

# COLORADO STATE PARKS Five-Year Strategic Plan Executive Summary 2005-2009



Steamboat Lake State Park



Indian blanket

## Contact us!

For more information or to obtain a copy of the Colorado State Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan, please visit us online at [www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us). You may also request a copy of the Strategic Plan by contacting our main office at 303-866-3437, or write to:

Colorado State Parks  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 618  
Denver, Colorado 80203



CSP-SP-10M-10/05



Steamboat Lake State Park



State Forest State Park



Chatfield State Park



Ridgway State Park



Navajo State Park



Crawford State Park ©Tom Wulf

## COLORADO STATE PARKS Five-Year Strategic Plan Executive Summary 2005-2009

The Colorado State Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan, 2005-2009, is the product of a comprehensive planning process. It builds on the vision, themes, and common statewide recreation issues identified within the federally required Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP, entitled "Colorado's Outdoor Recreation Future: Strategies For Colorado's Outdoor Heritage," was completed at the end of 2003 and has guided the strategic planning process.

In addition to building upon the SCORP, the plan reflects significant public feedback. Over the past two years, State Parks' personnel have listened to park visitors and others about Colorado's parks and statewide recreation programs. This feedback, including suggestions for improvements and new experiences, is incorporated into this plan. By including visitor feedback and following the objectives and actions laid out in this Five-Year Strategic

Plan, Colorado State Parks can respond to the needs of Colorado's recreationists and pursue effective investments and decisions.

### Mission Statement

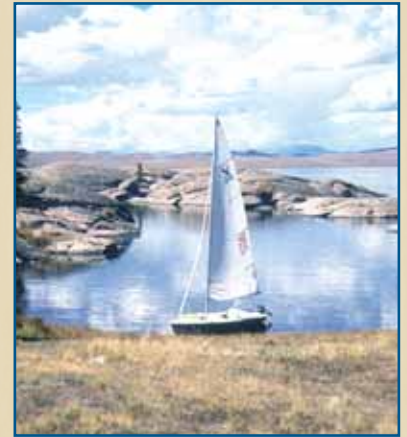
To be leaders in providing outdoor recreation through the stewardship of Colorado's natural resources for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of present and future generations.

### Vision Statement

Colorado State Parks offer exceptional settings for renewal of the human spirit. Residents and visitors enjoy healthy, fulfilled interaction with the natural world, creating rich traditions with family and friends that promote stewardship of our natural resources. Parks employees and their partners work together to provide ongoing and outstanding customer service through recreational programs, amenities and services.



Mancos State Park ©Tom Wulf



Eleven Mile State Park

## Introduction

The state parks in Colorado enable everyone, regardless of age, background, economic or social circumstance to enjoy the state's internationally famous natural beauty and experience a wide range of activities. Park visitors and beneficiaries of State Parks' many statewide outdoor recreation programs can literally "re-create" themselves both physically and spiritually. The parks are a priceless, irreplaceable legacy for future generations. Enabling that enjoyment and protecting the legacy is the essence of the Colorado State Parks' mission.

However, as Colorado State Parks (State Parks) approaches its 50th year providing quality outdoor recreation to the public, it faces unprecedented challenges. Recovery from a sluggish statewide economy and the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) growth restrictions create substantial challenges for the agency to continue satisfying outdoor recreation demands of a rapidly expanding population. Drought conditions, increased recreational use and budget cutbacks threaten to damage park resources, and challenge the agency's ability to sustain facilities and programs.

This backdrop of social, economic, and environmental influences requires continual, innovative approaches and dedication by State Parks' personnel to provide the outdoor settings and programs people desire while effectively meeting resource management goals. State Parks has long been familiar with these challenges; they are embodied in the agency's multi-faceted legislative mission mandated in Colorado state law. Those holding the fate of Colorado's state parks have an awesome responsibility. State Park system leaders "...must decide – or seek to influence those who decide – what kind of parks we want to leave our children, and then pursue that vision with unswerving determination."<sup>1</sup> In Colorado, these responsibilities extend to the management of statewide outdoor recreation programs as well.



*broad-tailed hummingbird*

<sup>1</sup> Comments by Ney Landrum, former Executive Director, National Association of State Parks Directors, 1993.



Mueller State Park



Snowmobiling at Colorado State Parks

## GOAL: RECREATION

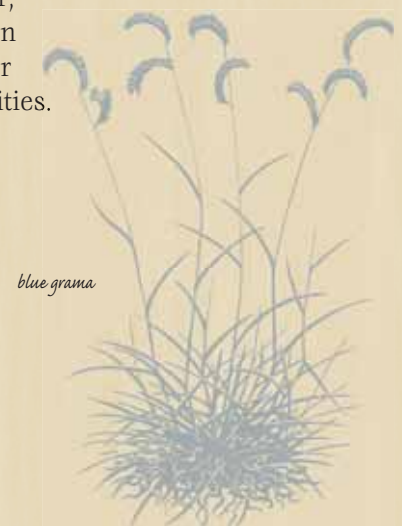
*Provide sustainable outdoor recreation settings, statewide programs and education opportunities to keep pace with the rising demands, needs and diversity of Colorado citizens and visitors.*

Colorado State Parks has accumulated a sizeable portfolio of park facilities and infrastructure. It is important that these assets are properly maintained for current and future generations. At the same time, in the face of Colorado's burgeoning growth, the agency must continue seeking opportunities for additional parklands and water for recreation. State Parks will apply sustainable development principles to maintaining current and developing new park properties, facilities and infrastructure.

State Parks has a continued responsibility to fulfill its role as Colorado's outdoor recreation leader by advocating outdoor recreation through interpretation and environmental education opportunities, managing statewide outdoor recreation programs and creating safe recreational environments.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Operate State Parks to enhance visitor experiences and promote positive interaction with Colorado's natural environment.
- ◆ Design and develop sustainable park facilities and infrastructure that meet visitors' needs and enrich the State Parks experience.
- ◆ Pursue new state park lands and water resources to meet current and future demand.
- ◆ As a statewide leader, promote participation in Colorado's outdoor recreation opportunities.



blue grama



Kremmling Cretaceous Ammonite Natural Area



Eustoma grandiflora

## GOAL: NATURAL RESOURCES

*Improve and sustain the ecological, scenic and scientific assets in and around state parklands through proactive stewardship.*

Colorado State Parks is obligated to provide places that are the best and most representative of the state's available resources, as well as to preserve and protect these resources for all time. With increased threats to the natural resources in state parks, taking care of existing resources and meeting the agency's resource stewardship mandate will require increased focus and attention on parkland natural resources.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Inventory State Parks natural resources to determine their nature, location and overall condition.
- ◆ Manage and monitor State Parks natural resources to limit impacts and ensure that the condition of the resources, natural viewshed and ecological communities remain intact for future generations.
- ◆ Integrate monitoring and management of State Parks' natural resources into management, development, training and marketing plans.
- ◆ Cooperate with other agencies and conservation organizations to collect, share and disseminate natural resource information and to coordinate resource management.



scrub jay



Chatfield State Park



Highline Lake State Park ©Tom Wulf

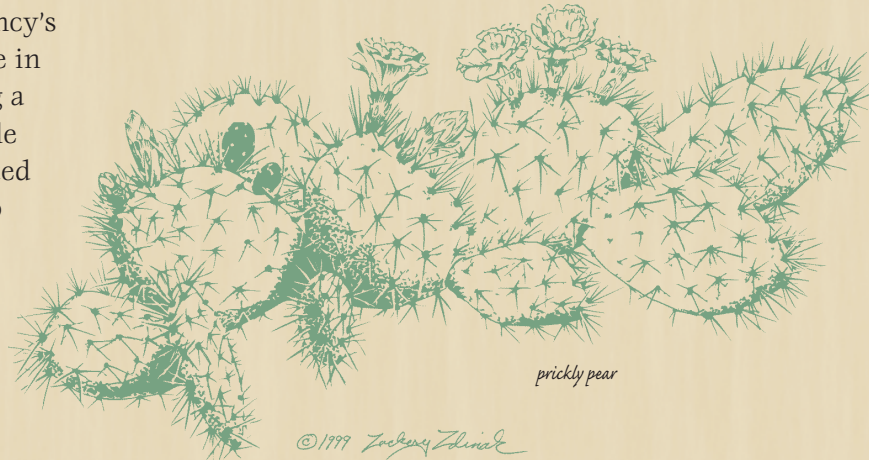
## GOAL: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

*Develop and implement appropriate strategies to stabilize and strengthen State Parks' financial condition.*

Colorado's current economic backdrop poses financial challenges for State Parks over the coming years. State spending restrictions outlined in the TABOR significantly limit the ability of State Parks to maintain adequate growth. As a result, state General Fund tax dollar support to State Parks has fallen considerably over recent years from an historically consistent 30% level of the agency's overall budget. To remain financially stable in the uncertain times ahead, while providing a park system that is accessible and affordable to all visitors, State Parks remains committed to being innovative, creative, and willing to step outside the agency's "comfort zone."

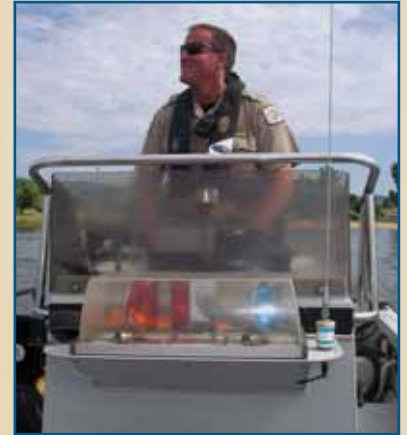
### Objectives:

- ◆ Deliver a financially stable yet diverse park system that meets a range of visitor needs.
- ◆ Base all decisions on reliable (long and short-term) financial planning and analysis.
- ◆ Improve the management of State Parks' project and program funding and its strategic use of available resources.
- ◆ Evaluate and structure state park fees to maximize revenues while providing accessibility and affordability to all visitors.





Cherry Creek State Park



Chatfield State Park

## GOAL: HUMAN RESOURCES

*Motivate and enable a dedicated and customer-focused workforce.*

State Parks takes pride in its ability to accomplish so much with so few staff. For years the agency has ranked as one of the leanest park systems in the nation, with one of the lowest ratios of employees to both visitors and resources managed in the country. State Parks employs people who are passionate about their jobs, are capable of accomplishing a lot with very little, have outstanding “people skills” and possess a deep-seated commitment to both customer and public service. This commitment includes increasing investments in human resources for training opportunities, succession planning, and recognition for innovativeness.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Facilitate clear and effective communication among State Parks employees.
- ◆ Assure that State Parks has a sufficient number of full-time and seasonal employees, and the necessary equipment and workspace to efficiently perform their job responsibilities.
- ◆ Assess, develop and select training opportunities and requirements for State Parks employees.
- ◆ Implement employee incentive programs to recognize and reward motivated and dedicated employees.





Cheyenne Mountain State Park



Navajo State Park

## GOAL: MARKETING

*Retain current and acquire new customers through exceptional service and by improving State Parks' visibility with innovative marketing.*

State Parks' extensive public outreach over the past two years has revealed the importance of taking care of existing customers and seeking new ones. To thrive, the agency must continue to educate the public on park resources and services through improved visitor information and marketing approaches. State Parks will strive to build lifelong relationships with visitors by encouraging them to advocate for its programs and services.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Broaden the agency's visibility by applying marketing strategies that emphasize the unique attributes of State Parks.
- ◆ Retain and foster impassioned customers by building life-long relationships through exceptional service and innovative approaches.
- ◆ Attract future visitors by creating connections to the outdoors and opportunities for discovery that will inspire individuals and groups to experience State Parks.







Mueller State Park



Lory State Park

## GOAL: PARTNERSHIPS

*Strengthen partnerships and strategically engage new partners to achieve common goals and mission.*

Many successful partnerships have been established and nurtured to improve State Parks' programs and promote outdoor recreation statewide. For this agency to survive, it must transition further toward seeking assistance from other agencies, volunteers, local constituency groups, the private sector and individuals through partnerships.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Establish and cultivate State Parks' champions and advocates, including individuals, organizations, government entities and user groups.
- ◆ Expand and promote meaningful opportunities for volunteer partners.
- ◆ Emphasize partnerships to leverage and enhance on-the-ground park and program resources.
- ◆ Increase the relevance and effectiveness of State Parks' partnerships.





Cheyenne Mountain State Park



Cheyenne Mountain State Park

## GOAL: PLANNING

*Apply effective, accurate and reliable information for the analysis, planning and implementation of all decisions.*

Effective organizations establish ways to ensure accuracy in important decisions at all levels of the organization. It is essential that State Parks creates and maintains reliable processes to disseminate accurate and timely information within the agency. Although the agency will pursue a variety of strategies, technology is viewed as a primary tool to accomplish this vision. State Parks is committed to continue the creation and implementation of electronic portals for administrative applications such as public safety, agency revenue reporting, and gathering information from park visitors. This information will aid the agency in its integrated planning efforts, while utilizing the Five-Year Strategic Plan as the blueprint for allocation of State Parks' budget and other resources.

### Objectives:

- ◆ Improve the collection, interpretation and distribution of current, reliable information to ensure consistent and strategic agency planning and decision-making.
- ◆ Create, implement and annually update the agency-wide, Five-Year Strategic Plan to allocate agency resources.
- ◆ Develop specific, consistent plans for each program and section that support the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Produce an integrated Management Plan for each park that supports the Strategic Plan.
- ◆ Update and maintain policies and procedures to provide direction for all agency planning and decision-making.

*rufous-sided towhee*

