

ACCESS, EXPERIENCES AND EDUCATION ALL FROM A BACKPACK AT YOUR LIBRARY

An Overview of the Check Out
Colorado State Parks Program



**LIVE LIFE
OUTSIDE**

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Introduction

For almost eight years, Colorado Department of Education’s Colorado State Library (CSL), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and libraries across Colorado have partnered to ensure Coloradans have access to their state parks. The resulting program, [Check Out Colorado State Parks](#), provides participating Colorado libraries with materials for their community members to explore the outdoors, including a day pass to Colorado State Parks and a backpack that contains an exploration kit. Borrowers head into Colorado State Parks with binoculars, field guides for identifying flora and fauna, and fishing and outdoor activity guides. Every pack also includes a [Leave No Trace card](#) to encourage park visitors to learn about park stewardship and keep our parks free of debris. Anyone with a library card to a participating library can check out the backpack and Colorado State Parks pass for a week at a time. A total of 308 library locations from 158 library districts or systems in the state participate in the Check Out Colorado State Parks program. This includes 115 Colorado public library systems (e.g., county, municipal, and special library districts), 37 academic libraries, three military libraries, and three special libraries.

[The Check Out Colorado State Parks pilot program](#) ran from October 2015 to March 2016 with eight participating libraries. The success of the pilot led to an expansion of the program with 279 more libraries joining in 2016. Beginning in June 2016, CSL began collecting data and reporting on the program annually to library and partner stakeholders. Data on circulation of the pass and backpack are collected to gauge interest in the materials and calculate the savings provided to Coloradans. This program saves Coloradans around \$69,800 annually, with only minimal costs to CPW and CSL. Additionally, libraries include surveys in the backpack to gain insight on patrons’ experiences, and discover how the backpacks were used. Borrowers are also asked to share thoughts about their experiences at the parks with an open-ended question. CSL has continued to gather borrower feedback through surveys over the last 7 years. Annually, CSL’s Library Research Service (LRS) creates an infographic of patron feedback and survey findings. These data and reports are shared with CPW, participating libraries, and other organizations interested in partnering with libraries. This report shares CSL’s findings from patron surveys completed from June 2016 to March 2023 and circulation data from 2016 through 2022. Surveys and infographics are available on the state library’s Check Out Colorado State Parks website at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/checkoutcostateparks> as well as in the appendix B of this report.

About the Data

The survey that program participants filled out in 2016 asked about the participant's park visit (when and where they went) as well as how likely they were to recommend a visit to a state park, buy a day pass, or buy an annual pass in the future based on their experience. It also asked participants whether they learned more about nature or learned more about what libraries have to offer because of this program. The current survey still asks these same questions, but in addition, asks what type of activities people participated in while at the park and their overall satisfaction with their experience (see appendix A for the full survey). There are 3,654 total survey responses compiled by CSL, and close to half of these surveys include the additional questions. Therefore, the aspects of this report that refer to the park activities that patrons participated in and their overall satisfaction include responses from about half the number of participants as the questions that have been asked consistently since 2016. In addition, beginning in 2023, the survey has been made available electronically and in print in both English and Spanish languages. To date, however, the survey has been available in both print and electronic formats only in English.

To gather more stories on this program's impact, as well as count the number of times that Check Out Colorado backpacks circulated, CSL also administers an annual survey to participating Colorado libraries. Over the last seven years, on average, 71 libraries have responded to this survey each year. In 2022, 50 libraries responded which is less than a third of the total participating library systems. Because CSL was unable to gather an accurate estimate of total backpack circulation due to these low response rates, LRS also began asking public libraries how many times Check Out Colorado backpacks circulated on the Public Library Annual Report (PLAR) survey in 2021. For academic, military, and special libraries, CSL still depends on the annual Check Out Colorado library survey for this data. This change in reporting methods impacted the data because, for the last two years, public libraries have been required to report the number of times their backpacks circulated, giving CSL a more accurate (and higher) circulation count than was previously collected. Circulation totals impact estimates of program growth, reach, and cost savings. In future years, circulation totals for public libraries will continue to be collected in the PLAR.

About the Data Cont.

The current total circulation count for the backpack and pass is approximately 43,468; however, it is likely that the actual total number of checkouts is higher since reporting Check Out Colorado backpack circulation was not mandatory for five years of the program and is still not mandatory for academic, military, and special libraries. Likewise, the 3,654 borrower survey responses do not represent the full borrower population. The borrower surveys collected and reported represent only around 8% of total backpack checkout experiences. Since completing the survey included in the backpack is optional, CSL’s data is from participants who self-select to take the survey. Borrower surveys are anonymous and no borrower data are tracked due to privacy protections at libraries, thus it is possible that individuals who have borrowed a backpack multiple times have submitted multiple surveys.

Annual and Comprehensive Totals

Year	Circulation [†]	Participating Libraries	Participants that would recommend a visit to a state park	Participants that learned more about nature	Participants that changed their view of what libraries have to offer
2016	3,960	287	97%	85%	94%
2017	6,980	297	98%	83%	94%
2018	7,630	297	98%	82%	95%
2019	7,692	297	99%	86%	94%
2020	1,527	297	99%	80%	89%
2021	6,915	307	99%	81%	92%
2022	8,764	308	98%	81%	94%
Overall**	43,468	308	99%	83%	95%

* Reporting public library circulation of program materials was not mandatory until 2021 when it was first included in the Public Library Annual Report survey.

**Aggregate totals may differ from annual reporting.

Check Out Colorado Program Growth

Backpack circulation for this program began with an average of 165 checkouts per week in 2016. After the initial excitement surrounding the program during its inaugural year, average backpack checkouts dropped slightly in 2017. In the following years they rose again and began to level off at an average of almost 150 backpack checkouts per week across the state until early 2020, just prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Library services, including circulation of the backpacks, were interrupted by COVID-19 four years after the start of the Check Out Colorado State Parks program. In that time, libraries remained open with limited services, including pick-up/drop-off services for materials. During those limited services, the state library and CPW added a plastic pouch to the backpack kit to limit the potential exposure of borrowers and library workers to COVID-19 and for ease of handling in processing at library locations. While overall library visits and circulation of materials (including circulation of the state park passes and backpacks) decreased compared to previous years and historical trends, some circulation of the program materials continued during this time.

Since the sharp drop off in backpack checkouts in 2020, however, circulation numbers have risen rapidly, even lately exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Prior to the pandemic, the number of backpack checkouts per week was 148.5 on average, but closures and travel advisories due to the pandemic dropped the average number of backpack checkouts per week to 29 in 2020. That is an 80.5% decrease in backpack checkouts. The number of backpack checkouts per week during 2021 was back up to 133. That is only a 10% decrease from pre-pandemic numbers and a 359% increase from 2020. In 2022, the number of recorded backpack checkouts was higher than any other year since the program began at an average of more than 168 checkouts per week.

The number of libraries participating in the program from 2016 to 2023 has also increased. After the trial, the program kicked off with 287 participating library locations. Now, there are 308 participating library locations. The addition of 21 library locations over the last 7 years, alongside increasing circulation counts, indicates that everyone involved in this program sees benefits from participating.

Program Satisfaction

Of the 1,744 participants that answered the question, “Overall, how satisfied were you with your Check Out Colorado State Parks experience?” (with the answer options: very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neutral, somewhat unsatisfied, and very unsatisfied) 98% of participants indicated that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, and out of all the responses to this question, 93% were very satisfied. Only 1% of survey takers indicated that they were unsatisfied with the program. Within the 1% of those rating their experiences as unsatisfying, responses to the open-ended question included positive comments about the program or explanations that their low rating reflected an experience at the park (e.g., rules or conditions at the time of their visit) rather than with the program itself.

In response to the survey’s reflective, open-ended question, “Do you have a story? Please share with us how this experience helped you discover and learn at a Colorado state park” the most common suggestion was to make the check out period for the backpack longer than one week. Due to the limited supply of passes, oftentimes participants need to place the backpack on hold and wait for it to be available. Likewise, due to the travel necessary to reach state parks, weather, and other unavoidable circumstances, there are instances when the patrons wait for their pack, only to receive the pass during a week when they are unable to visit a state park. However, with the limited supply of passes, lengthening the check out period would also mean patrons on hold for the backpack need to wait even longer to receive it.

It is worth noting that the feedback received regarding the number of passes at library locations as well as the circulation statistics have led CPW to increase the quantity of passes distributed to some library locations. CPW remains committed to expanding access to library users to state parks and works with the state library to review annual circulation statistics and borrower program satisfaction. In addition, library partners are consulted for feedback on the program from the library point of view.

Answers to the survey question, “Based on your experience with Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to recommend a visit to a state park?” indicated overall satisfaction with their parks experience. Each year at least 97% of survey respondents have said that they are likely to recommend a visit to a state park, and for the past six years, at least 98% of respondents have said they are likely to recommend a visit to a state park.

Program Satisfaction Cont.

These responses, along with the stories shared at the end of the survey, overwhelmingly express positive feelings towards state parks. However, positive experiences at the parks and/or with the library program do not necessarily correlate with an interest in or ability to purchase park passes for continued access to Colorado State Parks. In response to the question, “Based on your experience with Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to buy a day pass to visit a state park?” more than three out of four survey respondents (79%) said that they were likely to buy a day pass. In response to the same question, though regarding an annual pass, the number of people that said they are likely to buy an annual pass dropped 22 percentage points to 57%. Several respondents shared that they bought a state parks pass because of their experience with the Check Out Colorado program, but around four times as many survey respondents spoke of the financial help that this program provides or shared that they would not have visited a state park if it were not for this program. [State park day passes](#) cost \$10.00 per vehicle, and the median number of annual checkouts for this program is 6,980. Therefore, this program saves Coloradans around \$69,800 annually. These savings increase if program participants decide to use the pass multiple days during the week that they have it checked out. CPW does not sell weekly passes, so the existence of a week-long Colorado State Parks pass is unique to this partnership. The cost to the state partners (CPW and CSL) is minimal and consists of the initial upfront cost for pack materials, such as binoculars and field guides, as well as annual printing and postage.

These findings indicate that this library program often reaches people who would not otherwise be willing and/or able to visit a state park. The cost of the park pass and/or the process by which passes are purchased are barriers to entry, and the Check Out Colorado State Parks program reduces these barriers to outdoor access at state parks. Appreciation and gratitude are the most prevalent themes expressed in the survey’s open-ended responses, with “thank you” being the most common written response. By partnering with libraries through the state library in the Check Out Colorado State Parks program CPW’s goal is to expand access to parks. The data related to this series of questions has been key, not only to the continued partnership with libraries, but also in CPW’s decision to explore alternative pass types and costs as they seek to reduce barriers to parks and invite more park visitors, particularly those from historically underserved populations including visitors for whom cost is a primary barrier.

Participation Across Colorado and Beyond

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program has a statewide reach. Colorado libraries serve communities within all regions and areas in the state whether or not they are near state parks. The survey has been filled out by respondents from 311 different Colorado zip codes since 2016. Due to the density of population in the Front Range region of the state, the heaviest usage of the program is throughout that area. However, less densely populated areas of Colorado—such as Walsenberg, Glenwood Springs, and Hotchkiss—have returned many Check Out Colorado State Parks surveys, which indicates high participation in these areas as well. Variables including the proximity of participating libraries to state parks, the residents’ ages and activity levels, and local library advertisement of the program may contribute to circulation differences among Colorado libraries. Overall, the range of locations from which CSL has received surveys illustrates that Check Out Colorado has reached people across all regions of Colorado.

CSL has also received survey responses from visitors to the state, including 50 travelers from 44 non-Colorado zip codes. Colorado’s State Parks saw visitors from across the country through the Check Out Colorado program, with people from Massachusetts to Washington filling out the survey. Many responses to the question “Do you have a story?” recount borrowers taking friends or family visiting from out of state to Colorado’s State Parks. Borrowers also included recent transplants and new Colorado residents who welcomed the program as a great way to learn about what Colorado has to offer.

All but one of Colorado’s State Parks have been visited by survey respondents. The exception, [Lone Mesa State Park](#), limits public access and requires an additional permit to visit. With that exception, all Colorado State Parks have gained visitors because of this program.

Engagement with the Outdoors

Since 2018, participants have been asked which activities they participated in during their park visits. Of the 1,721 survey respondents who answered this question, 69% participated in trail/road activities, 30% participated in water-based activities, 35% participated in wildlife-related activities, 35% selected “other” and only 2% participated in winter activities. Over half (52%) indicated that they participated in two or more of these activities at the park. There is, however, far more to do at parks than the options provided on the survey. Write-in responses by those that selected “other” include climbing, conservation projects, geocaching, picnicking, and attending ranger programs. Overall, around 150 unique activities were shared from people who wrote in their activity. Fishing and camping were the activities written most often, with 11% of respondents sharing that they went fishing.

Check Out Colorado State Parks gives participants the opportunity to uncover the benefits of outdoor recreation such as learning, health and fitness, relaxation, or bonding with family and friends. Throughout the surveys, respondents wrote about opportunities to connect with family and positive impacts on their mental health. One survey respondent described their visit as a “renewal of spirit and soul” and another wrote, “State park day trips are perfect for our family to connect and break free from day-to-day stress.” Spending time with family and connecting with the company that visitors enjoyed the park with were some of the most frequently occurring themes throughout the stories shared.

Accessibility

The accessibility of their parks is an important focus for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Increasing access for disabled visitors is one of their goals which is evident in the state parks. There are many outdoor spaces and public lands in Colorado without entry fees, but the state parks make certain efforts to expand access to seniors, persons with mobility restrictions and those with disabilities. Staunton State Park, Barr Lake, and others have [track-chairs](#) that can be used to access some of the park trails for users of wheelchairs or mobility devices whose vehicles and devices are otherwise not suited for use on trails. The track chair program was mentioned in Check Out Colorado participant surveys. Additionally, several respondents observed and noted adaptive trails and facilities at other state parks. One visitor wrote, “We love the outdoors and state parks. We are grateful Sweitzer has handicapped [sic] facilities and will plan to visit again”. A visitor to Stagecoach State Park wrote, “It was the perfect trail for someone who is ambulatorily challenged.”

Accessibility Cont.

Natural areas without entry fees are not often set up with adaptive trails and facilities for people with physical disabilities, so state parks play an important role in serving this community. Beyond reducing financial barriers to parks, the Check Out Colorado program reduces physical obstacles to the outdoors as well by connecting disabled library visitors and their families to accessible outdoor spaces, making Colorado's beautiful, wild places even more accessible.

Learning About Libraries

Check Out Colorado State Parks has helped people learn more about their libraries. Even community members who have long supported and loved their libraries are often unaware of the variety of items libraries circulate and the access their library cards can provide to places far beyond the library building walls. Overall, 95% of survey respondents agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer." Many people were pleasantly surprised to find out that access to Colorado State Parks is something that can be offered by libraries.

The parks pass and backpack program, then, has served as a way to educate community members about library services and resources more broadly. Not only do libraries have books-which they already knew-libraries also provide access to other interesting experiences in their communities. Libraries can provide makerspaces where people can build missing parts of appliances in their homes or innovate gadgets and toys. People can take telemedicine appointments in library study rooms and connect with the healthcare providers on devices they borrow from the library while using the library's wifi to connect to the internet. Libraries hold programs in auditoriums, on their patios, and at parks, community centers or coffee shops. Of course, though, not everyone needed the Check Out Colorado State Parks program to clue them in. Some people responded that they already knew what libraries have to offer. One respondent wrote, "We are already regular beneficiaries of the awesome services provided by libraries and were delighted to spread the news of this resource."

Learning From Nature

Each year since this program began at least four out of every five people have said that their Check Out Colorado State Parks experience helped them learn more about nature. This is significant because program participants are not necessarily visiting a state park to attend a formal educational program. Even if there was not a facilitated learning activity taking place, participants still agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “This park experience helped me/us to learn more about nature.” Just being immersed in nature was often enough for participants to say that they learned something about it. For many, their visit was not their first time at a state park. Only 9% of respondents said that this was their first visit to a state park, yet 83% reported learning something during their park experience. This suggests that people are likely to continue learning something new on each park visit even after their first.

The materials included in the Check Out Colorado backpack were also mentioned in many survey responses. The binoculars and the plant and wildlife identification guides were brought up most often in survey respondents’ comments. The binoculars were regularly enjoyed by both children and wildlife watchers, and respondents shared how helpful the identification guides were in learning more about the natural world around them. CPW hopes to foster stewardship among visitors to state parks through education and engagement such as wildlife observation, tree and flower identification, and exposure to the interconnectedness of our ecosystems. Survey findings suggest that the materials included in the Check Out Colorado backpack field exploration kit support this goal. Expanding the kit to include materials like stargazing, fishing, and other activity guides has also helped promote engagement with parks’ facilities and programs. In addition to learning about nature, respondents also shared stories about learning new skills such as archery or kayaking.

Conclusion

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program is a model for potential partnerships between libraries and organizations and agencies hoping to expand access to their services and resources. Colorado State Library (CSL) has served as an invaluable partner to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in reaching potential park visitors and creating stewards of our state's outdoors and wildlife. Libraries are anchor institutions with a statewide coverage area that invite visitors from all areas of the state and all types of communities, at all income levels, from all walks of life, with various interests, levels of experience and knowledge of the outdoors, and ranges of abilities and access. Providing access to no-cost park entry and a field exploration kit reduces obstacles that keep many Coloradans from visiting state parks.

Because of this program, Colorado Parks and Wildlife receives visitors to its state parks that would not otherwise explore these amazing natural areas. Colorado residents and visitors gain access to spaces and experiences that foster physical, emotional, and social wellness. In their own words, borrowers describe how visiting the parks with their Check Out Colorado pass and backpack is not only fun, but also relieves stress, helps them strengthen relationships, and teaches them something new and interesting. Check Out Colorado State Parks eliminates the financial barrier of purchasing a day pass and helps people understand all that libraries can offer to their communities. Even after COVID-19 disrupted services, this program bounced back stronger than ever. After collecting seven years' worth of data on this program, there have been very few complaints, which shows that there are virtually no negative consequences of this program—a program which has saved Coloradans around \$489,860 over the past seven years.

In fact, Colorado's Check Out Colorado State Parks program has inspired similar programs across the nation, and starting in 2023, Colorado residents will have the option to purchase a discounted state parks pass along with their vehicle registration. Regardless of this change, Colorado State Library will continue to partner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to offer the Check Out Colorado State Parks backpacks.

Conclusion Cont.

Once community members expand their view of library resources beyond just books, they are more likely to seek out and find other benefits provided by their library. Colorado libraries' partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife is just one example of the many unique partnerships libraries can form to better serve their community. Libraries are becoming community hubs that connect community members to the organizations and agencies that serve them. Libraries are places to read, learn, and rest. Libraries have books on the shelves, but they also provide programming for all ages and boundless opportunities to learn and grow. Some community members already know this but many don't. Libraries are spreading the word that they are more than just quiet reading spaces, and the Check Out Colorado State Parks program is helping them do that.



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Appendices

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Check Out Colorado State Parks

If you were able to use the state parks pass during the time you checked it out, please take a minute to share your opinions with us about your experience. Your feedback will help us sustain and improve the program! You may also take this survey online at: tinyurl.com/CheckOutCSP.

State park(s) visited: _____ Date(s): _____

1. Was this your first visit to a Colorado state park? Yes No

2. Did you participate in any of the following activities during your visit? (Please check all that apply.)

- Trail/road activities (e.g., hiking, mountain biking) Water-based activities (e.g., swimming, canoeing)
 Winter activities (e.g., snowshoeing, skiing) Wildlife-related activities (e.g., birdwatching)
 Other (please describe): _____

3. Overall, how satisfied were you with your Check Out Colorado State Parks experience?

Very Satisfied

Somewhat Satisfied

Neutral

Somewhat Unsatisfied

Very Unsatisfied

4. Based on your experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to...

Very Likely

5

4

3

2

Not at all Likely

1

A. Recommend a visit to a state park

B. Buy a day pass to visit a state park

C. Buy an annual pass to state parks

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Strongly Agree

5

4

3

2

Strongly Disagree

1

A. This park experience helped me/
us to learn more about nature

B. The Check Out Colorado State
Parks program changed my view
about what libraries have to offer

6. What is your zip code? _____

7. Do you have a story? Please share with us how this experience helped you discover and learn at a Colorado state park. You can also share a photo with #CheckOutColorado on Twitter or Instagram.



Scan here to complete
this form online.

Thank you very much!

Please return this form to your library.

To sign up for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife e-newsletter, visit cpw.state.co.us/enews

Explora los Parques del Estado de Colorado

Si usaste el pase para parques estatales durante el tiempo que lo tuviste, por favor tómate un minuto para compartir con nosotros tu opinión sobre la experiencia. ¡Tus comentarios nos ayudarán a mantener y mejorar el programa! También puedes tomar esta encuesta en línea tinyurl.com/CheckOutCSP.

Parque(s) estatal(es) visitados: _____ Fecha(s): _____

1. ¿Es la primera vez que visitas uno de los parques estatales de Colorado? Sí No

2. Durante tu visita, ¿participaste en alguna de las siguientes actividades? (Selecciona tantas respuestas como sean necesarias.)

Actividades por senderos/carreteras (p.ej., caminatas, ciclismo de montaña) Actividades acuáticas (p.ej., nadar, pasear en canoa)

Actividades de invierno (p.ej., caminatas con raquetas de nieve, esquiar) Actividades relacionadas con la fauna (p.ej., observación de aves)

Otras (por favor, especifica): _____

3. En general, ¿cómo de satisfecho/a estás con la experiencia "Explora los Parques del Estado de Colorado"?

Muy satisfecho/a

Algo satisfecho/a

Neutral

Algo insatisfecho/a

Muy insatisfecho/a

4. Basándote en tu experiencia en los parques estatales de Colorado, ¿cuáles son las probabilidades de que...

Muy probable

Nada probable

5

4

3

2

1

A. recomiendes visitar un parque estatal?

B. compres un pase de un día para visitar un parque?

C. compres un pase anual para parques estatales?

5. ¿Hasta qué punto estás en acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes declaraciones?

Totalmente de acuerdo

Totalmente en desacuerdo

5

4

3

2

1

A. La experiencia en este parque me ayudó/nos ayudó a aprender más sobre la naturaleza

B. El programa "Explora los Parques del Estado de Colorado" cambió mi opinión sobre lo que las bibliotecas ofrecen

6. ¿Cuál es su código postal? _____

7. ¿Tienes alguna historia que contar? Por favor, comparte con nosotros cómo esta experiencia te ayudó a descubrir y aprender sobre uno de nuestros parques estatales de Colorado. También puedes compartir una foto usando #CheckOutColorado en Twitter o Instagram.



Escanea aquí para encontrar esta encuesta.

Gracias por tomar nuestra encuesta.
Por favor devuélvela a tu biblioteca.

Para recibir noticias sobre los parques inscríbete a cpw.state.co.us/enews

Appendix B: Annual Report 2016

Check Out Colorado State Parks

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 287 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. Between June and November 2016, 720 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Patrons recommend visiting a park and are likely to buy a pass

Based on your experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to:



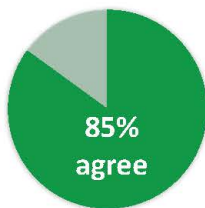
The parks pass from my library encouraged me to visit a park that, although it is less than an hour from where I live, I had never been before. The park was absolutely gorgeous, the rangers knowledgeable and kind, and the all-around experience excellent. **I cannot recommend this program enough!**

The pass is wonderful and a great idea for any family unable to afford much of anything. We do plan on buying a pass as soon as it is in the budget.

We made it our goal to visit as many new parks as we could with this pass. We learned [about] so many new parks as a result of this experience and **we highly recommended Eldorado to friends...as well as the pass.**

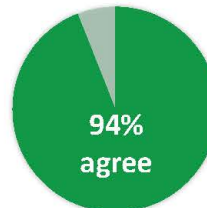
Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



We got to walk the trails and **tried to identify as many wildlife as we could**, also it was nice for a single mom to be able to enjoy outdoor fun with the kids.

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



I didn't know anything about the kids programs some of the state parks offer. We are new to USA. I'm looking forward to the education programs about wild animals. My kids will love it, and so will I. **So important to know these things.**

It was a family excursion to the great outdoors, yet still close to home. **The information provided in the backpacks, along with the binoculars excited the younger children.** They were able to pick out a bald eagle and zoom in on it, there were smiles all around.

There were approximately **3,960** backpack checkouts in the first **6 months.**
That's **165** checkouts per week!



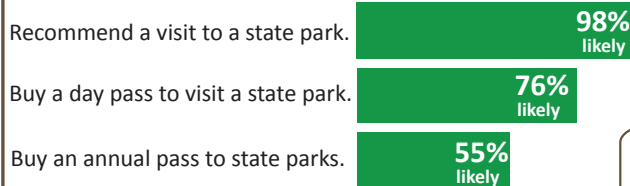
Appendix B: Annual Report 2017

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2017

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2017, 806 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Patrons recommend visiting a park and are likely to buy a pass

Based on your experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to:



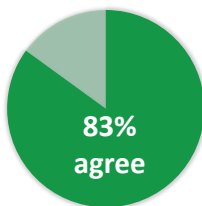
Thank you for this wonderful backpack of information and goodies. My husband and I loved learning and experiencing our closest state park. **Now we will buy a pass and travel to other state parks.** This pack is a fabulous tool to get people out in our beautiful natural surroundings!

I would definitely use a parks pass often, but \$70/year is outside of my budget. I'm thankful the library has things like this and the adventure pass to help me enjoy CO anyway. **I tell people about these programs all the time!**

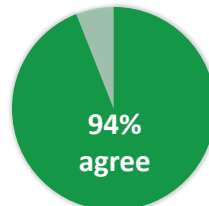
We had forgotten [what] a lovely park Lathrop is, and had not bothered to take the 12 mile car trip there to hike. **We will be buying an annual pass and visiting a lot this year.** Thank you, Colorado Parks & La Veta Library.

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



My son loves to explore. I am trying to foster that with both him and my daughter. We used the guides for trees and shrubs and for animals to identify many things we saw. **It was fun to watch the wonder in their eyes.**



I really appreciated having the pass from the library...We shared the fact that we checked out the pass & other items in the backpack with a couple we met on the gondola. **They were astonished this was available & eager to ask Denver libraries about the backpack.**

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:

Thank you for this great opportunity! We feel that this is a wonderful program to acquaint people with [what] state parks and libraries have to offer. We found the booklets extremely helpful and **our grandchildren especially loved identifying species of birds, wildlife and plants** with the binoculars. We would really like to explore parks further from our home. We are saving to purchase an annual pass.

There were approximately **6,980** backpack checkouts in **1 year.** That's **134** checkouts per week!



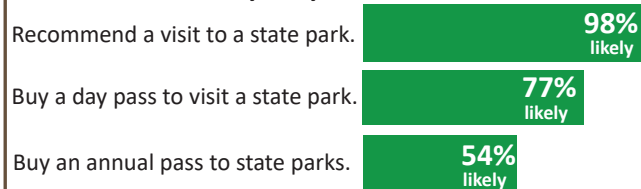
Appendix B: Annual Report 2018

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2018

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2018, 560 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Patrons recommend visiting a park and are likely to buy a pass

Based on your experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, how likely are you to:



[We] learned that **the parks are treasures** and that we can be thankful to the entities that preserve and take care of them for our enjoyment and well-being.

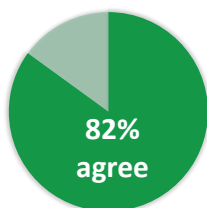
This backpack is a great benefit to our community. Please keep it up!

We are thankful the library has this program—**we wouldn't be able to go otherwise.** Thank you!

We love that we can check out Colorado State Parks passes at our library. Our family really likes to go on hikes and **this makes it possible for us to go to new parks around us.** Thanks!!

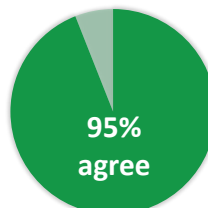
Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



I'm a beginner kayaker and the lake access is helping me perfect my roll. **This will make me a safer boater** and give me another way to enjoy my time in the wilderness.

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



It's a great way for people to have a chance to go to a state park that otherwise might not be able to afford it. Thank you for having this program. **It's also a great way for folks to discover just how much your local library has to offer.**

This State Park [Yampa Valley] hit the mark on activities! We did a "first-ever" river float with the park rangers. The flower/tree identification guide, along with the wildlife one, were so fun to find in the library backpack, we used them!

Loved being able to teach my daughter and show her what CO State Parks have to offer. Great program!

There were approximately **7,630** backpack checkouts in **1 year.** That's **147** checkouts per week!



Appendix B: Annual Report 2019

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2019

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2019, 371 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park. **99%**

Buy a day pass to visit a state park. **79%**

Buy an annual pass to state parks. **57%**

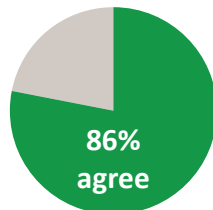
We are seniors on a fixed income. **This pass was wonderful to allow us to visit this park and its trails!** Thanks! A great experience. Thanks for contributing to us in a special way!

We purchased a pass!

Castlewood Canyon State Park is a place we've always driven past and wondered about. **We were so glad to finally explore it, and hope to go back.**

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

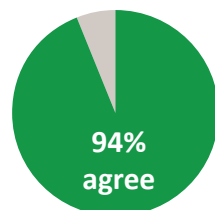
This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



Up close viewing of turkey vultures at Castlewood Canyon **was a first & an amazing experience for my daughter and I.**

Tiger salamander larvae are fascinating! The lost pond in Mueller State Park was full of them and we spent a long time watching them. They are such interesting looking creatures and **none of us had ever seen anything like them in the wild before.**

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



We learned things about the bald and golden eagles we did not know. We appreciated the opportunity to access our State Parks via the SP Backpack Program and **had no idea this existed through the library system.** Thank you!



There were approximately **7,692** backpack checkouts in **1 year**. That's **148** checkouts per week!

Appendix B: Annual Report 2020

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2020

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2020, state parks were closed from March 26 until May 12, when a gradual reopening of campgrounds began. However, people were still urged to avoid unnecessary travel for much of the year. Due to the extreme nature of the 2020 pandemic, many libraries were closed for a portion of the year or offering limited services. Only 137 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:



Trail/road activities

63%



Water-based activities

28%



Winter activities

7%



Wildlife-related activities

37%

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park. **99%**

Buy a day pass to visit a state park. **78%**

Buy an annual pass to state parks. **53%**

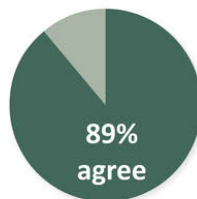
I am going to purchase an annual pass on Earth Day 4/22/21. I am newly retired and born in Colorado. I intend to visit as many state parks as possible this year.

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



I really wanted a way to get out of town for a lovely weekend. This pass helped me do that. Mueller was gorgeous, the sun was bright, the breeze strong, and the people few. Thank you!

Great pack with all the information to enjoy the outdoors (wildlife, birds, etc.). Parks have just about anything for the beginner to experienced person. Bathrooms, camping sites, trails with all the beautiful views not seen before. Great for families with kids to get out and see. Five star rating.



There were approximately **1,527** backpack checkouts in one year.

That's **29** checkouts per week!

Appendix B: Annual Report 2021

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2021

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 307 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. While backpack circulation was down due to the continuing pandemic, this program provided critical access to nature for many during 2021. 397 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:



Trail/road activities

63%



Water-based activities

37%



Fishing

7%



Wildlife-related activities

37%

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park. **99%**

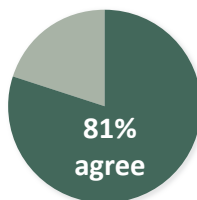
Buy a day pass to visit a state park. **80%**

Buy an annual pass to state parks. **60%**

Enables we seniors to walk/fish in the fresh air and avoid the COVID threat. We could not afford to do so otherwise.

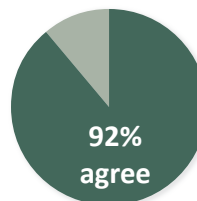
Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



We were able to access the boat ramp to tube the Colorado River! We saw herons and enjoyed the water. We also walked our dogs around the lake. Amazing program! We would not have gone without this.

The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



This pass allows my family access to the State Parks on our unusual school year! Thanks for an opportunity to hike in January--that was a first for us! We hope you'll continue this program.



There were approximately **6,915** backpack checkouts in one year. That's **133** checkouts per week!

Appendix B: Annual Report 2022

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2022

Check Out Colorado State Parks, the result of a partnership between **Colorado Parks and Wildlife** and the **Colorado State Library**, provides 308 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. This program provided critical access to nature for many during 2022. In 2022, 356 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:



63%

Trail/road activities



32%

Water-based activities



9%

Fishing



29%

Wildlife-related activities

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park. **98%**

Buy a day pass to visit a state park. **75%**

Buy an annual pass to state parks. **63%**

"This program has been really well received in our community, allowing access and opportunity for everyone to get out and enjoy the beauty of Colorado."

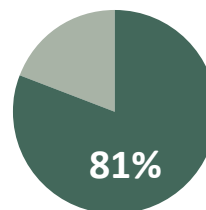
"Our patrons love this program and the passes are always in high demand... I also love seeing our patron's faces light up when they first learn of the program and that they can visit a Colorado state park for free."

"In a region where access to public lands has been seriously limited due to the ongoing impact of a major wildfire a few years ago, this program is the key to getting out and into our amazing local landscape."

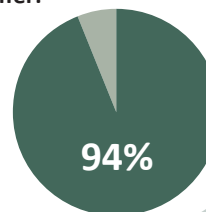
"Our 7 year old used everything in the packet. She could identify birds, animals and flowers. She especially liked the binoculars."

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

This park experience helped us learn more about nature:



The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:



There were approximately **8,764** backpack checkouts in 2022.

That's more than **168** checkouts per week!

Check Out Colorado State Parks

Seven years of data showcasing this program's success

PROGRAM TOTALS

43,468

TOTAL CIRCULATION

308

PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES

ANNUAL SAVINGS OF **69,800** FOR COLORADANS

43

STATE PARKS VISITED

3,654

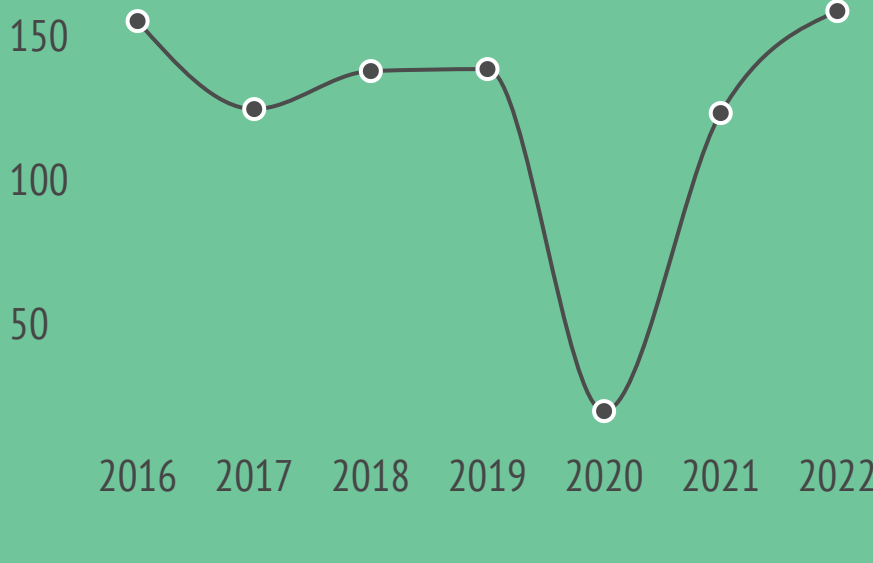
PATRON SURVEYS COMPLETED

PROGRAM GROWTH

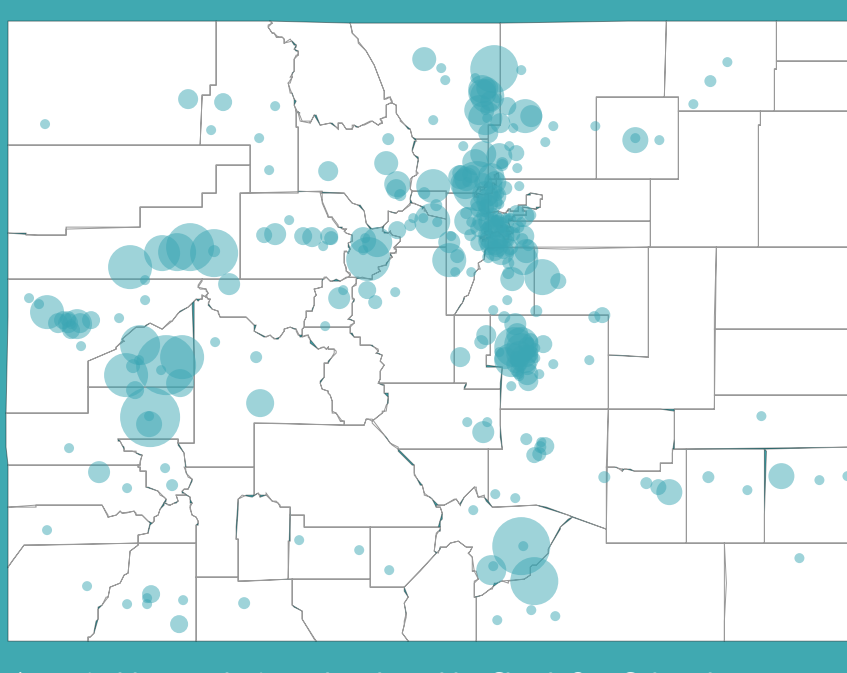
Before COVID-19 there were almost 150 checkouts per week.

Backpack checkouts dropped in 2020 but bounced back quickly.

2022 set a new record for backpack checkouts in a year!



PARTICIPATION ACROSS COLORADO



People from all regions of Colorado participate!

Every state park open to the public in Colorado was accessed.

1% of survey respondents were out of state visitors.

Areas in blue mark zip codes shared by Check Out Colorado survey respondents. The size of the circle corresponds with how often the zip code was shared, and areas where the circles overlap represent multiple zip codes shared in that area.

WHAT LIBRARIES HAVE TO OFFER

"I was not previously aware that public libraries offered such opportunities. It was a great resource for us."



"We are already regular beneficiaries of the awesome services provided by libraries and were delighted to spread the news of this resource."

5% were neutral or did not agree

95% of survey respondents agreed to the statement:
The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer.



OUTDOOR ENGAGEMENT



People shared about **150** unique activities



*Other includes a wide variety of activities such as geocaching, photography, and meditation.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

83%

Learned something new about nature

99%

Would recommend a visit to a state park

98%
SATISFIED



THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR STORIES!

#CheckOutColorado



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Check Out Colorado State Parks 2016

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 287 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. Between June and November 2016, 720 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (97%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (77%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (54%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

85% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

94% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"The parks pass from my library encouraged me to visit a park that, although it is less than an hour from where I live, I had never been before. The park was absolutely gorgeous, the rangers knowledgeable and kind, and the all-around experience excellent. I cannot recommend this program enough!"

"The pass is wonderful and a great idea for any family unable to afford much of anything We do plan on buying a pass as soon as it is in the budget."

"We made it our goal to visit as many new parks as we could with this pass. We learned [about] so many new parks as a result of this experience and we highly recommended Eldorado to friends...as well as the pass."

"We got to walk the trails and tried to identify as many wildlife as we could, also it was nice for a single mom to be able to enjoy outdoor fun with the kids."

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"I didn't know anything about the kids programs some of the state parks offer. We are new to USA. I'm looking forward to the education programs about wild animals. My kids will love it, and so will I. So important to know these things."

"It was a family excursion to the great outdoors, yet still close to home. The information provided in the backpacks, along with the binoculars excited the younger children. They were able to pick out a bald eagle and zoom in on it, there were smiles all around."

There were approximately 3,960 backpack checkouts in the first 6 months. That's 165 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Linda Hofschire, Library Research Service Director. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 343. www.LRS.org | © 2017 Library Research Service

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Appendix C

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2017

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2017, 806 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (98%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (76%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (55%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

83% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

94% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"Thank you for this wonderful backpack of information and goodies. My husband and I loved learning and experiencing our closest state park. Now we will buy a pass and travel to other state parks. This pack is a fabulous tool to get people out in our beautiful natural surroundings!"

"I would definitely use a parks pass often, but \$70/year is outside of my budget. I'm thankful the library has things like this and the adventure pass to help me enjoy CO anyway. I tell people about these programs all the time!"

"We had forgotten [what] a lovely park Lathrop is, and had not bothered to take the 12 mile car trip there to hike. We will be buying an annual pass and visiting a lot this year. Thank you, Colorado Parks & La Veta Library."

"My son loves to explore. I am trying to foster that with both him and my daughter. We used the

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guides for trees and shrubs and for animals to identify many things we saw. It was fun to watch the wonder in their eyes."

"I really appreciated having the pass from the library...We shared the fact that we checked out the pass & other items in the backpack with a couple we met on the gondola. They were astonished this was available & eager to ask Denver libraries about the backpack"

"Thank you for this great opportunity! We feel that this is a wonderful program to acquaint people with [what] state parks and libraries have to offer. We found the booklets extremely helpful and our grandchildren especially loved identifying species of birds, wildlife and plants with the binoculars. We would really like to explore parks further from our home. We are saving to purchase an annual pass."

There were approximately 6,980 backpack checkouts in one year. That's 134 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Linda Hofschire, Library Research Service Director. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 349. www.LRS.org | © 2018 Library Research Service

This report was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services

Appendix C

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2018

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2018, 560 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (98%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (77%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (54%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

82% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

95% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"[We] learned that the parks are treasures and that we can be thankful to the entities that preserve and take care of them for our enjoyment and well-being."

"This backpack is a great benefit to our community. Please keep it up!"

"We are thankful the library has this program—we wouldn't be able to go otherwise. Thank you!"

"We love that we can check out Colorado State Parks passes at our library. Our family really likes to go on hikes and this makes it possible for us to go to new parks around us. Thanks!!"

"I'm a beginner kayaker and the lake access is helping me perfect my roll. This will make me a safer boater and give me another way to enjoy my time in the wilderness."

"It's a great way for people to have a chance to go to a state park that otherwise might not be able to afford it. Thank you for having this program. It's also a great way for folks to discover just how much your local library has to offer."

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"This State Park [Yampa Valley] hit the mark on activities! We did a "first-ever" river float with the park rangers. The flower/tree identification guide, along with the wildlife one, were so fun to find in the library backpack, we used them!"

"Loved being able to teach my daughter and show her what CO State Parks have to offer. Great program!"

There were approximately 7,630 backpack checkouts in one year. That's 147 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Linda Hofschire, Library Research Service Director. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 352. www.LRS.org | © 2019 Library Research Service

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Appendix C

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2019

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2019, 371 patrons completed a survey about their experience with the program:

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (99%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (79%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (57%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

86% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

94% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"We are seniors on a fixed income. This pass was wonderful to allow us to visit this park and its trails! Thanks! A great experience. Thanks for contributing to us in a special way!"

"We purchased a pass!"

"Castlewood Canyon State Park is a place we've always driven past and wondered about. We were so glad to finally explore it, and hope to go back."

"Up close viewing of turkey vultures at Castlewood Canyon was a first & an amazing experience for my daughter and I."

"Tiger salamander larvae are fascinating! The lost pond in Mueller State Park was full of them and we spent a long time watching them. They are such interesting looking creatures and none of us had ever seen anything like them in the wild before."

"We learned things about the bald and golden eagles we did not know. We appreciated the opportunity to access our State Parks via the SP Backpack Program and had no idea this

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existed through the library system. Thank you!"

There were approximately 7,692 backpack checkouts in one year. That's 148 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Leah Breevoort, LRS Research Assistant. Questions can be sent to lrs@lrs.org. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 356. www.LRS.org | © 2020 Library Research Service

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Check Out Colorado State Parks 2020

Check Out Colorado State Parks (cpw.state.co.us/librarybackpack), the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 297 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. In 2020, state parks were closed from March 26 until May 12, when a gradual reopening of campgrounds began. However, people were still urged to avoid unnecessary travel for much of the year. Due to the extreme nature of the 2020 pandemic, many libraries were closed for a portion of the year or offering limited services. Only 137 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:

- 63% reported participating in trail and/or road activities.
- 28% reported participating in water-based activities.
- 7% reported participating in winter activities.
- 37% reported participating in wildlife-related activities.

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (99%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (78%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (53%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

80% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

89% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"I am going to purchase an annual pass on Earth Day 4/22/21. I am newly retired and born in Colorado. I intend to visit as many state parks as possible this year."

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"I really wanted a way to get out of town for a lovely weekend. This pass helped me do that. Mueller was gorgeous, the sun was bright, the breeze strong, and the people few. Thank you"

"Great pack with all the information to enjoy the outdoors (wildlife, birds, etc.). Parks have just about anything for the beginner to experienced person. Bathrooms,

camping sites, trails with all the beautiful views not seen before. Great for families with kids to get out and see. Five star rating."

There were approximately 1,527 backpack checkouts in one year. That's more than 29 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Leah Breevoort, Research Assistant. Questions can be sent to lrs@lrs.org. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 358.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Check Out Colorado State Parks 2021

Check Out Colorado State Parks, the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 307 Colorado libraries with park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. While backpack circulation was down due to the continuing pandemic, this program provided critical access to nature for many during 2021. 397 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:

- 63% reported participating in trail and/or road activities.
- 37% reported participating in water-based activities.
- 7% reported fishing.
- 37% reported participating in wildlife-related activities.

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (99%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (80%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (60%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

81% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped us learn more about nature."

92% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"Enables we seniors to walk/fish in the fresh air and avoid the COVID threat. We could not afford

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to do so otherwise.”

“This was my first visit to each of these parks after living here nearly 20 years. Thank you for the library pass access. I loved both of these parks and will visit again!”

“We were able to access the boat ramp to tube the Colorado River! We saw herons and enjoyed the water. We also walked our dogs around the lake. Amazing program! We would not have gone without this. ”

“This pass allows my family access to the State Parks on our unusual school year! Thanks for an opportunity to hike in January--that was a first for us! We hope you'll continue this program.”

There were approximately 6,915 backpack checkouts in one year. That’s more than 133 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Beth Crist, Youth Services Consultant. Questions can be sent to lrs@lrs.org. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 360.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Learn more by visiting [Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s library backpack webpage](#).

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Check Out Colorado State Parks 2022

Check Out Colorado State Parks, the result of a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado State Library, provides 308 Colorado libraries with two park passes and adventure backpacks filled with information and educational activities. Patrons of participating public, military, and academic libraries can check out a backpack for a week at a time to visit state parks for free. This program provided critical access to nature for many during 2022. In 2022, 356 patrons completed a survey about their park experience.

Activities patrons participated in while at the park:

- 63% reported participating in trail and/or road activities.
- 32% reported participating in water-based activities.
- 9% reported fishing
- 29% reported participating in wildlife-related activities

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (98%). Buy a day pass to visit a state park (75%). Buy an annual pass to state parks (63%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

81% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped me/us learn more about nature."

94% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"This program has been really well received in our community, allowing access and opportunity for everyone to get out and enjoy the beauty of Colorado."

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“Our patrons love this program and the passes are always in high demand... I also love seeing our patrons’ faces light up when they first learn of the program and that they can visit a Colorado state park for free.”

“In a region where access to public lands has been seriously limited due to the ongoing impact of a major wildfire a few years ago, this program is the key to getting out and into our amazing local landscape.”

“Our 7 year old used everything in the packet. She could identify birds, animals and flowers. She especially liked the binoculars.”

There were approximately 8,764 backpack checkouts in 2022. That’s more than 168 checkouts per week!

The author of this report is Sara Wicen, research assistant at Library Research Service. Questions can be sent to lrs@lrs.org. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 364.

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Appendix C

Check Out Colorado State Parks

Seven years of data showcasing this program's success

Program Totals

Total Circulation: 43,468

Participating Libraries: 308

An annual savings of \$69,800 for Coloradans State Parks Visited: 43

Patron Surveys Completed: 3,654

Program Growth

Before COVID-19 there were almost 150 checkouts per week. Backpack checkouts dropped in 2020 but bounced back quickly. 2022 set a new record for backpack checkouts in a year!

Average backpack circulation per week:

2016: 165

2017: 134

2018: 147

2019: 148

2020: 29

2021: 133

2022: 168

Participation Across Colorado

People from all regions of Colorado participate!

Every state park open to the public in Colorado was accessed. 1% of survey respondents were out of state visitors.

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Areas in blue mark zip codes shared by Check Out Colorado survey respondents. The size of the circle corresponds with how often the zip code was shared, and areas where the circles overlap represent multiple zip codes shared in that area.

Map data consists of each zip code shared and how many times respondents shared this zip code.

Zip Code	Count	Zip Code	Count	Zip Code	Count
80001	1	80131	3	80247	2
80002	5	80132	16	80249	15
80003	8	80133	5	80254	1
80004	7	80134	29	80301	10
80005	7	80138	18	80302	18
80010	4	80150	2	80303	18
80011	2	80155	1	80304	7
80012	3	80175	1	80305	28
80013	16	80177	1	80307	2
80014	6	80189	1	80401	23
80015	5	80202	1	80402	2
80016	4	80203	5	80403	4
80017	4	80204	4	80408	1
80019	4	80205	3	80420	10
80020	20	80206	6	80421	37
80021	7	80207	3	80422	5
80023	16	80209	6	80424	58
80026	10	80210	2	80425	1
80027	76	80211	1	80429	1
80030	9	80212	1	80432	1
80031	20	80214	9	80433	6
80033	5	80215	9	80435	28
80104	18	80216	2	80436	2
80106	4	80218	4	80437	1
80107	38	80219	6	80438	3
80108	5	80220	6	80439	15
80109	5	80221	4	80440	6
80110	30	80222	2	80442	11
80111	4	80223	9	80443	3
80112	8	80224	3	80444	4
80113	19	80226	1	80446	18
80117	7	80227	5	80447	4

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80118	2	80228	10	80452	41
80120	16	80229	2	80459	11
80121	3	80231	4	80461	14
80122	14	80232	4	80465	4
80123	11	80233	3	80466	35
80124	2	80234	15	80467	3
80125	4	80236	2	80470	1
80126	19	80237	2	80474	5
80127	8	80238	3	80476	9
80128	10	80239	8	80477	1
80129	13	80241	2	80478	21
80130	6	80246	5	80479	1
80481	1	80705	1	80951	1
80482	5	80723	1	81001	10
80497	1	80736	2	81003	5
80498	19	80741	1	81004	6
80501	20	80751	4	81005	7
80503	21	80766	2	81007	4
80504	21	80809	1	81008	3
80512	1	80814	6	81019	2
80513	11	80816	11	81020	68
80516	19	80817	11	81024	1
80517	3	80829	15	81035	1
80520	5	80831	9	81036	3
80521	24	80832	5	81039	4
80524	16	80835	7	81040	1
80525	35	80840	2	81041	2
80526	24	80863	13	81044	1
80528	11	80864	2	81047	3
80530	4	80902	4	81050	22
80534	11	80903	5	81052	22
80535	2	80904	34	81054	5
80536	2	80905	9	81055	28
80537	35	80906	6	81067	5
80538	29	80907	20	81069	1
80539	1	80908	7	81072	1
80540	1	80909	25	81077	7
80543	1	80910	5	81082	1
80545	17	80911	16	81084	1

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80547	1	80913	3	81089	103
80549	70	80915	11	81091	1
80550	9	80916	9	81101	3
80601	2	80917	5	81109	1
80602	6	80918	29	81122	2
80610	2	80919	49	81137	10
80620	8	80920	33	81144	2
80621	2	80921	16	81147	5
80631	16	80922	10	81154	2
80634	33	80923	7	81212	3
80635	1	80924	3	81224	5
80644	1	80925	1	81226	16
80645	1	80926	2	81230	25
80648	2	80927	2	81240	2
80649	1	80930	3	81251	2
80651	3	80933	1	81301	9
80701	21	80938	1	81303	2
81320	1	81434	2	81623	16
81326	1	81501	11	81624	2
81328	3	81502	2	81625	12
81401	106	81503	9	81629	1
81402	1	81504	26	81631	16
81403	20	81505	9	81632	10
81410	6	81506	7	81635	59
81413	49	81507	12	81636	2
81415	25	81520	13	81637	8
81416	61	81521	35	81638	1
81418	3	81524	3	81639	9
81419	109	81525	1	81643	1
81420	1	81526	9	81645	3
81423	16	81527	2	81647	72
81424	1	81535	1	81650	38
81425	10	81536	1	81652	43
81427	4	81601	70	81655	2
81428	60	81602	4	81657	10
81430	1	81613	1	81658	6
81432	1	81620	11		

What Libraries Have to Offer

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95% of survey respondents agreed to the statement, The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:

"I was not previously aware that public libraries offered such opportunities. It was a great resource for us."

5% were neutral or did not agree with the statement, The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer:

"We are already regular beneficiaries of the awesome services provided by libraries and were delighted to spread the news of this resource."

Outdoor Engagement

People shared about 150 unique activities that they participated in while at the park.

Percent of participants that participated in each activity:

Trail/road activities: 69%

Wildlife-related activities: 35%

Water-based activities: 30%

Fishing: 11%

Winter activities: 2%

Other*: 35%

*Other includes a wide variety of activities such as geocaching, photography, and meditation.

Connection to Nature

83% of survey respondents learned something new about nature. 99% of survey respondents would recommend a visit to a state park.

98% reported being satisfied with their Check Out Colorado State Parks experiences.

Word cloud data:

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Word	Count	Word	Count	Word	Count
accessibility	10	Financial help	45	opportunity	18
amazing	17	first time	38	pack materials	70
awesome	23	fishing	46	paddleboarding	12
beautiful	46	friendly staff	37	pets	18
birds	68	fun	12	plants	16
camping	18	geology	4	purchased pass	10
canoeing	5	gorgeous	6	relaxing	4
discovery	5	hiking	109	senior	23
excellent	4	Information sharing	17	thank you	223
exercise	6	kayaking	13	wildflowers	7
experience	17	learning	74	wildlife	125
exploring	7	library love	65	wonderful	28
family time	124	nature	13		
fantastic	5	night sky	8		

Thank you for sharing your stories. #CheckOutColorado

This report was written by Sara Wicen, Research Assistant & Cristy Moran, Adult Library Services Senior Consultant

www.lrs.org LRS@LRS.org Fast Facts ED3/110.10/No. 366

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