
SECTION 2

OUTDOOR RECREATION PROVIDERS AND PARTNERS IN COLORADO



This section describes the roles and importance of major recreation providers in Colorado including federal, state, and local agencies, as well as integral partners such as non-profit groups, open space and land trust organizations, and businesses represented by private industry associations. Collectively, all of these entities play a unique and vital role in providing and supporting diverse outdoor recreation experiences throughout the state. While it is impossible to highlight every agency and organization relevant to outdoor recreation in Colorado, the most significant providers and partners that impact recreation statewide are highlighted in this section.

For each outdoor recreation provider there is an overview of the agency and associated recreation opportunities. Within each of the federal, state, and local outdoor recreation providers sections, a table depicts the acres managed by each agency, both regionally and statewide. These totals reflect the acres managed, not owned, and not all of the acreages displayed are open to public use. Map 1: Land Management in Colorado displays the distribution of public lands by agency in the Executive Summary.

Additional summaries have been provided for agencies that fund and provide outdoor recreation activities throughout the state. Also, outdoor recreation businesses are included in this section by describing the private industry organizations that represent them in Table 9. Non-profit partners, as well as land trusts and open space organizations, are outlined at the end of this section in Tables 10 and 11, which overview each organization's purpose and notable achievements.

For details on visitation and participation in activities that take place on these lands, refer to Section 3: Outdoor Recreation Trends. Contact information for each of the organizations in this section is included in the Information Resources in Appendix C.

2.1 Overview

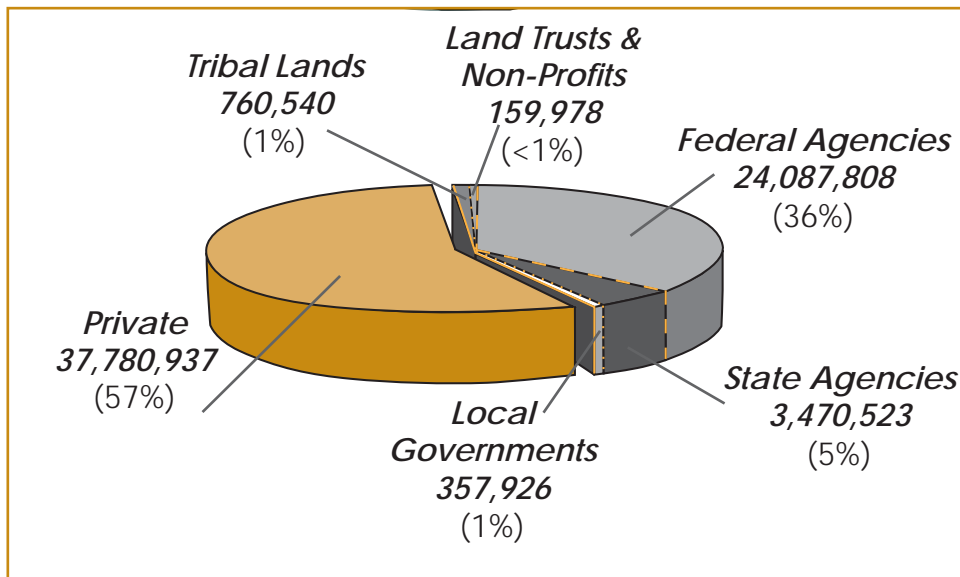
Colorado consists of nearly 29 million acres of public lands, 83% of which are open to outdoor recreation pursuits, which is 36% of the entire state.¹ These distinct lands are managed by different agencies which provide various services and uses, fulfilling different “niches” of the outdoor recreation spectrum. While the types and level of amenities may vary among agencies, all land managers strive for balance between meeting the demand for use and maintaining the health of the irreplaceable natural resources that provide the basis for outdoor recreation.

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>



In Colorado, private lands comprise the largest portion of the state’s nearly 67 million acres. Federal agencies manage 36% of all lands, state agencies 5%, and local governments, land trusts, non-profit organizations, and Native American Tribes combined oversee slightly less than 3% of Colorado’s total land base (Figure 4).²

Figure 4: Land Management in Colorado (Acreages and Percentage of the State by Manager)



Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

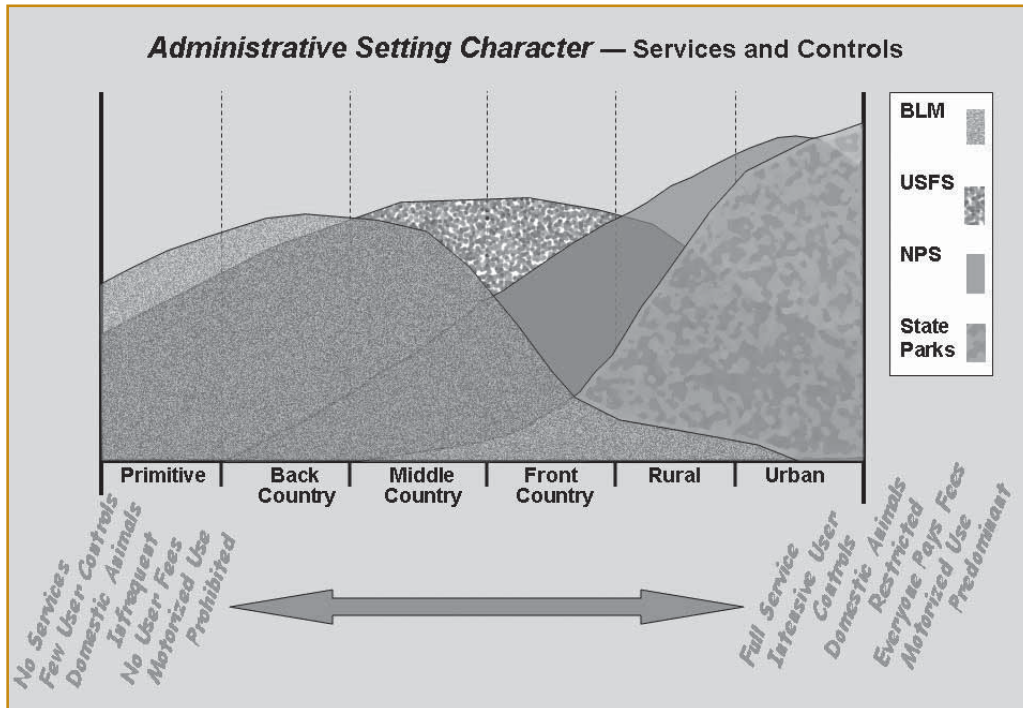
Recreation Provider Roles

Each public land agency provides outdoor recreation “settings” and manages for distinct types of recreation “experiences,” fulfilling various aspects of the diverse spectrum of outdoor recreation in Colorado. These traits are often referred to as “niches” because each provider serves a specialized role for a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits—creating a distinctive market which appeals to different users with varying preferences. As Colorado’s population increases and outdoor recreation participation continues to grow, further identifying and developing these “niches” may help agencies plan for changes in recreational use patterns, and better understand how their “niche” compares with that of other recreation providers. Refer to Influence # 2: Changing Community Demographics and Recreation-Tourism Market Demands in Section 7: SCORP Strategic Plan for specific recommendations related to agency “niches.”

²Ibid.



Figure 5: Schematic of Relative Proportion of Land by Physical Setting Character (Demonstrating Recreation Provider Roles or “Niches”)



Source: BLM, 2008

Figure 5 qualitatively illustrates the variances in agency roles for some of the largest providers in Colorado, and broadly depicts the settings, levels of service, regulations (or controls), and typical uses. While these roles sometimes overlap, it is important to understand that each agency often serves specific market segments (i.e. niches) and satisfies different user preferences.

Examining the total acres of land managed by each agency in Table 2 can also be useful in interpreting provider niches. While the acres do not convey the importance or relevance of each agency’s role in providing outdoor recreation, it is beneficial to compare the quantity of land overseen by each entity to help interpret the recreation setting and types of use that occur on those public lands. Generally, agencies with large expanses of public land provide more primitive and remote experiences while those administering smaller tracts of land provide different roles. For instance, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 8.4 million acres and provides mostly backcountry, middle-country, and rural experiences with few services or fees while Colorado State Parks manages just over 200,000 acres and offers recreation opportunities that are often close to urban centers, offer full services (e.g., visitor centers, camper services buildings, boating marinas, etc.) and charge nominal fees. Visitors are generally more dispersed on lands in primitive or backcountry settings and more concentrated in sites close to cities.

Consider the unique niche of each agency when reviewing the agency descriptions that follow, particularly when recreation opportunities are discussed.



2.2 Federal Agencies

Over 24 million acres in Colorado are managed by various federal agencies, primarily the U.S. Forest Service (14.4 million acres), Bureau of Land Management (8.4 million acres), and National Park Service (700,000 acres). Table 2 displays the acreage managed by each federal agency in order of the amount of land they manage. Collectively, this considerable federal land base is critical to the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities and services in the state. Most federal managers provide sites for all types of non-motorized and motorized activities on land, water, snow, and ice settings. Because of the large expanse of public lands, most recreation on federal lands is relatively dispersed (particularly outside of the Front Range Region) and occurs on sites with few developed facilities.

Table 2: Acres Managed by Federal Agency and SCORP Region

Federal Agencies							
Land Manager	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	Total by Manager
U.S. Forest Service	1,429,247	0	4,351,426	632,502	3,777,437	4,224,962	14,415,575
U.S. Bureau of Land Management	31,917	3,449	5,026,993	110,146	1,184,788	1,998,569	8,355,861
National Park Service	169,981	0	274,325	13,356	116,219	122,241	696,121
Other Federal Lands (Jointly Managed, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Military, etc.)	24,942	0	7,084	331,566	109,598	0	473,190
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	23,246	0	35,632	0	86,816	143	145,837
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	0	0	1,218	0	0	7	1,225
Total Acres Managed by Federal Agencies							24,087,809

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007



US Army Corps of Engineers®



The following section details the largest federal recreation managers listed according to the amount of land they manage.

2.2.1 U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service)

Established in 1905, the Forest Service is an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that manages 14.4 million acres of national forests and grasslands. Congress originally established the Forest Service to protect watersheds and manage timber resources for the nation’s benefit but this role was later expanded to encompass multiple uses including wildlife management and recreation resources.

The Forest Service mission is accomplished through a variety of programs including natural resource protection, research, community assistance, partnerships, international collaboration, and policy development. Generally, forests and grasslands are managed for the best combination of uses while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment, echoing the agency’s motto “caring for the land and serving the people.”

The agency is organized by Ranger Districts, National Forests or Grasslands, and regions. Colorado’s forests and grasslands are managed within Region 2, the Rocky Mountain Region, whose headquarters are located in Lakewood, Colorado.

Recreation Opportunities

Forest Service lands provide extensive opportunities to explore open spaces and natural environments. In addition to 35 Wilderness Areas and the Arapaho National Recreation Area in Colorado, the following National Forests (NF) and National Grasslands (NG) also provide recreation experiences for nearly 26 million visitors⁴ each year:

- | | | | |
|--------------|----|---------------|----|
| • Arapahoe | NF | • Roosevelt | NF |
| • Comanche | NG | • Routt | NF |
| • Grand Mesa | NF | • San Isabel | NF |
| • Gunnison | NF | • San Juan | NF |
| • Pawnee | NG | • Uncompahgre | NF |
| • Pike | NF | • White River | NF |
| • Rio Grande | NF | | |

The Forest Service is guided by their mission “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

Currently, in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region, the Forest Service is conducting travel management planning to reduce user conflicts and conserve high quality natural resources in sensitive areas. As of 2005, each National Forest and Grassland must develop a Travel Management Plan that identifies and designates roads, trails, and areas that permit motorized vehicles. Once identified, Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) will be published and distributed publicly, at which point the rules become enforceable. Currently, Forests and Grasslands in the Rocky Mountain Region are still developing travel management plans and seeking public input.³

³“Travel Management.” U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. 5 May 2008 <www.fs.fed.us/r2/armf/recreation/travel_mgmt>.

⁴English, Don. “USFS Visitation by Forest.” 20 Nov. 2007.



People enjoy a wide variety of activities on Forest Service lands in Colorado including: backpacking in remote wilderness areas, navigating all-terrain vehicles on extensive trails, enjoying the views along a scenic byway, and fishing in productive trout streams and lakes. Over 11,000 miles of trails offer plenty of access for hikers, bikers, and equestrians to experience Forest Service lands. Approximately 4.3 million acres of Wilderness Areas allow non-motorized recreation activities. Over 731 miles of groomed cross-country trails supply opportunities for snowshoers and cross-country skiers.⁵ Others enjoy camping in developed sites or in primitive areas, hunting, viewing wildlife, biking, kayaking, or hiking.

2.2.2 Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM is situated within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and administers 261 million acres of America's public lands, located primarily in the western United States. Established in 1946 through the merger of the U.S. Grazing Service and the General Land Office within the DOI, the BLM manages multiple resources and uses including: energy and minerals, timber, forage, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and archaeological, paleontological, and historical resources. Seventeen BLM offices are located in communities spread across the state with the agency's headquarters located in Lakewood.

Recreational Opportunities

As a provider of dispersed recreation, most BLM lands maintain an undeveloped open character and are still managed in the spirit of the western frontier. BLM maintains numerous Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) and National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units in Colorado which include: Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA), Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, five designated Wilderness Areas, and 54 Wilderness Study Areas.

The BLM operates according to its mission "to enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources."

In Colorado, the BLM manages nearly 8.4 million acres providing recreation opportunities for almost 5.8 million visitors each year.

⁵2003 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Colorado State Parks, 2004.

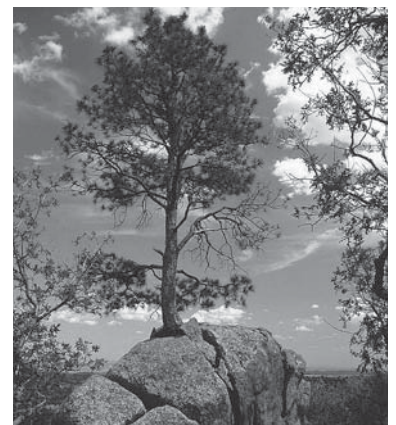


BLM lands provide a plethora of recreation opportunities including: whitewater rafting, auto touring, mountain bike riding, wildlife watching, Nordic skiing, archaeological and paleontological exploring, rock climbing, camping, target shooting, and hunting and fishing. Over 1,500 miles of trail provide opportunities for All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and dirt bike riding, mountain bike riding, snowmobiling, horseback riding, hiking, and backpacking.



To respond to the competing demands for BLM lands, the agency has developed a Recreation and Visitor Services Strategy for Colorado with the mission to foster "... innovative partnerships, stakeholder commitment, and community-based collaboration; maintain the valued recreation opportunities, desired landscape settings and public land health ensuring long-term ecological sustainability while providing benefits to visitors, communities, and the natural and cultural environment." This strategy provides a framework for guiding management priorities of Colorado's BLM lands.

The plan can be accessed at: www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Programs/recreation.htm





2.2.3 National Park Service (NPS)

With nearly 700,000 acres of protected lands in Colorado, and almost 84 million acres nationwide, the NPS preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations. In 1916, the NPS Organic Act created the agency within the DOI to protect the national parks and monuments that were already in existence and those yet to be established.

The NPS strives to meet the original goals instituted by the Organic Act, while filling other roles such as guarding diverse cultural and recreational resources, protecting the natural environment, and collaborating with other partners and countries to help preserve parks and open spaces. The NPS also administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which mandates and supports the development of the SCORP and provides funding for outdoor recreation through trail, park, and open space grants. For details on annual LWCF allocations to Colorado, refer to *Section 1: Introduction* and *Section 6: Priority Recreation Issues and Influences*

Recreation Opportunities

NPS sites have dramatic appeal for many residents and travelers to Colorado, hosting approximately 5.4 million people each year.⁶ For those looking to drive or hike along scenic and historic routes and explore the area, there are over 717 miles of National Historic Trails and 800 miles of Scenic Trails (the Continental Divide Trail) in Colorado.⁷

Water enthusiasts enjoy the three reservoirs that comprise Curecanti National Recreation Area (NRA): Morrow Point, East Portal, and Blue Mesa.⁸ Kayakers, rafters, and anglers pursue the 107 miles of river corridor in Bent's Old Fort, Black Canyon, and Dinosaur. Other activities are plentiful, too, including camping, picnicking, boating, wildlife viewing, birding, cross-country skiing, mountain climbing, bicycling, horseback riding, jeep touring, and river trips. Interpretive programs offer educational experiences at most sites.

Blue Mesa Reservoir, within Curecanti NRA, is Colorado's largest body of water with over 10,000 surface acres of water. It's also popular with anglers because it is the largest Kokanee salmon fishery in the U.S.

⁶"National Park Service." 20 Oct. 2007 <www.nps.gov>.

⁷2003 Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Colorado State Parks, 2004.

⁸"Curecanti National Recreation Area." National Park Service. 11 Dec. 2007 <www.nps.gov/cure/>.



The NPS Centennial Challenge

In 2006, the National Park Service launched the Centennial Challenge, “a 10-year effort to prepare national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment, by the agency’s 100th anniversary in 2016.” Superintendents from each NPS site submitted ideas for innovative local strategies to continue to care for and enhance the nations’ national treasures.

The Centennial Challenge will benefit several Colorado NPS sites. Bent’s Old Fort NHS, Colorado NM, Mesa Verde NP and Rocky Mountain NP were awarded over \$750,000 will assist projects to enhance visitor experiences, and enable continued stewardship of the natural resources at these exceptional sites.

In total, nearly \$52 million will be infused into park budgets as a result of the Centennial Challenge, \$24.6 million of which was an appropriation from Congress and matched by private donations, foundations, and non-profit organizations vested in the NPS system.

--NPS Centennial Challenge Summary, 2006

NPS sites are listed in Table 3 and are also located on the Map 1: Land Management in Colorado in the Executive Summary.

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), within the NPS, provides planning assistance to community groups, local, state, and federal government agencies to assist with conserving rivers, preserving open spaces, and developing trails and greenways. Since its inception in 1990 through 2007, RTCA has assisted with 53 projects within Colorado. Another six projects are slated for 2008. The RTCA program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the National Park Service in communities across America. Although the RTCA does not directly provide monetary funding, nationally, they have provided assistance to partners through 2,086 projects to protect more than 700 miles of rivers, create over 1,400 miles of trails, conserve more than 63,700 acres of open space.

For more details, including application instructions, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca>

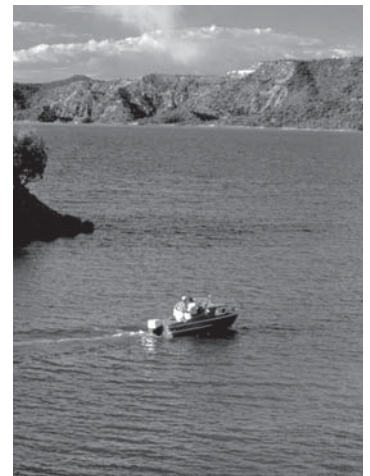


Table 3: National Park Service Units in Colorado

National Parks (NP)	National Monuments (NM)	National Historic Sites (NHS)	National Recreation Area (NRA) and National Heritage Area	National Historic Trails (NHT) and Scenic Trails
Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP	Colorado NM	Bent’s Old Fort NHS	Curecanti NRA	Pony Express NHT
Mesa Verde NP	Dinosaur NM	Sand Creek	Cache la Poudre	Santa Fe NHT
Rocky Mountain NP	Florissant Fossil Beds NM	Massacre NHS		Old Spanish NHT
Great Sand Dunes NP and Preserve	Hovenweep NM			Continental Divide Trail



2.2.4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) mission is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continued benefit of the American people and "conserving the nature of America." Part of the DOI, the FWS is responsible for overseeing federal laws and programs that conserve fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

The FWS was originally instituted in 1871 as the U.S. Fish Commission and throughout many decades expanded duties and changed names several times. The current agency was officially established in 1956, with the passage of the National Fish and Wildlife Act.

The FWS also administers the *Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Programs*, which distributes excise tax revenues from hunting and fishing equipment sales and motorboat fuels to states for fish and wildlife restoration projects.

Recreation Opportunities

Colorado contains over 146,000 acres of FWS protected lands with the recreation emphasis on wildlife watching, birding, hunting, and fishing. Environmental education programs are also offered. These lands are protected at eight National Wildlife Refuges, the Leadville and Hotchkiss National Fish Hatcheries, two Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Offices, and one Colorado River Fishery Project Office. Colorado's wildlife refuges are managed under the jurisdiction of Region 6, the Mountain-Prairie Region.

Colorado's National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alamosa NWR• Arapaho NWR• Baca NWR• Brown's Park NWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monte Vista NWR• Rocky Flats NWR⁹• Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR• Two Ponds NWR
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In 2008, Colorado was allocated nearly \$10 million for sport fish restoration and \$7.8 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education from the FWS's Federal Aid program.

Every year, over 78,000 people visit National Wildlife Refuges and 43,500 visit the two National Fish Hatcheries in Colorado.

⁹Not currently open to the public.



2.2.5 Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

The mission of the BOR is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public. Established in 1902 within the DOI, the BOR was originally created to develop water projects for irrigation and power production in 17 western states. The building of these dams, powerplants, and canals facilitated homesteaders to begin settling and developing the west. Today, the BOR highlights recreation as a major feature of water projects.

Recreation Opportunities

Colorado contains over 30 BOR reservoirs which provide primarily water-based opportunities like boating, fishing, waterskiing, sailing, swimming, as well as picnicking and camping. Recreation at these sites is typically managed by non-federal governmental entities, such as state and county agencies. Some sites, such as Curecanti National Recreation Area, are managed by federal agencies like the NPS. Colorado State Parks manages recreation at eight BOR reservoirs. At many sites, private concessionaires operate facilities and services for the public such as marinas, campgrounds, and swimming beaches.

2.2.6 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE)

In 1775, the Continental Congress authorized the first Chief Engineer to build fortifications near Boston at Bunker Hill. This was the beginning of The Army Corps of Engineers (COE) which would later develop into an agency of civilian and military personnel who serve as engineers, scientists, and natural resource managers for the Army.

The COE natural resource management mission is to manage, conserve, and improve natural resources and the environment while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences. Since the vast majority of these recreation areas are located next to water, the COE, in partnership with other agencies, is active in the National Water Safety Program which publishes water safety materials and educates water enthusiasts about being safe while enjoying water recreation.

The COE also manages thousands of square miles of forests and wildlife habitat, monitors water quality at its dams, operates fish hatcheries in cooperation with state wildlife agencies, and in some cases restores the environment at disturbed sites. The Section 404 permit program is also managed by the COE, ensuring that the physical, biological, and chemical quality of our nation's water is protected from unregulated discharges of dredged or fill material. Details on the Section 404 permit program are included in the Wetlands Component in Appendix D.

The COE is organized geographically into eight divisions across the country and 41 districts. Divisions and districts follow watershed boundaries, therefore, there are four districts in Colorado: Omaha, Sacramento, Albuquerque, and Kansas City.

The BOR is the largest wholesaler of water in the U.S. and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the western U.S.

Many facilities at BOR properties have been designed for accessibility for the physically-challenged and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Accessible fishing docks, picnic tables, and campsites have created recreation opportunities for the disabled in Colorado. Ridgway State Park, a BOR property leased and managed by Colorado State Parks, is considered to be one of the most accessible parks in the country.



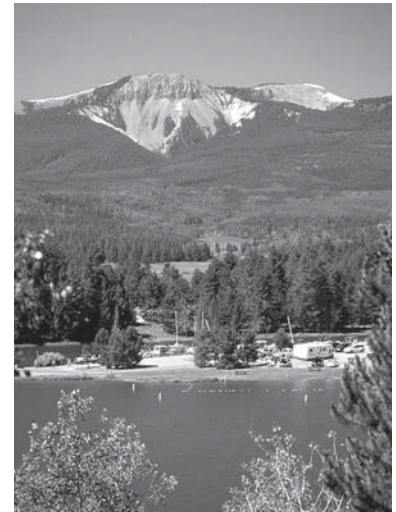
Recreation Opportunities

In Colorado, over five million visitors enjoy the three largest COE sites each year which are Cherry Creek, Chatfield, and Bear Creek reservoirs which total nearly 2,400 surface acres. The COE areas are listed in Table 4 and provide swimming, boating, sailing, jetskiing, fishing, and other water-based sports, as well as family gatherings and picnics.

The mission of the COE is to provide quality, responsive engineering services to the nation through civil works projects.

Table 4: Corps of Engineers sites in Colorado

Colorado State Parks
Chatfield State Park
Cherry Creek Reservoir State Park
John Martin Reservoir State Park and Wildlife Area (managed by CDOW)
Trinidad Lake State Park
City of Lakewood
Bear Creek City Park
Homestead and Fox Hollow Golf Course
City and County of Denver
Kennedy Sports Fields and Golf Course
Chatfield Nature Preserve
City of Greenwood Village
Village Greens Park
City of Aurora
Olympic Park



Source: COE, 2008

According to the COE, the agency provides more outdoor recreation than any other federal agency in the U.S.

2.3 State Agencies

This section summarizes the state agencies that provide outdoor recreation activities throughout Colorado. While federal agencies manage the majority of land available for recreation in Colorado, state agencies manage a wide variety of lands for a multitude of recreation opportunities. State land managers collectively manage nearly 3.5 million acres of public lands, or 5% of the state's acreage (Table 5). Generally, state agencies oversee smaller parcels of land than federal agencies, often with higher concentrations of visitors.



Table 5: Acres Managed by State Agency and by SCORP Region

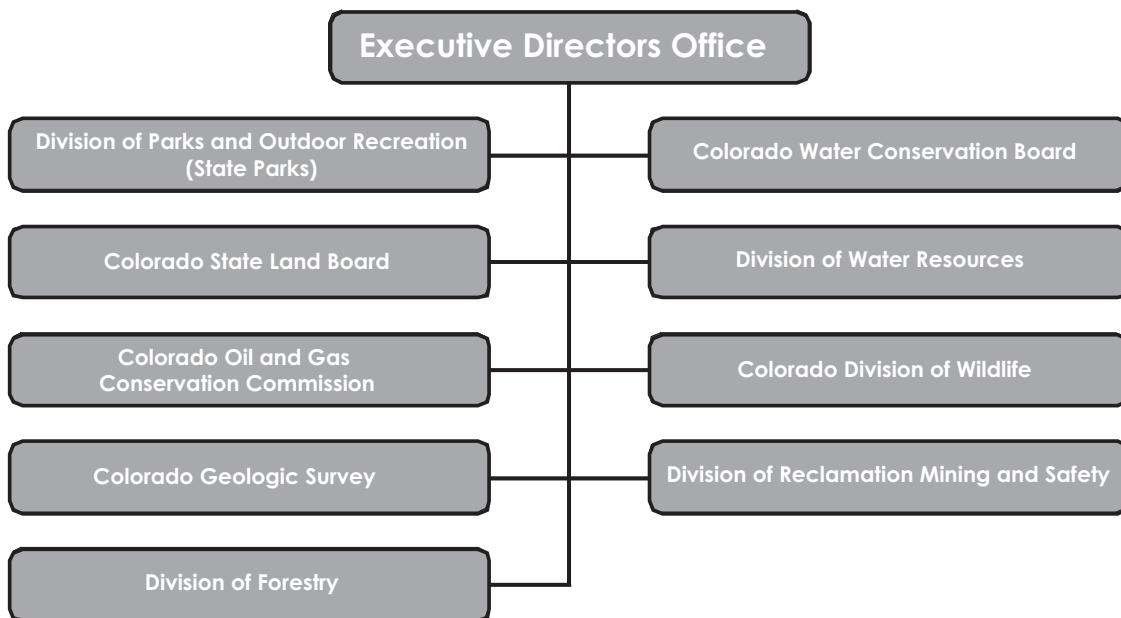
State Agencies							
Land Manager	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	Total by Manager
State Land Board	253,681	680,068	343,652	892,847	486,830	49,561	2,706,639
Colorado Division of Wildlife	46,332	62,926	162,371	108,578	83,050	85,176	548,433
Colorado State Parks	41,467	8,573	83,273	16,645	29,490	23,221	202,668
Other State Lands (Colorado State Forest Service, CDOT, Dept. of Corrections, etc).	12,755	0	5	0	0	23	12,783
Total Acres Managed by State Agencies							3,470,523

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

2.3.1 Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was created to develop, protect, and enhance Colorado’s natural resources for the use and enjoyment of the state’s present and future residents, as well as for visitors. Established in 1968, the DNR is comprised of nine divisions and overseen by the Executive Director’s Office (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Divisions within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources





Collectively these divisions, with the guidance of boards and commissions, fulfill the DNR's responsibilities for stewardship of water; outdoor recreation; minerals, energy and geology; wildlife; and land management. Over 1,500 employees and a \$198 million annual budget help accomplish the mission of the DNR.

While key state recreation management agencies within DNR have historically been Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), other agencies also manage lands with limited recreation or play supporting roles in providing recreation opportunities to the public. Those agencies within DNR that provide significant contributions to outdoor recreation are outlined in Table 5 and overviewed in the following section in descending order of total acres managed.



The SLB operates according to the following mission statement:

"To effectively manage trust assets for the beneficiaries through producing reasonable and consistent income over time and projecting and enhancing long term production and value through sound stewardship."

2.3.2 Colorado State Land Board (SLB)

When Colorado entered statehood in 1876, the federal government granted approximately 4.5 million acres of federal lands to the state. These lands were apportioned into eight trusts, the largest of which was granted to support common schools, termed "school lands." Today, the State Board of Land Commissioners, a six person commission, and Colorado State Land Board (SLB) staff manage all of these lands for the purpose of generating income for current and future citizens of Colorado.¹⁰ The SLB manages trust lands for ranching, farming, timber production, recreation, mineral, oil, and gas production, renewable energy development, and other uses. Individual parcels might have several different leases, including recreation.

The SLB is the largest state landholder in Colorado with approximately 2.7 million acres of surface land and another 1.5 million acres of mineral rights. Each year the SLB generates about \$60 million to support the eight trusts, the largest of which benefits kindergarten-12 grade public education in the state.¹¹

Because the SLB's first responsibility is to its trust beneficiaries, state trust lands are not considered 'public lands' in the same way Forest Service or BLM lands are managed. Unless a local government, state agency, or private individual has offered to pay for the right to have recreational use, and taken responsibility for managing that recreation, the land is closed to public recreation.

¹⁰State Land Board Frequently Asked Questions. Colorado State Land Board. 11 Apr. 2008 <<http://www.trustlands.state.co.us/Documents/Stewardship/STQ&A2.pdf>>.

¹¹Department of Natural Resources Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2008-09. Colorado Department of Natural Resources, 2007.



State Land Board voters directed the agency to create a Stewardship Trust (the Trust) which fluctuates between 295,000 and 300,000 acres, approximately 10% of the total lands maintained by SLB. Trust lands continue to be managed for long-term economic benefits but with special consideration for conserving natural resources. In 2008, there are 107 parcels spanning 296,200 acres in the Trust. One of the largest examples of trust lands is the 72,000-acre Colorado State Forest in Jackson County, which is managed by Colorado State Parks.

Recreation Opportunities

In recent years, SLB has increased its role as a contributor to recreation. As the second largest public land owner in Colorado, behind the federal government, the 2.7 million acres it manages are an important part of the open landscapes in Colorado. In 1993, CDOW and SLB partnered to permit wildlife-based recreation on about 500,000 acres of SLB through a lease agreement on State Trust Lands. Restricted hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching opportunities are permitted on these lands. In several cases, these tracts provide or improve access to adjacent state wildlife areas, state parks, BLM, or Forest Service properties.

CDOW Highlights:

- *Has taught more than 1,000 people wildlife viewing skills.*
- *Provided over 700 hunter education classes to over 17,000 students*
- *Educates 500,000 children annually about wildlife in Colorado through the Project WILD Program.*

2.3.3 Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)

CDOW operates according to the mission “to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state and provide people the opportunity to enjoy them.”¹² Through easements and leases, the CDOW protects habitat on nearly 550,000 acres. While CDOW has traditionally focused on providing opportunities for hunting and fishing, the agency has recently created more opportunities for non-consumptive wildlife recreation, particularly wildlife watching.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife protects the state’s 960 wildlife species; regulates hunting and fishing activities by issuing licenses and enforcing regulations; and manages 2,800 lakes, reservoirs and ponds, and more than 10,000 miles of streams.¹³ CDOW also oversees more than 450 sites that are open to public recreation, conducts research to improve wildlife management activities, provides technical assistance to private and other public landowners concerning wildlife and habitat management, and develops programs to protect and recover threatened and endangered species.

The Colorado Wildlife Commission, an eleven member board appointed by the Governor, establishes CDOW regulations and statewide policies relevant to Colorado’s wildlife species protection. It is also responsible for making decisions about buying or leasing property, determining public access, and for approving CDOW’s annual budget and long-term plans.

CDOW does not receive state tax revenue but instead relies on many other funding sources including hunting and fishing license fees, federal aid, and grants from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). In 2006, CDOW instituted the Habitat Conservation Stamp to supplement the CDOW’s work and is expected to generate over \$2 million annually. The stamp is required to access any State Wildlife Area (SWA) or State Trust Land that may be open to the public. In 2008, the charge for the stamp was \$5 if purchased in conjunction with a hunting or fishing license or \$10.25 if acquired separately.

¹²Colorado Division of Wildlife Strategic Plan. CDOW, 2002.

¹³Colorado Division of Wildlife Annual Report (2006).



Statewide Recreation Programs

The CDOW focuses on four primary programmatic areas: watchable wildlife, hunting, fishing, and non-game, threatened, and endangered species. CDOW is also involved in numerous partnerships and programs to accomplish its mission and programs.

Some of the major CDOW programs that are especially pertinent to outdoor recreation in Colorado include the Hunting and Fishing Registrations and Related Programs, Watchable Wildlife, the Wetlands Wildlife Conservation, Colorado Species Conservation Partnership, and Fishing is Fun programs.

According to CDOW, habitat loss is the most significant threat to wildlife in Colorado. Estimated habitat loss ranges from 42,000 to 120,000 acres each year.

The Colorado Birding Trail

To enable greater access to Colorado's birding and wildlife watching opportunities, CDOW and numerous other partners launched The Colorado Birding Trail (Birding Trail), a network of over 30,000 acres of public and private sites. While the Birding Trail encompasses some local trails, the sites are primarily connected by local and county roads. The majority of the trail features public sites but there are also many areas located on private lands that are now accessible to the public.

The Birding Trail is the result of a statewide initiative involving the CDOW, Colorado Audubon Society, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Colorado Field Ornithologists, Colorado State Parks, and Playa Lakes Joint Venture in partnership with Colorado residents and other important stakeholders. The goals of the Birding Trail are to promote wildlife viewing, outdoor recreation, resource conservation on private lands, and income for rural landowners and businesses.

The first phase of this statewide project was launched in Southeast Colorado in February 2007 and plans are currently underway to launch "trails" in the Southwest next.

Hunting and Fishing Registrations and Related Programs

Maintaining high-quality hunting and fishing opportunities throughout Colorado remains a core component of the mission of the CDOW. Hunting and fishing registrations are managed by the agency which help preserve an important part of Colorado's rich tradition and a significant economic contributor to state and local economies. In 2006, over 1.5 million hunting and fishing licenses were purchased, generating \$72.5 million for the agency.

The fishing program continues to expand due to additional fish production and stocking efforts, education and outreach programs (particularly to youth and women), marketing efforts, expanded access, and a free annual senior license. Aquatic staff employees spend considerable time collaborating and reaching out to the public through angler roundtables and also operate the valuable and highly popular weekly fishing report.

For the serious angler, the Aquatic Wildlife Section of the CDOW oversees the Master Angler Program which recognizes individuals who are considered to be extremely skillful in the sport. Certificates are issued in two categories and awarded based on fish length: fish which are caught and released and fish which are caught and kept.



The Fishing is Fun program involves local communities in a three-way partnership with CDOW and Federal Sportfish Restoration Act monies derived from fishing equipment, motorboat, and small engine fuel taxes. During three decades, over \$20 million in grants have been awarded in Colorado, with grants in nearly every county.

Hunting in Colorado is world-renowned, partly because of the high success rates, abundant public lands which provide hunting access, and healthy and abundant wildlife species and herds. Hunting, for many Coloradans, is not just a recreation activity, it is a source of sustenance and an important skill passed from generation to generation. Colorado continues to rank as one of the top western states for attracting out-of-state hunters. While traditionally a great deal of hunting in Colorado has been centered on bull elk, 2006 demonstrated a recent increase in deer hunting licenses and success rates. The Walk-in Access Program, which permits hunters to access private lands with permission, was expanded for the small game season in 2006 opening more than 200,000 acres of private lands to small game hunters, adding significant access to sites on the Western Slope and in Southeastern Colorado.¹⁴

Since its inception in 1997, the Colorado Wetlands Program has preserved, restored, enhanced or created almost 220,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent habitat and more than 200 miles of streams. The partnership is responsible for almost \$40 million in total funding devoted to wetland and riparian preservation in Colorado.

Watchable Wildlife Program

Nature enthusiasts continue to pursue wildlife watching in Colorado's outdoors to witness the diversity and abundance of species. To meet the demand for this popular pastime, CDOW has a watchable wildlife program that enhances wildlife viewing opportunities through interpretive signage, environmental education programs, viewing blinds and boardwalks. CDOW has five watchable wildlife coordinators headquartered in different regions across the state. Coordinators help organize and promote wildlife viewing festivals like the High Plains Snow Goose Festival in Lamar and the Sandhill Crane Festival in Monte Vista.¹⁵

Wetlands Wildlife Conservation Program (WWCP)

The WWCP protects wetlands and wetland-dependent wildlife through incentives and other voluntary means. Protection strategies include the following measures: restoration, resource management and the purchase of conservation easements or fee titles by land trusts, private landowners, non-government organizations or government agencies such as county and municipal open space programs, State Parks, or CDOW.¹⁶ For more details on this program, view the *Appendix D: Wetlands Component*.

Colorado Species Conservation Partnership

CDOW, GOCO, private landowners and non-governmental organizations created the Colorado Species Conservation Partnership, to prevent the further decline of Colorado's wildlife species and accomplish species conservation goals. The Conservation Partnership uses protection strategies that involve the use of habitat protection tools such as conservation easements, leases and management agreements that provide incentives to private landowners to actively assist with the management and protection of Colorado's declining species.

¹⁴Colorado Division of Wildlife Annual Report (2006). Colorado Division of Wildlife, 2007.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Colorado Division of Wildlife. 4 Apr. 2008 < <http://wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/WetlandsProgram/>>.



Recreation Opportunities

CDOW manages over 241 designated SWAs and an additional 216 State Trust Lands owned by the SLB.¹⁷ Activities vary at each site. Some sites offer activities like hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing, while others permit additional activities such as: boating, sail surfing, waterskiing, camping, hiking, and picnicking. Both warmwater and coldwater fishing at many SWAs including ice fishing and fly fishing. Hunting opportunities include waterfowl, turkey, small game, and big game. Some properties permit field trials, a form of wildlife-related recreation which, through training and competition, results in highly-trained hunting dogs which contribute to the overall improvement of hunting dog breeds and retrieval of game birds.

CDOW also manages Project WILD (WILD), a conservation and environmental education program for educators who teach all grades from kindergarten through high school. Since 1983, more than one million educators nationally have been certified in this interdisciplinary curriculum.

WILD has partnered with Colorado chapters of Project Learning Tree (PLT), Project WET (WET), and Project Food, Land & People (FLP) to further assist educators to reach out to students to learn fundamental conservation and environmental concepts. Collaborating in this way strengthens all of these programs and integrates all aspects of our natural world—wildlife, landscapes, water, agriculture, and human population.

To learn more visit: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/Education/TeacherResources/ProjectWild>

-- Project WILD website, CDOW, June 2008

2.3.4 Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (State Parks)

Colorado State Parks manages 44 parks that protect over 178,000 acres of land and 46,000 acres of water in Colorado, and is considered a leader in providing outdoor recreation.¹⁸ State Parks are a vital cornerstone in Colorado's economy and quality of life, offering quality outdoor recreation destinations across the state. State Parks owns about 22% of the lands it manages. Remaining lands are managed via lease agreements in partnership with other federal, local, and private entities (Figure 7).

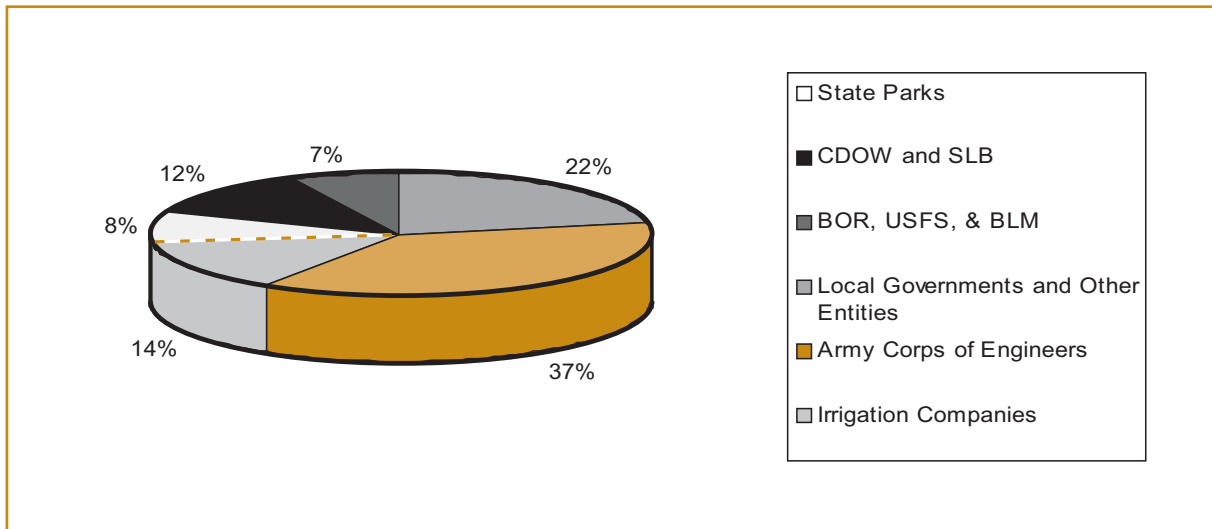
It is the mission of State Parks "To be leaders in providing outdoor recreation through the stewardship of Colorado's natural resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of present and future generations."

¹⁷Colorado Division of Wildlife. 4 Apr. 2008 <<http://wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/StateTrustLands/>>.

¹⁸Stanton and Lone Mesa State Parks are not currently open to the public.



Figure 7: Ownership of Lands Managed by State Parks



Source: Colorado State Parks Annual Report, 2007

The State Board of Parks & Outdoor Recreation, a five-member citizen board appointed by the Governor, provides policy guidance for the agency over a four-year term. Members include representatives from the North, West, South, and Metro regions and one at-large member. Supervision of park operations is divided among three geographic areas: the High Plains, Rocky Mountains, and Southeast regions. Operation centers are located in Denver, Littleton, Clifton, and Colorado Springs.

Statewide Recreation Programs

Along with managing parks, the Division is active in statewide recreation programs and efforts to protect and preserve Colorado's ecosystems. The agency manages or partners in a number of programs that have far-reaching impacts across the state and extend well beyond the boundaries of state parks.

Some of the statewide recreation programs within State Parks are detailed in Table 6 and further described in the next section. Registration trends for boating vessels, river outfitters, off-highway vehicles, and snowmobiles are provided in *Section 3: Outdoor Recreation Trends*.

Table 6: Statewide Recreation Programs Managed by State Parks

Statewide Recreation Program	Overview
Colorado State Trails Program	Awards over \$3 million in grants annually through LWCF, GOCO, Colorado Lottery, Recreational Trails Program, and OHV and Snowmobile registrations
Boat Safety and Vessel Registration Program	Promotes safe, enjoyable boating experiences and training and registers about 100,000 vessels annually
Commercial River Outfitter Licensing	Registers nearly 170 outfitters each year
Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Registration Program	Registers nearly 131,000 OHVs annually
Snowmobile Registration Program	Registers about 34,000 snowmobiles each year
Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP)	Protects, preserves, and enhances 103 natural area sites in Colorado that have diverse or unique biological assets

Source: Colorado State Trails Program and Colorado Natural Areas Program, 2008



The Colorado State Trails Program (State Trails Program)

This program provides assistance through grants and expertise for the development of trails throughout Colorado. The Program is responsible for distributing between \$2 and \$3 million in trail grants every year, which are funded through the Colorado Lottery, Great Outdoors Colorado, Off-highway vehicle (OHV) and snowmobile registrations, LWCF, and federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) awards.

Almost \$82 million in grants has been awarded through the State Trails Program since 1971.¹⁹ To view grants awarded through the Trails Program by county and SCORP region, view the regional profiles in Section 2: SCORP Regional Profiles.

An eight member State Trails Committee is appointed by the State Parks Board and is comprised of citizens representing each of Colorado's Congressional Districts (and one at-large). The Committee provides guidance on program policies and plays an active role in reviewing and approving the annual Trails Program grants.

The Trails Program also provides technical assistance, helps organize volunteers, and coordinates with other agencies, partners, and trail foundations. The Trails Program is a resource for individuals, non-profit organizations, local communities, and state and federal agencies and assists in all aspects of trail planning and development for motorized and non-motorized uses.

The State Trails Program contains many programs which meet the needs of multiple users. Because of their statewide contribution to outdoor recreation, some of the individual programs within the State Trails Program are outlined below.

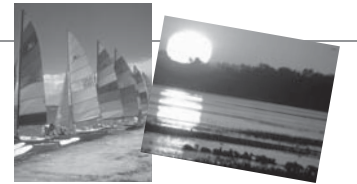
The Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT)

Under the leadership of the State Parks Board and in collaboration with over 500 partners, with partial funding from GOCO, the State Trails Program is spearheading an ambitious initiative to build The Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT), a contiguous trail that will parallel Colorado's Front Range from Wyoming to New Mexico. A 900-mile network of interconnected pedestrian and bicycle trails is envisioned, using existing trails and creating additional connectors. According to the CFRT Implementation Plan, the 14 counties that encompass the CFRT could benefit from a direct economic impact of approximately \$1.3 to \$2.0 billion over the next 25 years.

With 295 miles of the trail already built, and 100 miles more in the planning and design phases, the vision of the CFRT is becoming reality. The CFRT will be a unique legacy that will enrich Colorado's tourism and recreation resources, as well as the heritage and health of residents and visitors.

*More information and detailed maps are available at:
<http://parks.state.co.us/Trails/ColoradoFrontRangeTrail>*

¹⁹Newman, W. Alternative Funding Strategy for the Colorado State Trails Program. 2006.



The LWCF Program is overseen by State Parks, the statutorily-designated agency in Colorado which distributes and manages stateside LWCF allocations. Within State Parks, the State Trails Program administers the LWCF program. Staff is responsible for administering the grants, providing expertise to local governments, and monitoring sites for compliance with federal guidelines. Through 2008, approximately 1,115 projects have been funded through LWCF grants since the 1960's, totaling over \$59 million.

The **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with funds from the Federal Highway Trust Fund. These monies are derived from a portion of the motor fuel excise tax for fuel used for by snowmobiles, OHVs, and off-highway light trucks. RTP funds help states develop and maintain recreational trails and facilities for both non-motorized and motorized uses.²⁰ Communities, non-profits, and federal agencies compete for trail planning, design, construction, and maintenance project grants through the annual State Trails Program grants process. Since 2003, over \$13 million in RTP funds have been granted through the State Trails Program.²¹

The Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Registration Program improves and enhances motorized recreation opportunities across the state while promoting safe, responsible use for OHVs. Administration of the program includes:

- Registering over 131,000 vehicles in 2007;
- Allocating between \$1.5 - \$2.0 million in annual grants to agencies and non-profits to construct and maintain OHV trails;
- Providing information and awareness on the availability of off-highway vehicle recreational opportunities;
- Promoting of off-highway OHV vehicle safety;
- Establishing and maintaining OHV routes, parking areas, and facilities; and
- Purchase or lease of private land for the purposes of access to public land for OHV uses.

Funding for these activities is derived from OHV vehicle registration fees.²²

The Snowmobile Registration Program provides the funding base for the mandatory safety certification of young operators, enforcement of registration requirements, trail marking and signing, and the establishment and grooming of snowmobile trails and related facilities. The program also funds the Snowmobile Safety Certification Program. State Parks has managed the Snowmobile Program since it was developed in 1977. Through a longstanding partnership with the Colorado Snowmobile Association (CSA), this program has grown substantially over the years. Over 34,000 machines were registered in 2007, a 167% increase since the program began in 1972.²³

Statewide Trails Mapping Project

The Trails Program, in partnership with GOCO, is currently gathering Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data to inventory and track all trails in Colorado. This information will help streamline information about Colorado's extensive network of trails and will be a useful planning tool for managers as well as a valuable resource for trail users. Organizers are currently creating a pilot project for Larimer County that will serve as a model for statewide data.

Snowmobile registration funds assist community-based clubs to groom about 2,700 miles of winter trails annually through over \$700,000 dollars in grants each year.

²⁰FHWA Recreational Trails Program. 5 May 2008 <www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails>.

²¹Ibid.

²²Colorado State Parks. 5 May 2008 <<http://parks.state.co.us/OHVandSnowmobiles/OHVProgram/OHVRegistrations/>>.

²³Metsa, T. "2007 Registrations for OHV, Boat, and Snows." Email to the author. 9 Apr. 2008.



The Boat Safety and Vessel Registration Program is part of state implementation of the federal Boat Safety Act. State Parks is responsible for registration of all water-going vessels including sailboats, canoes, motorboats, and personal watercraft and for providing boat safety education. The Boat Safety Program also promotes safe operating and works to improve boating experiences.

Funding for the Boat Safety Program is supported through boat registration fees, fees paid from boat safety courses, and federal funds from the U.S. Coast Guard which also support boating activities within State Parks and boat patrolling at lakes, reservoirs, and rivers statewide. The Boat Vessel Registration program registered nearly 100,000 boats in 2007.

Snowmobile registration funds assist community-based clubs to groom about 2,700 miles of winter trails annually through over \$700,000 dollars in grants each year.

The River Outfitter Licensing Program is responsible for licenses and regulation of commercial river outfitters to ensure the safety and welfare of commercial passengers engaged in river running activities. The Commercial River Outfitter Licensing Program registered 167 outfitters in 2007.²⁴ Funding for these activities comes from license fees paid by river outfitters.

The River Outfitter Licensing Program was established by the Colorado Legislature in 1984. The program gave responsibility to the Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for enacting rules and regulations necessary to govern the annual licensing for river outfitters, regulate river outfitters, and ensuring the safety of river running activities. In order to enforce the state statutes and the Parks Board regulations pertaining to the river outfitter-licensing program, State Parks employs temporary state peace officers that serve as “river rangers” during the peak summer rafting season.

Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) Another statewide program within State Parks is the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP). Through a statewide system of designated natural areas, CNAP preserves, protects, and enhances areas in the state which have diverse or unique native plant communities, special geologic and paleontology features, and/or habitats for rare or endangered plants and animals for education and scientific research. Sites qualify as Natural Areas when they contain at least one unique or high quality feature of statewide significance including: native plant communities, geologic formations, fossils, or habitat for rare plants or animals.

Since 1977, CNAP has completed many milestones towards conserving lands within Colorado:

- *Designated 78 and registered 25 natural area sites across 141,000 acres*
- *Designated 140,090 acres and registered 51,266 acres as natural areas*
- *Written statewide manuals about native plant revegetation, weed management, and wetland management*
- *Recorded 159 designated rare, threatened, or endangered species and communities*

²⁴Ibid.



The Colorado Natural Areas Act (33-33 C.R.S. 2004) was created in 1977 with a Legislative Declaration recognizing the existing and potential threats to the diverse ecological communities of Colorado. The CNAP is mandated to identify outstanding natural features throughout the state, recognize landowners for their stewardship efforts, and work with interested landowners to maintain important parts of Colorado's natural heritage.

All management agreements are voluntary and official designation of sites as Natural Areas is authorized upon recommendation by the CNAP Council (Council). The Council oversees activities of CNAP, and is composed of seven members representing the State Parks Board, State Board of Land Commissioners, Colorado Wildlife Commission, and four citizens appointed by the Governor.²⁵

Recreation Opportunities

Varied landscapes provide diverse backdrops for numerous recreation experiences at the 44 state parks in Colorado. Twenty-one parks are reservoir-based, eight are river corridor parks, and fifteen are categorized as "scenic parks." Some of the agency's most popular facilities include 64 cabins, yurts, and tipis available to rent, over 4,000 campsites, and 14 marinas.²⁶

Visitors come to pursue a variety of interests at Colorado's 44 state parks: fishing, camping, hiking, boating, biking, picnicking, rock climbing, wildlife watching, ice fishing, water skiing, horseback riding, nature study, skating, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, jet skiing, environmental education programs, and more. State Park campgrounds offer pull-in, tent, and backcountry camping.

Designated Natural Areas, managed by the Colorado Natural Areas Program, offer additional limited opportunities for passive recreation including environmental education and interpretation activities, nature study and photography, and wildlife watching.

2.3.5 Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), an agency of Colorado State University, provides numerous services that help ensure the health and viability of Colorado's forests which are an important part of outdoor recreation. The CSFS offers citizens an easily accessible source of professional and technical forestry assistance along with educational outreach.

The modern CSFS was created in 1955 to protect and improve the environment through sound forestry practices and conservation education. The CSFS uses a stewardship approach to encourage landowners to meet individual objectives for their property and maintain or improve overall forest health (which subsequently improves watershed conditions, wildlife habitat, and recreation resources). Nineteen field offices around the state help facilitate interaction and education with landowners, communities, and other agencies.

²⁵"Colorado Natural Areas Program." 27 Feb. 2008 <<http://parks.state.co.us/NaturalResources/CNAP/>>.

²⁶ [Colorado State Parks Annual Report](#). Colorado State Parks. 2007.



CSFS actively works to improve the overall health of Colorado's forests by preventing and mitigating wildfires and insect infestations such as bark beetles. The CSFS is a partner of the Northern Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative which is collaboratively managing bark beetle epidemics while attempting to reduce the associated wildfire hazards.²⁷ For more details on bark beetle infestations in Colorado, refer to *Section 6: Priority Issues and Influences*.

Recreation Opportunities

The CSFS and State Parks collectively manage the 72,000-acre Colorado State Forest, located in Northern Colorado, a unique Colorado SLB State Trust property used for forestry, grazing, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The State Forest's recreational uses are administered by Colorado State Parks, which has leased the area for public recreation from the Colorado Board of Land Commissioners since 1972. The State Forest offers many recreational possibilities including backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, lake and stream fishing, wildlife watching, camping, and four-wheeling. Snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are popular winter pursuits.

CWCB's Mission Statement:

To conserve, develop, protect and manage Colorado's water for present and future generations.

2.3.6 Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)

Since 1937, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has been the state executive branch agency responsible for water policy and planning, which greatly influences the availability of many outdoor recreation activities in Colorado.

The major programs of the CWCB include:

- Water Supply Protection
- Watershed Protection and Flood Mitigation
- Stream and Lake Protection
- Water Supply Planning and Finance
- Conservation and Drought Planning
- Intrastate Water Management and Development
- Water Information and Education



The CWCB is responsible for the appropriation, acquisition, and protection of instream flows and natural lake level water rights to preserve the natural environment to a reasonable degree. The agency operates under the direction of a 15-member board comprised of representatives from eight major river basins and the City and County of Denver plus the DNR Executive Director, the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Colorado Attorney General, the State Engineer, the CDOW Director, and the CWCB Director.²⁸

²⁷U.S. Forest Service Region 2, Northern Colorado Bark Beetle Collaborative. 28 Jan. 2008. <www.fs.fed.us/r2/mbr/resources/BarkBeetles/NCBBC_2006_wrapup.pdf>.

²⁸Colorado Water Conservation Board Strategic Plan (1994, Re-Adopted in 2006). Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2006.



2.3.7 Division of Water Resources

The Division of Water Resources administers and enforces all surface and ground water rights throughout Colorado, water well permits, approves construction and repair of dams, and enforces interstate hydrology compacts. The Division of Water Resources is also responsible for implementing and enforcing the statutes of the Ground Water Management Act passed by the State Legislature as well as implementing applicable rules and policies adopted by the Colorado Ground Water Commission.

While the agency does not provide direct recreation services, it does oversee many areas that impact outdoor activities. The agency is responsible for meeting the ever increasing challenges of water origin issues, reserved rights, wetlands protection and management, endangered species recovery, and interstate water issues on an already limited water supply.²⁹

Since the creation of the State's Instream Flow Program in 1973, the CWCB has appropriated instream flow water rights on more than 8,000 miles of streams and 475 natural lakes in the state. Instream flows affect recreation opportunities, particularly whitewater rafting, kayaking, boating, and shoreline uses such as camping and fishing.

2.4 Local Governments

While state and federal agencies manage the majority of acreage available for recreation, much of the actual use occurs on sites managed by local entities. In fact, 66% of all Coloradans travel less than ten miles to recreate during weekdays and 22% of residents recreate at parks or open spaces or use trails at least once a week. Therefore, most weekday recreation takes place on nearby lands and facilities managed by local agencies.³⁰

The distribution of lands managed by cities, counties, metro districts, school districts, and special districts is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: Acres Managed by Type of Local Government and by SCORP Region

Local Agencies							
Land Manager	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	Total by Manager
City	153,726	34	3,709	6,729	15,320	2,846	182,363
County	148,811	55	4,946	0	5,329	195	159,337
Joint City & County	223	0	1,570	0	0	0	2,728
Metro District	6,156	0	10	0	0	0	6,167
School District	3,195	24	103	449	8	94	3,874
Special District	3,456	0	2	0	0	0	3,458
Total Acres Managed by Local Governments							357,927

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

²⁹Colorado Division of Water Resources Annual Report, 2006.

³⁰Horvath, 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.

SCORP



Nearly 450 municipalities, counties, and special districts supply recreation for Colorado's citizens and manage nearly 360,000 acres of public lands.^{31,32} Local agencies must frequently assess public demands and preferences in order to respond to the recreation preferences of their customers. They also must serve a rapidly growing population and meet the needs of many different segments of the community's population, which often creates funding challenges. Local providers increasingly leverage their limited budgets through partnerships and public/private cost share programs.

Most local governments tend to focus on developed sites with facilities such as ballfields for team sports, tennis and basketball courts, swimming pools, and golf courses. At the same time, agencies recognize their critical role in conserving natural open space, particularly in urbanized areas. The 140 agencies that responded to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey reportedly manage over 1,800 parks with developed facilities spanning nearly 49,000 acres. Approximately 53,000 open spaces 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 maintained by these local government agencies (Table 8).^{33,34}

2007 SCORP Local Government Survey respondents:

- 89 towns and cities
- 20 counties
- 12 special districts
- 19 school districts

While the more urban county governments often feature active parks and open space programs, rural counties tend to defer to their municipalities and special recreation districts to finance services and facilities. Some communities have chosen to establish special districts in order to focus dedicated taxes on recreation resources. Special districts can be particularly effective in regionalizing recreation across community boundaries, such as the South Suburban and Foothills Parks and Recreation Districts in the Denver metro area.



³¹Thayer, C. "Local Governments List." 5 Jan. 2007.

³²Wilcox, 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>>.

³³2007 SCORP Local Government Survey. Colorado State Parks. 2007.

³⁴These statistics represent the 140 local government agencies responding to the 2007 SCORP Local Government Survey.



Table 8: Inventory of Local Government Facilities Statewide and by Region

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: 2007 Local Government Survey, Part I: Questions 1-37

More information about the Local Government Survey and the important role of local agencies in outdoor recreation can be found in Section 5: SCORP Regional Profiles.

2.5 Outdoor Recreation Partners

2.5.1 Funding Sources

This section highlights important sources of funding for outdoor recreation and open space projects. Many state agencies and local governments rely on funding from a variety of sources, particularly the Colorado Lottery and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which are highlighted in the following section.





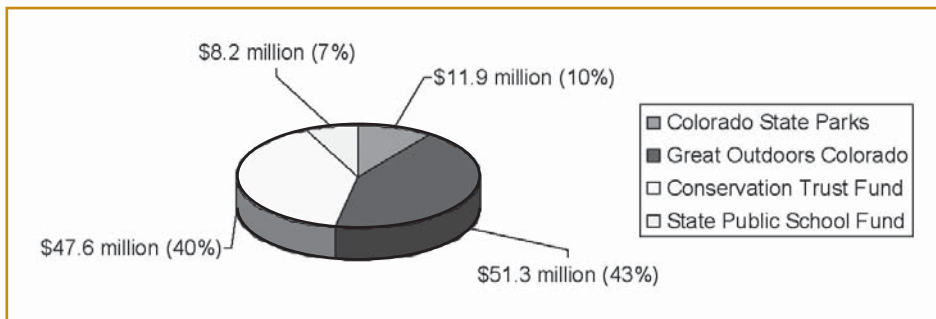
Colorado Lottery



In 1982, the Colorado General Assembly approved the Colorado Lottery, as a state-supervised division of the Colorado Department of Revenue. The Colorado Lottery was created to maximize revenues which are distributed to four recipients. By statute, the Colorado Lottery distributes 50% of its proceeds to Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), 10% to Colorado State Parks, and 40% to the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) which is distributed to local governments by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). Since GOCO is capped at \$35 million (according to 1992 dollars and adjusted for inflation), funds in excess of the cap are directed to the State Public School Fund. Distribution of Colorado Lottery proceeds for 2007 are illustrated in Figure 8.

Efforts are underway to increase Colorado Lottery revenues to expand its contributions to beneficiaries. This campaign involves creating additional publicity and advertising of the Colorado Lottery games, expanding the number of games available, and increasing the number of retailers offering lottery games from 2,900 to at least 3,000 statewide.³⁵

Figure 8: Distribution of Colorado Lottery Proceeds in 2007



Source: Colorado Lottery, 2008

“When Colorado plays the Lottery, everyone wins.”

Since 1982, the Colorado Lottery has invested over \$2 billion in the state via its beneficiaries by:

- *Protecting 718,171 acres —ensuring preservation of open spaces for future generations*
- *Creating, restoring, or enhancing 47,676 acres of wetlands and 213 miles of stream through the Colorado Wetlands Program*
- *Acquiring 21,947 acres for future State Parks or for buffers and in-holdings at existing State Parks.*
- *Building or maintaining 700 miles of trails through the State Trails Program*
- *Creating or improving over 1,000 community parks and outdoor recreation sites through GOCO*
- *Establishing 200 wildlife-viewing areas*

³⁵Colorado Lottery 25th Anniversary Fact Book. Colorado Lottery. 2007.



Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)



In 1992, residents of Colorado voted to approve a Constitutional amendment that required allocating 50% of Colorado Lottery proceeds to the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Trust Fund.³⁶ The GOCO Trust Fund allocates grants for projects that preserve, protect, and enhance Colorado's wildlife, parks, rivers, trails, and open spaces. The creation of GOCO has provided Colorado with unique opportunities to fund programs that are critical to the protection and continued support of our natural heritage, quality of life, recreational amenities, and working landscapes.

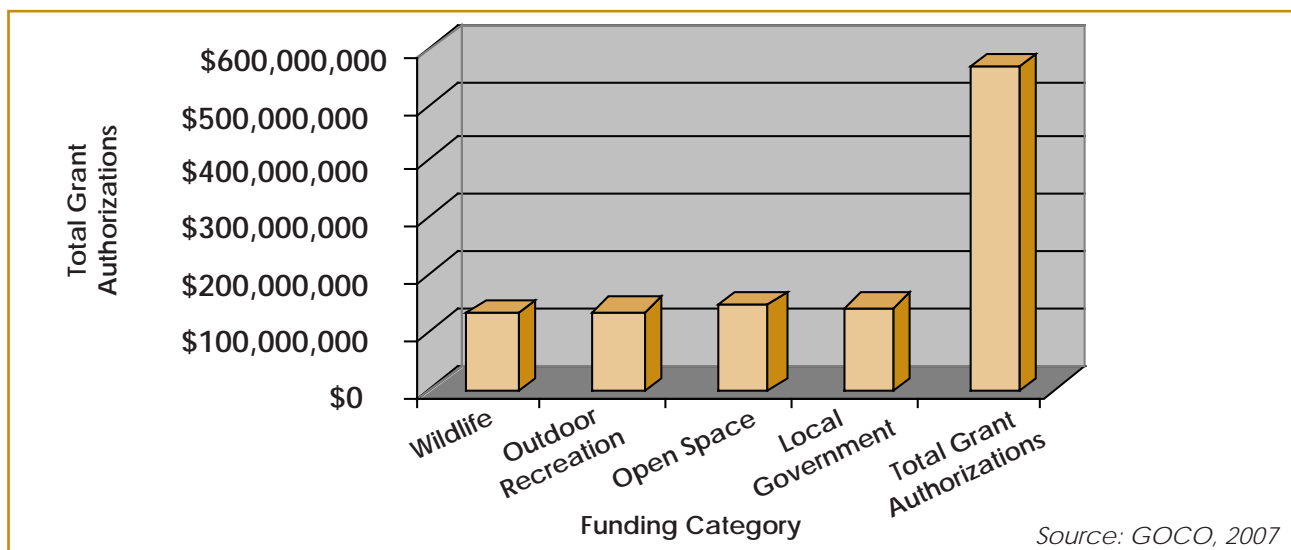
Since its inception in 1994, GOCO has awarded almost \$570 million for more than 2,700 projects throughout the state.

GOCO's funding is capped at \$35 million a year with annual inflation adjustments and if GOCO's share exceeds that amount, the remainder goes into the State Public School Fund. In Fiscal Year 2006-2007, the adjusted GOCO cap totaled \$51.3 million, therefore, \$8.2 million in remaining Colorado Lottery proceeds was directed to the State Public School Fund.³⁷ The Colorado Constitution requires GOCO to allocate its proceeds for four purposes in substantially equal portions over time (Figure 9):

- Investments in wildlife through the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW).
- Investments in outdoor recreation resources through Colorado State Parks.
- Competitive grants to acquire and manage open space to Colorado State Parks and CDOW, and to counties, municipalities, or other political subdivisions of the state, or non-profit land conservation organizations.
- Competitive matching grants to local governments or other entities which are eligible for distributions from the CTF, to acquire, develop, or manage open lands and parks.

For more information on GOCO awards, and the CTF, by county and region, refer to Section 5: SCORP Regional Profiles.

Figure 9: GOCO Grants by Category (1994-2007)



³⁶Aside from interest income, the Colorado Lottery is GOCO's sole funding source.

³⁷GOCO Annual Report FY 2007. Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). Denver, 2008.



Private Industry Partners

Private industry partners provide a critical role in supporting outdoor recreation in Colorado. While many businesses are retail-based, others connect users to outdoor recreation, such as outfitters and guides. Industry groups, like the Colorado River Outfitters Association, represent and advocate for specific interest groups. Because of the enormity of businesses supporting outdoor recreation in the state, this section addresses only the umbrella organizations representing the individual businesses (Table 9). Trends related to these industries are located in *Section 3: Recreation Trends*.

Table 9: Private Industry Associations in Colorado (listed alphabetically)³⁸

	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Details
Colorado Campground and Lodge Owners Association	CCLOA	CCLOA has represented privately-owned campgrounds, RV parks, cabins, and lodges in Colorado since 1968. Currently, over 100 members utilize the networking, support services, and promotion efforts offered by the organization. The CCLOA mission is to "be the voice of the Colorado RV park and campground industry by promoting the continued growth and success of our members as they provide a quality camping experience."
Colorado Outfitters Association		The Colorado Outfitters Association members are professionals who are registered, bonded and insured to ensure clients' safety and enhance people's experiences in the outdoors. Over the years, the organization has worked to improve the outfitting industry's standards and overall quality of services.
Colorado River Outfitters Association	CROA	Members of CROA guide the majority of rafters on Colorado's whitewater rivers. Representing 55 licensed outfitters, CROA serves to provide support and create a united voice for state river conservation issues as well as promote safe whitewater boating practices for commercial and private river rafters. CROA operates an industry web site for consumers and also compiles economic impact data and statistics about the industry. In addition, CROA helps ensure member's commitment to safety, water and natural resource conservation and professional conduct.
Colorado Ski Country USA	CSCUSA	CSCUSA is the not-for-profit trade association representing 26 ski and snowboard resorts in Colorado. The organization offers many important services including providing snow reports, helps educate users about the skiing safety code, promoting Colorado's ski industry, and publishing the <i>Colorado Winter Vacation Planner</i> .
Outdoor Industry Association	OIA	The Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) represents over 4,000 manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, sales representatives, and retailers in the active outdoor recreation industry and has a regional office in Boulder. OIA also conducts market and social research and sets industry standards. The organization provides support to its members through policy development and legislative efforts, training, and education. The OIA also founded and operates the Outdoor Industry Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to fostering active outdoor recreation pursuits. More information on the OIF is included in the Non-profit Organizations table (Table 10).

2.5.2 Non-Profit Organizations

Colorado is dependent on the substantial initiatives of a diverse and active non-profit community which serve vital roles such as providing outdoor recreation programs, promoting land stewardship, disseminating information, and organizing volunteer opportunities. These organizations support land managers, outdoor recreation businesses, and recreationists throughout the state. In addition to the major organizations described in Table 10, numerous other community-based and regional non-profits actively engage Coloradans and their visitors in the outdoors. Many of these organizations are listed in Information Resources (Appendix C). Only organizations with a statewide focus are included.

³⁸Note: Industry organizations may also be non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 status.

Table 10: Non-Profit Organizations (Listed Alphabetically)

Non-Profit Organizations	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Details
Colorado Audubon Society	Audubon	Audubon Colorado has 11 chapters statewide focused on wildlife enjoyment and conservation. These chapters work in nearly every part of the state to encourage people to protect, restore, and enjoy Colorado's natural wonders. They focus particularly on birds and other wildlife through education, research, resource conservation, and advocacy.
Bicycle Colorado	Bicycle Colorado	Bicycle Colorado is a statewide coalition of individuals, organizations, and bicycle-related businesses who promote and encourage bicycling, bicycle safety, improve conditions and provide a voice for cyclists in Colorado. Bicycle Colorado provides a variety of programs and services to help people enjoy bicycling safely and responsibly. Bicycle Colorado also manages the Safe Routes to School Program which is a national initiative to return kids to the once common act of biking or walking to school.
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education	CAEE	CAEE works to advance environmental education in Colorado. The organization is dedicated to supporting and promoting quality environmental education opportunities by facilitating communication, coordination and professional development among the varied environmental education programs in the state. CAEE serves the shared interests of public agencies, businesses, teachers, community organizations, and individuals involved in the environmental education community. Some of CAEE's accomplishments and programs include: community-based EE network development, competency guidelines for environmental educators, curriculum content standards correlations, and an online database which provides statewide information about public program opportunities.
Colorado Backcountry Horsemen	CBH	CBH, a member of the Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA), is a service organization who volunteers in the backcountry of Colorado and educates backcountry users on responsible equine recreation. Eight chapters help enact these goals across the state, focusing on trail maintenance and Leave No Trace ethics. Each year, members donate nearly 10,000 hours of volunteer time to maintain and improve public lands. As a result, the CBH also contributes to quality trail experiences for not just equestrians but also other trail users.
Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition	COHVCO	COHVCO represents and educates OHV/recreationists in the protection and promotion of off-highway motorized recreation throughout Colorado. COHVCO represents 50 community-based member organizations which are comprised of OHV, ATV, dirt bike, four-wheel drive, and snowmobile enthusiasts. COHVCO promotes responsible use and conservation of public lands and natural resources and works closely with the State Parks OHV Program to develop and promote trail systems, permit management, and public lands management programs such as the development of youth conservation corps, participation in Colorado's public lands travel management planning process, and the educational "Stay the Trail Campaign" are some of COHVCO's major initiatives.
Continental Divide Trail Association	CDTA	The Continental Divide Trail Alliance (CDTA) assists federal recreation agencies in the completion, management, and protection of the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). Nearly 3,000 members of the CDTA network help promote public involvement, volunteer commitment, and financial support for the CDT. Since forming in 1995, approximately 9,500 CDTA volunteers have spent nearly 25 million hours of their time and \$14 million in donations have been secured to support trail completion and maintenance; and 2,650 miles of the CDT have been completed.
Colorado Ducks Unlimited		Over 10,000 members of Colorado Ducks Unlimited have raised over \$726,000 to conserve nearly 74,000 acres of wetlands and waterfowl habitat in the state to continue Colorado's long tradition of waterfowl hunting and wildlife viewing.
Colorado Fourteeners Initiative	CFI	Formed in 1994, CFI is a partnership of nonprofit organizations, concerned individuals, and public agencies to protect and preserve the natural integrity of Colorado's Fourteeners and associated high-quality recreational opportunities. Over 500 volunteers have participated in trail maintenance, trail construction, and trail restoration projects. CFI also coordinates trail designation work on 17 Fourteeners. CFI conducts trail and restoration projects on Fourteeners to create and/or delineate sustainable routes on the peaks and restore past impacts. Volunteers, including "Peak Stewards" who hike to collect information and promote Leave No Trace ethics, are a vital part of these efforts.
Colorado Horse Council	CoHoCo	CoHoCo engages a substantial network of community horse organizations in monitoring state and local activity regarding the use of equines on public land. These organizations are the leading advocates for inclusion of equine trails in community, regional, and public lands trail systems. Through several Rocky Mountain Horse expos across Colorado, CoHoCo aims to reach out to engage stakeholders and accomplish outreach and education efforts.





Table 10: Non-Profit Organizations, Cont'd.

Non-Profit Organizations	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Details
Colorado Mountain Club	CMC	Developed in 1912, the CMC's mission is to gather and disseminate information about Colorado's mountains, to furnish facilities for the enjoyment and study of the mountains, and to advocate for the preservation of the environment. CMC manages and maintains 100 miles of trails, 100 miles of roads, and 100 miles of ski runs. CMC also operates the Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum in Golden which opened in winter of 2008.
Colorado Parks and Recreation Association	CPRA	The CPRA serves local government recreation agencies in a variety of roles and is comprised of over 1,000 individual members representing 140 agencies throughout Colorado. CPRA provides training and certification for parks and recreation professionals, serves as a voice for the recreation community, offers grants programs for professionals and students, and promotes communication and information sharing among professionals, communities, and the public.
Colorado Horse Development Authority	CHDA	The CHDA provides programs to stimulate Colorado's multi-billion dollar horse industry. Established in 1988 through legislation, CHDA is funded through a fee assessment on brand inspections. CHDA has educated horse owners and the general public on equine health, land management, land use regulations. CHDA also works to increase youth involvement in equestrian activities through the "Ag in the Classroom" program which has reached 66,000 youth to date.
Colorado Wildlife Federation		The Colorado Wildlife Federation, a state affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, is one of the state's oldest wildlife organizations and is comprised of members who are hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers invested in sound stewardship of the state's wildlife resources. The mission of the organization is "to serve as determined stewards of our state's wildlife, winter range, migration corridors, reproduction areas and the waterways they depend on to survive." The organization actively advocates on behalf of issues that impact wildlife including oil and gas leases, rules affecting roadless areas, land use, and land auctions. The Colorado Wildlife Federation also offers nature education programs for school-aged children.
Colorado Youth Corps Association	CYCA	Launched as an initiative in 1987 by GOCO and several private funders, CYCA develops and maintains a network of 11 accredited regional youth conservation corps programs that preserve and enhance the environment by employing youth in construction and maintenance on trail, parks, and stewardship projects. These opportunities not only provide income to participants but also instill environmental ethics in participants while protecting Colorado's natural resources. Since its inception, over 6,300 youth have participated in the program and the number of local youth corps groups have more than doubled. Areas of focus for conservation projects include trail building, community park and recreation agencies, State Parks, COOW, NPS, Forest Service, Continental Divide Trail Alliance, Colorado Fourteens Initiative, COHCO, and various land trusts.
High Mountain Institute	HMI	HMI is an educational non-profit located in Leadville that was founded in 1995 to combine wilderness education with traditional academics. HMI has served over 600 students from across the nation. The most renowned program offered is the "Rocky Mountain Semester," an academic and wilderness program for college-bound high school juniors. In addition, HMI offers summer programs, wilderness medicine, avalanche courses, professional development seminars for educators, and program development services for smaller outdoor programs.
International Mountain Bicycling Association	IMBA	IMBA is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado and creates, enhances, and preserves trail opportunities for mountain bikers worldwide. The IMBA network includes over 32,000 members and 450 bicycle clubs. IMBA is regarded as the premier resource for Colorado recreation agencies to plan, build, and maintain trail networks for mountain bike use. Since 1988, IMBA has been advocating for low-impact riding, organized volunteer trailwork participation, cooperated with numerous other trail user groups, and coordinated grassroots advocacy to develop innovative trail management solutions.
National Wildlife Federation	NWF	NWF's Rocky Mountain Natural Resource Center is located in Boulder and supports NWF's overall national efforts to preserve and protect wildlife on public lands. Specific areas of focus in Colorado are: protecting and restoring wildlife habitat on tribal lands, strengthening protection for critical migratory bird habitat along the Central Platte River, providing training and resources to classroom educators and landowners on the importance of providing wildlife habitat in their own backyards, and promoting environmental education throughout the state. The Colorado Wildlife Federation, the state affiliate of NWF, is also listed separately in this table.
Outdoor Industry Foundation	OIF	The OIF was established by the Outdoor Industry Association to inspire future generations of outdoor recreationists. OIF's vision is to increase active outdoor recreation throughout the country.



Table 10: Non-Profit Organizations, Cont'd.

Non-Profit Organizations	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Details
Outward Bound Wilderness	Outward Bound	Headquartered in Golden, Colorado, Outward Bound is one of the largest providers of wilderness-based education in the U.S., offering more than 500 expeditionary courses for all age groups. Courses are offered to a variety of groups including business professionals seeking team-building experiences, women, urban youth, and at-risk youth. Over 500,000 alumni have participated in these programs. One of the group's core programs is <i>Intercept</i> , which immerses at-risk teenagers and young adults in outdoor adventures. Outward Bound also helps influence school curriculum, provides classroom opportunities, and advocates for quality wilderness experiences on federal, state, and private lands throughout Colorado and the western United States.
Outdoor Recreation Information Center	ORIC	The ORIC is a unique partnership among the Forest Service, State Parks, CMC, USGS, NPS, BLM, CDOW, and REI that provides comprehensive outdoor recreation and public lands information at the REI Flagship Store in Denver and through their website (www.oriconline.org). ORIC volunteers provide information about recreation activities and sites, Leave No Trace ethics, and safety in the backcountry.
Rocky Mountain Field Institute	RMFI	RMFI is based in Colorado Springs and is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of wildlands and natural areas through environmental stewardship, research, and education. RMFI works in the Southern Rockies and Colorado Plateau Region and offers environmental service opportunities ranging from one day programs to extended internships like the 28-day Earth Corps program. RMFI has provided the leadership for a number of important trails and recreational management initiatives including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, the Eldorado Canyon Trails Project, and the Shelf Road and Penitente Canyon Site Development Projects.
Rocky Mountain Recreation Initiative	RMRI	RMRI's mission is to advocate for recreation policies that protect wildlife habitat and sensitive plant and animal communities on Colorado public lands through sound biological principles and proven conservation techniques. RMRI works with the Forest Service and BLM on travel planning to reduce habitat fragmentation and ensure the integrity of large-scale ecosystems. RMRI also works to protect hiking and the quiet use experiences in Colorado's backcountry.
Roundup Riders of the Rockies	3R	Since 1948, 3R have promoted Colorado's natural resources and tourism assets through backcountry equestrian rides and parades, and an annual week-long, 100-mile ride through Colorado's wildlands. The 3R was instrumental in the creation and continued stewardship of the Colorado Trail and works extensively on trail stewardship projects throughout Colorado. The organization also provides grant resources for equestrian projects.
Trout Unlimited	TU	Trout Unlimited has 19 chapters in Colorado which raise funds and provide labor for stream restoration and improvement, native trout recovery, whirling disease recovery, and youth education projects.
Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado	VOC	Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is recognized as a statewide leader in promoting and coordinating Coloradans in outdoor volunteerism. Established in 1984, VOC motivates and enables citizens to be active stewards of public lands, thereby fostering stewardship of Colorado's natural and cultural resources. To date, VOC has worked with more than 46,500 Coloradans to complete 240 trail and habitat projects valued at over \$12.5 million. VOC volunteers have built hundreds of miles of trails and planted thousands of trees across Colorado, from Denver's urban parks to the summits of Fourteeners. VOC focuses its work on four primary program areas: conservation projects, V Outdoors (an online clearinghouse of volunteer opportunities and training events), Extending Your Reach (EYR) (a capacity building program that teaches volunteer management and technical skills), and Youth Conservators Initiative (YCI) which engages Colorado's future land stewardship leaders through VOC projects.





2.5.3 Land Trust and Open Space Organizations

Colorado is fortunate to have an active and effective group of 46 local, regional and nationally-based land trust and open space organizations who work diligently to protect some of the state's most extraordinary and irreplaceable natural assets. According to the Colorado Conservation Trust, over 100,000 acres of open lands in Colorado are permanently lost to development each year.

Land trust missions vary in Colorado with some focusing on protecting a specific type of land, like farms and ranches, while other organizations concentrate on a particular geographic area. While missions may differ, all land trusts are non-profit organizations that work with landowners to voluntarily conserve open lands through a variety of tools:

- Acquisition (by donation or purchase) of conservation easements, deed restrictions and fee title to land.
- Development of management agreements
- Strategic estate planning

Local government open space programs contribute greatly to land protection efforts, as well. As of 2007, 43 cities and counties throughout the state have effective local open space programs, which are primarily supported by dedicated local sales or property taxes. Most of these local government open space programs are located along the Front Range, from Larimer County south to El Paso County. Front Range open space programs have protected 77% of all of the lands protected by local governments statewide. Through 2007, local governments have protected nearly 400,000 acres across Colorado, primarily through fee title acquisitions. Some of the larger agencies that have been extremely active in open space protection include: Jefferson County Open Space Parks, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, and Douglas County Division of Open Space and Natural Resources, and Pitkin County Open Space and Trails. These organizations and agencies play a vital role in maintaining habitat for wildlife and providing limited outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and horseback riding).

What is a conservation easement?

According to CCLT, a conservation easement is a permanent restriction on some land uses, typically development and subdivisions, to protect the conservation values of the property. Some easements allow for agricultural production, hunting and fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation. Each easement is unique and developed individually for each property in agreement with federal and state guidelines to reflect the landowner's wishes while ensuring conservation of the site.

Nearly 80% of all the acres conserved by land trusts have been protected through conservation easements.

Colorado's County Open Space Sales Tax Exemption was implemented in March 2007. This bill allows counties to ask voters to approve up to a half-cent sales and use tax to fund a local open space program to acquire and manage conservation projects. This will help Colorado counties protect water quality, natural areas, working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, and create new parks and outdoor recreation sites.



While land trusts and open space organizations manage a relatively small proportion of the total land base in the state (about 160,000 acres or <1% of all lands), they provide invaluable contributions in preserving the natural character of Colorado, and in some cases, provide recreation opportunities.⁴⁰ (About 3% of sites owned or managed by land trusts currently permit recreation access).⁴¹ In actuality, these non-profit organizations have protected nearly two million acres statewide (through 2006) and currently own and/or manage nearly 555,000 acres.⁴² The vast majority of the two million acres of land that has been protected as open space is managed by private landowners or public agencies and is not reflected in the acreage managed by land trusts. This is because some land trusts acquire land in fee title, but then donate or sell the property to a land management agency. While local governments contribute greatly to land protection efforts, only non-profit organizations with a statewide emphasis are outlined in Table 11.

Table 11: Acres Managed by Land Trusts and Open Space Organizations by SCORP Region

Land Trust and Open Space Organizations							
Land Manager	Front Range	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	South Central	Southwest	Total Acres by Manager
Land Trusts	2,131	15,076	2,226	1,768	84,529	2,420	108,151
Non-governmental Organizations and Non-profit Organizations	24,148	5,395	12,562	0	9,721	0	51,826
Total Acres Managed by Land Trusts and Open Space Organizations							159,977

Source: CoMap, NREL, CSU 2007

Of the 160,000 acres actually overseen by these entities, only a small percentage is open to public recreation. Regardless, all lands conserved via land trusts contribute to the distinctive qualities that define Colorado by preserving open landscapes, providing buffers between communities, preserving scenic vistas and wildlife habitats, maintaining urban open spaces and parks, protecting working farms, and conserving natural resources.

Land protection efforts in Colorado continue to progress. Colorado Conservation Trust (CCT) reported that during 2005, land trusts and community open space programs statewide protected 179,000 acres. Figure 10 shows the distribution of open lands protected by major open space organizations, land trusts and local government open space programs by region, as of 2005.

GOCO has helped fund approximately 500 land protection projects encompassing over 550,000 acres in Colorado since 1994. In 2007, GOCO awarded \$8.2 million in open space grants for 21 projects to preserve 20,350 acres.

⁴⁰Wilcox, 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>.

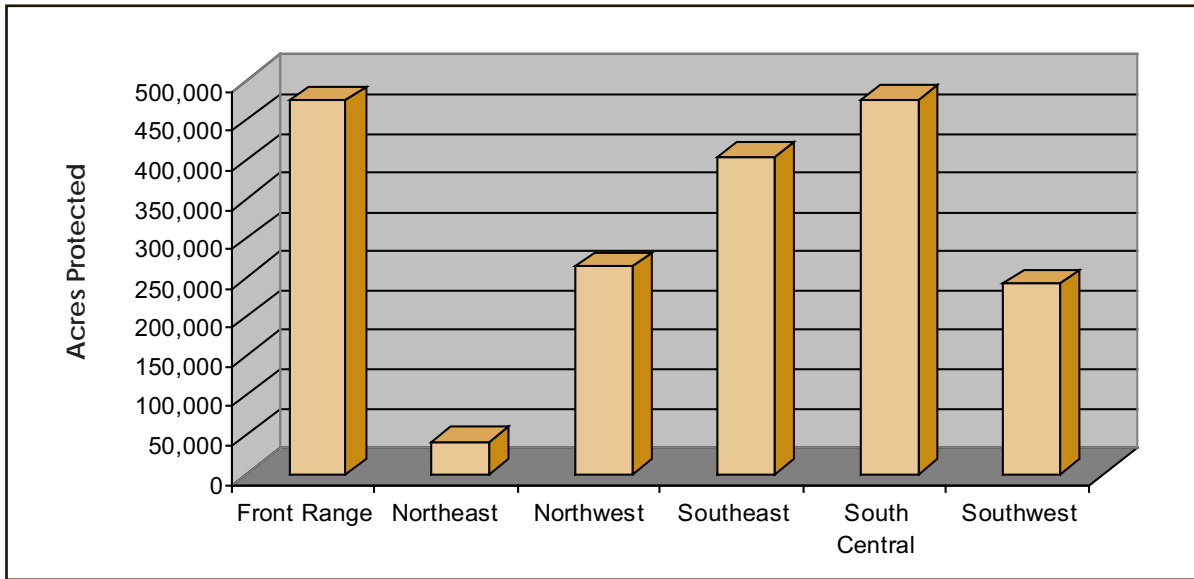
Colorado Conservation Trust. 1 May 2008 <www.coloradoconservationtrust.org>.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.



Figure 10: Acres of Land Protected by Land Trusts, Open Space Organizations, and Local Government Open Space Programs by SCORP Region (through 2006)



Source: Colorado Conservation Trust, 2007

Table 12 outlines the most significant land trust and open space organizations with a statewide emphasis, in descending order of the total acreage protected to date.

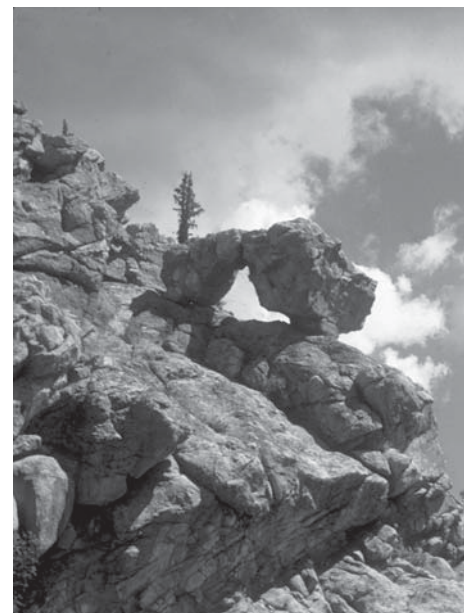


Table 12: Major Land Trust and Open Space Organizations

Land Trust & Open Space Organizations	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Details	Approximate Acres Protected through 2007
Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts	CCLT	The CCLT was established in 1991 as an umbrella organization by a group of conservation practitioners and land trust executive directors desiring one voice for the land conservation community. Currently, it is comprised of 39 land trusts across Colorado, 32 of which are local land trusts and 7 regional, state, or national land trusts. CCLT represents these land trusts by influencing public policy, increasing awareness to support private land conservation, and promoting land conservation excellence.	630,000 (for all 39 land trust members within CCLT)
Colorado Open Space Alliance	COSA	Colorado Open Space Alliance is a statewide organization of publicly funded local and regional open space programs, working collaboratively to share information, create public awareness, and foster partnerships to protect the unique open spaces of Colorado. COSA is developing a best practices document to guide local governments on the acceptance and stewardship of conservation easements. The organization also administers a Leadership Program which fosters leadership in the conservation community.	Not Available
Individual Open Space and Land Trust Organizations			
The Nature Conservancy	TNC	The Nature Conservancy is a national organization with a regional office in Boulder, protects land and waters to preserve plant, animal, and natural community habitats at 17 sites in Colorado. Recently, TNC lead efforts, with LWCF assistance, to preserve the 97,000-acre Baca Ranch adjacent to Great Sand Dunes National Park.	437,000
Colorado Conservation Trust	CCT	The CCT was created in 2001 to work with citizens, foundations, non-profits, and public agencies to foster leadership, develop strategic initiatives, and increase conservation investments statewide. CCT's goal is to protect an additional two million acres of land by 2015 through additional conservation funding and leveraging existing resources.	341,000
Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust	CCALT	CCALT was established to specifically serve the agricultural community through conservation easements which enable farmers and ranchers to protect their working lands for future generations. It is the only land trust in the state that exclusively serves the agricultural community and has been effective in 30 counties across Colorado.	272,000
Colorado Open Lands	COL	Since 1981, COL has worked to acquire 148 conservation easements in 38 counties and maintains a nearly \$2 million stewardship endowment to achieve conservation efforts. Protected areas include: agricultural lands, threatened watersheds, community buffers, critical watersheds, and vital wildlife habitat.	200,000
The Conservation Fund		The Conservation Fund is a national organization that develops partnerships to preserve wildlife habitat, working farms, waterways, and community open spaces. The Western Regional Office is located in Boulder. In Colorado, one of The Fund's most significant accomplishments is the protection of 33,000 acres of the Greenland Ranch along I-25 in partnership with GOCO and Douglas County. This \$70 million project represents Colorado's largest land conservation project in history, financially.	185,000
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	ELK	ELK works on wildlife habitat enhancement and conservation, wildlife management, education, and land acquisition projects for wildlife, particularly elk across the Rocky Mountain States. In Colorado, there are seven active chapters that have helped protect lands in 26 counties.	158,000
The Trust for Public Land	TPL	The Trust for Public Land works to protect land for human enjoyment and to improve the health and quality of life for all. In recent years, TPL has been especially active in the Red Mountain mining district near Oury and Silverton where LWCF is helping to protect a targeted 11,000 acres. In 2008, TPL, in partnership with GOCO, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and CCALT, purchased a conservation easement to protect over 12,500 acres of the Middle Bijou Creek Ranch in eastern Arapahoe County.	56,000
The Wilderness Land Trust		The Wilderness Land Trust is the only organization which targets the acquisition of in-holdings in Wilderness Areas to transfer to federal land management agencies in order to block development for homes, logging, mining, or roads. Since The Trust began working in Colorado in 1992, it has preserved 112 different parcels in 16 of the state's 41 Wilderness Areas. The Trust's work has significantly reduced the threat in-holdings pose to the state's Wilderness Areas and aims to protect the less than 2,000 acres of remaining parcels in Colorado by 2013.	5,323

