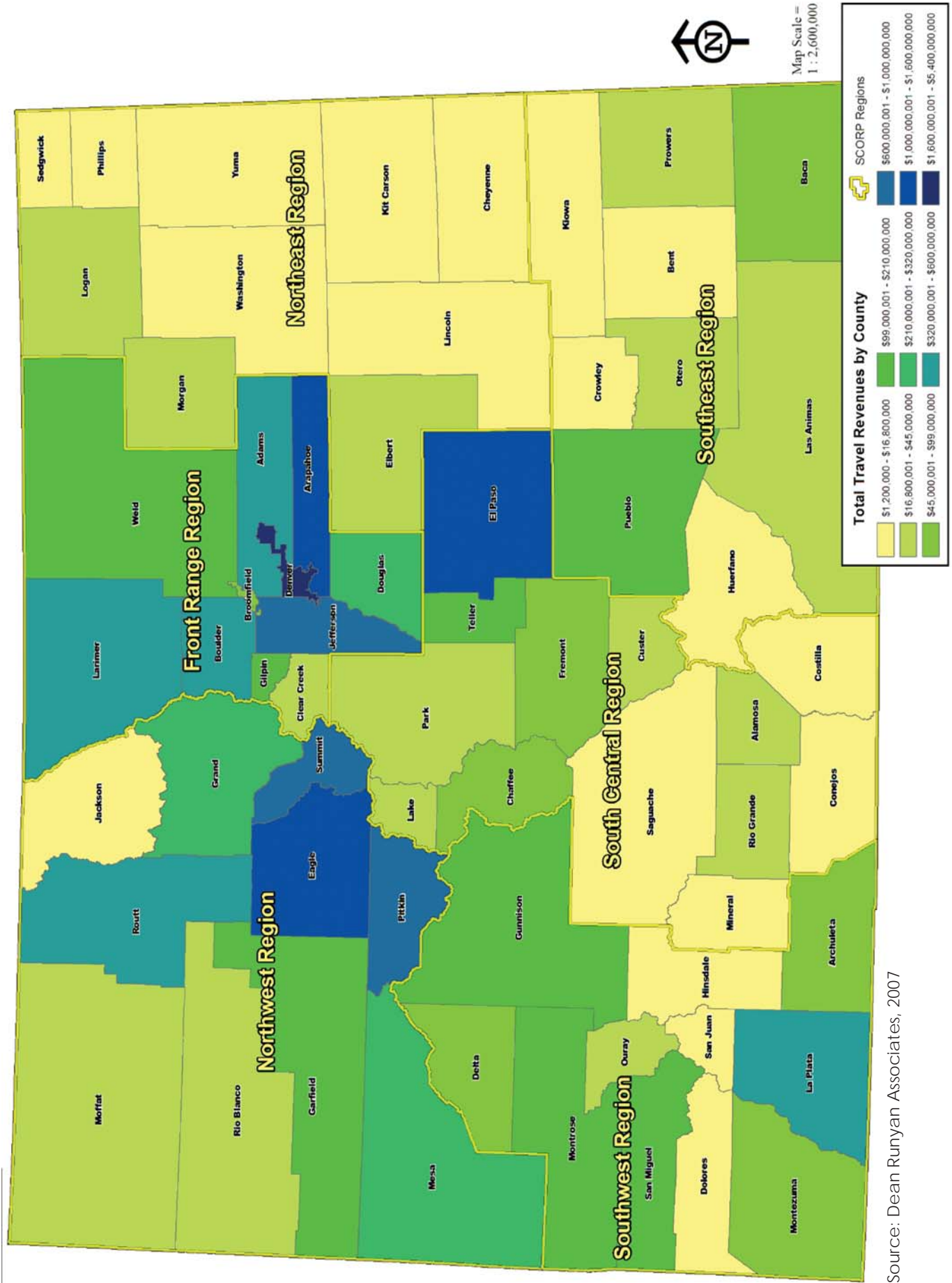
¹⁶In Table 30 and Figure 35, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes.

¹⁷Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹⁸Colorado totals may differ from those outlined in The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding. These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all 64 counties in Colorado.

¹⁹The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p. 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>.

Map 4: Total County Travel Revenues (2006)



Source: Dean Runyan Associates, 2007



5.1.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of Colorado’s recreation amenities have been created with the assistance of grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. In Colorado, the primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado State Trails Program, which administers Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Snowmobile, and Off-Highway Vehicle grants (OHV); and the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF), which is overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). Funding challenges for many of these programs are described in Section 6: Priority Recreation Issues and Influences.

- **GOCO** grants are awarded for the purposes of open space protection, local parks, outdoor recreation facilities, environmental education facilities, and community planning. The GOCO grants outlined in Table 32 and in each regional description include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.
- The **Colorado State Trails Program** awards grants for trail planning and design, construction, maintenance, special projects, and equipment. Grants are distributed from a variety of sources including Colorado Lottery, GOCO, the Colorado OHV Registration Program, and the Colorado Snowmobile Registration Program. LWCF grants are also awarded through the Colorado State Trails Program by authority of the National Park Service. Trails grants overviewed in the “State Trails Program Grants” column of Table 32 include grants funded by Recreational Trails Program, GOCO, and Colorado Lottery.
- **CTF Grants** are derived from a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds and are distributed quarterly to local governments according to population. CTF grants can be used for planning, acquisition, development, and maintenance for new conservation sites or to create recreation opportunities on existing sites.

Summaries of grant allocations for these programs are compiled by region in Table 32 and are further detailed by county in the regional descriptions. Each dollar amount is the total historical amount for each grant source from the program’s inception through 2007. (See Table 31 for inception dates).

Maps 5 and 6 illustrate awards granted through the Colorado State Trails Program, GOCO, and the CTF to demonstrate the substantial contributions these funding entities have made to outdoor recreation in Colorado (despite funding challenges). Map 5 illustrates a per capita analysis of these grants, while Map 6 shows total grants awarded by county.

For more details about these programs, or to apply for grants, visit the following websites:

*Colorado State Trails Program:
<http://parks.state.us/Trails/Grants>*

*Conservation Trust Fund:
<http://www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/fa/ctf>*

The LWCF has contributed over \$58 million to plan, acquire, build, and maintain over 1,100 recreation projects in Colorado.

*More details are available at:
<http://www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/LWCF>
GOCO:
www.goco.org*



Table 31: Inception Dates for Grant Programs

Grant Program	Year of Inception
LWCF	1965
Colorado State Trails Program	1971
Snowmobile Registration Grants Program	1978
OHV Registration Grants Program	1989
CTF	1983
GOCO	1994

As of 2007, nearly \$900 million in recreation grants have been awarded throughout Colorado with CTF being the largest grantor. GOCO has allocated over \$131 million in recreation grants through its Local Government program and the Colorado State Trails Program has awarded over \$16 million since 1971. The Front Range Region has received the largest grant allocations, nearly \$700 million, or 55% of all grants and also contains 66% of Colorado’s population. The Northeast Region has received just 3% of all grants in the state but also has fewer public lands than any other region and 2% of the state’s population.²⁰

Table 32: Recreation and Open Space Grants by Region²¹

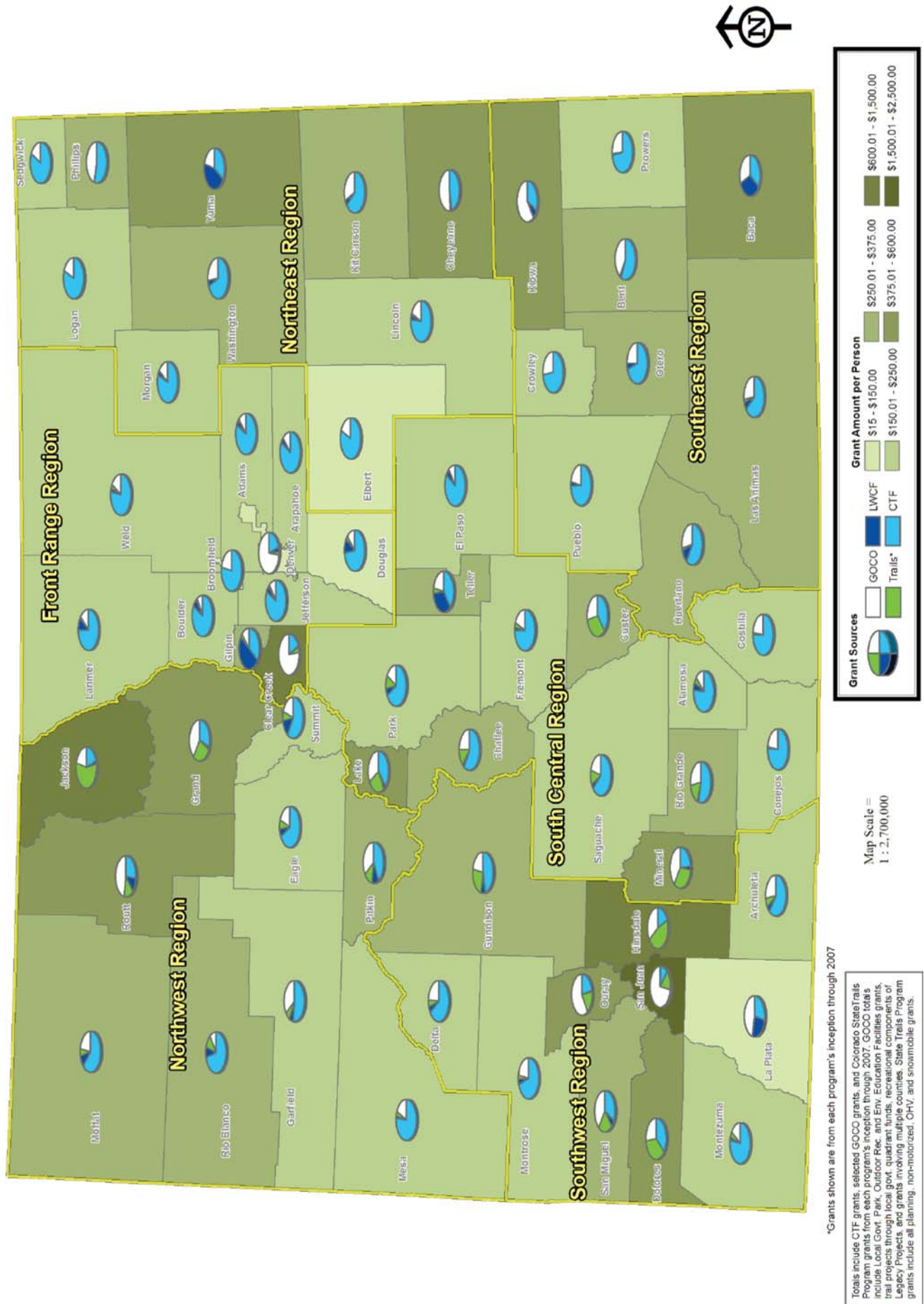
Region	GOCO County Grants ¹	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Front Range	\$56,308,458	\$6,235,521	\$31,898,247	\$1,447,701	\$6,646,732	\$0	\$450,509,722	\$553,046,380
Northeast	\$5,441,035	\$0	\$2,612,031	\$0	\$29,400	\$0	\$17,308,467	\$25,390,933
Northwest	\$20,968,838	\$1,500,000	\$5,356,244	\$3,251,351	\$3,633,243	\$1,054,768	\$45,541,085	\$81,305,529
South Central	\$16,337,307	\$45,896	\$8,859,433	\$1,450,436	\$2,779,025	\$744,539	\$105,742,165	\$135,958,801
Southeast	\$13,276,591	\$0	\$3,100,812	\$47,085	\$517,770	\$0	\$36,732,880	\$53,675,139
Southwest	\$10,904,381	\$47,670	\$2,766,795	\$2,233,842	\$2,451,682	\$930,751	\$26,105,350	\$45,440,470
Totals for Colorado	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Source: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

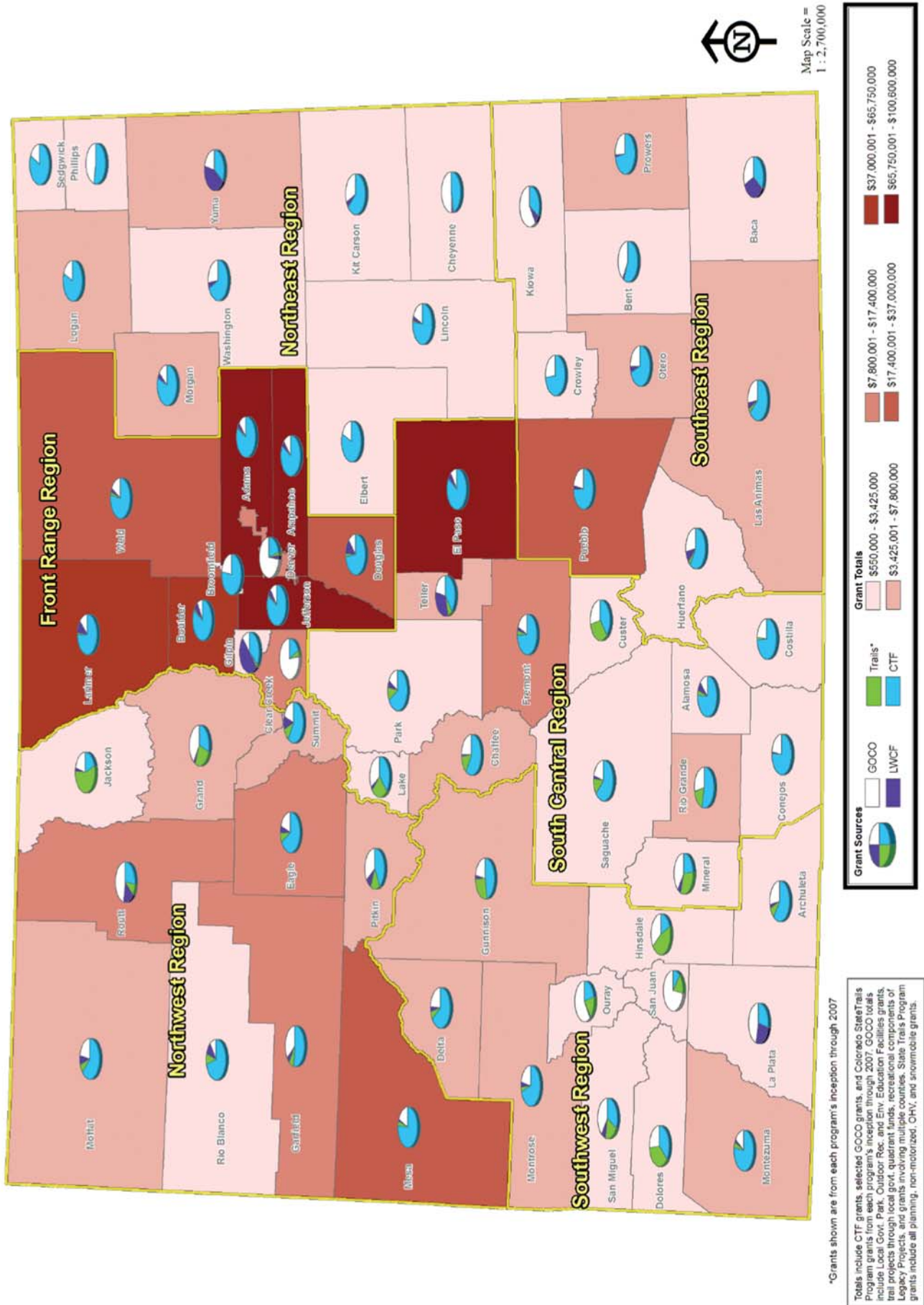
²⁰“Colorado State Demography Office.” Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

²¹The GOCO grants outlined in Table 32 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.

Map 5: Distribution of Outdoor Recreation Grants per Capita by County*
 (Total Dollars per Person by county)



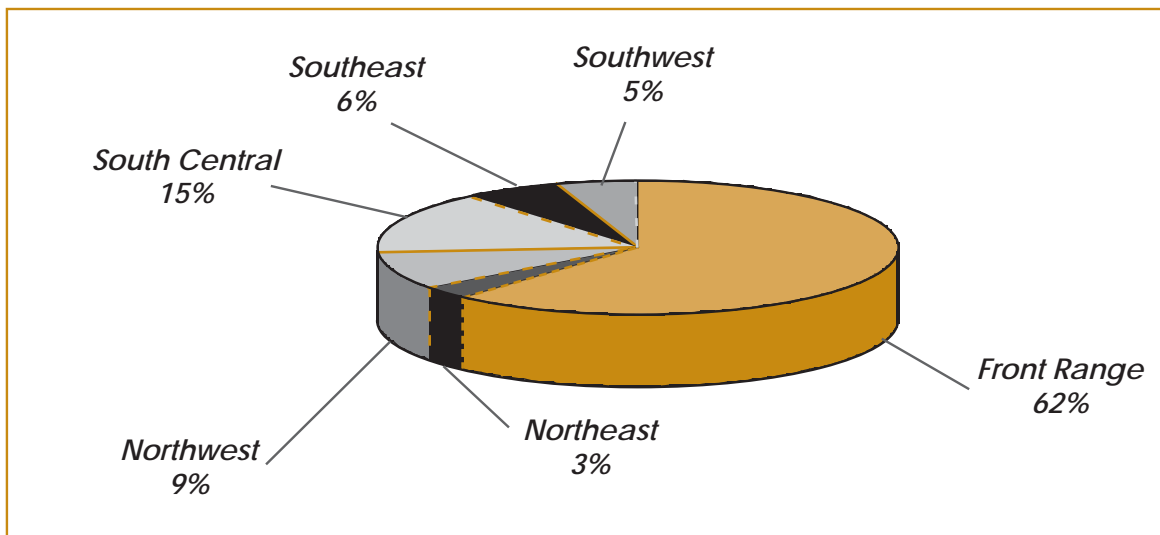
Map 6: Distribution of Outdoor Recreation Grants*
(Total Dollars by county)





In addition to the grants detailed in Table 32, another \$3.1 million in LWCF awards for projects that involve several counties were also distributed to Colorado but were not included in this total. Since 1965, Colorado has received \$58.2 million in LWCF monies for over 1,100 grants through 2007.²² In addition, nearly \$1 million in OHV grants and \$115,000 in snowmobile grants were awarded for statewide purposes and are not incorporated into these totals.

Figure 36: Distribution of Recreation and Open Space Grants by Region (Through 2007)



Source: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2007.

Includes totals displayed in Table 32 including grants administered by GOCO, the Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA (CTF).

5.1.5 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey Results

Results of the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey are also included in each regional description. The Local Government Survey was conducted to inventory the facilities maintained by municipalities, counties, special districts, and school districts, and to assess the distinctive issues and needs of these local governments. A summary of the inventory results, agency characteristics, and needs and issues are displayed in Tables 33-36 and are also detailed in each regional description.

All of the local governments that manage outdoor recreation were invited to complete the survey, however, not every agency responded. A total of 140 surveys were completed. Responses from every SCORP region were received with 48 of Colorado's 64 counties represented. Special attempts were made to solicit responses from counties, municipalities, and/or special districts that provide substantial recreation services to local populations in each region.

Results of the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey help guide the allocation of LWCF grants administered by the Colorado State Trails Program.

²²For year-by-year distributions of LWCF grants to Colorado, see the *Section 1: Introduction*.



Because the majority of Coloradans recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays, local recreation agencies meet a significant portion of the recreation demand across the state.²³ Responding local governments manage over 1,800 parks with developed facilities spanning nearly 49,000 acres. Approximately 53,000 acres of open space are devoted to passive outdoor recreation pursuits, totaling nearly 200,000 acres. Over 2,000 miles of non-motorized trail and 81 miles of motorized trail are also available for public enjoyment (Table 33).²⁴

Comprehensive results of the survey, including a statewide inventory of facilities and an overview of agency characteristics, are included in the Local Government Survey Summary (Appendix B). Additional details, including the survey instrument, are provided online at: www.Coloradoscorp.org



Table 33: Statewide Summary of Recreation Facilities and Lands Managed by Local Governments

Item	Statewide	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	South Central	Southeast	Southwest
Public parks (developed sites)	1,819	1,342	45	65	197	113	57
Open spaces	52,815	48,604	5	3149	176	218	663
Non-motorized trail miles	2,147	1,506	25	164	156	42	77
Motorized trail miles	81	0	0	20	0	0	61
Picnic Shelters	1,040	704	45	51	115	78	47
Playgrounds	1,177	822	31	49	162	85	28
Ballfields and courts	3,720	2,747	80	138	462	178	115
Campsites	748	714	1	30	0	3	11
Off-leash dog parks	58	38	1	2	6	3	8

Source: Colorado State Parks SCORP Local Government Survey, 2007
N = 140

²³Horvath, 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.

²⁴2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

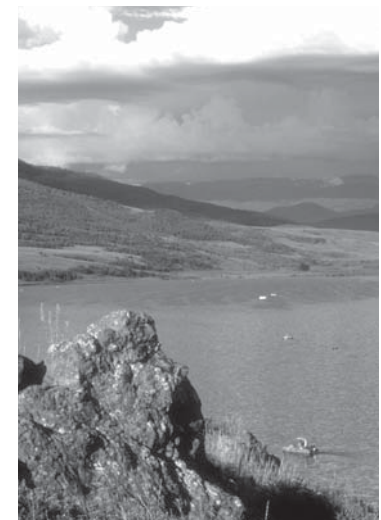
²⁵Ibid.



When asked about five-year acquisition and capital improvement plans, agencies responded that their investment needs exceeded \$1.1 billion, with only \$656 million in allocated funding (Table 34). This 36% deficit equates to nearly \$400 million in unmet acquisition and capital improvement needs. Staff shortfalls are largely subsidized by volunteers and youth groups. On an annual basis, volunteers contribute over 280,000 hours of service to the 140 local government agencies that responded to the survey. Youth groups also provide 344 annual crew weeks each year.²⁵

Table 34: Statewide Summary of Local Government Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	72	42%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	71	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.)	70	41%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	64	37%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	45	37%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	29	17%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	438,188	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	36	21%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	66	39%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	283,292	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	35	20%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	344	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	48	28%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$1,096,602,688	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$398,945,182	n/a



Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007
N = 140

Of the 140 local agencies and schools that responded to the Local Government Survey, 24 agencies provide environmental education and interpretation programs to nearly 440,000 people annually.

²⁵Ibid.



Priority Recreation Issues

To determine the highest priority needs and issues, respondents were asked to choose the degree of priority (ranging from 5 for very important to 1 for not important) their agency places on investing in 45 various types of outdoor recreation sites and activities. Note that some responses were equal when summed, creating several ties.

“Visitor Safety and Protection” was the most significant issue statewide, appearing in the top three issues in all regions (Table 35). Of the 119 agencies that responded to the question, 52 ranked the issue as “5,” the highest priority. “Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources” was the second most significant issue in Colorado. Of the 118 agencies that responded to the priority they place on maintenance of infrastructure, 50 considered the issue of highest priority, ranking it a “5.” Two of the top five issues statewide related to funding. “Insufficient resources to fund your agency’s budget” and “year-to-year stability of your agency’s budget” ranked 4th and 5th.²⁶

Table 35: Priority Issues for Local Governments

Top Issues	Statewide	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	South Central	Southeast	Southwest
Visitor safety and protection	1	2	2	1	2	3	1
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	2	7	1	3	3	5	3
Offering youth programs	3	1	5	11	7	1	7
Insufficient resources to fund your agency’s budget	4	5	3	7	1	4	6
Year-to-year stability of your agency’s budget	5	6	3	11	2	2	8
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	6	11	5	4	5	8	4
Capacity to serve a growing population	7	18	9	9	10	11	2
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	8	4	6	10	9	6	11
Collaboration/cooperation with other agencies that manage outdoor recreation	9	16	6	4	11	10	5
Adequate staffing levels	10	17	11	2	6	12	10

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007
N = 140

²⁶Ibid.



Priority Recreation Needs

Trails dominate the priorities for capital investments (Table 36), showing up in seven of the 10 highest priorities statewide. A “community trail system” was the greatest need for half of the regions and 55 agencies scored the item with a “5”, which is the highest priority. Playgrounds, picnic sites, and ballfields are also significant needs, demonstrating the popularity of these activities. These priorities reflect the demand for specific activities and facilities.²⁷

Table 36: Priority Recreation Needs for Local Governments

Top Needs	Statewide	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	South Central	Southeast	Southwest
Community trail system	1	1	4	1	5	6	1
Playgrounds	2	7	1	9	1	1	5
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	3	3	5	3	6	7	2
Picnic sites	4	6	3	11	1	2	7
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	5	9	2	5	3	5	4
Trails connecting to public lands	6	2	9	2	7	11	3
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	7	5	6	11	4	9	2
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	8	8	12	4	7	14	3
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	9	4	4	5	12	6	11
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	10	7	4	10	8	8	5

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2007
N = 140

²⁷Ibid.

5.2 Front Range Regional Profile

From the high plains to the Continental Divide, the 7.5 million acres of the Front Range Region include a mixture of both scenic landscapes and growing cities encompassing 7.5 million acres, Map 7. Included in this region are expansive grasslands, wooded canyons, undulating foothills, and high mountain ranges that serve as a foundation for a variety of outdoor pursuits. Because of the typically mild climate, most warm weather activities like walking, biking, and hiking can be carried out year-round.

Many urban centers in the region (like Denver, Fort Collins, and Boulder) have maintained their western heritage while evolving into outdoor lifestyle epicenters. With over 580,000 residents, Denver is Colorado's largest city and is recognized as having one of the best urban trail systems in the country. Fort Collins, which is situated between the plains and mountains, is a city of 130,000 people that has retained many small town characteristics. Another recreation-oriented urban center is Boulder, which is home to nearly 100,000 people. Boulder, in particular, is known as an outdoor recreation "haven" and is home to many professional cyclists, runners, and climbers who benefit from training at high altitude.

Bordering the western edge of these metropolitan areas, rolling foothills along the Front Range segue into the Rocky Mountains. The close proximity to the Rockies offers Front Range residents convenient access to a multitude of year-round recreation attractions that contribute to the overall high quality of life. The popularity of these recreation attractions, however, has also resulted in traffic congestion, particularly during weekends on the I-70 corridor.

Whether exploring cultural history, attending one of the many outdoor festivals, or looking for a unique outdoors experience, Colorado's Front Range is an enticing destination. In both 2006 and 2007, this region included some of the most popular tourism destinations of all six SCORP regions.¹

5.2.1 Population and Demographic Trends

The most populated region in Colorado, the Front Range Region contains over three million people, accounting for about 66% of the state's total population. Population density is also the highest in the state with about 0.43 persons per acre. By 2030, the population of the region is anticipated to reach 4.7 million people – a 45% increase from 2007 (Table 37) which will influence the already increasing demand for outdoor recreation amenities and services.² The Front Range Region consists of ten counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Gilpin, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld.

City of Denver is the most populated municipality in the region (and in Colorado) with 580,000 residents. The City of Aurora is the second largest with 308,000 residents. Other major cities with a population greater than 75,000 in this part of the state include: Lakewood (pop. 143,000), Fort Collins (pop. 130,000), Thornton (pop. 110,000), Arvada (pop. 102,000), Centennial (pop. 100,300), Boulder (pop. 98,000), Greeley (pop. 90,000), and Longmont (pop. 83,000).³

¹The 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. 207 <http://www.colorado.com/static.php?file=industry_partners>.

²"Colorado State Demography Office." Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

³Ibid.

Map 7: Front Range Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions

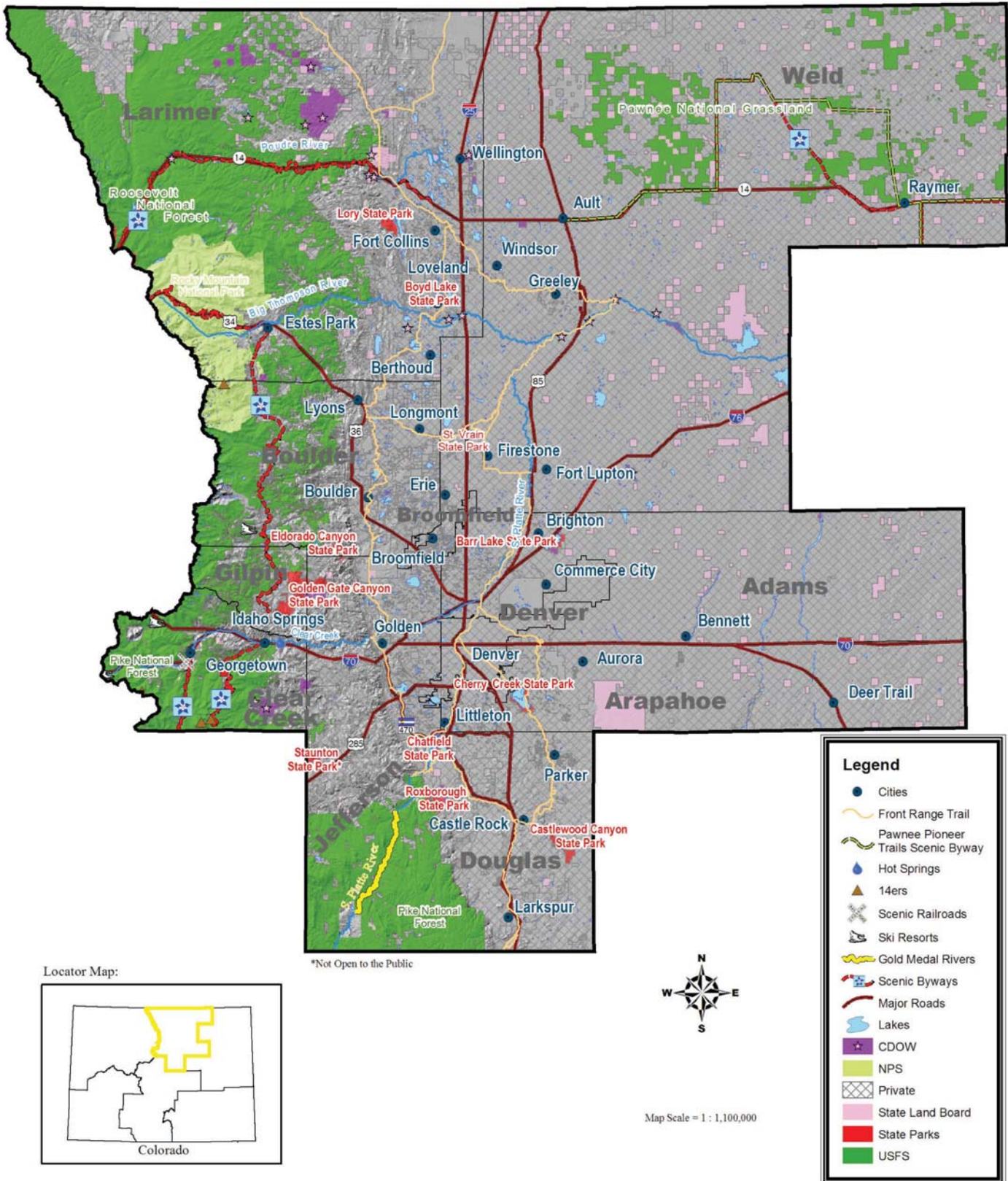




Table 37: Projected Population Growth for the Front Range Region

County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Adams	424,245	452,411	504,711	659,601	55%
Arapahoe	551,724	581,897	634,009	780,355	41%
Boulder	290,580	298,822	319,236	376,554	30%
Broomfield	48,552	51,970	59,002	79,842	64%
Clear Creek	9,631	10,242	11,380	14,642	52%
Denver	587,526	606,667	633,533	706,302	20%
Douglas	274,731	303,362	360,680	502,305	83%
Gilpin	5,184	5,495	6,027	7,625	47%
Jefferson	538,371	550,046	573,712	665,104	24%
Larimer	281,565	298,361	332,680	440,830	57%
Weld	243,579	267,032	311,809	488,291	100%
Regional Totals	3,255,688	3,426,305	3,746,779	4,721,451	45%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

5.2.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

Federal and state agencies, local governments, (and in some instances, land trusts), all manage unique recreation assets in the Front Range that support the active outdoors lifestyle enjoyed by residents and visitors. Over 2.8 million acres of public land are located in the Front Range Region, with 1.9 million of those acres open to recreation (Figure 37).⁴

Of the 7.5 million total acres that comprise the Front Range Region, 69% is privately held and 22% is managed by federal agencies including the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), National Park Service (NPS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (Figure 37). On a per capita basis, Front Range residents enjoy 0.6 acres of public land per person. Some of these public lands are displayed on Map 7.

Federal and State Lands

The largest federal land manager in the region is the Forest Service which oversees 1.4 million acres that comprise the Roosevelt, Arapaho, and Pike National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. Indian Peaks Wilderness Area, which is located west of Boulder, is one of the most frequently visited wilderness areas in the U.S.⁵

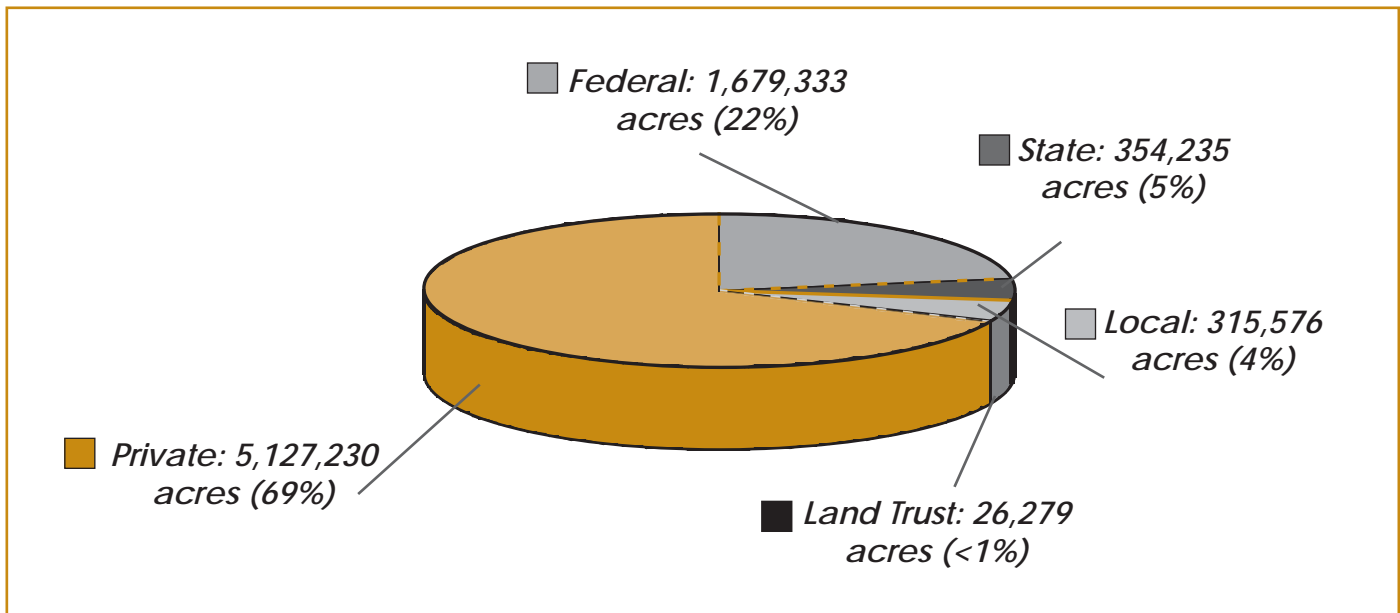
⁴Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

⁵United States Forest Service. 02 Nov. 2007 <www.fs.fed.us>.



The northern boundary of Indian Peaks Wilderness Area borders majestic Rocky Mountain National Park, which is the most popular National Park Service (NPS) site in Colorado. Rocky Mountain National Park annually hosts 2.7 million visitors, more than all other NPS sites in the state combined.⁶

Figure 37: Land Management in the Front Range Region



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

The park is a major draw for extremely adventurous cyclists, hikers, photographers, and those who want to take in the scenery from the car. Trail Ridge Road, which bisects the park, is a popular scenic byway that climbs 4,000 feet above the valley and over the tundra. About 250,000 cars travel this road each year.⁷

Approximately 5% of the public lands in the Front Range are managed by state agencies including State Land Board (SLB), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), and Colorado State Parks. Eleven state parks and 42 State Wildlife Areas (SWAs) provide a myriad of outdoor pursuits.⁸



⁶National Park Service. Public Use Statistics Office. Nov. 2007 <<http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/state.cfm?st=co>>.

⁷Colorado Scenic Byways. Colorado Department of Transportation. 3 Sept. 1008 <www.coloradobyways.org>.

⁸Horvath, 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.

⁴Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.



Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Because the majority of Coloradans recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays,⁹ local recreation agencies in the Front Range meet a significant portion of the recreation demand. The 53 agencies in the region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey manage over 50,000 parks and open spaces encompassing more than 211,000 acres. They also maintain 1,506 miles of non-motorized trail, 704 picnic sites, and 714 campsites (Table 40 in the Local Government Survey Section).

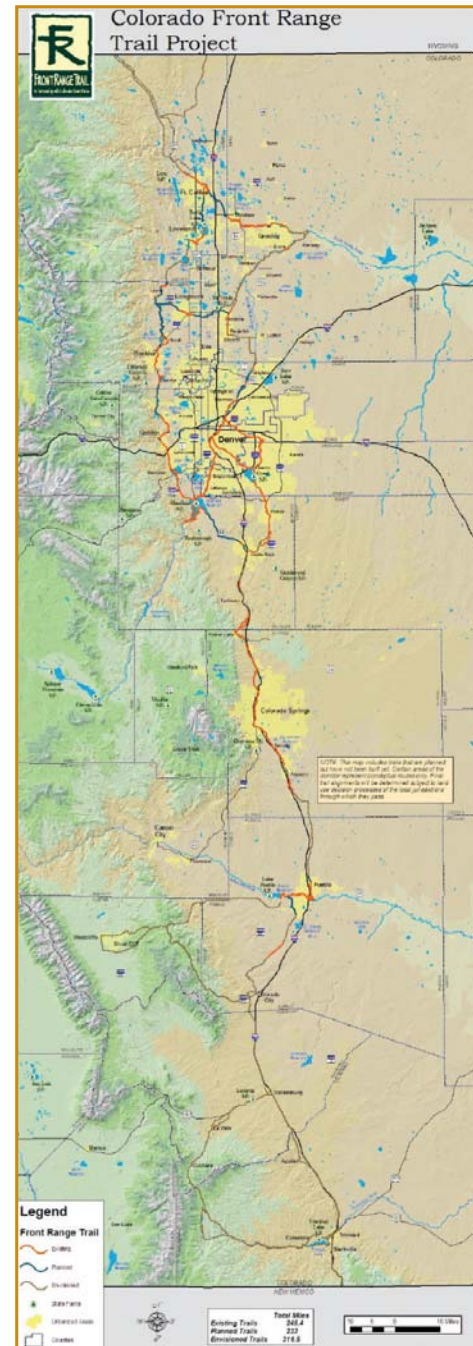
Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

Whether on public lands maintained by federal, state, or local agencies, a multitude of land, water, and snow-based activities are available to residents and visitors in the Front Range Region (Map 7). Large urban parks and smaller neighborhood parks provide spaces for picnicking and family gatherings, team sports, outdoor concerts, walking, and bicycling. Denver's City Park and Washington Park and Boulder's Chautauqua Park are some of the region's most frequented urban parks. Passive recreation opportunities are also available within a vast network of locally- and county-owned open spaces.

The incredible variety of urban trails in this section of the state is unparalleled. An extensive network of urban trails throughout the Front Range please walkers, runners, equestrians, cyclists, and rollerbladers. Components of the Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT), a trail corridor that will eventually span 900 miles along Colorado's Front Range, are located throughout the region. Sand Creek Greenway, Cherry Creek Trail, Boulder Creek Path, and the Poudre Trail are some of the most popular trails and are also existing segments of the CFRT. Waterton Canyon, a convenient and scenic playground for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders, has eight miles of trail that funnels into The Colorado Trail.

Water-enthusiasts can test their kayaking skills at whitewater parks on the Clear Creek in Golden, on the South Platte at Confluence Park, or on Boulder Creek. During summer months many grab an old tire inner tube and float some of these stretches, as well.

For those wanting to head out of the parks and into the mountains, just 30 minutes west of Denver, the Clear Creek has steadily grown to become Colorado's second most popular whitewater river, next to the Arkansas, with nearly 37,000 user days in 2007.¹⁰ The Poudre River is another challenging and scenic run hosting over 35,000 user days in 2006.¹¹



¹⁰A user day is defined as a paying guest on a river for any part of a day, according to the Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA).

¹¹Commercial River Use in the State of Colorado. Colorado River Outfitters Assoc. 2007. Nov. 2007 <www.croa.org>.

²¹Horvath, 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



Numerous reservoirs and rivers offer water-based recreation opportunities including Horsetooth, Cherry Creek, Chatfield, and Boulder reservoirs. These reservoirs are popular destinations for boating, jet skiing, swimming, and fishing. Gold Medal waters on the South Platte River in the Pike National Forest lure anglers throughout the year.

In winter, the westernmost foothills experience an abundance of snowfall to satisfy people seeking fresh powder or ice fishing. Eldora Mountain and Echo Mountain offer downhill skiers and snow boarders plenty of runs without facing traffic on I-70. Cross-country skiers and snowshoers can hit the groomed trails at Brainard Lake Recreation Area or Eldora Mountain Resort’s Nordic Center. And in January 2007, Winter Park Resort and Denver Parks and Recreation partnered to establish Ruby Hill Rail Yard, the first-ever skier and rider urban rail yard located right in the City of Denver. Three feet of manmade snow, and no fees, bring the slopes closer to urban youth.¹²

5.2.3 Economic Profile of Tourism

In 2006, total travel impacts in the Front Range Region generated an estimated \$9 billion dollars from direct travel spending, earnings and employment, and state and local taxes.¹³ Since 2001, the region has experienced steady growth in economic benefits from travel and tourism, increasing approximately 26% from \$7.2 billion (Table 38).¹⁴

Table 38: Estimated Travel Impacts for the Front Range Region (in Millions)^{15,16}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$5,738	\$5,396	\$5,333	\$5,442	\$5,972	\$6,358	\$6,882
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$1,607	\$1,603	\$1,656	\$1,579	\$1,697	\$1,728	\$1,920
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$142	\$131	\$128	\$128	\$135	\$149	\$173
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$130	\$120	\$119	\$118	\$128	\$134	\$149
Total Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$7,617	\$7,249	\$7,236	\$7,268	\$7,932	\$8,369	\$9,124
Employment (jobs)	59,740	54,730	53,660	52,240	56,360	58,100	60,310

¹²“Ruby Hill Rail Yard.” Denver Parks and Recreation. 19 Mar. 2007 <http://www.denvergov.org/Recreation/Recreation/RubyHill_RailYard_2008/tabid/428661/Default.aspx>.

¹³The 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>.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵In Table 38 and Figure 38, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹⁶These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.



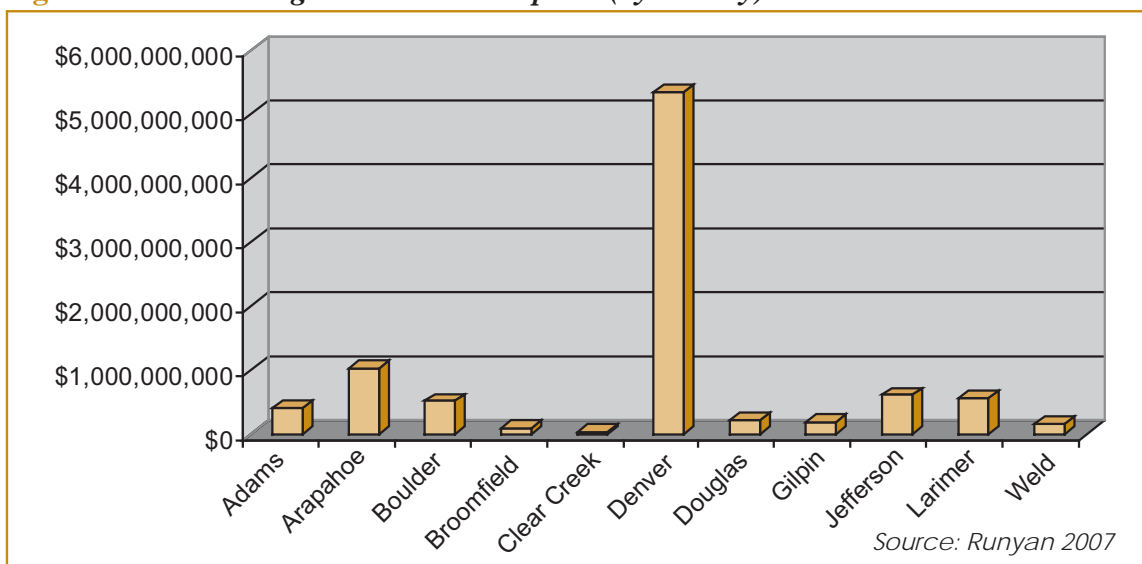
When exclusively examining direct travel spending such as purchases, lodging taxes, and local and state taxes paid at the point of sale, almost \$6.9 billion was generated in the Front Range in 2006, nearly half of the \$14.1 billion expenditures statewide (Table 38).

Visitors to Denver account for the majority of travel spending in the region, generating 59% of the Front Range’s \$6.9 billion total direct travel spending.¹⁷

For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles*.

Visitors at Colorado’s Welcome Centers are one indicator of the volume of tourists in the Front Range. Nearly 25,000 people sought information at the Red Rocks Welcome Center in 2007, which first opened in 2006.¹⁸

Figure 38: Front Range Total Travel Impacts (by County)



5.2.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Front Range Region have resulted from grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. Details on the nearly \$37 million in grant awards are provided in Table 39, and are summed for each grant program from inception through 2007. Primary grant programs in Colorado include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails), and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

A brief description of each grant program is provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles* along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Meharg, C. “CO Welcome Center Visitation Numbers.” 8 Aug. 2007.



Table 39: Front Range Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)^{19,20}

County	GOCO County Grants ¹	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Adams	\$5,481,329	\$944,328	\$2,741,218	\$0	\$793,500	\$55,801,058	\$65,761,433
Arapahoe	\$8,194,732	\$954,328	\$4,019,124	\$0	\$791,000	\$79,032,893	\$92,992,077
Boulder	\$3,226,303	\$127,525	\$3,284,189	\$259,856	\$604,744	\$44,722,831	\$52,225,448
Broomfield	\$25,000	\$544,025	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,083,954	\$2,652,979
Clear Creek	\$6,848,664	\$452,818	\$103,067	\$0	\$559,762	\$1,509,189	\$9,473,499
Denver	\$9,952,324	\$2,681,762	\$3,837,873	\$0	\$15,000	\$91,610,274	\$108,097,233
Gilpin	\$3,015,697	\$75,000	\$4,403,702	\$500,346	\$494,910	\$22,315,261	\$30,804,916
Jefferson	\$180,609	\$0	\$892,727	\$0	\$49,839	\$681,034	\$1,804,209
Larimer	\$8,749,176	\$45,000	\$4,918,895	\$467,769	\$1,282,041	\$85,118,240	\$100,581,120
Weld	\$5,556,979	\$153,500	\$6,303,729	\$76,100	\$828,812	\$38,752,535	\$51,671,655
Region Total	\$5,077,644	\$257,235	\$1,393,725	\$143,630	\$1,227,125	\$28,882,453	\$36,981,812
Colorado Total	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668

Sources: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

5.2.5 Local Government Survey Results

Tables 40-43 summarizes responses from 53 counties, municipalities, special districts, and school districts in the Front Range Region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Although not all of the local governments that manage outdoor recreation responded to the survey, the largest recreation providers were captured including Denver Parks and Recreation, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, City of Boulder Parks and Recreation, Jefferson County Open Space, Douglas County Parks and Trails, and Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.

Local governments in Colorado’s Front Range Region provide a wide spectrum of recreation opportunities and serve the largest population of the SCORP regions - 66% of Colorado’s total population. Coloradans typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays, therefore, local governments in the Front Range Region support a significant amount of the recreation needs of local residents.²¹ Because the majority of the state’s residents are concentrated here it also contains more local government agencies that manage outdoor recreation than any other region. About 84% of the locally-managed public parks, open spaces, and golf courses reported by Local Government Survey respondents are found in the Front Range Region (Table 40).²²

¹⁹No snowmobile grants have been awarded in this region and therefore, that column is not displayed.

²⁰The GOCO grants outlined in Table 39 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.

²¹Horvath, 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

²²2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



Table 40: Front Range Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Front Range Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	211,245	250,345	84%
Public parks (with developed sites)	1,342	1,819	74%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	48,604	52,815	92%
Non-motorized trail miles	1,506	2,150	70%
Motorized trail miles	0	81	0%
Picnic Shelters	704	1,040	68%
Playgrounds	822	1,177	70%
Ballfields and courts	2,747	3,720	74%
Campsites	714	748	95%
Off-leash dog parks	38	58	66%
% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 66%			

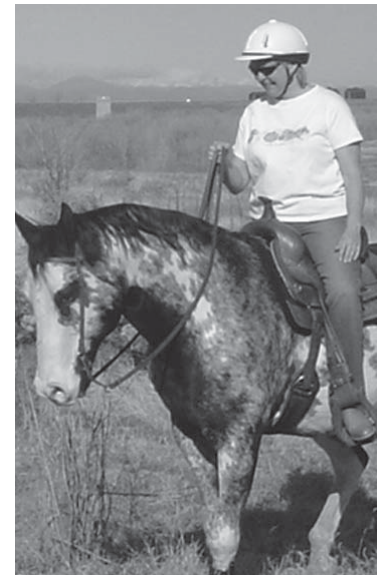
Region N=53
Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks SCORP Local Government Survey, 2007.

Table 41 highlights characteristics of local governments in the region. Approximately 66% of local government agencies have a formal outdoor recreation plan that is adopted by a governing body. Most plans include a trails component (66%) as well as natural resource management and protection component (53%). Environmental education, interpretation, or outdoor programs are offered by 18 different agencies and served over 178,000 people in 2007.

Agency needs are supplemented considerably by volunteers and youth groups. Volunteers contribute an impressive 151,000 hours annually for visitor services, maintenance, and construction. Youth groups and youth corps supply an additional 294 crew weeks annually.

Over \$9.5 million in planned acquisitions and improvements are envisioned for the region between 2008 and 2013. Only 64% of these projects have allocated resources, leaving a 36% deficit. About 42% of the 53 agencies have a dedicated funding source, such as special taxes, levies, or bonds.²³



²³Ibid



Table 41: Front Range Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	35	66%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	35	66%
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.)	35	66%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	35	66%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	28	53%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	18	34%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	178,553	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	23	43%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	28	53%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	151,269	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	31	58%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	294	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	22	42%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$952,873,515	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$341,719,100	n/a

N=53

Source: Colorado State Parks SCORP Local Government Survey, 2007.



Front Range Region Priority Recreation Issues

Offering youth programs was the top issue for recreation managers in the Front Range Region, while ensuring visitor safety and providing public information were the second and third priorities, respectively (Table 42). The Front Range Region confronts somewhat different issues than managers in other SCORP regions, as demonstrated by the ranking of several concerns that were not consistent with statewide results. For instance, while vandalism and graffiti control were ranked 13th statewide, it is the sixth greatest issue for Front Range recreation providers.

Table 42: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the Front Range Region

Issue	Front Range Region	Statewide
Offering recreation programs for youth	1	3
Visitor safety and protection	2	1
Providing public information about facilities and programs	3	12
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	4	8
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	5	4
Vandalism and graffiti control	6	13
Providing adequate trails and trail systems	7	6
Year-to-year stability of your agency's budget	8	5
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	9	2
Assessing visitor satisfaction and expectations	10	14

Securing funding for maintenance of existing recreation facilities was repeatedly mentioned as a significant challenge for recreation managers in the Front Range Region.

One agency stated, "Our agency has an unusually high dependence on fees to generate operating revenues due to a lack of voter support for taxes."

Another noted, "Our rapidly growing community grows faster than the tax base. More funding requests with less funding resources."

*Region N=53
Statewide N= 140
Source: Colorado State Parks SCORP Local Government Survey, 2007.*





Front Range Region Priority Needs

Trails-related infrastructure accounted for seven of the 10 most significant needs, illustrating the region’s strong focus on trail systems (Table 43). More picnic sites, playgrounds, and ballfields were also needed. Managers reported increased public demand for nature study opportunities and wildlife watching areas.²⁵

Table 43: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the Front Range Region

Need	Front Range Region	Statewide
Community trail system	1	1
Trails connecting to public lands	2	6
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	3	3
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	4	9
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	5	7
Picnicking sites	6	4
Playgrounds	7	2
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	7	10
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	8	8
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	9	5
Nature study/wildlife watching sites	10	14

*Note that some values were equal when summed resulting in a tie.

Some Front Range Region managers responded that an increase in minority populations has changed the demand for bilingual programs and signs. Denver Parks and Recreation noted the need to connect minority populations to existing outdoor programs.



²⁵Ibid.

5.3 Northeast Regional Profile

The high plains and open spaces of the Northeast Region have motivated many locals to refer to the area as “Colorado’s Outback” or “The Other Colorado.” The wide-open grasslands, prairies, and wheat fields of the northeast encompass approximately 11.3 million acres (Map 8) and are host to a range of recreation opportunities including hunting, birding, wildlife watching, horseback riding, boating, and fishing. While about 93% of the Northeast Region is privately-owned, the area contains a variety of recreation opportunities on public land¹ (Figure 39). Despite the relatively small amount of public land, the area is widely undeveloped with significant expanses of farms and ranches providing endless scenic views.

The area’s rich history is evident today and many festivals celebrate the region’s pioneer heritage throughout the year, particularly in the summer months. The South Platte River, the largest river in the region, and its tributaries, peak during spring run-off then meander slowly through the region during the rest of the year. Interstates 76 and 70 transect the region and are gateways to Colorado and major transportation corridors for in-state travelers (Map 8).²

5.3.1 Population and Demographic Trends

With a total population of 113,000 people, the Northeast Region is the least populated of the six SCORP Regions (Table 44) and contains just 2% of Colorado’s total population. However, the number of residents is expected to continue to increase steadily. Between 2007 and 2030, another 70,000 people are anticipated to migrate or be born into the 10- county area.³ This 62% population increase will inevitably impact outdoor recreation managers in the Northeast Region.

The Northeast Region consists of 10 counties: Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma (Map 8). The largest city in the region is Sterling, located in Logan County, with nearly 14,000 people. Other major towns and cities include Fort Morgan with 11,000 people, Wray (pop. 5,500), Burlington (pop. 4,000), Holyoke (pop. 2,300), Julesburg (pop. 1,400), and Limon (pop. 2,000).⁴

Table 44: Projected Population Growth for the Northeast Region

County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Cheyenne	2,059	2,068	2,102	2,255	10%
Elbert	23,701	25,848	32,307	59,358	150%
Kit Carson	7,858	8,002	8,304	8,983	14%
Lincoln	5,823	5,966	6,237	7,151	23%
Logan	22,043	23,327	25,840	32,477	47%
Morgan	29,153	31,241	34,988	47,393	63%
Phillips	4,662	4,745	4,890	5,220	12%
Sedgwick	2,634	2,705	2,826	3,131	19%
Washington	4,948	4,990	5,071	5,267	6%
Yuma	10,094	10,346	10,776	11,764	17%
Regional Totals	112,975	119,238	133,341	182,999	62%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%



Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2008

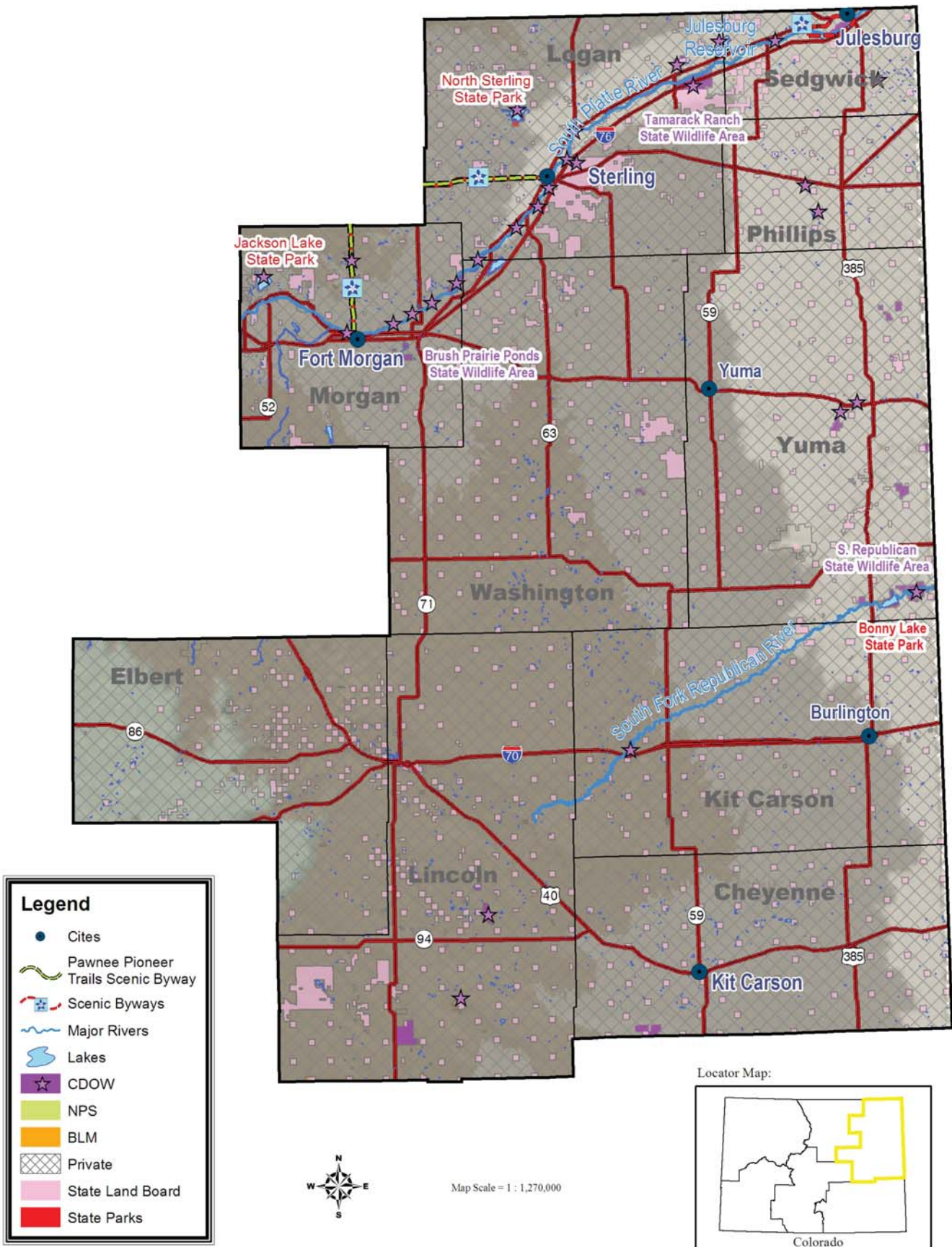
Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

Colorado Tourism Office. 10 Feb. 2008 <www.colorado.com>.

"Colorado State Demography Office." Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

Ibid.

Map 8: Northeast Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions



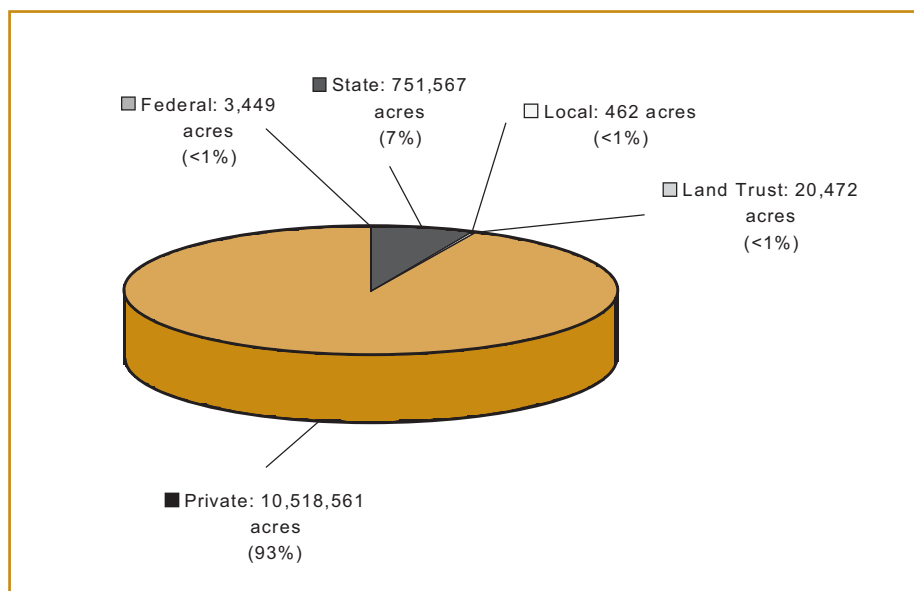
Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007



5.3.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

While about 93% of the Northeast Region is privately-owned, the area contains a variety of public lands and recreation attractions⁵ (Figure 39). On a per capita basis, Northeast Region residents have less than 0.1 acre of public land per person with public land comprising about 7% of the total land base. Despite the relatively small amount of public land, the area is still widely undeveloped. Land trusts have helped contribute to open space protection efforts in the region by preserving over 20,000 acres.⁶

Figure 39: Land Management in the Northeast Region



Federal and State Lands

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007

Pawnee National Grassland, managed by the United States Forest Service (Forest Service), is a destination for a variety of outdoor pursuits including horseback riding, birding, hiking, hunting, target shooting, and off-roading. Hunters and wildlife watchers pursue prairie species such as antelope, white tail and mule deer, geese, ducks, pheasant, quail, and wild turkeys. Abundant bird species including blue heron and white pelicans draw birders from around the state and surrounding region. Pawnee Buttes, twin towers that rise 300 foot above the grasslands, are a popular destination for hikers and birders looking for nesting birds of prey.⁷

State agencies manage over 750,000 acres, or 7% of the region. There are 35 State Wildlife Areas (SWAs) managed by Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and three state parks.⁸ Jackson Lake, North Sterling, and Bonny State Parks attract anglers, boaters, waterskiers, horseback riders, and campers. Fishing and hunting opportunities at these parks and SWAs draw anglers from across Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Kansas.

⁵Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

⁶Ibid

⁷United States Forest Service. 02 Nov. 2007 <www.fs.fed.us>.

⁸Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap)

V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.



Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Over 50 local community parks and open spaces encompassing nearly 1,100 acres also provide considerable recreation opportunities in the Northeast Region. Forty-five picnic shelters, 25 miles of non-motorized trail, and 80 ballfields and courts offer the public many options for outdoor activities.⁹

Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

Rich in pioneer history, the Northeast Region contains emigrant trails, historic buildings, and abandoned settlements that also attract many heritage travelers. The region's cultural heritage is celebrated continuously throughout spring, summer, and fall months hosting over 150 festivals, heritage celebrations, rodeos, historical reenactments, horse events, and parades.

Two designated Colorado Scenic Byways, Pawnee Pioneer Trails and the South Platte River Trail, offer visitors an opportunity to tour or bike through the area and imagine homesteaders and Native Americans amidst the shortgrass prairies and cattle ranches. For golfers, the region offers many chances to hit the links at 18 different golf courses.¹⁰

5.3.3 Economic Profile of Tourism

Although the area is not generally considered a major tourism destination, the public lands, festivals, and special events attract travelers from neighboring states and from across Colorado. The number of travelers in the area is documented by the thousands of people who visit the two official Colorado Visitor Centers in Burlington and Julesburg each year. In 2006, over 425,000 people stopped at these two welcome centers seeking tourist information.¹¹

Visitors to the Northeast Region annually generate \$146 million in travel expenditures, tourism-related employment, and local and state taxes (Table 45). Since 2000, total travel impacts have increased by about 7%.¹² For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles*.



⁹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹⁰Colorado Tourism Office. 10 Feb. 2008 <www.colorado.com>.

¹¹ Meharg, C. "CO Welcome Center Visitation Numbers." 8 Aug. 2007.

¹²The 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>.



Table 45: Estimated Travel Impacts for the Northeast Region^{13,14}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$96	\$98	\$92	\$99	\$104	\$103	\$106
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$36	\$37	\$34	\$36	\$37	\$35	\$35
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$2	\$2	\$2	\$2
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$3	\$4	\$4
Total Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$136	\$139	\$130	\$139	\$146	\$143	\$146
Employment (# of Travel-related Jobs)	2,110	2,080	1,930	2,000	2,060	1,940	1,830

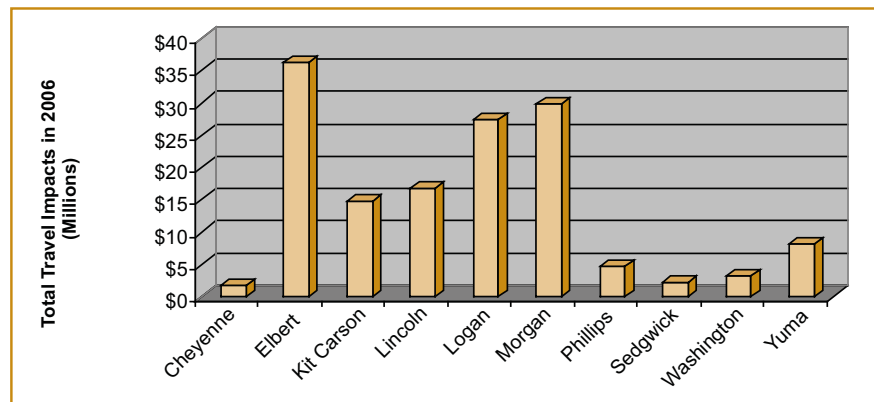


Source: Runyan, 2007.

* 2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

Elbert County generates the most significant travel-related revenues in the region – over \$36 million in 2006 (Figure 40). Logan and Morgan counties contributed another \$30 million and \$28 million, respectively. For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in 5.0 *Introduction to Regional Profiles*.¹⁵

Figure 40: Northeast Region Total Travel Impacts by County (2006)



Source: Runyan, 2007

¹³In Table 45 and Figure 40, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of 2006

¹⁴These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.

¹⁵Ibid.



5.3.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Northeast Region have resulted from grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. Details on the \$25 million in grant awards are provided in Table 46, and are summed from each grant program's inception through 2007. Primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails); and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

A brief description of each grant program is provided in 5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

Table 46: Northeast Region Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)¹⁶

County	GOCO County Grants ¹	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Cheyenne	\$432,035	\$0	\$8,587	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$408,515	\$849,137
Elbert	\$549,979	\$0	\$22,112	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,728,860	\$3,300,951
Kit Carson	\$734,683	\$0	\$113,844	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,337,159	\$2,185,686
Lincoln	\$217,943	\$0	\$63,419	\$0	\$27,000	\$0	\$1,013,545	\$1,321,907
Logan	\$706,458	\$0	\$38,103	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,444,952	\$4,189,513
Morgan	\$686,981	\$0	\$259,687	\$0	\$2,400	\$0	\$4,487,229	\$5,436,298
Phillips	\$715,540	\$0	\$14,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$796,276	\$1,525,816
Sedgwick	\$88,046	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$486,476	\$574,522
Washington	\$377,358	\$0	\$80,331	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$911,677	\$1,369,366
Yuma	\$932,013	\$0	\$2,011,948	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,693,777	\$4,637,738
Region Totals Colorado Totals	\$5,441,035	\$0	\$2,612,031	\$0	\$29,400	\$0	\$17,308,467	\$25,390,933
	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Source: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

5.3.5 Local Government Survey Results

Twelve representatives from counties, municipalities, special districts, and school districts in the Northeast Region responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Although not all of the local governments that manage outdoor recreation in the region returned surveys, some of the largest recreation providers were captured, including the Limon Parks and Recreation Department, the Town of Burlington, Lincoln County, and the cities of Brush, Ft. Morgan, and Sterling.¹⁷

Much like recreationists throughout Colorado, most Northeast Region residents typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays, therefore, local governments support a significant amount of the recreation needs of local residents.¹⁸

¹⁶The GOCO grants outlined in Table 46 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.

¹⁷2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹⁸Horvath, 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.



While it appears that these local governments do not provide a significant portion of the entire state’s recreation facilities, it should be noted that these 12 local governments serve only about 2% of Colorado’s total population. Nearly 1,100 acres of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses are managed by the agencies that completed the survey.¹⁹

Table 47: Northeast Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Northeast Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	1,098	250,345	<1%
Public parks (with developed sites)	45	1,819	3%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	5	52,815	<1%
Non-motorized trail miles	25	2,150	1%
Motorized trail miles	0	81	0%
Picnic Shelters	45	1,040	4%
Playgrounds	31	1,177	3%
Ballfields and courts	80	3,720	2%
Campsites	1	748	<1%
Off-leash dog parks	1	58	2%
% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 2%			

Region N=12
Statewide N=140

Source: GOCO, Colorado State Parks, Local Government Survey, 2007

Only one-fourth of the agencies have a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities, and services, all of which are formally adopted by an overseeing government (Table 48). None of these plans include a natural resource management and protection component. (Developing or updating plans was one of the top ten issues in the region).

Staff needs are supplemented by volunteers who contribute about 460 hours of service each year for maintenance and construction projects. Youth groups also provide the equivalent of nine crew weeks annually.

Budget concerns are an issue for recreation managers in the Northeast Region and across Colorado. Only Burlington School District has a dedicated funding source for parks, trails, and/or open space; this was identified as one of the top ten regional issues. An estimated \$1.1 million is still needed to accomplish the acquisitions and capital improvements planned for 2008-2013. “Insufficient resources to fund your agency’s budget” and “year-to-year stability of your agency’s budget” were tied for the third most significant issues.²⁰

¹⁹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007

²⁰Ibid.



Table 48: Northeast Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	3	25%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	2	17%
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.)	3	25%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	2	17%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	0	0%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	0	0%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	0	0%
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	0	0%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	4	33%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	457	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	2	17%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	9	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	1	8%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$2,170,002	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$1,107,501	n/a

N=12

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007



Northeast Region Priority Recreation Issues

Local governments in the Northeast Region reported that a myriad of issues were important, resulting in numerous ties. The three greatest issues were: maintaining existing recreation infrastructure, protecting visitors, and budget issues (Table 49). Providing programs for youth and senior citizens and disseminating information to the public were also a priority.²¹

Note that some values were equal when summed resulting in multiple ties.

Table 49: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the Northeast Region

Issue	Northeast Region	Statewide
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	1	2
Visitor safety and protection	2	1
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	3	4
Year-to-year stability of your agency's budget	3	5
Liability protection for your agency	4	11
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	5	6
Offering recreation programs for youth	5	3
Collaboration/cooperation with other agencies that manage outdoor recreation	6	9
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	6	8
Need to create a dedicated funding source for your agency's budget	6	15
Providing public information about facilities and programs	7	12
Creating or updating your agency's park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan	8	21
Providing programs and opportunities for senior citizens	8	18
Funding for partnerships with volunteer and/or youth organizations	8	25
Capacity to serve a growing population	9	7
Assessing visitor satisfaction and expectations	9	14
Engaging volunteer assistance for programs or maintenance/construction	10	21
Strategies for public/private cost-sharing for recreation	10	20

Region N=12

Statewide N= 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Other concerns for recreation managers in the Northeast Region were a declining youth population, determining the unique needs of rural areas, and understanding the recreation demands for a changing community.

²¹Ibid



Northeast Region Priority Recreation Needs

Playgrounds, ballfields, picnicking sites, and tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts were the most significant needs in the Northeast Region (Table 50). Developing a variety of trails was also important, appearing six times among the priority needs. Acquiring water and parklands were also important to local recreation managers.²²

Table 50: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the Northeast Region

Need	Northeast Region	Statewide
Playgrounds	1	2
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	2	5
Picnicking sites	3	4
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	4	11
Community trail system	4	1
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	4	9
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	4	10
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	5	3
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	6	7
Toilets and showers	7	15
Acquisition of water for recreation	8	19
Trails connecting to public lands	9	6
Acquisition of parklands	10	12

Region N=12

Statewide N= 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Maintaining natural resources, high-quality vegetation, and wildlife habitats was reported as critical to providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.



²²Ibid

5.4 Northwest Regional Profile

The Northwest Region of Colorado encompasses nearly 15 million acres and is a land of many contrasts. The region's eastern border skirts the Continental Divide with forested mountains that transform into sagebrush deserts heading east along U.S. Interstate 70 (I-70), the main transportation corridor of the region (Map 9). Continuing west, rugged mesas and semi-arid plateaus dominate the landscape.

Recreational opportunities in the region are closely tied to the 9.9 million acres of public lands. These lands support a variety of essentially limitless year-round recreation pursuits for both residents and visitors including world-renowned skiing and snowboarding, extensive snowmobiling trails, a plethora of scenic areas for horseback riding, and abundant wildlife for viewing and hunting. The Northwest Region is also home to some of Colorado's most popular resort towns including Aspen, Snowmass, Vail, Beaver Creek, Winter Park, Breckenridge, Frisco, and Steamboat Springs. Sprawling ranches and quaint western towns are interspersed throughout the Northwest Region, resembling the Colorado of frontier days.¹

The close proximity of many resort towns, ski areas, and other outdoor recreation pursuits to the Front Range have contributed to significant transportation congestion issues along I-70, as well as a thriving second-home market. In 2006, about 57% of all the homes in Summit, Grand, Pitkin, and Eagle counties were owned by "second homeowners."² Since development of the 2003 SCORP, another issue changing the face of recreation in the Northwest Region (particularly in the westernmost portions of the region in Garfield, Rio Blanco, and Mesa counties) is the increased oil and gas exploration. Between 2002 and 2006, drilling permits in Colorado increased 163% (with many of these permits associated with drilling in the Northwest Region).³ Today, recreationists such as hunters, anglers, and mountain bikers must increasingly share public lands and rural roads with gas rigs, pipelines, and large drilling equipment.

5.4.1 Population and Demographic Trends

With a total population of 351,000 people in 2007 (7% of Colorado's total residents), the Northwest is the third most populated SCORP region (Table 51). The population density remains relatively sparse with 0.02 persons per acre giving much of the region a remote, undeveloped character. Mesa County has the largest population of the 10 counties with 138,200 people while Jackson County is the least populated with 1,500 people. The Northwest Region is comprised of 10 counties: Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Mesa, Moffat, Pitkin, Rio Blanco, Routt, and Summit (Map 9).

The municipalities in the region are Grand Junction (pop. 52,000), Fruita (pop. 10,300), Steamboat Springs (pop. 11,100), Craig (pop. 9,300), Glenwood Springs (pop. 8,700), Rifle (pop. 8,700), Avon (pop. 6,800), Aspen (pop. 6,400), Carbondale (pop. 6,100), Breckenridge, Vail (pop. 4,800), and Silverthorne (pop. 4,000).⁴

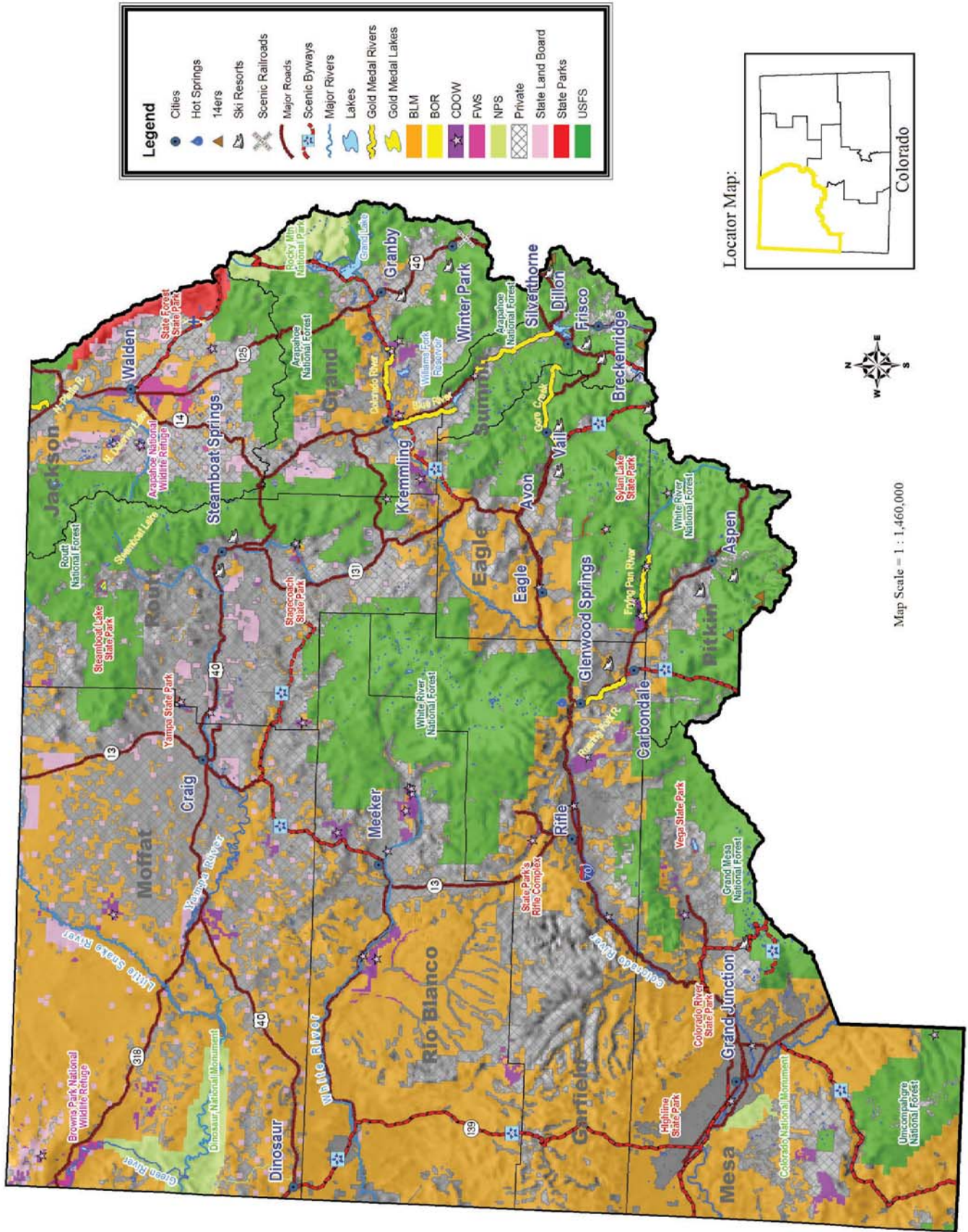
¹Colorado Tourism Office. 10 Feb. 2008 <www.colorado.com>.

²Transitions in Mountain Communities: Resort Economies and Their Secondary Effects. Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. 2007.

³Mathews, V. "China and India's Ravenous Appetite for Natural Resources and Their Potential Impact on Colorado." Presentation by the Director of the Colorado Geological Survey to the Colorado State Parks Board. Frisco, Colorado. Jan. 2008.

⁴"Colorado State Demography Office." Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

Map 9: Northwest Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007



Growth in the region will significantly impact the demand for outdoor recreation in the future. Overall, the Northwest Region anticipates an 80% increase in residents by 2030 partially attributed to two major factors: anticipated growth in the oil and gas industry and retiring baby boomers seeking the milder climate of the Western Slope.⁵ Garfield County is projected to grow more dramatically than other counties in the region, increasing 138% between 2007 and 2030.⁶

Table 51: Projected Population Growth for the Northwest Region

County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Eagle	52,521	58,196	66,453	89,369	70%
Garfield	55,307	63,957	80,932	131,645	138%
Grand	14,746	15,920	18,095	25,828	75%
Jackson	1,546	1,584	1,658	1,869	21%
Mesa	138,230	150,504	169,479	234,701	70%
Moffat	13,861	14,424	15,978	21,891	58%
Pitkin	16,617	17,427	19,489	26,402	59%
Rio Blanco	6,351	6,651	7,239	8,531	34%
Routt	22,860	24,517	28,003	39,872	74%
Summit	28,789	31,498	35,888	49,866	73%
Regional Totals	350,828	384,678	443,214	629,974	80%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2008

5.4.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

The Northwest Region contains 9.9 million acres of “accessible” public land (or acres that are open to public access), the majority of which is managed by federal agencies such as the United States Forest Service (Forest Service), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service (NPS) (Map 9). Nearly 600,000 acres are managed by state agencies such as the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Colorado State Parks (State Parks), and Colorado State Land Board (SLB) (Figure 41).

On a per capita basis, residents of the Northwest Region enjoy 28.2 acres of public land each. Moffat has the largest public land base with approximately 1.8 million acres. Rio Blanco and Jackson Counties each contain over 1.6 million acres of public land.⁷

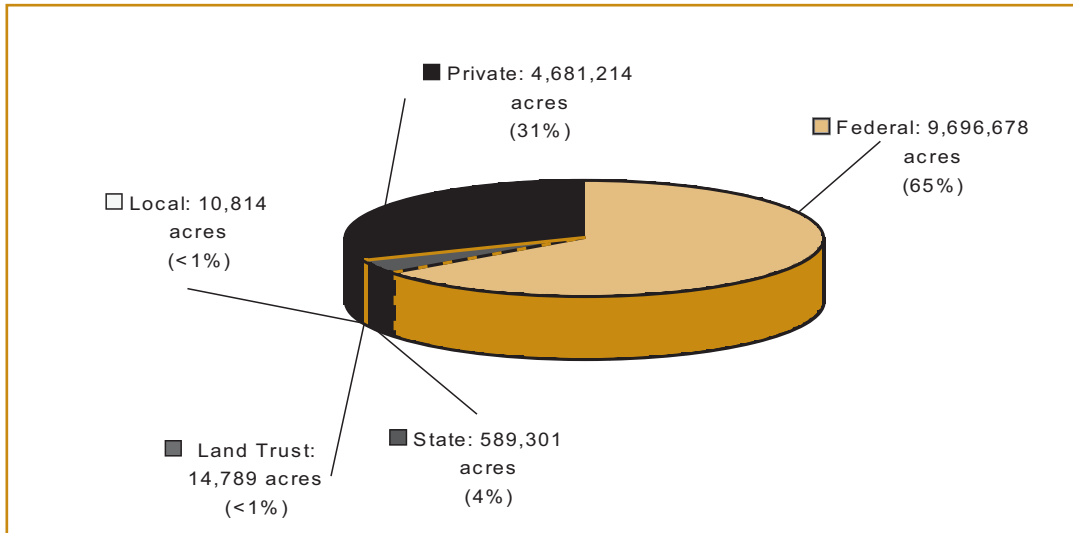
⁵“Demographic Information.” Northwest Council of Governments. 8 Feb. 2007 <http://www.nwc.cog.co.us/MembersDemographics/demographic_information.htm>.

⁶“Colorado State Demography Office.” Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog/>>.

⁷Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.



Figure 41: Land Management in the Northwest Region



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007

Federal and State Lands

In the Northwest, ubiquitous federal and state lands provide ample opportunities for a variety of year-round recreation activities for residents and visitors. In 2006, over 3.4 million people visited the three NPS sites in the Northwest: Colorado National Monument, Dinosaur National Monument, and Rocky Mountain National Park. Five National Forests and four National Wilderness Areas also host an estimated 18.8 million recreationists each year seeking land, water, and snow-based activities.⁸ Hanging Lake outside of Glenwood Springs in the White River National Forest, the Grand Mesa (the world's largest flat-top mountain boasting over 300 lakes) in the Grand Mesa National Forest, and Maroon Bells Wilderness are particularly popular destinations. Dillon Reservoir, Lake Granby, and Shadow Mountain Reservoir provide plenty of surface water acres and miles of shoreline for boaters and anglers.

The BLM manages five million acres in the Northwest Region offering camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, biking, nature study, horseback riding, rock hounding, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) opportunities. One of the most popular BLM sites in the region, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area, contains over 122,000 acres available to the public.⁹

Plenty of boating, jet skiing, canoeing, fishing, camping, hiking, picnicking, and many other adventures are sought at 13 state parks. Additionally, anglers, hunters, and wildlife watchers can access the 80 State Wildlife Areas (SWAs) managed by CDOW which span over 162,000 acres.¹⁰

⁸English, Don. "USFS Visitation by Forest." E-mail. 20 Nov. 2007.

⁹Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

¹⁰Ibid.



Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Information on community parks, trails, and open space is based on information from 14 local government agencies that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. These agencies manage over 3,200 parks and open spaces in the region with 51 picnic sites, 30 campsites, and two off-leash dog parks. They also manage over 160 miles of non-motorized trail and 20 miles of motorized trail (Table 54).¹¹

Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

Whitewater rafters and kayakers enjoy the Colorado, Yampa, Eagle, Dolores, Green, and Roaring Fork Rivers during spring and summer. Approximately 126,000 rafting user days were recorded on these rivers in 2006.¹²

Both motorized and non-motorized winter pursuits are plentiful throughout the Northwest. Aspen/Snowmass, Breckenridge, Keystone, Winter Park, Vail, Beaver Creek and Steamboat Springs are just a few of the 19 ski resorts in the region. Eleven Nordic centers and the 10th Mountain Trail Association Hut System provide many options for track skiing, showshoeing, and ski touring. Backcountry skiers and snowboarders enjoy an abundance of suitable terrain and snow. Snowmobilers access numerous popular sledding areas on Forest Service lands across the region, including sites near Grand Mesa and Rabbit Ears Pass.

Mountain bikers seek out legendary trails in the Northwest, particularly in Fruita, Grand Junction, and Winter Park, and also utilize the many ski resorts during summer months. Road cyclists take advantage of the paved bike paths in Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, Vail, and Summit County, along with numerous mountain passes, and six designated scenic byways.

5.4.3 Economic Profile of Tourism in the Northwest Region

The tourism industry is a critical component of the Northwest Region's economy contributing nearly \$3.9 billion in 2006 through direct travel spending, tourism-related employment wages, and state and local taxes (Table 52). Much of this tourism is integrally connected to the abundant recreation opportunities in the Northwest Region. Eagle, Pitkin, Summit, and Routt counties provide the largest tourism revenue sources in the region drawing skiers and summertime visitors from across the state, the U.S., and the world (Figure 42). Since 2000, the region's travel impacts have increased 27%, generating an additional \$832 million according to 2006 estimates.¹³

For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles*.



¹¹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹²Commercial River Use in the State of Colorado. Colorado River Outfitters Assoc. 2007. Nov. 2007 <www.croa.org>.

¹³The 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>.



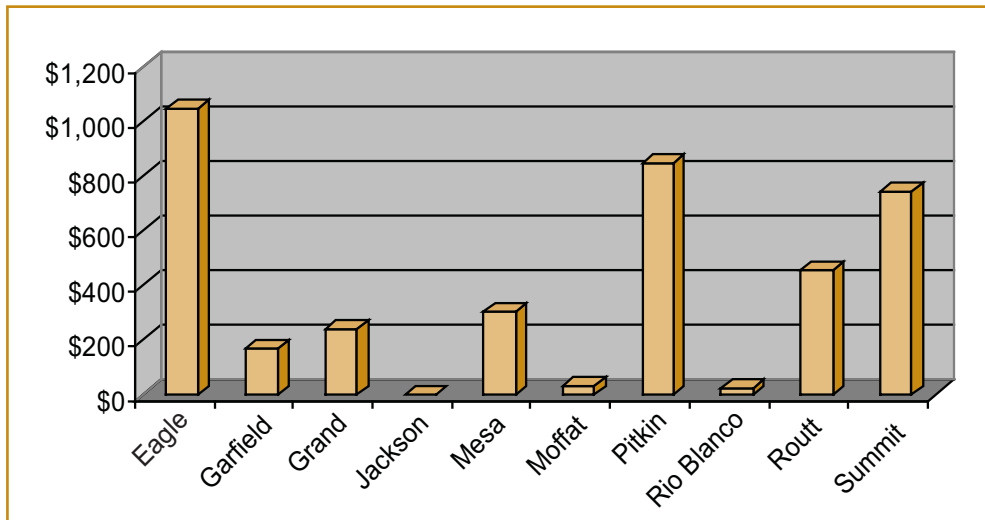
Table 52: Estimated Travel Impacts for the Northwest Region^{14,15}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$2,224	\$2,263	\$2,212	\$2,286	\$2,470	\$2,602	\$2,843
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$689	\$718	\$715	\$719	\$773	\$799	\$872
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$79	\$81	\$78	\$77	\$83	\$88	\$97
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$58	\$58	\$56	\$55	\$60	\$63	\$69
Total Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$3,050	\$3,119	\$3,061	\$3,138	\$3,385	\$3,551	\$3,881
Employment (Total Travel-related Jobs)	29,730	29,160	27,860	27,290	28,400	28,660	28,930

Source: Runyan, 2007

*2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

Figure 42: Northwest Region Total Travel Impacts by County (2006)



Source: Runyan, 2007

¹⁴In Table 52 and Figure 42, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹⁵These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.



5.4.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Northwest Region have been funded by grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of parks, open space, and trails. Details on the \$81 million in grants awarded to the region through 2007 are provided in Table 53, and are summed since each grant program's inception. Primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails); and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

A brief description of each grant program is provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles* along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

Table 53: Northwest Region Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)

County	GOCO County Grants ¹⁶	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Eagle	\$1,542,680	\$0	\$686,575	\$69,475	\$679,951	\$76,817	\$5,610,627	\$8,666,125
Garfield	\$3,327,732	\$1,500,000	\$587,904	\$148,345	\$469,850	\$199,910	\$6,597,903	\$12,831,643
Grand	\$2,399,978	\$0	\$159,271	\$898,062	\$252,536	\$162,342	\$1,839,661	\$5,711,850
Jackson	\$326,703	\$0	\$57,883	\$787,668	\$36,914	\$136,271	\$292,247	\$1,637,686
Mesa	\$3,996,219	\$0	\$570,764	\$833,677	\$198,232	\$92,682	\$18,965,712	\$24,657,285
Moffat	\$785,389	\$0	\$372,954	\$42,170	\$125,000	\$116,405	\$2,209,406	\$3,651,323
Pitkin	\$2,089,510	\$0	\$448,911	\$24,525	\$570,965	\$25,732	\$2,506,925	\$5,666,568
Rio Blanco	\$128,247	\$0	\$178,679	\$96,554	\$12,450	\$70,933	\$1,123,040	\$1,609,903
Routt	\$5,303,523	\$0	\$1,465,471	\$347,375	\$716,416	\$144,243	\$3,064,944	\$11,041,971
Summit	\$1,068,857	\$0	\$827,834	\$3,500	\$570,929	\$29,434	\$3,330,620	\$5,831,174
Region Totals	\$20,968,838	\$1,500,000	\$5,356,244	\$3,251,351	\$3,633,243	\$1,054,768	\$45,541,085	\$81,305,529
Colorado Totals	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Sources: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA 2008

5.4.5 Local Government Survey Results

The recreation issues and needs of 14 counties, municipalities, special districts, and school districts in the Northwest Region were summarized through the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey (Tables 56-57). Although not every local government that manages outdoor recreation in the region completed the survey, many of the larger agencies submitted responses including Summit County, Craig, Silverthorne, Carbondale, Rifle, and Breckenridge. All counties, municipalities, special districts, and school districts in the region were invited to participate.

¹⁶The GOCO grants outlined in Table 16 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.



Much like recreationists throughout Colorado, most Northwest Region residents typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays,¹⁷ therefore, local governments support a significant amount of the recreation needs of local residents. Local governments in the Northwest serve just 7% of Colorado’s population and manage over 10,000 acres of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses (Table 54). These agencies maintain 65 parks with some development such as picnic sites, campgrounds, and restrooms while over 3,100 open spaces offer opportunities for passive recreation uses like nature study. About 25% of the state’s motorized trails (20 miles) are managed by local governments in the region.

Table 55 highlights characteristics of the agencies which responded to the survey in the Northwest Region. The majority of agencies use a recreation or open space master plan to guide outdoor recreation decisions. All of these plans are subject to public review and are adopted by a government entity such as a city council, board of county commissioners, etc. About 90% of the plans include a trails component. All of the responding agencies that did not have a recreation plan were school districts.¹⁸

Table 54: Northwest Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Northwest Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	10,295	250,345	4%
Public parks (with developed sites)	65	1,819	4%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	3,149	52,815	6%
Non-motorized trail miles	164	2,150	8%
Motorized trail miles	20	81	25%
Picnic Shelters	51	1,040	5%
Playgrounds	49	1,177	4%
Ballfields and courts	138	3,720	4%
Campsites	30	748	4%
Off-leash dog parks	2	58	3%

*% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 7%
Region N=14
Statewide N=140*

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Over \$55 million in acquisition costs and capital improvements are planned in the Northwest Region between 2008 and 2013; however, only 59% of the funding needed to accomplish those projects has been allocated. Just half of the respondents have a funding source other than external grant programs (such as GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, etc.). Municipalities that do not have specific funding mechanisms for recreation include: Dillon, Craig, and Minturn. Gypsum has a 1% sales tax but it is dedicated specifically for maintaining and operating the local recreation center.¹⁹

¹⁷Horvath, 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

¹⁸2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹⁹Ibid



Table 55: Northwest Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	10	71%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	10	71%
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.)	10	71%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	9	64%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	5	36%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	3	21%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	24,950	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	3	21%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	7	50%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	5,065	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	4	29%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	11	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	7	50%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$55,007,590	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$32,195,000	n/a

N=14

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government Survey, 2007

²¹Ibid



Northwest Region Priority Recreation Issues

Consistent with statewide results, local governments managing outdoor recreation in the Northwest Region felt the greatest issue they confront is ensuring visitor safety (Table 56). In addition, grappling with adequate staffing levels, serving a growing population, and maintaining existing recreation resources were also significant priorities.

Many challenges for Northwest Region recreation managers are different from their cohorts across the state. While managing off-leash dogs, dealing with overcrowding and overuse, and developing volunteer programs (and engaging volunteers) did not rank in the top 10 issues for the state, these are notable challenges for managers in the Northwest Region. Educating the public about user ethics was also a considerable issue.

Note that some values were equal when summed resulting in multiple ties.

Table 56: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the Northwest Region

Issue	Northwest Region	Statewide
Visitor safety and protection	1	1
Adequate staffing levels	2	10
Capacity to serve a growing population	3	7
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	3	2
Collaboration/cooperation with other agencies that manage outdoor recreation	4	9
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	4	6
Providing adequate trails and trail systems	5	16
Vandalism and graffiti control	6	13
Educating the public on user ethics	6	17
Assessing visitor satisfaction and expectations	7	14
Providing public information about facilities and programs	7	12
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	7	4
Protecting unique species and ecosystems	8	19
Engaging volunteer assistance for programs or maintenance/construction	8	21
Capacity to develop volunteer programs and manage volunteers	9	24
Creating or updating your agency's park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan	10	21
Staff training for recreation services	10	22
Management of crowding/overuse of parks and trails	10	26
Management of off-leash dogs	10	28
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	10	8
Providing adequate trail and interpretive signage	10	23

Managers in the Northwest Region are not only challenged by securing additional funding for recreation infrastructure, but they also would like to diversify existing funding mechanisms such as a lodging tax.

Region N = 14

Statewide N = 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

²¹Ibid



Northwest Region Priority Recreation Needs

Developing a community trail system is the top need for not just Northwest Region local governments but also for respondents across Colorado. In fact, trails-related categories were mentioned seven times in Table 57 as high priority needs. Interestingly, mountain biking trails are not reported as a priority for recreation managers in other regions but they are important for agencies in the Northwest. Similarly, acquisition of trail corridors and open spaces ranked as high priorities as well. Providing opportunities for team sports on baseball, football, and soccer fields and tennis, basketball, and volleyball courts are in demand, too.²¹

Table 57: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the Northwest Region

Need	Northwest Region	Statewide
Community trail system	1	1
Trails connecting to public lands	2	6
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	2	3
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	3	8
Acquisition of natural open space	4	13
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	5	5
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	5	9
Swimming pools	6	18
Acquisition of parklands	7	12
Mountain biking trails	7	24
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	8	11
Nature study/wildlife watching sites	8	14
Playgrounds	9	2
Fishing	9	20
Acquisition of water for recreation	10	19
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	10	10

Region N = 14

Statewide N = 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Finding spaces to provide youth programs is a definite need for the Town of Breckenridge while the City of Rifle struggles with rising construction costs. The Town of Silverthorne recognizes a demand for additional access to rivers, such as the Blue River, in their community.

²¹Ibid

5.5 South Central Regional Profile

South Central Colorado boasts spectacular scenery with dramatic mountain peaks, broad valleys, steep canyons, and historic towns. Encompassing over 10.7 million acres, the landscape is varied, offering vistas of high plains contrasted by a backdrop of numerous mountain ranges including the San Juans, Collegiate Peaks, La Garitas, and Sangre de Cristos. The Arkansas, Rio Grande, and South Platte Rivers meander through the region providing irrigation for ranches and farms as well as renowned opportunities for whitewater rafting, kayaking, and Gold Medal fishing (Map 10).

Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Apache and Arapahoe Indians were the original residents of the South Central Region. In 1848, part of the land was acquired by the United States through the U.S.-Mexican War. Hispano settlers, descendants of Spanish and Mexican ancestors, migrated north from New Mexico into the San Luis Valley. After Zebulon Pike explored the eastern parts of the region in the early 1800's, word eventually spread, and in the 1870's homesteaders, pioneers, trappers, and spectators sought out the area's natural beauty and potential wealth. When ore was found in the mountains, an influx of thousands of settlers and miners transcended the land and rapidly constructed towns and railroads. Some of the region's rich mining history is present today in the abandoned ghost towns and National Historic Districts that evoke images of Colorado's affluent boom and bust days of the Wild West.¹

The South Central Region contains many of Colorado's notable records. The Arkansas River, the most commercially rafted river in the country, meanders through the center of the region, originating in the northern reaches of Lake County and traveling 315 miles through the state. Colorado's tallest mountain, Mt. Elbert, looms 14,433 feet above the Arkansas Valley. The San Luis Valley is one of the largest high desert valleys in the U.S., roughly the size of Connecticut. The state's oldest town (San Luis) and the country's highest incorporated city (Leadville) can also be found here. Great Sand Dunes National Park contains the tallest sand dunes in North America. Pike's Peak is the steepest railroad incline in the world. The world's highest suspension bridge, Royal Gorge Bridge, and highest cog train, the Manitou and Pike's Peak Railway are also significant regional attractions.

5.5.1 Population and Demographic Trends

About 766,000 people reside within the 10.7 million acres that comprise the South Central Region. This region is the second most populated SCORP Region, next to the Front Range, and contains 16% of Colorado's residents.²

Many of the counties in South Central Colorado are among the least populated and least dense in the state. The population density is about 0.07 persons per acre for the entire region, however, the relatively higher population density of El Paso County (0.44 persons per acre), and particularly the City of Colorado Springs, which accounts for 67% of El Paso County's population, skews the average for the region. Comparatively, Fremont County, the second most densely populated county in South Central Colorado, has less than 0.05 persons per acre. With the exception of the City of Colorado Springs and its surrounding metropolitan suburbs, most of the region's residents are located outside of incorporated areas.³

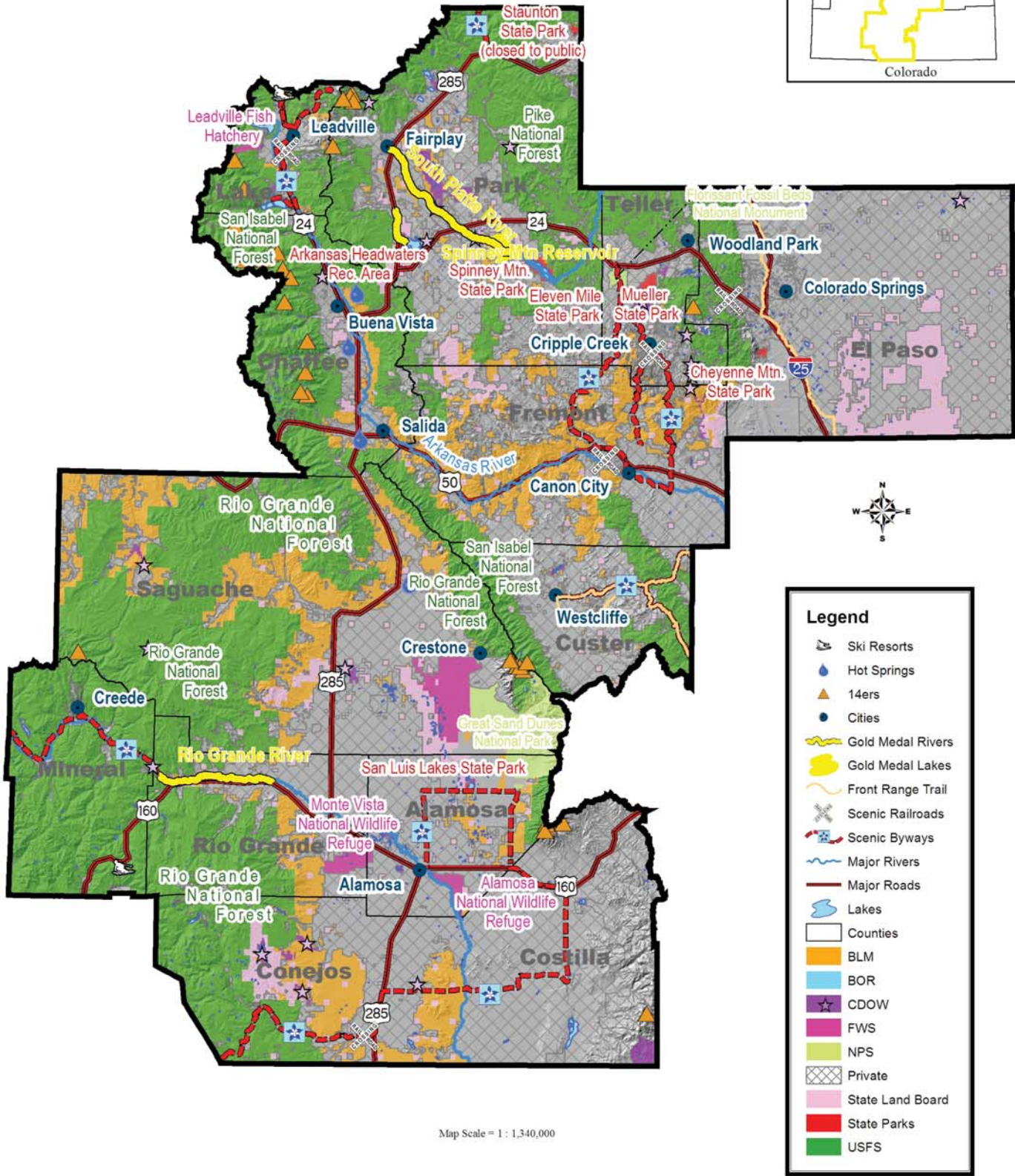
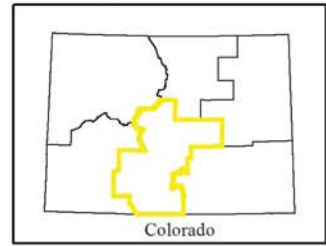
¹Caughey, B., and D. Winstanley. *The Colorado Guide*. 5th ed. Updated. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001 and 2005.

²"Colorado State Demography Office." Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

³Ibid and Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. *Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5*. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

Map 10: South Central Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions

Locator Map:



Legend

- Ski Resorts
- Hot Springs
- 14ers
- Cities
- Gold Medal Rivers
- Gold Medal Lakes
- Front Range Trail
- Scenic Railroads
- Scenic Byways
- Major Rivers
- Major Roads
- Lakes
- Counties
- BLM
- BOR
- CDOW
- FWS
- NPS
- Private
- State Land Board
- State Parks
- USFS

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007



The South Central Region consists of 13 counties: Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Custer, El Paso, Fremont, Lake, Mineral, Park, Rio Grande, Saguache, and Teller (Map 10). Colorado Springs is the largest city in the region with 391,000 people and the second most populated city in the state (next to Denver). Other cities larger than 4,000 people include: Fountain (pop. 21,000), Canon City (pop. 16,000), Alamosa (pop. 8,500), Woodland Park (pop. 7,200), Manitou Springs (pop. 5,500), Salida (pop. 5,300), and Monte Vista (pop. 4,500).

The population in all 13 counties is anticipated to grow, which will likely increase the demand for outdoor recreation services in the future (Table 58). Another 370,000 people are expected to move or be born into the region by 2030. El Paso County’s population will expand the most dramatically, adding an estimated 272,000 people by 2030. When examining percent growth, between 2000 and 2007, Park and Lake Counties are expected to grow the most significantly with an estimated increase of 134% and 120%, respectively.⁴

Table 58: Projected Population Growth for the South Central Region

County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Alamosa	15,978	16,692	18,037	22,436	40%
Chaffee	17,331	17,941	19,873	27,963	61%
Conejos	8,650	8,881	9,299	10,175	18%
Costilla	3,644	3,767	3,967	4,435	22%
Custer	4,136	4,599	5,456	8,094	96%
El Paso	597,632	648,874	709,217	869,224	45%
Fremont	48,869	51,454	56,334	71,928	47%
Lake	8,358	9,290	11,430	18,425	120%
Mineral	976	1,029	1,091	1,197	23%
Park	17,380	19,616	24,412	40,633	134%
Rio Grande	12,876	13,263	14,158	16,952	32%
Saguache	6,668	6,976	7,485	8,586	29%
Teller	23,239	24,886	27,855	35,624	53%
Regional Totals	765,737	827,268	908,614	1,135,672	48%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2008

5.5.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

The availability of public lands and recreation activities are integral to the quality of life of South Central residents and a major attraction for tourists. Six million total acres of mountainous forests, deep canyons, and high plains are managed by federal, state, and local agencies and land trusts, 91% of which permits public access (Figure 43). Federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), and National Park Service (NPS) manage the majority of land in the region (49%) while private lands comprise about 4.7 million acres, or 44% of the land. Colorado State Parks (State Parks), Colorado State Land Board (SLB), and Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) also manage nearly 600,000 acres in South Central Colorado. Most of the nearly 21,000 acres managed by municipalities, counties, and school districts permit public access.⁵

⁴ “Colorado State Demography Office.” Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

⁵ Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.



On a per capita basis, South Central Region residents enjoy more than seven acres of accessible public land each, the third highest among the six SCORP regions. Saguache County is comprised of nearly 1.5 million acres of public land (72% of its total acreage), more than any other county in the region.⁶ Location and ownership of public lands are displayed by manager on Map 10.

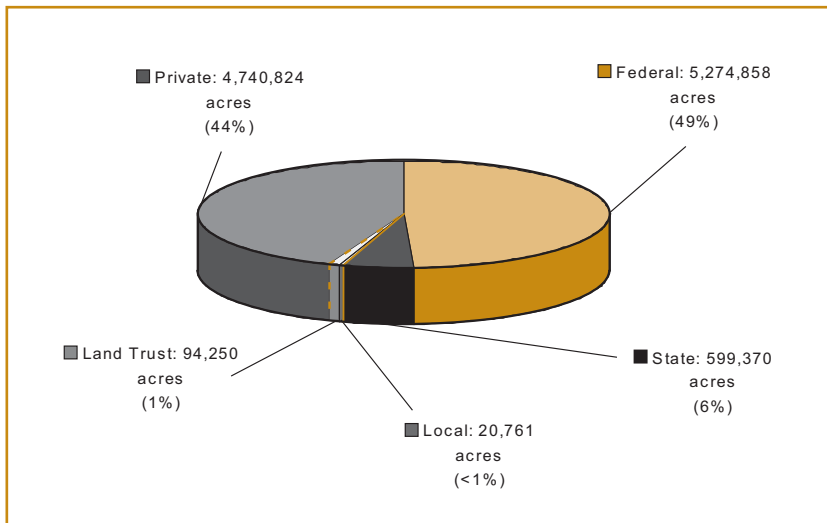
Federal and State Lands

The Rio Grande, Pike, and San Isabel National Forests are all partially or completely located in the South Central Region, attracting an estimated 5.5 million visitors each year. Many national forests feature picnicking and camping sites that are accessible to persons with disabilities. Several 10th Mountain Hut System yurts and cabins allow snow enthusiasts, bikers, equestrians, and hikers adventurous trekking options. The Sangre de Cristo, La Garita, Collegiate Peaks, Buffalo Peaks, and Mt. Massive Wilderness Areas provide access to areas devoted to non-motorized pursuits.

The BLM maintains 1.2 million acres in the area including eight special recreation management areas like Zapata Falls and Penitente Canyon as well as the Gold Belt Tour. Two NPS sites are located in South Central Colorado. Nearly 260,000 visitors venture to Great Sand Dunes National Park in the San Luis Valley each year. Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument in Teller County teems with prehistoric plant and insect fossils, attracting over 56,000 people annually.⁷ Alamosa and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges provide habitat for 200 species of migratory birds and other wildlife, which attract numerous birders and wildlife watchers.⁸

State agencies manage 600,000 million acres in South Central Colorado including six state parks, 16 natural areas, and 62 State Wildlife Areas (SWAs). These sites offer many year-round outdoor activities throughout the region.

Figure 43: Land Management in the South Central Region



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

⁶Ibid.
⁷National Park Service. Public Use Statistics Office. Nov. 2007 <<http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/state.cfm?st=co>>.
⁸U.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>.



In winter, national forests and state lands host numerous snow and ice-based activities including: snowmobiling, backcountry skiing and snowboarding, ice climbing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, dog sledding, and ski joring (which is cross-country skiing while harnessed to one or more dogs). Three family-oriented ski resorts, Wolf Creek, Monarch, and Ski Cooper, offer uncrowded downhill skiing and snowboarding.

Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

In addition to the recreation assets maintained by federal and state agencies, the contributions of local governments should not be overlooked. The 24 entities in the South Central Region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey manage 373 parks with facilities and undeveloped open spaces encompassing 17,500 acres as well as 156 miles of non-motorized trail (Table 61 in the *Section 5.5.5. Local Government Survey Section*).⁹

Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

Opportunities for essentially every outdoor activity are abundant on federal, state, and local lands. Touring and biking are popular on three scenic byways: the Gold Belt Tour, Top of the Rockies, and Frontier Pathways. Glimpses of blooming wildflowers, expansive valleys, and golden aspen leaves can be viewed from several scenic railroads in the region including: the Cumbres and Toltec Narrow Gauge Railroad between Antonito and Chama, New Mexico; the old Colorado & Southern line from Leadville to the Continental Divide; the Manitou and Pike's Peak Railway; and the Royal Gorge Route Railroad.

Scenic driving, boating, picnicking, hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, camping, backpacking, horseback riding are all popular. Mountain climbers can summit 33 fourteeners in the region. Many miles of motorized trails are also available for those exploring by off-highway vehicle (OHVs).¹⁰

In recent years, birding has become increasingly popular, particularly at public and private sites along the Colorado Birding Trail. Hundreds of birders also flock to the annual Monte Vista Crane Festival in the San Luis Valley to watch the arrival of thousands of sandhill cranes.

For water enthusiasts the Arkansas River Headwaters Area (AHRA), a joint project between the BLM and Colorado State Parks, tempts adventure-seeking kayakers and whitewater rafters. With over half a million user days logged each year, the Arkansas is the most popular whitewater rafting river in the U.S.¹¹ Anglers also access the renowned Gold Medal waters of the Arkansas River to fish for plentiful brown trout.

The Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT), a multi-purpose trail corridor that will span 900 miles along the Front Range, is located in El Paso County and will eventually extend southward into Pueblo County. The Mineral Belt Trail in Lake County is a 12-mile paved loop trail that skirts through the historic Leadville mining district, offering hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing, and is also Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

⁹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007

¹⁰"Travel Management." United States Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. 5 May 2008 <www.fs.fed.us/r2/amf/recreation/travel_mgmt>.

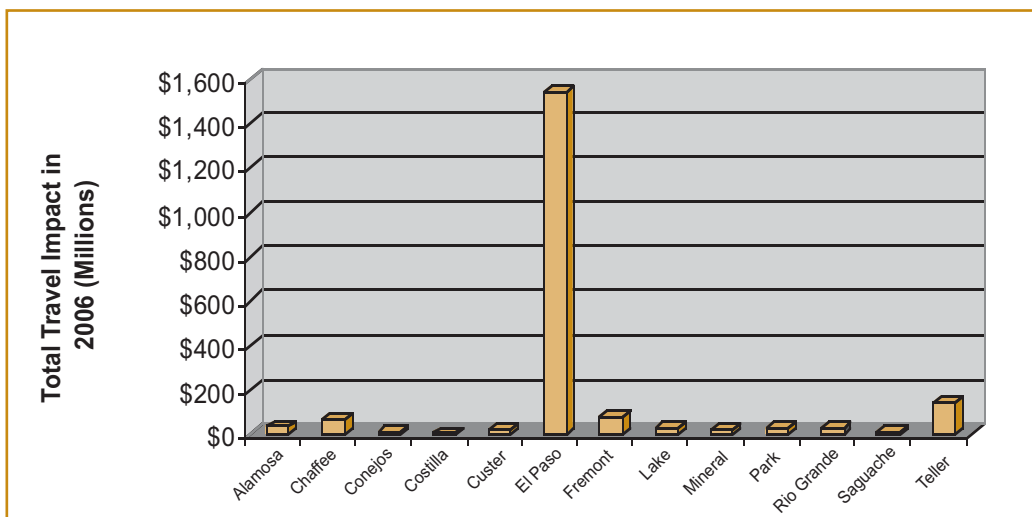
¹¹A user day is defined by the Colorado River Outfitters Association as "a paying guest on a river for any part of a day."



5.5.3 Economic Profile of Tourism in the South Central Region

Approximately 12% of the state’s travel impacts were generated in the South Central Region in 2006, with nearly \$2 billion in direct travel spending, tourism-related employment wages, and state and local taxes (Table 59). Over 18,000 jobs are directly related to travel and tourism, earning about \$409 million in 2006.

Figure 44: South Central Region Total Travel Impacts by County (2006)



Source: Runyan, 2007

Overwhelmingly, El Paso County generates more travel-related revenue than any other county, primarily because of the City of Colorado Springs and its tourism attractions (Figure 44). In 2006, over \$1.5 billion of the region’s tourism economy was attributed to El Paso County, 78% of the South Central Region’s total travel impacts. Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region attract over six million visitors annually to cultural and recreation attractions like Pike’s Peak, Garden of the Gods Park and Visitor Center, Cave of the Winds, Manitou Cliff Dwellings, and Seven Falls.

Teller County’s tourism industry, which is heavily reliant on small stakes gambling in Cripple Creek, earned over \$140 million. In Fremont County, the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park entertains 300,000 annual visitors significantly affecting the county’s \$73 million in travel and tourism revenues. Chaffee County, and its whitewater rafting industry, contributed an additional \$68 million and 880 jobs.¹²

For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in 5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles.

¹²The 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>.



Table 59: Estimated Travel Impacts for the South Central Region^{13,14}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$1,332	\$1,251	\$1,157	\$1,273	\$1,414	\$1,453	\$1,519
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$363	\$358	\$342	\$359	\$392	\$387	\$409
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$27	\$25	\$23	\$24	\$26	\$26	\$27
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$35	\$33	\$31	\$32	\$35	\$35	\$37
Total Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$1,757	\$1,668	\$1,553	\$1,687	\$1,867	\$1,901	\$1,992
Employment (# of Travel-related Jobs)	19,330	17,880	16,320	16,690	18,620	18,220	18,100

Source: Runyan, 2007.

* 2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

5.5.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the South Central Region have resulted from grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. Details on the nearly \$136 million in grant awards are provided in Table 60, and are summed from each grant program’s inception through 2007. Primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails), and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

A brief description of each grant program is provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles* along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

¹³In Table 59 and Figure 44, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹⁴These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in *The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006* report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.



Table 60: South Central Region Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)¹⁵

County	GOCO County Grants ¹⁵	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Alamosa	\$352,601	\$0	\$271,193	\$0	\$167,995	\$0	\$2,565,789	\$3,357,579
Chaffee	\$1,108,697	\$0	\$117,919	\$353,969	\$210,650	\$175,705	\$2,607,951	\$4,574,891
Conejos	\$418,756	\$0	\$32,090	\$0	\$10,208	\$0	\$1,406,698	\$1,867,752
Costilla	\$189,519	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$21,528	\$0	\$607,381	\$818,428
Custer	\$370,166	\$0	\$3,053	\$38,785	\$254,011	\$78,244	\$512,781	\$1,257,041
El Paso	\$7,502,335	\$0	\$5,333,111	\$79,169	\$582,390	\$0	\$81,616,050	\$95,113,055
Fremont	\$1,599,628	\$0	\$353,466	\$198,435	\$262,000	\$0	\$6,959,510	\$9,373,039
Lake	\$1,154,212	\$0	\$89,690	\$32,000	\$557,485	\$72,725	\$1,294,863	\$3,200,975
Mineral	\$234,146	\$0	\$22,720	\$19,519	\$28,039	\$123,262	\$129,244	\$556,931
Park	\$453,551	\$0	\$220,523	\$178,579	\$234,029	\$0	\$1,977,829	\$3,064,511
Rio Grande	\$1,126,283	\$22,948	\$45,060	\$244,000	\$132,118	\$294,603	\$2,101,708	\$3,966,720
Saguache	\$282,334	\$22,948	\$52,489	\$104,536	\$134,459	\$0	\$950,250	\$1,547,016
Teller	\$1,545,079	\$0	\$2,318,119	\$201,444	\$184,111	\$0	\$3,012,109	\$7,260,863
Region Totals	\$16,337,307	\$45,896	\$8,859,433	\$1,450,436	\$2,779,025	\$744,539	\$105,742,165	\$135,958,801
Colorado Totals	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Sources: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

5.5.5 Local Government Survey Results

Table 61-64 summarizes responses from 17 municipalities, one county, three special districts, and three school districts in the South Central Region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. The majority of the local government agencies in the region submitted completed surveys including Chaffee County, Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services District, Canon City Area Recreation and Park District, Echo Valley Estates Metropolitan Recreation and Park District (in Florissant), City of Alamosa, City of Monte Vista, and City of Leadville.¹⁶

Much like recreationists throughout Colorado, most Southwest Region residents typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays.¹⁷ Subsequently, local recreation agencies in the Southwest meet a significant portion of the recreation demand.

¹⁵The GOCO grants outlined in Table 60 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.

¹⁶2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹⁷Horvath, 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.



Table 61: South Central Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	South Central Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	17,485	250,345	7%
Public parks (with developed sites)	197	1,819	11%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	176	52,815	0%
Non-motorized trail miles	156	2,150	7%
Motorized trail miles	0	81	0%
Picnic Shelters	115	1,040	11%
Playgrounds	162	1,177	14%
Ballfields and courts	462	3,720	12%
Campsites	0	748	0%
Off-leash dog parks	6	58	10%

% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 16%

Region N= 17

Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007.

The 24 local government agencies responding to the survey operate over 17,000 acres of parks, open space, and public golf courses in the South Central Region, or about 7% of the total acreage managed by respondents statewide. There are 197 parks that feature facilities like picnic sites, restrooms, or other facilities and 176 open spaces that provide opportunities for passive activities like walking, hiking, or nature study. Additional outdoor activities are available at 162 playgrounds, 240 football, baseball, and soccer fields as well as 222 tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts. Residents and visitors can also enjoy a respite at 115 picnic shelters and allow their dogs to play at six off-leash dog parks.

The 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey also examined general management characteristics for the 24 agencies in the region. Just over 40% of respondents rely on a park, trail, or open space master plan to guide outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services. (As expected, none of the three school districts have a recreation or open space plan).

Just two agencies offer environmental education programs: Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services District and Fremont School District Re-3. Colorado Springs reached over 180,000 people through these programs, more than any other agency in the state.

Most municipalities and all three special districts utilize volunteers for construction and maintenance projects but only three agencies access volunteers for visitor services. Six agencies (25%) employ youth corps or youth groups for construction and maintenance needs totaling 25 annual crew weeks.

Nearly \$49 million in acquisition and capital improvement projects are scheduled for the five-year period between 2008 and 2013, 73% of which have allocated funding. An additional \$13.2 million must be secured to accomplish these projects. Three agencies (13%) have a portion of the sales tax dedicated to help fund outdoor recreation: City of Florence, City of Creede, and the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services District.¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid.



Table 62: South Central Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	10	42%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	9	38%
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	8	33%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	4	17%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	2	8%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	180,015	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	3	13%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	9	38%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	124,991	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	6	25%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	25	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	3	13%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$48,752,500	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$13,155,500	n/a

N=17
 Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

South Central Region Priority Recreation Issues

Given the significant funding deficit for projects planned through 2013 “insufficient resources to fund your agency’s budget” was unsurprisingly the most significant issue for local recreation providers in South Central Colorado (Table 62). Stability of budgets ranked second, tied with visitor safety and protection. “Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources,” liability protection, and monitoring and maintaining natural resources were the third, fourth, and fifth greatest issues.¹⁹

Note that some values were equal when summed resulting in multiple ties.

¹⁹Ibid



Table 63: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the South Central Region

Issue	South Central Region	Statewide
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	1	4
Visitor safety and protection	2	1
Year-to-year stability of your agency's budget	2	5
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	3	2
Liability protection for your agency	4	11
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	5	6
Adequate staffing levels	6	10
Offering recreation programs for youth	7	3
Vandalism and graffiti control	8	13
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	9	8
Capacity to serve a growing population	10	7

N=17

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Engaging youth in summer programs and the ability to provide year-round opportunities for youth was noted as a significant issue in the South Central Region.

South Central Region Priority Recreation Needs

When asked about the need for facilities or services, additional playgrounds and picnicking sites were deemed the greatest needs across the region, and ranked in the top five for the state (Table 64). While toilets and showers were not considered a significant need across Colorado, these amenities are considerable priorities for South Central Region local government agencies. Developing more trails is also important to providers in the region and local government agencies across Colorado. Trails-related categories were recorded six times in the top 10 needs for this SCORP region.²⁰



²⁰Ibid



Table 64: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the South Central Region

Need	South Central Region	Statewide
Playgrounds	1	2
Picnicking sites	1	4
Toilets and showers	2	15
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	3	5
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	4	7
Community trail system	5	1
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	6	3
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	7	8
Trails connecting to public lands	7	6
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	8	10
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	9	11
Acquisition of parklands	10	12

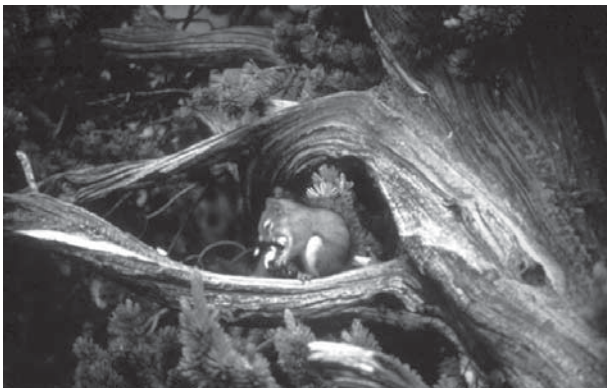
Region N= 17

Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Disseminating information about parks and programs to visitors was noted several times by South Central Region managers as a challenge.

Informing voters about funding shortfalls, stocking fish in municipal ponds, and multiple years of deferred maintenance are also confronting various recreation managers in the region.



5.6 Southeast Regional Profile

Southeast Colorado is home to sweeping plains, hidden canyons, and unique historic attractions, spread across 11.8 million acres. Dominating the western edge of the region, the Spanish Peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Range are a prominent topographic feature and recreation attraction. To the east, vast expanses of shortgrass prairie stretch across the horizon. The Arkansas River flows through the center of the region, draining over 24,904 square miles, making it Colorado’s largest river basin (Map 11).

The Southeast Region is home to world-renowned birdwatching and wildlife watching opportunities. The area lies along the Western Central Flyway, a well-traveled migration route for birds and contains many playas, or shallow seasonal wetlands, which provide critical bird habitat.¹

The Santa Fe Trail meanders through the Southeast, following the Arkansas River from the Kansas border before winding south into New Mexico. Countless pioneers and homesteaders made their way west along the trail and through this corner of the state. Along the trail are numerous historic sites such as Boggsville and Bent’s Old Fort, and some of the regions more populous cities: Trinidad, La Junta, Lamar, Las Animas, and Rocky Ford.

Quiet and laid-back, the area’s lack of crowds and congestion may be one of its greatest assets. Avian lovers come for The Colorado Birding Trail, fishermen and boaters for several reservoirs including John Martin, Trinidad, and Lake Hasty. Historians and art enthusiasts enjoy the museums and galleries in La Junta and Trinidad. Others come for fresh-grown fruit at Rocky Ford or to hike in the Comanche National Grassland and view fossilized dinosaur tracks and pictographs. Those seeking the scenic route will find plenty of open roads and grand vistas, particularly Highway 50 and the Scenic Highway of Legends, which are designated Colorado Scenic Byways. Those in search of nature and solitude will find miles of open prairie, rolling hills, and canyons throughout Southeast Colorado.

5.6.1 Population and Demographic Trends

The 233,000 residents in the Southeast are widely distributed across the region’s nearly 11.8 million acres with the majority of people living outside of incorporated cities or towns, excluding the City of Pueblo, Colorado’s seventh largest city.

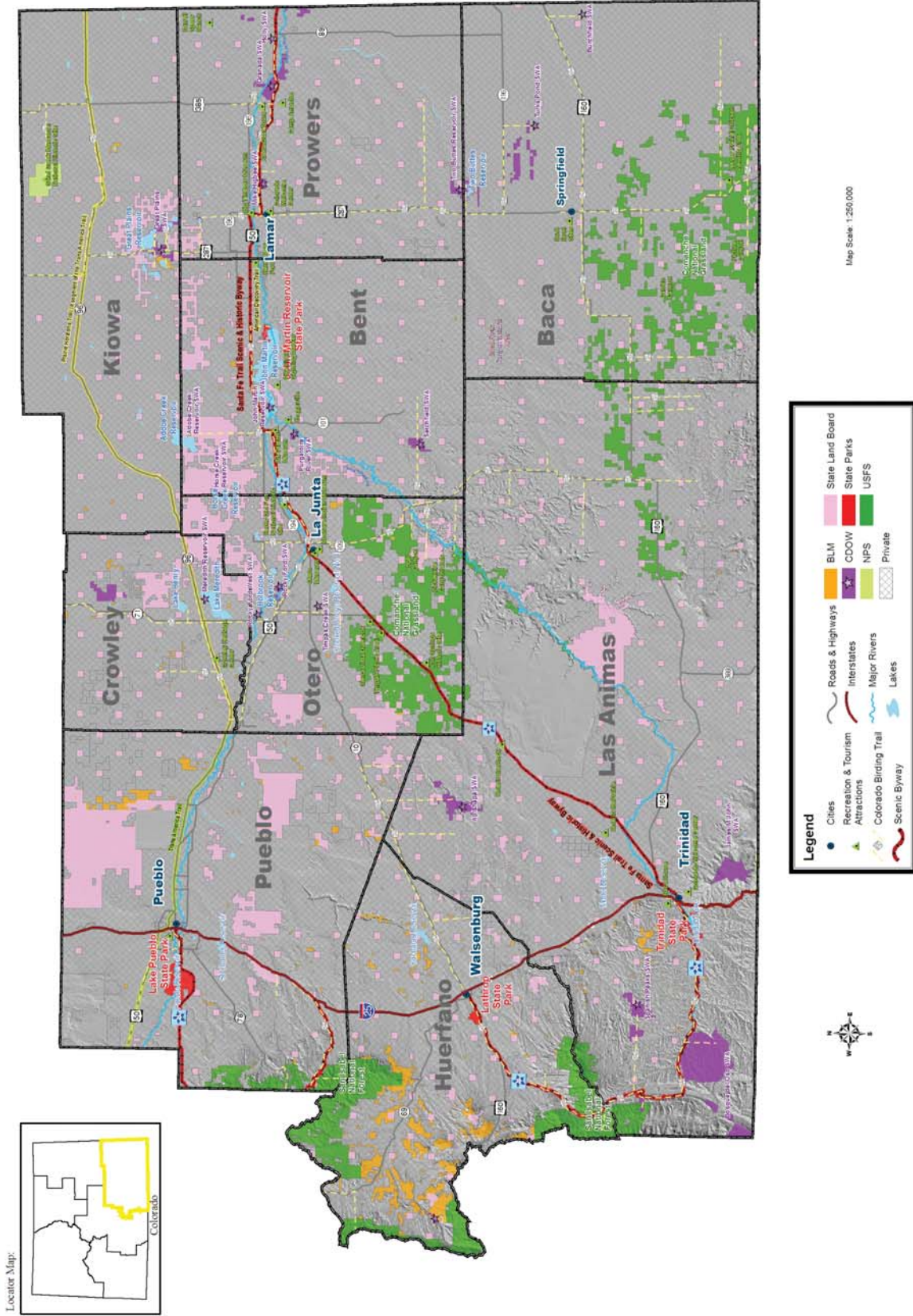
Sparse population and open expanses convey a sense of remoteness throughout most of the region. Many of the counties are among the least densely populated in the state. Overall, there are 0.02 persons per acre in the Southeast, however, the density of Pueblo County (0.10 persons per acre) is considerably higher than the other eight counties, inflating the regional average.

The Southeast Region consists of nine counties: Baca, Bent, Crowley, Huerfano, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, and Pueblo (Map 11). Just 5% of Colorado’s total population live in the area and are located primarily in Pueblo (pop. 105,000), Trinidad (pop. 9,400), La Junta (pop. 7,200), Lamar (pop. 8,500), and Walsenburg (pop. 4,000).

The region’s population is estimated to expand 40% between 2007 and 2030, from 232,868 to 325,422 residents (Table 65). Although this is the smallest population growth anticipated among the six SCORP regions, it will still affect the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation in the area.

¹Southeast Colorado Regional Tourism and Partnerships Forums: a Strategic Outdoor Recreation Plan. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

Map 11: Southeast Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU, 2007



Pueblo County, the region’s most populated county, will need to plan for another estimated 73,000 residents by 2030, a 47% increase from 2007. The area’s second largest percentage growth will be in Las Animas County, which is projected to increase by 45% by 2030, surpassing Otero County as the region’s second largest county.²

Table 65: Projected Population Growth for the Southeast Region³

County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Baca	4,218	4,128	4,107	4,155	-1%
Bent	6,301	6,432	6,656	6,968	11%
Crowley	6,113	6,235	6,506	7,577	24%
Huerfano	8,228	8,771	9,635	11,806	43%
Kiowa	1,519	1,501	1,502	1,564	3%
Las Animas	16,798	17,827	19,593	24,334	45%
Otero	19,580	19,971	20,937	22,793	16%
Prowers	13,910	14,285	14,911	16,597	19%
Pueblo	156,201	164,982	177,196	229,628	47%
Regional Totals	232,868	244,132	261,043	325,422	40%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

5.6.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

In comparison to the rest of the state, public lands in the Southeast are fairly limited with only 917,000 acres open to public use which translates to about 3.9 acres per capita. Still much of the region’s 9.6 million privately-owned acres are vastly undeveloped and the wide open spaces are an important tourism and recreation amenity. Colorado State Land Board (SLB) is the largest public land manager, with nearly 900,000 acres.³

Federal and State Lands

The U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) is the second largest land management agency with over 630,000 acres, 69% of which is the Comanche National Grassland. The Forest Service estimates that approximately 100,000 visitors recreate on the Comanche annually. Wildlife watchers, equestrians, hikers, bikers, and cultural and paleo-enthusiasts all visit the area to enjoy the interpreted heritage, paleontology, and wildlife resources. Recreational shooting is also a pastime on these Forest Service lands. Picture Canyon and Picket Wire Canyonlands are host to many cultural explorers in search of the petroglyphs and pictographs on canyon walls and the largest dinosaur track sites in North America.⁴

²“Colorado State Demography Office.” Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

³Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

⁴“Southeast Colorado Regional Tourism and Partnerships Forums: a Strategic Outdoor Recreation Plan. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

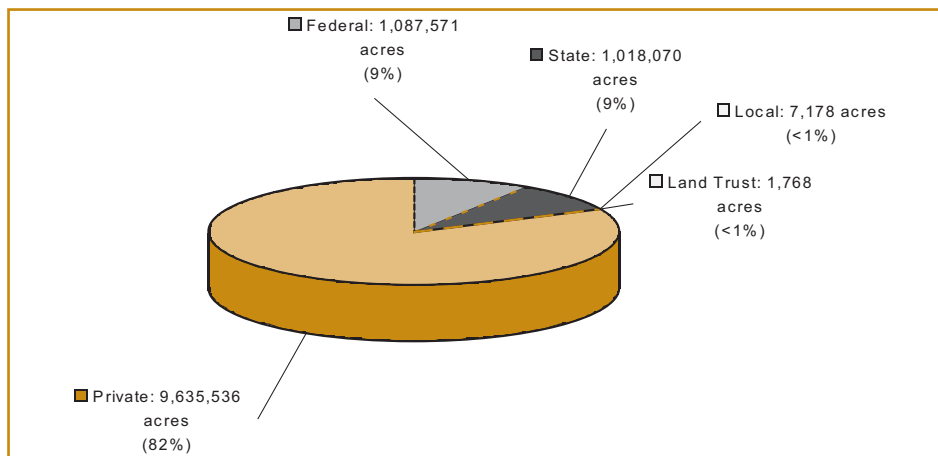


Two National Park Service (NPS) sites are located in the Southeast: Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site (NHS) and Sand Creek Massacre NHS. More than 25,000 people visit Bent’s Old Fort each year, a reconstructed 1840’s trading post where fur trappers, traders, travelers, and Plains Indians tribes once converged on the Santa Fe Trail to trade furs and supplies. The Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (NHS) commemorates the lives of 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian women, children, and elderly who were attacked by Cavalry troops on November 29, 1864. Formally established as a NHS in 2000 and opened to the public on April 28, 2007, the site is the result of a partnership between numerous entities including: the State of Colorado, Kiowa County, representatives of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, private citizens, and The Conservation Fund.⁵

In addition to the recreation opportunities on federal lands, there are abundant opportunities to recreate on state areas as well. Forty State Wildlife Areas (SWAs) provide 109,000 acres for hunting, fishing, and wildlife-viewing. Many of these areas also offer hiking opportunities. Boating is enjoyed at many of the reservoir-based SWAs like Lake Meredith, Adobe Creek Reservoir, and Great Plains Reservoir.

Three State Parks (Trinidad Lake, Lathrop Reservoir, and John Martin Reservoir) encompass nearly 17,000 acres enticing locals and tourists seeking both land and water-based recreation. Boating, swimming, wildlife viewing, picnicking, fishing, and hiking are popular pursuits at these parks.⁶

Figure 45: Land Management in the Southeast Region



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

Local government providers also contribute to the variety of recreation options in the Southeast. The 19 agencies that responded to 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey manage nearly 6,400 acres devoted to parks, open spaces, and golf courses. These agencies maintain 113 parks with picnic shelters, restrooms, and/or drinking fountains, 218 open space areas devoted exclusively to passive recreation like hiking or nature study, and three off-leash dog parks. Approximately 42 miles of non-motorized trail provide ample walking, biking, and equestrian opportunities. Residents also enjoy 47 football, soccer, baseball, and softball fields and 131 tennis, basketball, or multi-use courts maintained by the agencies that responded.

⁵“National Park Service.” 20 Oct. 2007 <www.nps.gov/sand>.

⁶Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (Co-Map) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>. & Colorado Tourism Office. 10 Feb. 2008 <www.colorado.com>.



Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

Southeast Colorado's recreation and tourism assets provide many opportunities for exploring the vast open landscapes and the region's cultural legacy. Cuchara Valley Ski Area in Huerfano County, the only ski resort in the region, boasts over 200 inches of snow each year. (Although it hasn't been open to the public since 2006, locals have plans to turn it into a co-op in the near future).

Two coast-to-coast bicycling routes traverse the Southeast via county and local roads: the American Discovery Trail (ADT) and the TransAmerica Trail, hosting cyclists from all over the world. Frontier Pathways, Highway of Legends, and Santa Fe Trail Scenic Byways provide a scenic tour of the rich cultural history of the region whether on a bike or touring in a car. Endurance cyclists challenge their abilities during Labor Day Weekend in Lamar. The Santa Fe Trail Stage Race, is a three day endurance ride, the longest road race in Colorado, and is also the culmination of all the stage races in Colorado.⁷

Renowned wildlife-viewing and birding opportunities are widespread in the Southeast, particularly along the Colorado Birding Trail, an innovative public-private partnership that permits access to many private ranches. In February each year, hundreds of people attend the High Plains Snowgoose Festival in Lamar to view the flocks migrating to breeding grounds extending as far away as the Arctic Ocean.

5.6.3 Economic Profile of Tourism in the Southeast Region

The abundance of historical sites, state wildlife areas, bird watching opportunities, and the presence of the Santa Fe Trail National and Historic Scenic Byway all substantially contribute to the Southeast Region's tourism and recreation economy. While agri-business, mainly corn production and cattle ranching, is the primary industry in the Southeast Region, tourism is a significant contributor to the economy. In 2006, \$253 million was generated from travel in the region including direct travel spending, tourism-related employment, and state and local taxes (Table 66). A 22% increase in total travel impacts occurred in the region since 2000. Across the Southeast in 2006, 3,500 tourism-related jobs generated over \$42 million in wages. Approximately 61% of these jobs were located in Pueblo County.

Pueblo County's economy benefits more from tourism than the other eight counties combined with nearly \$168 million in tourism revenue in 2006, 66% of the region's total.⁸ Much of this can be attributed to the nearly 500,000 visitors that attend the annual Colorado State Fair and the popularity of Lake Pueblo State Park, which attracted over 1.6 million visitors in FY 06/07.^{9,10}

The volume of travelers in the area is documented by the number of people seeking tourist information at Colorado Visitor Centers in Trinidad and Lamar. Over 27,000 visitors were recorded at the Lamar Welcome Center and 81,000 at the Trinidad Welcome Center.

⁷Hallberg, J. "Great Santa Fe Trail Stage Race." 19 May 2008.

⁸The 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>.

⁹Colorado State Fair. 10 Feb. 2008 <www.coloradostatefair.com>.

¹⁰Lake Pueblo State Park Fact Sheet (FY 06/07). Colorado State Parks, 2007



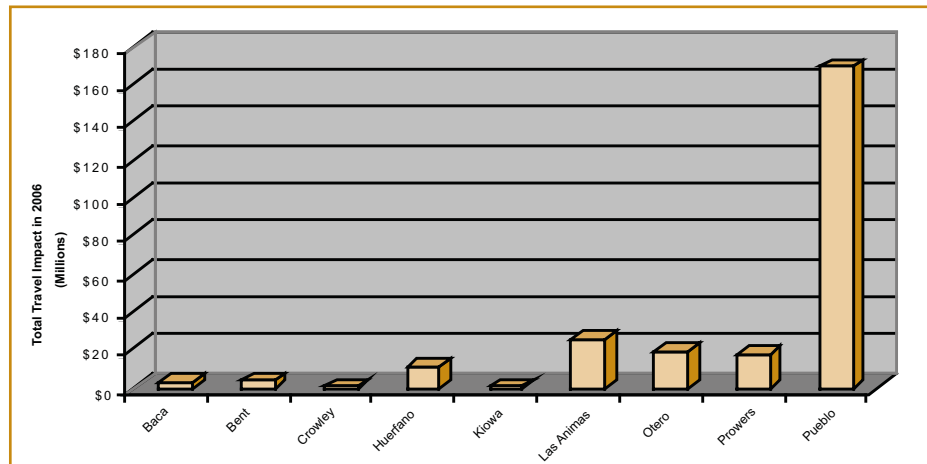
For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in 5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles.

Table 66: Estimated Travel Impacts for the Southeast Region (2006)^{11,12}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$146	\$140	\$140	\$152	\$171	\$170	\$180
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$52	\$50	\$50	\$54	\$62	\$60	\$62
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$5	\$4	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5	\$5
TOTAL Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$207	\$199	\$200	\$215	\$243	\$241	\$253
Employment (# of Travel-related Jobs)	3,350	3,070	3,060	3,170	3,510	3,380	3,510

Source: Runyan Associates, 2007
 * 2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

Figure 46: Southeast Region Total Travel Impacts by County (2006)^{11,12}



5.6.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Southeast Region have resulted from grant programs that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. Details on the nearly \$54 million in grant awards are provided in Table 67, and are summed from each grant program's inception through 2007. Primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails), and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

¹¹In Table 66 and Figure 46, travel spending is defined as "purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale." Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as "travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes." State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹²These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in *The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p* report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.



A brief description of each grant program is provided in 5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

Table 67: Southeast Region Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)¹³

County	GOCO County Grants ¹	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Baca	\$724,167	\$0	\$628,370	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$796,128	\$2,148,664
Bent	\$796,595	\$0	\$34,128	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,020,072	\$1,850,795
Crowley	\$310,416	\$0	\$7,203	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$817,977	\$1,135,595
Huerfano	\$634,900	\$0	\$246,541	\$30,119	\$35,611	\$0	\$1,271,333	\$2,218,504
Kiowa	\$503,765	\$0	\$60,713	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$304,062	\$868,540
Las Animas	\$1,196,216	\$0	\$279,636	\$0	\$160,807	\$0	\$2,675,747	\$4,312,406
Otero	\$1,337,608	\$0	\$368,754	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,652,873	\$5,359,235
Prowers	\$904,419	\$0	\$67,995	\$0	\$22,000	\$0	\$2,431,897	\$3,426,311
Pueblo	\$6,868,505	\$0	\$1,407,474	\$16,967	\$299,352	\$0	\$23,762,791	\$32,355,088
Region Totals	\$13,276,591	\$0	\$3,100,812	\$47,085	\$517,770	\$0	\$36,732,880	\$53,675,138
Colorado Totals	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Source: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

5.6.5 Local Government Survey Results

Much like recreationists throughout Colorado, most Southeast Region residents typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays. Subsequently, local recreation agencies in the Southeast Region meet a significant portion of the recreation demand.¹⁴

Table 68 summarizes responses from four counties, nine municipalities, two special districts, and four school districts in the Southeast Region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Although not all of the local governments that manage outdoor recreation responded to the survey, some of the largest recreation providers were captured including Pueblo, Baca, and Kiowa counties and the cities of Pueblo and Trinidad.¹⁵

Table 68: Southeast Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Southeast Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	6,357	250,345	3%
Public parks (with developed sites)	113	1,819	6%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	218	52,815	<1%
Non-motorized trail miles	42	2,150	2%
Motorized trail miles	0	81	0%
Picnic Shelters	78	1,040	8%
Playgrounds	85	1,177	7%
Ballfields and courts	178	3,720	5%
Campsites	3	748	<1%
Off-leash dog parks	3	58	5%



% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 5%

Region N= 19

Statewide N= 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

¹⁴Horvath, 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.

¹⁵2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007



Agency characteristics are depicted in Table 69. Only five respondents have a community master plan that includes a parks, trails, and open space component to guide decision-making, including the two special recreation districts. Annually, local government agencies relied on 1,080 volunteer hours and one crew week to assist with visitor services and maintenance and construction projects.

Approximately 50,000 people attend environmental education or outdoor recreation programs conducted by the City of Pueblo every year, the third largest provider of programs among the 140 entities that responded to the survey. Additionally, Kiowa County hosts another 100 people each year.

Almost \$11.7 million in planned acquisitions and improvements are slated for agencies in the Southeast between 2008 and 2013. Only 65% of these projects can be funded through existing sources—challenging recreation managers to secure an additional \$7.6 million. Five agencies have a dedicated funding source other than external grant programs for outdoor recreation.¹⁶

Table 69: Southeast Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	5	26%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	5	26%
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.)	4	21%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	3	16%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	2	11%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	2	11%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	50,100	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	5	26%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	12	63%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	1,080	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	2	11%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	1	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	5	26%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$11,683,081	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$7,618,081	n/a

N= 19

¹⁶Ibid

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007



Southeast Region Priority Recreation Issues

When asked about the issues facing local governments in the region, providing programs to specific populations was a significant challenge. Agencies indicated that offering youth programs ranked as the highest priority (Table 70). Programs and opportunities for senior citizens and people with disabilities were also significant issues. Providing information about existing programs and facilities ranked in the top ten as well.

Given the considerable funding deficit for projects planned through 2013, budget concerns were noted as one of most imperative issues for the region. Budget stability, insufficient funding, the need to create a dedicated funding source, and public/private cost-sharing strategies are also significant concerns to local governments in the Southeast.¹⁷ Note that some responses were equal when summed, resulting in numerous ties.

Table 70: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the Southeast Region

Issue	Southeast Region	Statewide
Offering recreation programs for youth	1	3
Year-to-year stability of your agency's budget	2	5
Visitor safety and protection	3	1
Insufficient resources to fund your agency's budget	4	4
Liability protection for your agency	4	11
Need to create a dedicated funding source for your agency's budget	4	15
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	5	2
Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	6	8
Providing programs and opportunities for senior citizens	7	18
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	8	6
Providing public information about facilities and programs	8	12
Strategies for public/private cost-sharing for recreation	9	20
Collaboration/cooperation with other agencies that manage outdoor recreation	10	9

N= 19

Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Two issues unique to the Southeast Region are: a limited number of residents to take advantage of the town's facilities and "establishing a culture that values parks."

¹⁷Ibid



Southeast Region Priority Recreation Needs

Survey questions regarding the need for additional facilities and services help illustrate the demand for specific activities. For example, playgrounds and picnic sites were identified as significant needs, ranking first and second, respectively (Table 71). Restrooms, showers, and visitor centers were not considered priorities across Colorado; however, they were important to local governments in the Southeast Region. In addition, agencies indicated that more outdoor courts and fields were needed. Consistent with statewide results, agencies noted a significant demand for trail-related activities, with five trails-related categories appearing in the 10 greatest needs.¹⁸

Table 71: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the Southeast Region

Need	Southeast Region	Statewide
Playgrounds	1	2
Picnicking sites	2	4
Toilets and showers	3	15
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	4	11
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	5	5
Community trail system	6	1
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	6	9
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	7	3
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	8	10
Visitor center and program facilities	9	21
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	9	7
Nature study/wildlife watching sites	10	14

Region N= 19

Statewide N= 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

A variety of trails are needed in the Southeast Region, according to respondents including: a fitness trail, a nature trail so school groups can learn about ecology, and an interpretive walking trail through an historic district.



²¹Ibid

5.7 Southwest Regional Profile

Stretching across 10.3 million acres of some of the most diverse geography in the state, the Southwest Region is a year-round playground for recreationists complete with vibrant desertscapes, inspiring mountain ranges, and a wide array of prominent landscape features.¹ (Map 12) Each part of the region possesses unique attributes that draw large numbers of visitors from around Colorado and other states, and increasingly retirees as well.

The extraordinary mountains and alpine glaciers of the San Juan Mountain Range have earned it the nickname “the Switzerland of America.” Ski areas in the region typically receive some of the highest accumulations of snowfall found in the state, often measuring 300 to 465 inches annually. In addition, over seven million public land acres, 300 days of sunshine and a welcoming climate all contribute to high-quality outdoor experiences sought out by many tourists and recreationists.

For people interested in the culture and history of the area, remnants of ancient civilizations, ghost towns, and abandoned mining camps provide glimpses of the area’s diverse inhabitants over time. Today, these cultural and historical treasures contrast the cities and towns that sometimes appear to struggle between the “west of two worlds.” Large cities and highly developed resorts are juxtaposed against expansive family-owned ranches and farms. Even wild horses still roam a section of the region just southwest of Montrose.²

Native American history is especially vibrant in Southwestern Colorado, where Ancestral Puebloans once hunted and farmed and today Ute Indians reside. Like many parts of Colorado, the mad rush for fortunes of silver and gold in the late 1800’s brought an influx of settlers, trappers, and miners to this corner of the state—a legacy that remains evident today. Fertile valleys support ranches, family-owned farms, and an agricultural industry that is an important component of the region’s economy and heritage.

5.7.1 Population and Demographic Trends

The Southwest Region is the second least populated SCORP region, next to the Northeast. Only 4% of Colorado’s residents (190,000) are settled on the region’s 10.3 million acres. The population density averages just 0.02 persons per acre, due in part to the abundance of public land. Eleven counties are located in the region including: Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, Gunnison, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan, and San Miguel counties (Map 12).

The Southwest Region’s largest cities and towns, which are small compared to most municipalities in other regions, are Montrose (pop. 16,500 residents), Durango (pop. 16,100), Cortez (pop. 8,800), Delta (pop. 7,800), Gunnison (pop. 5,400), Telluride (pop. 2,300), Crested Butte (pop. 1,600), Olathe (pop. 1,800), Pagosa Springs (pop. 1,700), and Paonia (pop. 1,500). Both Hotchkiss and Ridgway have 1,000 residents each.

Between 2007 and 2030, the Southwest Region is projected to grow by 134,000 people, a 71% increase that will impact the demand for outdoor recreation and public land use in the region. This growth is highlighted in Archuleta County, where the population is expected to expand by 111% (the highest growth rate in the region) as more retirees and second homeowners migrate to the area. When examining actual population growth, Montrose County anticipates the greatest increase by 2030, adding another 35,000 people.³

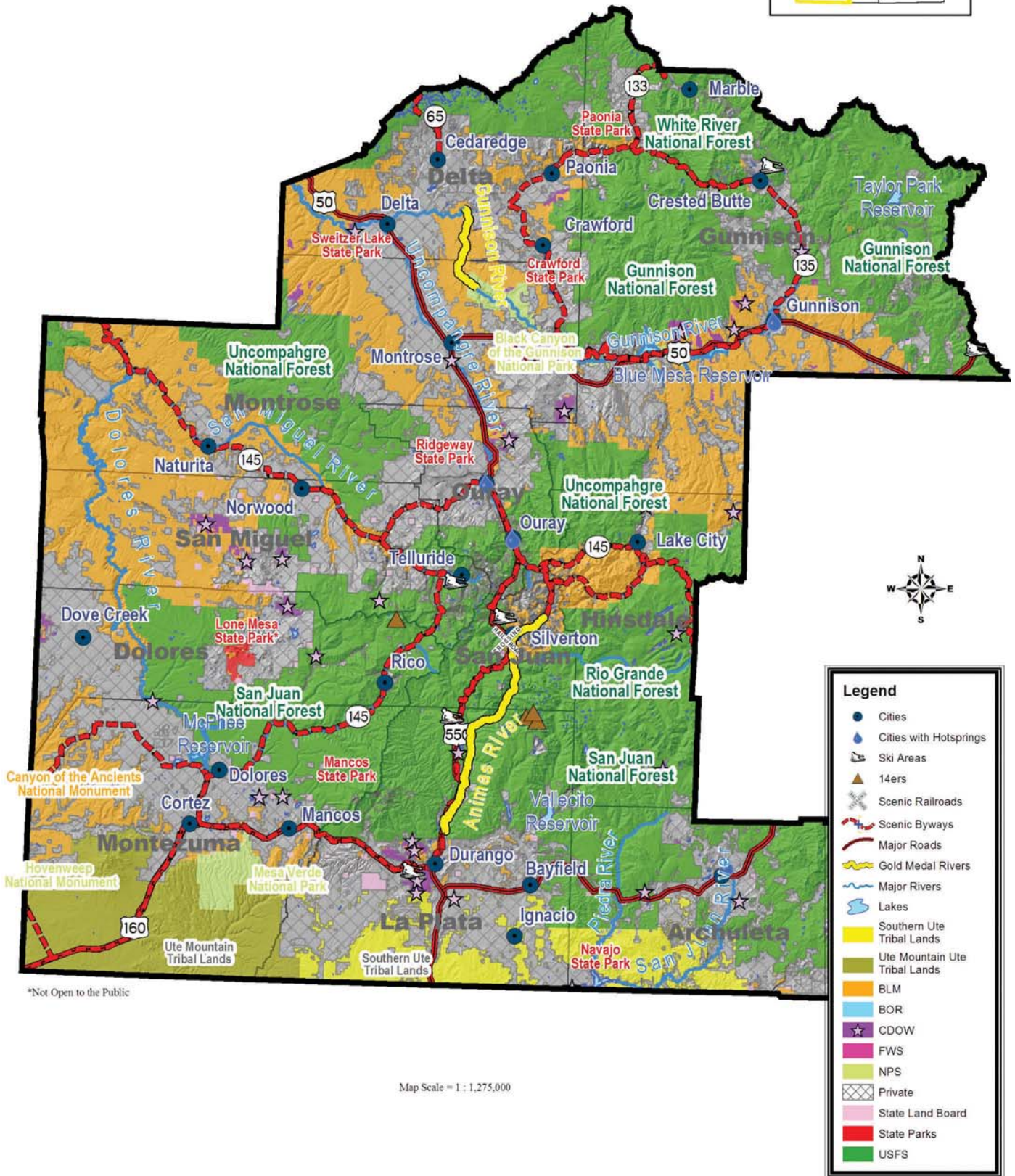
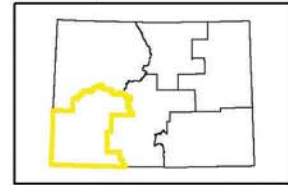
¹Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.

²United States Forest Service. 02 Nov. 2007 <www.fs.fed.us>.

³“Colorado State Demography Office.” Colorado Department of Local Affairs. 10 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.dola.state.co.us/demog>>.

Map 12: Southwest Region: Recreation & Tourism Attractions

Locator Map:



*Not Open to the Public

Map Scale = 1 : 1,275,000



Table 72: Projected Population Growth for the Southwest Region

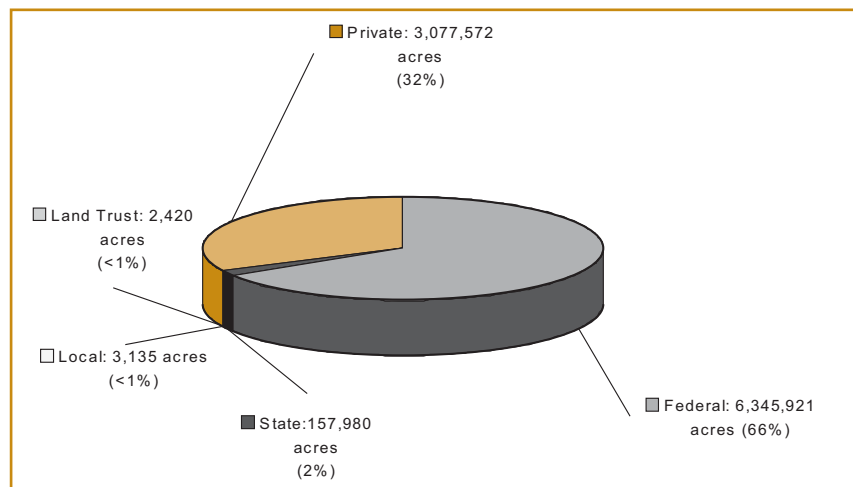
County	2007	2010	2015	2030	% Change 2007-2030
Archuleta	12,682	14,131	16,653	26,797	111%
Delta	31,421	34,200	39,817	57,145	82%
Dolores	1,988	2,076	2,229	2,732	37%
Gunnison	14,636	15,233	16,507	20,267	38%
Hinsdale	873	918	997	1,275	46%
La Plata	50,203	53,282	60,246	81,080	62%
Montezuma	25,868	27,523	30,554	39,538	53%
Montrose	39,757	43,875	51,861	74,693	88%
Ouray	4,461	4,781	5,846	7,030	58%
San Juan	588	608	640	668	14%
San Miguel	7,579	8,280	9,516	13,176	74%
Regional Totals	190,056	204,907	234,866	324,401	71%
Colorado Totals	4,908,152	5,206,528	5,727,857	7,319,919	49%

Source: DOLA, Demography Section, 2008

5.7.2 Public Lands, Recreation Attractions, and Activities

Federal, state, local agencies, and land trusts all manage unique recreation assets in Southwest Colorado. Over 5.8 million acres of land that are open to the public provide an impressive base for recreation adventures in the mountains, valleys, and deserts of the Southwest.⁴ Distribution and ownership of public lands are displayed on Map 12 and summarized in Figure 47.

Figure 47: Land Management in the Southwest Region



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

⁴Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>.



On a per capita basis, residents of the Southwest Region enjoy over 30 acres of lands open to the public per capita, more than any other SCORP region. People in Gunnison County have access to more than 788 acres open to the public per capita, the largest amount in the region. However, public lands are most prevalent in Montrose County with nearly one million acres that are open to public use.⁵

Federal and State Lands

Federal agencies are significant contributors to the recreation amenities in the region, managing over 66% of the entire land base. Of the federal agencies, the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) is the largest land holder overseeing 4.2 million acres including the Grand Mesa, San Juan, Uncompahgre, Gunnison, Rio Grande, and White River National Forests which host 14.8 million annual visitors, collectively.⁶ The Forest Service also maintains eleven National Wilderness Areas which provide spaces for passive activities like hiking, backpacking, wildlife watching, horseback riding and nature study. Another two million acres are maintained by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) which offer large tracts of land with few developed facilities, contributing to the remote character of this section of the state.

Four National Park Service (NPS) sites encompass just 122,000 acres but host 1.7 million people each year. Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area, Hovenweep National Monument, and Mesa Verde National Park all offer a variety of recreational and cultural activities including interpretive programs and guided tours.⁷

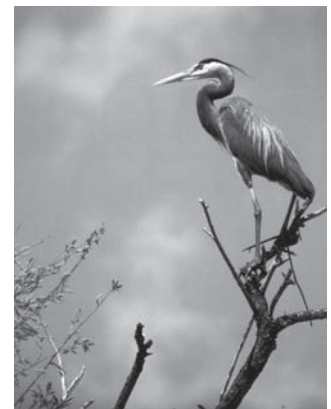
Collectively, state agencies manage 158,000 acres including seven state parks, sixty Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) State Wildlife Areas (CDOW), and 50,000 acres of State Land Board (SLB) parcels.⁸

Community Parks, Trails, and Open Space

In addition to the recreation amenities maintained by federal and state agencies, local governments also contribute significantly to the recreation services available. The 18 agencies in the Southwest Region that responded to the 2007 Local Government Survey manage 57 parks with facilities, 663 undeveloped open spaces encompassing nearly 3,900 acres and maintain 77 miles of non-motorized trail and 61 miles of motorized trail (Table 75).⁹

Other Recreation and Tourism Activities

A multitude of land-, water-, and snow-based activities can be carried out on federal, state, or local public lands found throughout the Southwest Colorado (Map 12). Essentially every outdoor activity, both motorized and non-motorized, can be pursued in the region including: hiking, climbing, horseback riding, road cycling, running, off-roading, camping, backpacking, hunting, and wildlife watching. An extensive network of legendary mountain biking trails beckon fat tire riders, particularly in Durango and Crested Butte. For those seeking water-based activities, the region's numerous reservoirs, wide rivers, and mountain streams provide ample options for boating, kayaking, rafting, jet skiing, fishing, and swimming.



⁵Ibid.
⁶English, Don. "USFS Visitation by Forest." E-mail. 20 Nov. 2007.
⁷"National Park Service." 20 Oct. 2007 <www.nps.gov>.
⁸Wilcox, G., D. M. Theobald, J. Whisman, and N. Peterson. 2006. Colorado Ownership, Management, and Protection (CoMap) V5. <http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/contact.html>
⁹2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



Winter months reveal world class ice climbing, internationally renowned downhill skiing and snowboarding, snowmobiling, dog sledding, ski joring, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, and sledding. And after a hard day of enjoying the powder, a soak in one of the many hot springs in the region can take the chill off. The ski areas of Telluride Mountain, the region's most popular, Crested Butte, and Purgatory Mountain at Durango tempt downhill skiers and snowboarders to ply their skills with over 300 inches of annual snowfall. Wolf Creek Mountain boasts "the most snow in Colorado" with an average of 465 inches of powder each year. Silverton Mountain is Colorado's newest ski area and offers extreme terrain reserved solely for adventurous experts.

A myriad of summer and fall festivals celebrate film, music, golden hued aspen, wildflowers, mushrooms, and many other aspects of Southwest cultural and natural resources.¹⁰

Archaeology buffs will find a concentration of unique historical and cultural attractions that should not be missed including Chimney Rock Archaeological Area, Mesa Verde National Park, Hovenweep National Monument and the Anasazi Heritage Center.

Auto touring and train rides are another way to experience the Southwest Region, in comfort. The Silver Thread, San Juan Skyway, Trail of the Ancients, Alpine Loop, and West Elk Loop Scenic Byways present many options for exploring the region. The Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad is a popular tourist attraction which provides hikers access to the Weminuche Wilderness and incredible scenic vistas.

5.7.3 Economic Profile of Tourism in the Southwest Region

The tourism and outdoor recreation economies in Southwest Colorado benefit from a balanced year-round visitor base. Tourism has grown in the Southwest Region fairly steadily since 2000 based on total travel impacts as measured by direct travel spending, tourism-related employment wages, and state and local taxes (Table 73). For example, revenues increased 31% between 2000 and 2006. Over 11,000 jobs support tourism, and recreation industries in the area generating nearly \$250 million in wages in 2006. Another interesting economic fact is that the La Plata County economy generates more tourism and recreation revenues than any of the other eleven counties in the region, primarily due to Purgatory Mountain at Durango Mountain Resort and the City of Durango.¹¹

Visitors at Colorado's Welcome Centers are one indicator of the volume of tourists in the Southwest. Over 42,000 people sought information at the Cortez Welcome Center in 2006, with May through October being the highest volume months.¹²

For a comparison to other regions and a map illustrating total travel revenues by county, view the information provided in *5.0 Introduction to Regional Profiles*.

¹⁰Colorado Tourism Office." Office of Economic Development and Trade. 12 Aug. 2007 <<http://www.state.co.us/oed/tourism/index.cfm>>.

¹¹The 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>.

¹²Meharg, C. "CO Welcome Center Visitation Numbers." 8 Aug. 2007



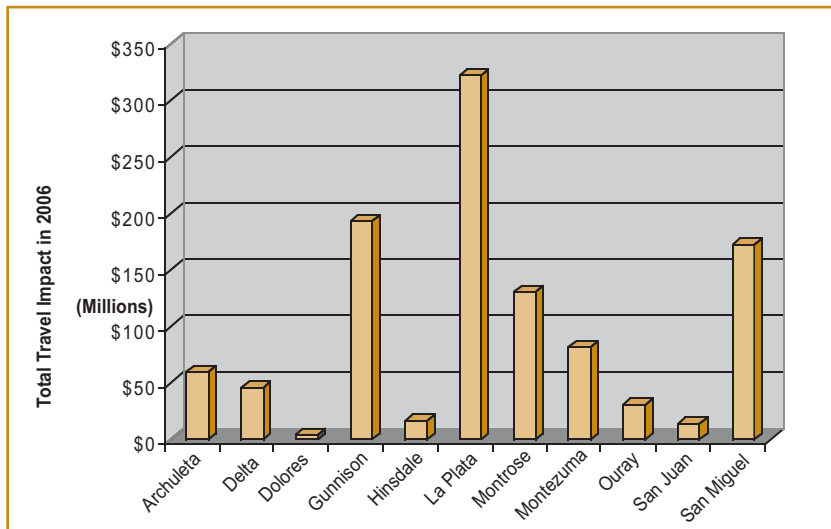
Table 73: Estimated Travel Impacts for the Southwest Region^{13,14}

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (predicted)*
Travel Spending (\$Millions)	\$592	\$575	\$555	\$642	\$714	\$748	\$782
Earnings (\$Millions)	\$193	\$192	\$187	\$209	\$232	\$237	\$248
Local Taxes (\$Millions)	\$17	\$17	\$16	\$17	\$19	\$20	\$21
State Taxes (\$Millions)	\$16	\$15	\$14	\$15	\$17	\$17	\$18
Total Travel Impacts (\$Millions)	\$818	\$798	\$772	\$883	\$982	\$1,022	\$1,069
Employment (# of Travel-related Jobs)	10,940	10,220	9,680	10,250	10,980	11,120	11,210

Source: Runyan, 2007

*2006 revenues are considered a prediction because the report was published prior to the end of the year.

Figure 48: Southwest Region Total Travel Impacts by County (2006)



Source: Runyan, 2007



¹³In Table 73 and Figure 48, travel spending is defined as “purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point of sale.” Earnings are the wages, salaries, and benefits for employees and business owners at sites that benefit from tourism spending. Only the specific earnings related to travel expenditures are included. The employment category includes only the jobs related to travel spending. Local taxes collected by counties and local governments on travel-related goods and services such as “travel-related purchases, lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods and motor fuel taxes.” State sales tax includes state lodging and motor fuel taxes, auto rental taxes, entertainment taxes, and casino taxes. Data for 2006 is considered to be a prediction since the report was published prior to the end of the year.

¹⁴These revenues were calculated by summing impacts for each category for all counties in the region and may differ from those outlined in *The Economic Impact of Travel on Colorado 1996-2006p* report published by Runyan Associates because of rounding.



5.7.4 Recreation and Open Space Grant Allocations

Many of the recreation opportunities that exist in the Southwest Region have originated from grants that facilitate the development and maintenance of local parks, open spaces, and trails. Details on the \$45 million in grant awards are provided in Table 74, and are summed from each grant program’s inception through 2007. Primary grant programs include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), Colorado State Trails Program grants including Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV), and Recreation Trails Grants (Trails), and Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) grants overseen by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

A brief description of each grant program is provided in 5.0 *Introduction to Regional Profiles* along with maps depicting grant allocations per capita and totals by county.

Table 74: Southwest Region Recreation and Open Space Grants by County (through 2007)

County	GOCO County Grants ¹⁵	GOCO Multi-County Grants	LWCF Grants	OHV Grants	State Trails Program Grants	Snowmobile Grants	CTF Grants	Totals
Archuleta	\$678,950	\$0	\$96,395	\$44,504	\$124,128	\$46,793	\$1,398,329	\$2,389,099
Delta	\$1,687,678	\$0	\$398,069	\$203,712	\$207,980	\$120,803	\$4,526,596	\$7,144,838
Dolores	\$208,889	\$0	\$0	\$199,285	\$46,608	\$15,728	\$297,662	\$768,172
Gunnison	\$991,280	\$0	\$205,806	\$710,962	\$291,397	\$198,915	\$2,198,651	\$4,597,011
Hinsdale	\$251,322	\$0	\$0	\$59,517	\$89,874	\$157,148	\$111,388	\$669,249
La Plata	\$1,273,682	\$0	\$1,284,138	\$89,219	\$1,099,132	\$15,728	\$6,869,160	\$10,631,058
Montezuma	\$640,231	\$0	\$150,997	\$168,885	\$85,405	\$15,728	\$3,767,077	\$4,828,322
Montrose	\$1,658,084	\$0	\$431,135	\$264,018	\$33,500	\$68,093	\$5,334,408	\$7,789,238
Ouray	\$1,522,693	\$0	\$34,682	\$237,513	\$283,715	\$39,971	\$544,466	\$2,663,041
San Juan	\$880,070	\$47,670	\$7,266	\$59,517	\$23,732	\$162,065	\$113,948	\$1,294,267
San Miguel	\$1,111,503	\$0	\$158,307	\$196,710	\$166,211	\$89,781	\$943,666	\$2,666,177
Region Totals	\$10,904,381	\$47,670	\$2,766,795	\$2,233,842	\$2,451,682	\$930,751	\$26,105,350	\$45,440,470
Colorado Totals	\$123,236,610	\$7,829,087	\$54,593,563	\$8,430,414	\$16,057,852	\$2,730,058	\$681,939,668	\$894,817,253

Sources: GOCO, Colorado State Trails Program, and DOLA, 2008

5.7.5 Local Government Survey Results

Responses from five counties, eight municipalities, three special districts, and two school districts in the Southwest Region that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey are summarized in Table 75-78. For comprehensive results of the survey, refer to Appendix B.

While the survey does not reflect the recreation issues and needs of *all* local government agencies in the region (because not all of the local governments that manage outdoor recreation completed the survey), some of the largest local government agencies did participate. Some of these agencies included the cities of Telluride, Paonia, Ridgway, Gunnison, and Cortez as well as Ouray, San Miguel, Dolores, Gunnison, and Archuleta counties. These local governments serve about 4% of Colorado’s population and manage nearly 4,000 acres of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses.¹⁶

¹⁵The GOCO grants outlined in Table 74 do not include Open Space grants which, in some instances, also provide public recreation access/opportunities. GOCO totals outlined in this table include Local Government Park, Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education Facilities grants including regular grants, mini-grants for small communities and regional grants from the first grants cycle in 1994 through 2007. They also include trail projects funded with GOCO local government funds and recreational components of Legacy Projects. Grants that involve multiple counties are also included.

¹⁶2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.



Much like recreationists throughout Colorado, most Southwest Region residents typically recreate within four miles of their home during weekdays.¹⁷ Subsequently, local recreation agencies in the Southwest meet a significant portion of the recreation demand.

In total, these agencies maintain 57 parks, with some development such as restrooms, drinking fountains, and/or picnic sites. In addition, these agencies manage over 660 open spaces devoted solely to passive recreation uses like walking, wildlife viewing, or nature study. About 75% of Colorado’s locally managed motorized trails are located in this portion of the state.¹⁸

Table 75: Southwest Region Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Southwest Region	Statewide	Percent of Colorado's Recreation Facilities Reported within Region
Acreage of public parks, open spaces, and golf courses	3,865	250,345	2%
Public parks (with developed sites)	57	1,819	3%
Open spaces (without development and devoted solely to passive recreation)	663	52,815	1%
Non-motorized trail miles	77	2,150	4%
Motorized trail miles	61	81	75%
Picnic Shelters	47	1,040	5%
Playgrounds	28	1,177	2%
Ballfields and courts	115	3,720	3%
Campsites	11	748	1%
Off-leash dog parks	8	58	14%

% of Colorado's Population within Region (2007) = 4%

Region N=18

Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

About half of the agencies surveyed use a master plan to guide decision-making processes, all of which are subject to a public review process and are adopted by a governing body. Most of these plans also incorporate a trails component and natural resources management guidance.

Local government agencies in the region indicated that staffing shortfalls are supplemented by volunteers and youth groups. Over 340 hours of volunteer service are donated annually, primarily for maintenance and construction projects. Youth corps or youth groups contribute one month of crew weeks to the cities of Cortez and Ridgway.

Between 2008 and 2013, \$26 million in planned acquisitions and improvements are scheduled for agencies in the Southwest Region. Only \$3.2 million is still needed to fund these projects, which is the smallest funding deficit of the six SCORP regions. Four agencies have a mill levy or dedicated tax specifically allocated for outdoor recreation or open space purposes.¹⁹

Over 4,500 people attend environmental education or outdoor recreation programs conducted by four providers every year.

¹⁷Horvath, 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.

¹⁸2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

¹⁹Ibid



Table 76: Southwest Region Agency Characteristics

Characteristic	Summary	Percent Responding "Yes"
Agencies with a plan for outdoor recreation sites, facilities and services (e.g., park/recreation/trail master plan or open space master plan)	9	50%
Of the agencies with a plan, those that are subject to public review and comment	9	50%
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	50%
Outdoor recreation plans that include a trails component	6	33%
Plans that also address natural resource management and protection (such as erosion control, noxious weed management, habitat protection, etc.)	6	33%
Agencies offering interpretive, outdoor, or environmental education programs	4	22%
Number of people attending Interpretive or Outdoor Education programs annually	4,570	n/a
Agencies using volunteers to provide visitor services	2	11%
Agencies using volunteers for maintenance or construction work	6	33%
Estimated annual volunteer hours	340	n/a
Agencies utilizing youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work	2	11%
Estimated total number of annual crew weeks	4	n/a
Agencies with a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments	4	22%
Estimated value of planned acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) for 2008-2013	\$26,116,000	n/a
Estimated funding deficit for planned acquisitions and capital improvements for 2008-2013	\$3,150,000	n/a

N=18

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007



Southwest Region Priority Recreation Issues

When asked about the issues challenging local governments, visitor safety was the greatest concern in the region and statewide (Table 77). With the regional population expected to grow 71% by 2030, it is not surprising that the “capacity to serve a growing population” ranked second. Given that only 22% of governments responding to the survey have a dedicated funding source, financial limitations confront the majority of respondents. Both insufficient funding and budget instability appeared in the top ten. Maintaining existing infrastructure was also a significant concern.²⁰

Table 77: Priority Issues for Local Governments in the Southwest Region

Issue	Southwest Region	Statewide
Visitor safety and protection	1	1
Capacity to serve a growing population	2	7
Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	3	2
Monitoring and maintaining natural resource conditions (e.g., vegetation, erosion, noxious weeds, water quality)	4	6
Collaboration/cooperation with other agencies that manage outdoor recreation	5	9
Insufficient resources to fund your agency’s budget	6	4
Offering recreation programs for youth	7	3
Year-to-year stability of your agency’s budget	8	5
Liability protection for your agency	9	11
Adequate staffing levels	10	10

Region N= 18

Statewide= 140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Cultivating relationships with private landowners is fundamental for one local government in the Southwest Region in order to acquire additional lands for parks and open space.

An expanding population was recorded several times as a significant issue.

Southwest Region Priority Recreation Needs

Local government agencies were also questioned about the need for additional recreation facilities and services in their region. Trails are clearly the greatest need appearing seven times in Table 78.

While the demand for trails is high statewide, agencies in the Southwest are also attempting to deliver other types of recreation facilities to accommodate its growing population. For example, cross-country ski trails, skateboard parks, interpretive displays, mountain biking trails, and snowshoeing areas were all ranked as significant needs in the Southwest but were not considered high priorities in other SCORP regions.

²⁰Ibid



Table 78: Priority Needs for Local Governments in the Southwest Region

Need	Southwest Region	Statewide
Community trail system	1	1
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	2	7
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	2	3
Trails connecting to public lands	3	6
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	3	8
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	4	5
Acquisition of natural open space	5	13
Playgrounds	5	2
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	5	10
Acquisition of parklands	6	12
Picnicking sites	7	4
Nature study/wildlife watching sites	7	14
Tennis/basketball/volleyball courts	8	11
Toilets and showers	8	15
Cross-country skiing	9	30
Skateboard parks	10	16
Interpretive displays	10	17
Mountain biking trails	10	24
Snowshoeing	10	30

Region N=18

Statewide N=140

Source: Colorado State Parks Local Government SCORP Survey, 2007

Note that some values were equal when summed, resulting in numerous ties.

A few recreation amenities that were reported in the Southwest Region that didn't rank in the top ten but were reported as significant needs are: a paintball area, BMX (or bicycle motocross) park, and sprayscapes (a park with a variety of water features such as fountains and water guns).