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APPENDIX B:  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY SUMMARY

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# Summary of the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey

## Purpose

The Local Government Survey was conducted by Colorado State Parks during the summer of 2007 as part of the update to Colorado's 2008 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The survey helps to identify prioritized issues and needs that Colorado will need to consider when determining the distribution of Colorado's LWCF allocations. The Local Government Survey also establishes both qualitative and quantitative baseline data about outdoor recreation characteristics of Colorado's local governments including municipalities, counties, and special districts which provide outdoor recreation to the public.

## Survey Details

The survey consisted of 125 questions divided into three major sections: an inventory of recreation resources and agency characteristics, an assessment of recreation management issues, and identification of recreation management needs. The majority of questions required the respondent to score provided responses on a scale of 1 to 5 (from not important to very important). These scores were summed and ranked according to value with the largest value receiving the highest priority. Note that some responses were equal when summed, creating several ties. In addition, there were numerous questions requiring "yes" or "no" responses and several "fill-in" questions.

Survey invitations were mailed via hardcopy or email on June 8<sup>th</sup> and the survey closed on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Follow-up phone calls were made to agencies that had not submitted or finalized surveys by July 31<sup>st</sup>. The survey was extended until August 6<sup>th</sup> to give some agencies additional time to complete the survey.

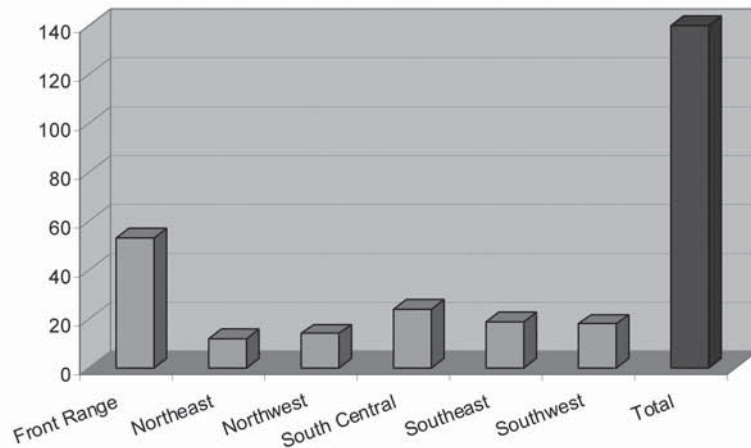
## Participants

The Local Government Survey targets local governments including: municipalities, special districts, school districts, and counties. A list of 649 targets was compiled using contact information provided by the Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Parks and Recreation Association, and Colorado Open Space Alliance. This comprehensive list consisted of any local government which manages outdoor recreation including small towns and cities. Respondents were emailed or mailed instructions on how to access the survey online via the State Parks website. Email addresses were obtained by phoning each agency. About 200 of the agencies contacted did not have obtainable email addresses and were mailed hardcopy surveys.

## Respondents

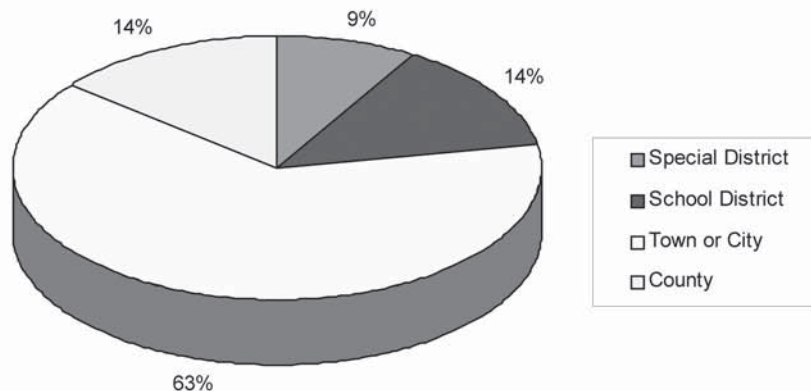
A total of 140 surveys were received by Colorado State Parks. Representatives from every SCORP region responded with 48 of Colorado's 64 counties represented. The Front Range Region had the most respondents with a total of 53 (Figure 1). These response rates reflect the number of agencies managing recreation and the distribution of Colorado's population. The majority of the State's population resides in the Front Range Region and appropriately contains more local governments with outdoor recreation missions than any other region.

**Figure 1: Respondents by Region**



The vast majority of surveys were completed by municipalities, returning 89 surveys, or 63% of the total. Counties and school districts submitted 20 and 19 surveys, respectively (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Respondents by Agency Type**



## Survey Results

Final results were tabulated on both a statewide and regional basis. The six regions used for the survey results are adapted from the Colorado Tourism Regions developed by the Colorado Tourism Office. Survey regions consist of the Front Range, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, South Central, and Southeast.

## Part I: Agency Characteristics

Questions 1-37 focused on the local government's park and recreation planning tools, an inventory of land and facilities, use of volunteers and youth groups, and funding capabilities.

Local governments play a critical role in providing recreation opportunities to residents and visitors. 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 more than 81 miles of motorized trail are also open to the public (Table 1).

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. This 36% deficit equates to nearly \$400 million in unmet acquisition and capital improvement needs.

**Table 1: Inventory of Facilities by Region and Statewide**

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	256	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: Local Government Survey, Part I: Questions 1-37.

Table 2 outlines the compiled responses from the agencies responding to the survey. The percentages of those responding "yes" or those who responded "no" does not add up to 100% because numerous agencies did not respond to every question.

Question #	Question Text	Total	% of Respondents Answering "Yes"	% of Respondents Answering "No"
23	Miles of non-motorized multiple-use gravel or soft surface trails managed by your agency	937	n/a	n/a
24	Miles of motorized trails for off-highway (OHV) and/or all-terrain vehicles (ATV) managed by your agency	81	n/a	n/a
25	Number of off-leash dog parks managed by your agency	58	n/a	n/a
26	Does your agency offer Interpretive, Outdoor, or Environmental Education programs?	n/a	17%	62%
27	If yes on #26, about how many people attend Interpretive, Outdoor, or Environmental Education programs annually?	438,188	n/a	n/a
28	Does your agency use volunteers to provide visitor services?	n/a	21%	58%
29	Does your agency use volunteers for maintenance or construction work?	n/a	39%	40%
30	If you chose "yes" on #28 or #29, please estimate total number of volunteer hours annually	283,292	n/a	n/a
31	Does your agency use youth corps or other youth groups for maintenance or construction work?	n/a	25%	71%
32	If yes on #31, please estimate total number of crew weeks annually	344	n/a	n/a
33	Other than state lottery funds, does your agency have a funding source (such as bonds or special purpose taxes) dedicated specifically for park, open space, and trail investments?	n/a	28%	51%
34	If you chose "yes" on Question #33, what is that dedicated funding source?	n/a	n/a	n/a
35	Please estimate the total dollar value of acquisitions and capital improvements (such as land, facilities, and trails) planned by your agency for the five year period of 2008-2013.	1,096,602,688	n/a	n/a
36	Of the total five-year acquisition and capital improvement need you identified in Question #35 above, please estimate what dollar amount of that need can be funded by existing resources already programmed by your agency.	656,269,010	n/a	n/a
37	Of the total five-year acquisition and capital improvement need you identified in Question #35 above, please estimate what dollar amount of that need will require funding not currently programmed by your agency for these investments.	398,945,182	n/a	n/a

Source: 2007 Local Government Survey, Part I Questions 2-37.

\* "n/a" = Not applicable.

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Source: 2007 Local Government Survey, Part I Questions 2-37.

\*"n/a" = Not applicable.

## Part II: Outdoor Recreation Issues

The second portion of the survey encompassed questions 38-77 and asked respondents to rank the highest priority issues related to managing outdoor recreation. Respondents were asked to determine the degree of importance their agency places on various issues (ranging from 5 for “very important” to 1 for “not important”). Note that some responses were equal when summed, creating several ties.

Understanding the outdoor recreation issues managers face is an integral part of the SCORP process which is addressed through *Section 7: SCORP Strategic Plan*. Outdoor recreation issues were considered as the challenges or concerns managers face when trying to provide a high-quality outdoor recreation experience to the public.

“Visitor Safety and Protection” was the most significant issue statewide, appearing in the top three issues in all regions (Table 3). Of the 119 agencies that responded to the question, 52 ranked the issue as a “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 with 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 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 3: Top Ten Issues Statewide and by Region**

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: 2007 Local Government Survey, Part II: Questions 38-77.

recreation sites and activities. Note that some responses were equal when summed, creating several ties.

Trails dominate the priorities for capital investments (Table 5), 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.

**Table 5: Top Ten Needs Statewide and by Region**

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: 2007 Local Government Survey, Part II: Questions 78-125.

In 2003 trails were repeatedly mentioned as being one of the greatest needs for local agencies (Table 6). Because of the importance placed on providing trails and the differentiation between the types of trails and uses, more specific categories related to trail surface types were added to the survey in 2007. Presumably because of the work accomplished in acquiring trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way since 2003, the need decreased in priority from fourth to eighth.



**Table 6: Comparison of Ranked Needs Between 2003 – 2007**

<b>Top Needs</b>	<b>Statewide Rank (2002)</b>	<b>Statewide Rank (2007)</b>
Community trail system	1	1
Playgrounds	3	2
Multi-purpose trails (including bicycling routes)	n/a*	3
Picnic sites	2	4
Baseball, football, and soccer fields	8/10	5
Trails connecting to public lands	5	6
Natural surface/crusher fine trails	n/a*	7
Acquisition of trail corridors, conservation easements, and/or rights of way	4	8
Hard surface (concrete or asphalt) trails	n/a*	9
Pedestrian only trails (hiking, walking, or jogging)	n/a*	10

Source: 2003 and 2007 Local Government Surveys, Part II.

"n/a" = "not applicable." The question was not included in the 2003 survey.

### **Additional Information**

Complete results of the survey, including a copy of the survey, responses to open-ended questions, and results by region are available on the State Parks website:

[www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/LWCF/SCORPplan](http://www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/LWCF/SCORPplan)