

**Excerpts from the 2003 Colorado
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
(Attachment A)**



In 2002, Colorado State Parks convened a panel of leaders from Colorado's diverse range of outdoor resources stakeholders to examine the current status of our outdoors resources and to identify strategies that can enable Colorado to maintain its reputation for top quality outdoors experiences amidst spectacular landscapes. Engaged in the process were community leaders, outdoor retailers, tourism industry experts, non-profit organization executives, as well as experts from the range of local, state and federal agencies charged with managing the public lands that host outdoors enthusiasts.

As Coloradans, our heritage is centered on our connections to the spectacular landscapes that define our state. Yet today Colorado faces a substantial challenge in satisfying the outdoor recreation demands of a rapidly expanding population, while meeting the responsibility to conserve the outstanding outdoors resources for which Colorado is renowned.

Millions of visitors continue to enjoy a wide diversity of outdoor recreation activities, yet recreation agencies across the state report real challenges in keeping up with public expectations for quality outdoors experiences.

Accordingly, this *Strategic Issues Steering Group* of stakeholders described a ***Vision for Colorado's Outdoors Recreation Future***:

“As Coloradans, our heritage is centered on our connections to the spectacular landscapes that define our state. Yet today, Colorado faces an enormous challenge of satisfying the outdoor recreation demands of a rapidly expanding population, while meeting the responsibility to conserve the special outdoors resources for which Colorado is renowned. Through strategic partnerships, Colorado's diverse resource of public land agencies, business interests and non-profit groups will pursue innovative approaches that will sustain our special outdoors-based quality of life.”

Key Objectives:

- Engage *key stakeholders* in identifying Colorado's most pressing outdoor recreation issues and in designing strategic actions to take on those challenges.
- Examine *public preferences and attitudes* about outdoor recreation activities and sites through survey instruments.
- Describe Colorado's current *scope of outdoor recreation resources* provided by the public agencies who manage those resources, the non-profit groups with vital roles in protecting and managing lands, and the private sector's substantial investments in the outdoor recreation industry.
- Identify *a public agency investment strategy* that enables local, state and federal agencies to focus on outdoors investments that will not only satisfy public expectations but also stretch scarce resources by complementing other agencies' investments.

Key Findings:

- Colorado's population is increasing substantially and the composition of the population will also change in the future towards higher proportion of elderly and ethnic representation (paraphrased).
- *The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) 2000*, published by the U.S. Forest Service, reports an ongoing growth in outdoor recreation that outstrips population growth rates.
- Over 94% of Coloradans participate in outdoor recreation.
- Outdoor recreation is a significant aspect of public health.
- Most state park users are *prepared to pay more to visit the parks*.
- The majority of current *annual state park pass holders (79%) are prepared to pay up to \$5 more for an annual pass*.
- Colorado State Parks is continuing to invest in cabin and yurt development following a well received pilot program.
- In 2001, 71% of visitors on overnight pleasure trips reported experiencing the mountains of Colorado.
- When asked about which outdoor activities they had participated in over the last year 74% had recreated on a trail, followed in popularity by water recreation, tent camping and visiting historical sites.
- Tourism generates more than \$7 billion a year in spending and tourism contributes over \$550 million to state and local tax coffers every year, according to Dean Runyan and Associates.
- To sustain both tourism business investments and the public land resources on which they depend, the tourism industry and land managers have a responsibility to work closely with community leaders to maintain that infrastructure and community identity so important to residents.