

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

This section addresses recreation sites served by I-70 and the potential effects on these recreation sites from the implementation of project alternatives. The Corridor provides access to recreation sites within publicly owned and federally managed lands of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the White River National Forest (WRNF), and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests (ARNF), as well as to many sites under the jurisdiction of adjacent counties and municipalities.

**Recreation and Tourism and the Corridor Economy.** Skiing and outdoor recreation are two of the top three tourism categories that provide jobs in Colorado. Skiing provides 14.3 percent of all tourism-related jobs, and outdoor recreation provides 13.1 percent of all tourism-related jobs (*Tourism Jobs Gain Ground in Colorado*, CBEF 2001). As illustrated in Figure 3.14-1, tourism jobs within counties along the Corridor account for a higher percentage of total jobs than anywhere else in the state.

**Recreational Travel.** More than 4 million trips were made to Colorado (from out of state) in 2001 for the purposes of skiing, outdoor recreation, and resorts (*Colorado Visitors Study 2001, Final Report* May 2002). Recreational travel is the most predominant contributor to peak I-70 traffic, especially during summer and winter weekends. Existing traffic during the ski season is characterized by congestion that is thought to affect local Corridor travel, suppress the number of skier visits, and affect the tourism economy. As a result, project alternatives would have the potential to affect recreation use in the Corridor. Such effects might include suppressed, relief of suppressed, or induced recreation visitation depending on the associated alternative travel characteristics.

According to Colorado’s 2003 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (Colorado State Parks 2003), congestion along road corridors that provide access to popular public lands sites and associated recreational opportunities, such as I-70, is a major issue in terms of recreation planning and management.

*“While over 80 percent of Coloradans reside along the Front Range, most of the public lands are located on the West Slope, resulting in strained transportation networks accommodating travel to and from recreation destinations.” (2003 SCORP)*

**Management of Recreational Use.** Many concerns were expressed in public and agency meetings regarding the potential for improved or increased access on I-70 to cause a higher number of visitors on public lands resulting in a deterioration of resources and visitor experiences. These possible impacts are of particular concern to public land managers (such as BLM, ARNF, and WRNF).

**Recreation Issues**

- Recreation sites within the Corridor are important destination areas for the state of Colorado and the nation.
- Several areas of national significance (Aspen, Vail, Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Wilderness Areas, Continental Divide National Scenic Trail) are accessed by the Corridor.
- Fifteen major ski areas and resorts are accessed from the Corridor (out of 26 ski resorts statewide).
- WRNF and ARNF are among the top 10 most highly visited forests in the nation.
- Direct access to the Corridor area from Denver International and Eagle County airports contributes to the Corridor-area recreation sites being major destinations of travelers around the US and abroad.
- “Increasing demands for unconfined recreation have exceeded the agency’s (USFS) ability to manage for high quality recreation opportunities within the capabilities of land and budget.” (USDA 2004)

### 3.14.1 Inventory Methods and Coordination

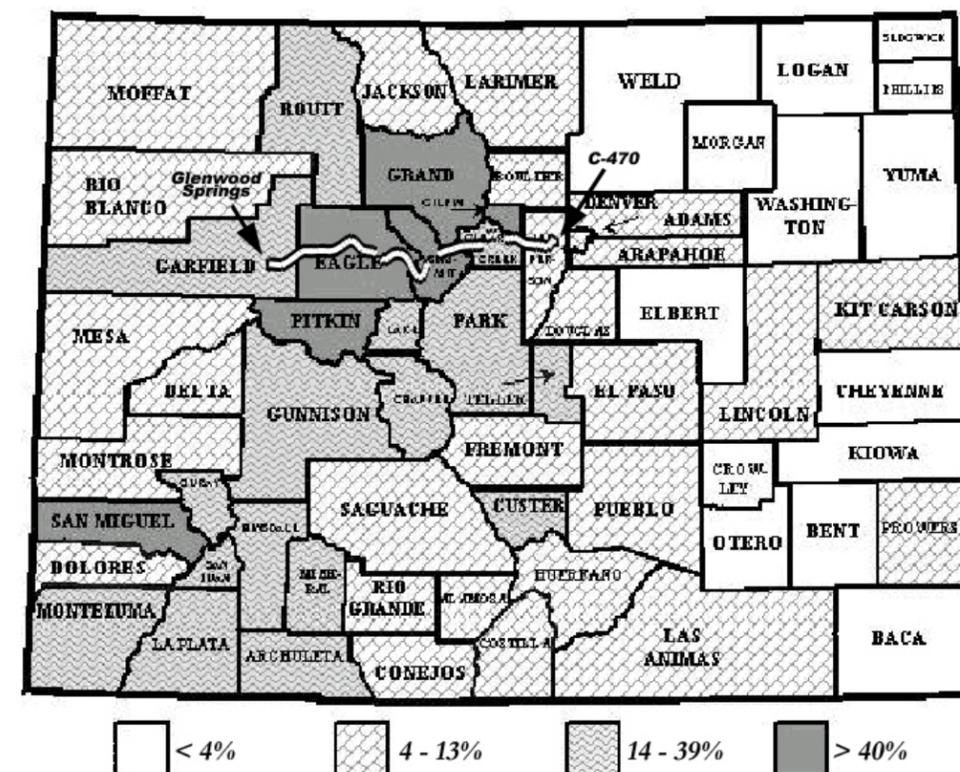
#### 3.14.1.1 Area of Study

The area of study for recreation resources centers on I-70 from Glenwood Springs east to C-470, including recreation sites immediately adjacent to I-70, and beyond the immediate geographic area, to address indirect consequences of alternatives. Direct recreation impacts are the result of physical disruption of a recreation resource by an alternative. Indirect recreation impacts are the result of the influence of I-70 on a broader area; they are related to forest visitation and extend to include recreation sites not directly adjacent to I-70. The inventory of forest visitation resources focused on the WRNF and the ARNF.

**Supporting Documentation**

- Appendix A, Environmental Analysis and Data
- Appendix M, Recreation Resources
- Resource Maps 3.14-1 through 3.14-15, Recreation Properties

Figure 3.14-1. 1999 Colorado Tourism as a Percent of Total Jobs



Source: *Tourism Jobs Gain Ground in Colorado*, April 27, 2001 CBEF

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

#### 3.14.1.2 Methods and Coordination

Recreation resource information was collected for all federally managed lands and from all counties and municipalities within the Corridor through letters, phone calls, and meetings with local planners. Planning organizations included the Glenwood Springs District of the BLM, the WRNF, and the ARNF; Garfield, Eagle, Summit, Clear Creek, and Jefferson counties; and municipalities directly adjacent to I-70. Data collected included:

- Federal lands management plans
- Open space and recreation plans
- Geographic Information System (GIS) databases

The plans and data received were then reviewed to help define recreation resources within the Corridor. While an inventory of recreation resources was conducted within a 6-mile-wide zone centered on I-70, a more detailed account of site amenity and function was completed for those sites in close proximity to alternatives. Additional coordination occurred with US Forest Service (USFS), county, and municipal planners to further describe the amenities and function of specific sites. USFS recreation planners from both the WRNF and ARNF provided forest visitation projections and were involved in the development of methodology for analyzing the indirect effects on recreation resources for potential suppression or inducement of recreation use associated with project alternatives.

#### Forest Management

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires that USFS lands be managed for various uses on a sustained basis to ensure in perpetuity a continued supply of goods and services to the American people. NFMA regulations state that each national forest's land and resource management plan be revised on a 10-year cycle or at least every 15 years. NFMA regulations also establish extensive analytical and procedural requirements for the development, revision, and significant amendment of forest plans. Forest management plans were reviewed in light of recreation resources issues for both the WRNF and ARNF.

Forest recreation management focuses on "desired recreation experiences." Some people prefer to recreate in more developed areas where there are more facilities, better access, and opportunities to interact with other recreationists. Others prefer more primitive settings where there is little evidence of other people, more difficult access, and opportunities for self-reliance. The range of possible recreation opportunities is based on activity types, settings, and quality of experience. This range is further described and quantified in terms of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes. The assigned desired ROS condition class is the maximum level of use, impact, development, and management that an area should experience over the life of the forest plan. The ROS serves as a tool for land managers to identify and mitigate change. Recreational capacity is a consequence of adopting specific ROS classes for which a landscape will be managed. WRNF has eight ROS classes: pristine, primitive, semi-primitive nonmotorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, roaded modified, rural, and urban. ARNF has six ROS classes: primitive, semi-primitive nonmotorized, semi-primitive motorized, roaded natural, roaded modified, and rural.

The ROS is used in the determination of capacities for both developed and dispersed recreation activities. Capacities generally indicate the level of use an area is able to accommodate. Capacity is further defined in terms of "theoretical capacity," which is based on a site's level of development, and "practical capacity," which is based on a 40 percent utilization rate. Use levels that are consistently above 40 percent of the theoretical capacity indicate long-term resource damage (see section 3.14.2.3 for a discussion of WRNF capacities).

Specific issues related to recreation resources are evaluated in the following text and include the potential for encroachment on or disruption of parks, recreation areas, trails, and ski areas. Project alternatives would also offer recreational benefits in the form of improved access to recreational activities. That is, by reducing congestion on I-70, more people may take advantage of recreation opportunities in the Corridor, and current recreation participants may engage in these activities more often. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even today, recreational trips that would use I-70 are being suppressed by existing congestion. Improvements to transportation capacity on I-70 might accommodate these suppressed or latent trips, and, perhaps, induce new recreational trips. Economic effects of project alternatives on tourism are addressed in section 3.9, Social and Economic Values. Impacts specifically pertaining to 4(f) protected properties (publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or any significant historic sites) are addressed in section 3.16, Section 4(f) Evaluation.

#### 3.14.1.3 Applicable Regulations

##### Section 4(f) Regulations

Section 4(f) as amended and codified in the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 USC 303 (c) states that the Federal Highway Administration

*"...may not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site unless a determination is made that: i) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the property; and ii) the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use." (23 CFR 771.135(a)(1) (i – ii)).*

*"When the first-tier broad scale EIS is prepared, the detailed information necessary to complete the Section 4(f) evaluation may not be available at that stage in the development of the action. In such cases, an evaluation should be made on the potential impacts that a proposed action will have on Section 4(f) land and whether those impacts could have a bearing on the decision to be made..." (23 CFR 771.135(o)(1)).*

See section 3.16, for the 4(f) evaluation.

##### Section 6(f) Regulations

Additional protection is provided for outdoor recreational lands under the Section 6(f) legislation (16 USC 4601-8(f) (3)) where Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) were used for the planning, acquisition, or development of the property. Section 6(f) provides, in part, that:

*"...no property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location."*

The inventory identified four Section 6(f) recreational properties purchased under the LWCF. While a temporary impact in the Georgetown Lake Recreation Area has been identified (see Table 3.14-3), analysis at the Tier 1 level indicates that permanent impacts on 6(f) resources could be avoided.

### 3.14.2 Affected Environment

#### 3.14.2.1 Overview of Past Influences

The earliest recreation uses of the Corridor can be traced to the early nineteenth century, before the Gold Rush of 1859. During this initial period, European and eastern travelers and sportsmen came to the Rocky Mountains to hunt, fish, and observe the Rocky Mountain landscape, beginning a pattern that has continued to the present. By the early twentieth century, as the middle class expanded in Denver and the nation, outdoor recreation in the Corridor evolved into day trips or weekend outings. New recreation entities, such as the “Denver Mountain Parks,” included facilities like Lookout Mountain Park. Eventually, the City and County of Denver acquired more than 13,000 acres in 22 mountain parks. This trend was later reinforced when Jefferson County and other local governments began to acquire open space lands, many along the Corridor, especially in the Corridor’s eastern reaches.

As early as the 1910s and 1920s, Denverites were driving to ski slopes on the outskirts of town, such as ones along the Corridor near Mount Vernon Canyon. World War II had a profound effect on the emerging ski industry. Camp Hale, outside Minturn, was used as a training camp for the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. After the end of World War II, veterans of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division became ski coaches, ski instructors, and recreation directors at many Colorado resorts. Others went on to develop Vail and Aspen as nationally recognized ski destinations. During the late 1950s and into the 1960s and beyond, more and more US residents sought the backcountry for all types of recreation, such as hiking, camping, and other activities. The presence of better air and highway access, especially in the Corridor, helped this rapid growth of skiing and other winter and summer sports (see section 3.9, Social and Economic Values, for a discussion of Corridor growth in relation to the construction of I-70). As described in the following discussions of recreation on forest and county lands, the importance of recreation throughout the Corridor has continued to intensify along with increases in local and regional population. In the year 2000, Colorado was ranked as number one (16.9 percent of the national total) in the nation for overnight ski trips (Longwoods International 2001).

#### 3.14.2.2 Summary of Corridor-Wide Recreation Resources

There are more than 200 recreation sites within a 6-mile buffer zone surrounding the Corridor length. Site locations are shown in the Resource Maps section, on Map 3.14-1 through Map 3.14-15. Table 3.14-1 illustrates the site type, land affiliation, and quantity of recreation resources within this area.

Table 3.14-1. Recreation Resources in the Inventory Area

Type	BLM	WRNF	ARNF	Garfield	Eagle	Summit	Clear Creek	Jefferson	Total
Trail	3	50	9	4	4	2	3	11	86
Park		2		5	21	17	9	10	64
Open space					5	2			7
Recreation area	7	5		1	4	1	5	1	24
Public campground	1	6	1	1					9
Picnic area	1	2	1						4
Interpretive site/ nature center	1	1	1					1	4
River access point	7	2		1	1		7		18
Ski resort		3	1		1	1			6
Congressionally Designated Wilderness Area		2							2
Grand total	20	73	13	12	36	23	24	23	224

Of the 86 trails within the inventory area, 78 are perpendicular to I-70. Only 7 trails are parallel to I-70, and only 7 trails cross under or over I-70. Trails that parallel I-70 in close proximity are more likely to be impaired depending on the project alternative to be implemented. Trails that cross under or over I-70 may also be affected by project alternatives. However, this type of impact is typically easier to mitigate. Trails located in close proximity and that parallel I-70 include:

- Glenwood Canyon Trail
- Vail Trail
- Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail
- Bakerville to Loveland Trail
- Georgetown to Silver Plume Trail
- Empire Pass Trail
- Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route

Trails that cross under or over I-70 include:

- Glenwood Canyon Trail
- Two Elk National Recreation Trail
- Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail
- Wilder Gulch Trail
- Corral Creek Trail
- Herman Gulch/Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route

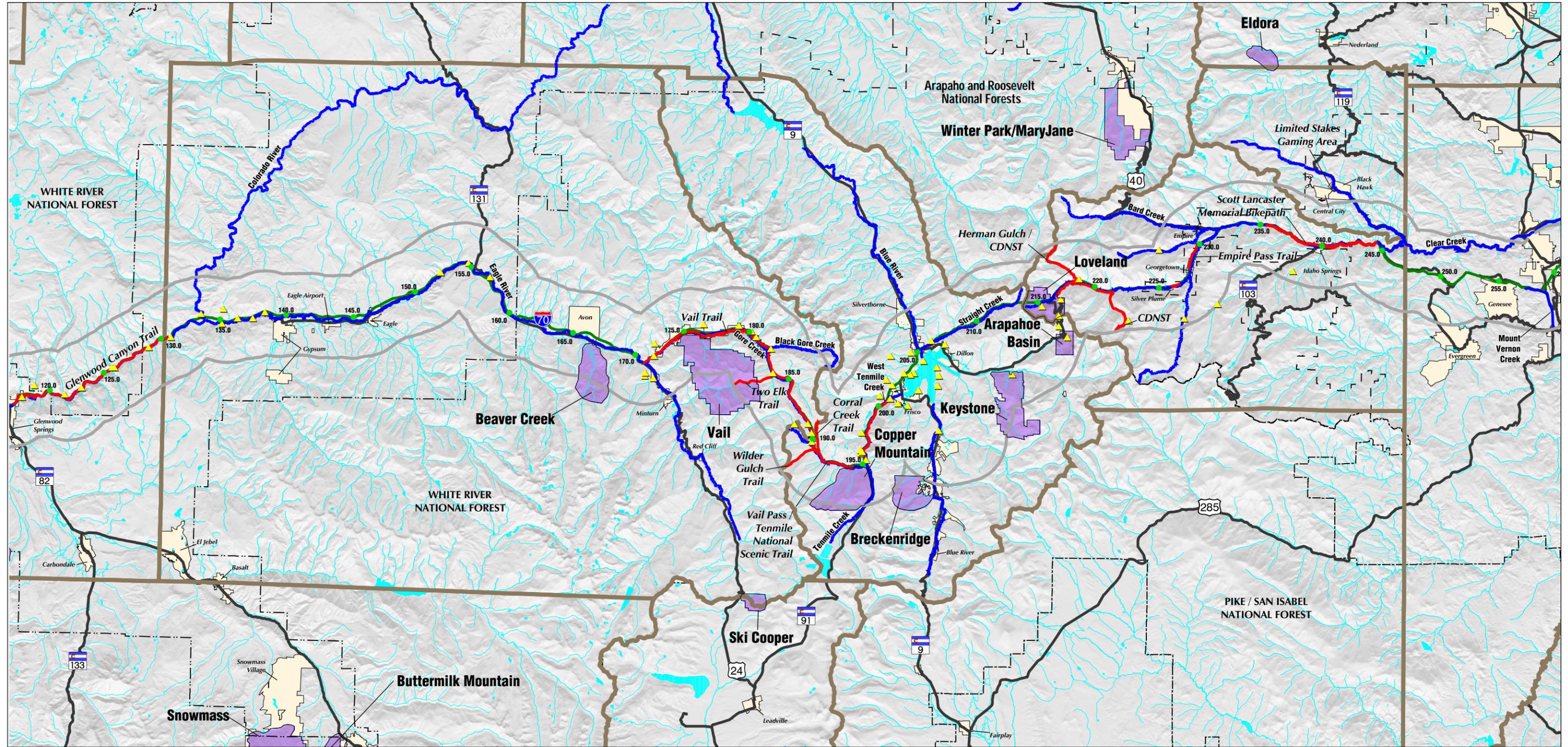
These trails are illustrated on Figure 3.14-2.

I-70 currently provides access to rivers and creeks that offer recreational opportunities such as fishing, rafting, and other water-related activities. These recreation resources could be affected by project alternatives. Twelve creeks and rivers flow along I-70 in the Corridor, as shown on Figure 3.14-2.

- Colorado River
- Eagle River
- Gore Creek
- Black Gore Creek
- West Tenmile Creek
- Tenmile Creek
- Blue River
- Straight Creek
- Bard Creek
- Clear Creek
- Shingle Creek
- Mount Vernon Creek

The Colorado Wildlife Commission has designated the lower 4 miles of Gore Creek (from Red Sandstone Creek downstream to the Eagle River) and a portion of the Blue River (through Silverthorne) as Gold Medal fisheries. Designation as a Gold Medal fishery is based primarily on the high recreational value of the brown trout community in these stream segments (USGS 2001). The Colorado River (through Glenwood Canyon), Eagle River, and Clear Creek also provide quality conditions for whitewater rafting. This industry plays an important role in local communities bordering these rivers, as well as in the Corridor. In 2003 the industry brought in \$116 million (463,421 total rafters during the year) to Colorado, doubling the 1991 income. In 2003 Colorado River rafters contributed \$14 million, Eagle River rafters contributed \$0.6 million, and Clear Creek rafters contributed \$6 million (*Executive Summary Commercial River Use in Colorado* 2003).

3.14 Recreation Resources



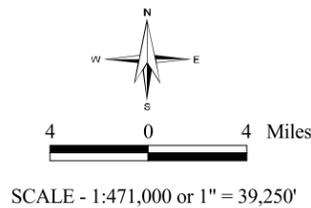
General Features

- I-70 Mileposts
- ▲ I-70
- ▲ U.S. Highways
- Water Bodies
- ▲ Rivers & Streams

- 3-Mile Study Area Buffer
- Municipalities
- Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest Boundary
- Pike / San Isabel National Forest Boundary
- White River National Forest Boundary

Key Recreation Resources

- ▲ Recreation Areas
- ▲ Rivers & Streams along the I-70 Corridor
- ▲ Trails in Close Proximity to I-70
- Ski Areas



**Figure 3.14-2. Recreation Sites Adjacent to and Accessed by the Corridor**

Many recreation sites and resort areas are located outside the immediate vicinity of I-70 but are primarily accessed via I-70. There could be indirect or secondary impacts on these recreation areas. Although these areas are not directly affected by project alternative footprints, indirect impacts on forest recreation are considered in section 3.14.3.2. These sites include ski areas and recreation areas in Pitkin, Garfield, Routt, Grand, Summit, and Gilpin counties as listed below; some of which are illustrated on Figure 3.14-2:

- Ski Sunlight North and South via I-70 and SH 82, located 10 miles south of Glenwood Springs in Garfield County
- Snowmass Ski Area via I-70 and SH 82, located in Pitkin County
- Aspen Mountain Ski Area via I-70 and SH 82, located in Pitkin County
- Aspen Highlands Ski Area via I-70 and SH 82, located in Pitkin County
- Buttermilk Mountain via I-70 and SH 82, located in Pitkin County
- Steamboat Springs Resort via I-70, SH 9, and SH 131, Routt County
- Breckenridge Ski Area via I-70 and SH 9, Summit County
- Keystone Resort via I-70 and US 6, Summit County
- Arapahoe Basin Ski Area via I-70 and US 6, Summit County
- Winter Park/Mary Jane Resort via I-70 and US 40, Grand County
- SolVista Resort via I-70 and US 40, Grand County
- Grand Lake via I-70, US 40 and US 34, Grand County
- Limited Stakes Gaming Area via I-70, US 6, and SH 119, Gilpin County

### Trends in Recreational Activities and Management

The 2003 SCORP emphasizes the connection between Colorado's population growth and growth in recreational use. The SCORP indicates that the Western Slope (including Summit, Eagle, and Pitkin counties) will continue to have one of the fastest rates of growth due to recreational amenities that attract second home construction and retirees.

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) 2000, published by USFS, indicates that the continuing growth in outdoor recreation outstrips population growth rates. To effectively evaluate outdoor recreation trends, the NSRE examined activities within each state. The 2003 SCORP includes summaries of NRSE information, as well as data from Colorado State Parks and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) surveys. Highlights of Colorado recreational activity trends according to the SCORP include:

- More than 94 percent of state residents participate in outdoor recreation activities. People most often participate in trails and driving pursuits, viewing/learning activities, and social pastimes.
- The largest percent increase in outdoor recreation from 1995 to 2003 is seen in individual sports, snow and ice activities, boating, and trails/driving activities.
- Swimming and team sports are the only activities declining relative to population growth.
- Kayaking, rafting, and jet-skiing are the biggest factors in growth of water-based recreation.
- Snowboarding, snowmobiling, and ice fishing are the major influences increasing winter recreation participation. Snowmobile recreation continues to grow, with an average annual increase in registration of 4.4 percent from 1998 to 2002.

- Family gatherings, walking for pleasure, outdoor sports events, visiting nature centers, sightseeing, picnicking, and wildlife viewing engage the highest percentage of the population.
- Ascents of 14,000-foot peaks ("fourteeners") increased by 300 percent in the past decade, from 65,000 to 200,000.
- Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) registrations have increased 223 percent from 1995 to 2003, with an average increase of 18 percent annually.
- Recreation participation rates are increasing faster than the rate of population growth.
- Of the eight states within the USFWS Mountain Region, Colorado attracts the most anglers and hunters.
- Cycling downhill at Colorado ski areas is becoming a major recreation attraction. More than 699,000, or half of all summer visitors, biked at one of the ski areas in the state. Seventy percent of bicycling tourists at ski areas were from out of state.
- More than 90 percent of state residents are trail users, and the average family uses trails 78 times a year. Since 1990, the number of trail climbers has increased by 10 percent per year.
- During FY 2001-02, more than 13,500 people participated in "festivals" focusing specifically on viewing Colorado's wildlife.

Recreation use is becoming more popular and diverse due to changes in technology (USDA 2004). This is supported by the fact that in 1970, mountain bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), snowmobile mountain recreation, fourteen climbing, and paragliding did not exist to any significant degree. In addition, while sports like snowshoeing, rock climbing, and kayaking were relatively uncommon in 1970, they are now common recreation activities. According to a Longwoods International Travel Study (2001), Colorado is ranked first in the nation for overnight ski trips, at 16.9 percent of total trips to US ski areas.

According to the USFS *Colorado Recreation Strategy* (USDA 2004):

*"Increasing demands for unconfined recreation have exceeded the agency's (Forest Service) ability to manage for high quality recreation opportunities within the capabilities of land and budget." (USDA 2004)*

Management issues arise due to many factors such as motor sport design that allows users greater access to remote areas leading to intensified conflicts as different recreation user groups compete for the same areas. Recent planning documents, including the 2004 USFS *Colorado Recreation Strategy* and the 2003 SCORP, are evidence of increased recreation management concerns. These documents have identified management issues and strategies to address the future of Colorado's recreational resources.

More recently, the USFS *Colorado Recreation Strategy* (USDA 2004) has focused on "Emphasis of Place in Recreation Management," and identifies 10 categories of "place" (or recreation "niches"). For example, one of these categories, "Resort Community Setting including winter sports areas," is defined as:

*"Primary areas with second home development and transient population. Residents depend on the Forest for scenic backdrop and day-use recreation activities."*

Management standards and direction, primary recreation activities, and "meaningful measure standards" have been identified for each category.

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Management standards for the Resort Community Setting category include scenery standards rated as “High Integrity Level” and standards applicable to a ROS class that is “primarily Roaded and Natural Rural.” Management direction for this category specifies the need to provide access to USFS lands through developed areas. Primary recreation activities are day use activities that include viewing scenery, day hikes, and winter sports. The “meaningful measure standards” are used to define the standards that would be used to evaluate the success of a management strategy of each “place” category.

#### 3.14.2.3 Recreation Resources Jurisdictions and Level of Visitation

This section documents the level of recreation visitation on federally managed lands, key differences among these jurisdictions, and associated land management challenges. This section also addresses recreation resources on county and municipal lands and the role of recreation and tourism within each county. Publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges of national, state, or local significance are protected under Federal Highway Administration’s Section 4(f) as amended and codified in the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 USC 303 (c). Section 3.16, Section 4(f) Evaluation, examines the properties eligible for protection under 4(f).

#### Bureau of Land Management

While BLM lands constitute a major component of the land area throughout the Corridor, USFS lands (WRNF and ARNF) receive most of the recreation use in the region, especially by nonlocal visitors. Recreation activities that generate the most use on BLM lands within the Corridor include hunting, fishing, and off-road vehicle driving. The BLM also manages whitewater rafting recreation areas along the Upper Colorado River. Designated recreation sites located on BLM lands within the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-1 through Map 3.14-4, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. More than 300,000 people visited the Glenwood Springs District of the BLM in 2002.

The BLM 2000-2005 Strategic Plan includes “Special Recreation Management Areas” (SRMAs) that serve to direct recreation funding and personnel to lands where a commitment has been made to provide a specific recreation activity or experience and public benefit opportunities. Community-oriented SRMAs are managed to provide structured recreation opportunities in response to recreation-tourism demand generated by community and/or tourism growth and development. Distinctive open space frontier is managed to support BLM’s traditional role as a provider of dispersed recreation, maintaining the land’s undeveloped, open character (SCORP 2003).

#### White River National Forest

The WRNF was established in 1891 and includes 750,000 acres of wilderness (including the nation’s largest elk herd), more than 2,400 miles of system roads, and more than 2,100 miles of system trails. WRNF lands within the Corridor contain high elevation and rugged lands; they house the Beaver Creek, Copper Mountain, and Vail resorts, as well as nine other ski areas and the Eagles Nest and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Areas. WRNF lands include many easily accessible trails, forest roads, recreation sites, picnic areas, and campgrounds.

#### Recreational Use

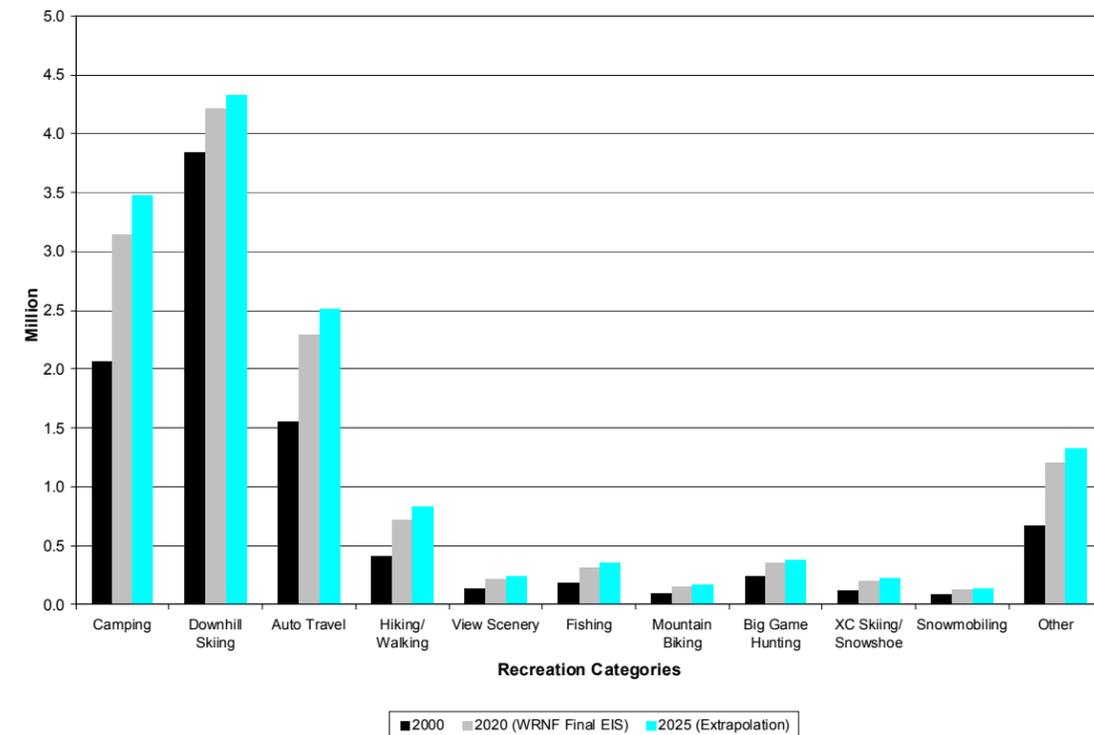
The WRNF receives a high level of both summer and winter recreational use: more than 8.9 million people visited the WRNF in 1997, which represents an 85 percent increase in visitation in little more than a decade. This increase is primarily linked to increases in local and regional (includes the Front Range area) population. Projected increases in regional and local population are anticipated to continue to increase demand on WRNF recreation resources (WRNF FEIS 2002). Communities neighboring or near the WRNF include New Castle, Rifle, Meeker, Silt, Glenwood Springs, Gypsum,

Eagle, Basalt, Edwards, Avon, Snowmass Village, Vail, Minturn, Aspen, Carbondale, Breckenridge, Dillon, Frisco, and Silverthorne. Population increases of these local communities have resulted in a shift in visitor profile from one dominated by regional visitation to one of heavy and increasing local visitation. This trend is expected to continue until local communities reach buildout or community planning or infrastructure constraints begin to restrict population growth.

Predominant recreation activities on the WRNF include downhill and cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping, auto travel, walking and hiking, big game hunting, fishing, sightseeing, mountain biking, and snowmobiling. Winter activities in the area of Vail Pass, especially increasing snowmobile recreation, have created WRNF management concerns.

The WRNF estimates recreation use in “Recreation Visitor Days” (RVDs), a term that takes the type of activity and time period of use into consideration. RVDs are intended to provide an accounting of visitor use in terms of time spent at specific recreational activities. One RVD is equivalent to 12 hours of continuous use, whereas one visit is any time spent on the forest. Specific activities are allotted standard times in hours to determine RVDs. For example, a visitor who picnics is allotted 0.2 RVDs. RVDs are generally lower in number than a simple accounting of visitors, excepting for certain time-intensive activities such as wilderness camping that might extend over numerous days. Chart 3.14-1 illustrates 2000, 2020, and 2025 RVDs by the predominant recreation activities on the WRNF (total forest). A more recent visitation survey, National Visitor Use Monitoring Results (NVUM 2003), was performed for the WRNF during the 2001/2002 seasons. The NVUM data indicate WRNF annual forest visits (not RVDs) were 9.7 million during the survey period. Note that visitation was probably “down” from normal because the survey took place after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001, and during a period of extreme drought and extensive wildfires.

Chart 3.14-1. White River National Forest RVDs by Activity



The WRNF receives 7.6 million skier visits annually, approximately 13 percent of the nation’s total downhill skier visits. Skier visits are generally represented by ticket sales, not RVDs. The combined daily capacity of the 12 ski areas on the WRNF is currently approximately 95,169 skier visits. Table 3.14-2 provides a breakdown of skier visitation by county. While the predominant recreation activity on the WRNF by far is downhill skiing, the future projected growth rate for skiing is relatively low (WRNF FEIS 2002). Skiing within Colorado is projected to increase at a higher rate than that of the nation as a whole over the next 10 years (WRNF FEIS 2002) but is still expected to have a decreased growth rate based on previous growth. The expansion of existing resorts within Colorado is anticipated to accommodate the modest growth rates projected.

**Table 3.14-2. WRNF Skier Visitation**

County	Annual Visitation (2001)	Percent of Total Skier Visits on the WRNF
Summit	3,800,000	56
Eagle	1,600,000	24
Pitkin	1,300,000	19
Garfield	84,000	1

**Forest Management**

The WRNF *Land and Resource Management Plan* was first issued in September 1984. The 2002 Forest Plan revision is accompanied by a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that describes the analysis used in the Plan’s development and formulation. The recreation-related goals and objectives of the WRNF *Land and Resource Management Plan* include multiple uses and sustainability of national forests and grasslands in an environmentally acceptable manner; and provide for scenic quality and a range of recreational opportunities. Strategies to meet these goals include study and analysis of resources; and construction and rehabilitation of developed recreation facilities, trailheads, and dispersed recreation sites. The WRNF *Land and Resource Management Plan* also contains standards and guidelines for recreation management and the travel system infrastructure that provides access to recreation facilities and experiences.

The WRNF manages for both developed and dispersed recreation use in accordance with ROS class. Developed recreation sites located in the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-1 through Map 3.14-11, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. Developed recreation activities are associated with campgrounds, picnic areas, downhill skiing, and other built sites. WRNF developed recreation sites include 12 ski areas, 70 developed campgrounds, 15 picnic grounds, 11 interpretive sites, and 209 trailheads. According to WRNF use projections, which assume little transportation improvement along the Corridor, it is anticipated that in 2020 all developed recreation facilities on the WRNF will be at 36 percent of theoretical capacity and at 90 percent of current practical capacity (WRNF FEIS). WRNF projections indicate that by 2020, camping will exceed existing capacities of developed sites.

Dispersed recreation occurs where no developed facilities are present. The WRNF estimates that approximately 50 percent of all recreation use is dispersed in nature. Dispersed recreation use on the WRNF has increased dramatically in the last decade and is anticipated to increase an additional 200 percent by 2020 for backpacking, day hiking, visiting prehistoric sites, running and jogging, rafting/tubing, sailing, and cross-country skiing in the Rocky Mountains. The diversity of these activities continues to grow, and such growth has contributed to increased conflicts among different types of recreationists. In addition, as the “developed site” visitor experiences changes due to heavy use within developed recreation facilities, it is anticipated that visitors will seek more remote recreation experiences in dispersed backcountry locations.

WRNF’s existing travel system receives most of its use from recreation users, and recreation on WRNF lands has substantially increased since the last major transportation planning effort in 1984. The WRNF began developing a *Travel Management Plan* for the forest in September 2002. Recent technological changes also affect access and recreation use. Mountain bikes, ATVs, and snowmobiles have become more popular, and they are able to access various terrains, including areas that once were inaccessible. The *Travel Management Plan* will define the forest’s summer and winter travel strategy and define an official road and trail travel network on the ground. More importantly, in relation to recreation management, the Plan will define how people access different areas of the forest. Travel management may include controlling and/or restricting access to specific areas during specific times/seasons. Access limitation is considered a key tool in the management of forest recreation use. Travel management strategies are intended to address existing and future recreation use issues.

USFS lands immediately adjacent to I-70 are designated as a Utility Corridor from Vail to Copper Mountain and from the Continental Divide to Silverthorne. These areas are managed as existing and potential right-of-way corridors (such as highways, pipelines, and electric transmission systems). Lands adjacent to utility corridors are managed for developed recreation complexes, backcountry recreation (nonmotorized), elk habitat, dispersed recreation, ski-based resorts, pristine wilderness, primitive wilderness, and river recreation. The Glenwood Canyon Trail (Glenwood Canyon) and the Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail (Vail to Silverthorne) parallel I-70 for approximately 34 miles.

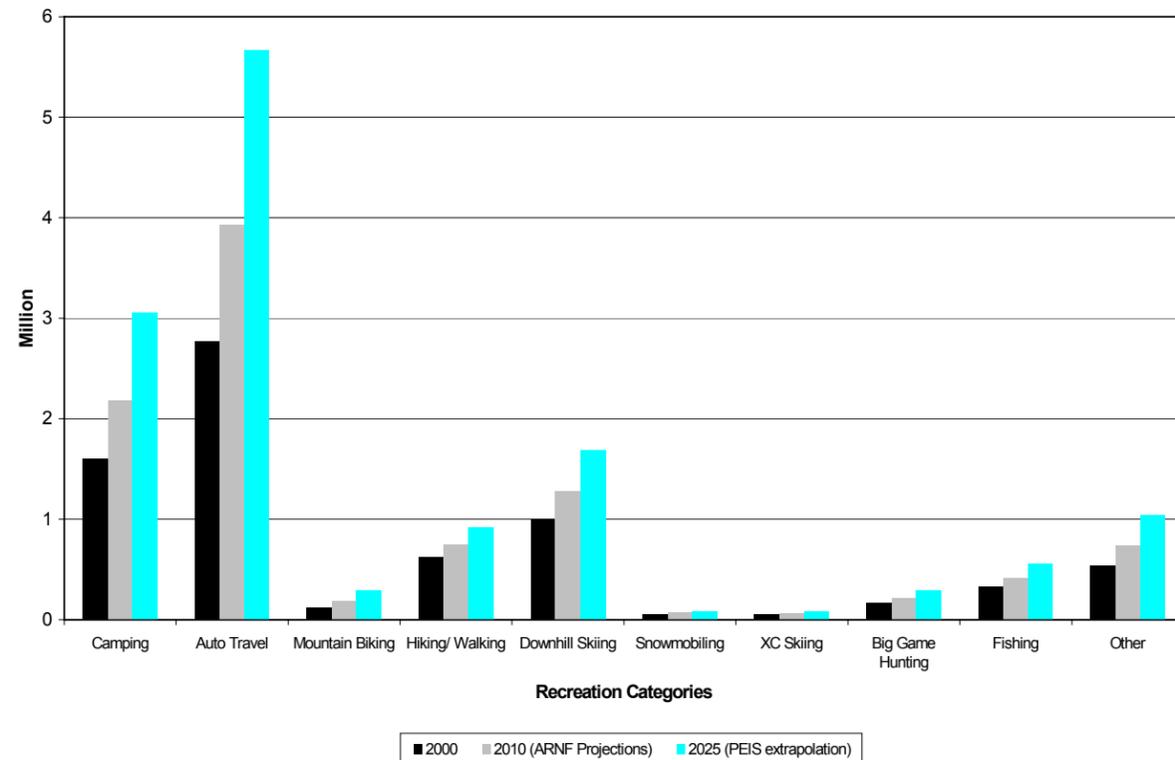
**Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests**

ARNF was established in 1908 and includes 1.3 million acres of public land in the Rocky Mountains and foothills of north central Colorado. ARNF lands within the Corridor contain high elevation and rugged lands. They house the Loveland Ski Area, Guanella Pass National Scenic Byway, and Mount Evans Scenic Byway, and contain many easily accessible trails and forest roads. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail crosses I-70, following along the Herman Gulch Trail, just east of the Eisenhower Tunnel. Recreational use on the ARNF is heavily influenced by its close proximity to large urban areas of the Front Range, and the area receives a high level of both summer and winter recreational use. More than 6.2 million people visited the ARNF in 2000 (*National Visitor Use Monitoring Results*, August 2001).

Predominant developed recreation activities on the ARNF include developed skiing, camping, picnicking, and interpretive and educational sites and facilities. Chart 3.14-2 illustrates 2000/2010/2025 RVDs by predominant recreation types. Although the Clear Creek District is the only Ranger area directly accessible from I-70, the adjoining Sulphur District is also considered within the area of Corridor influence. RVDs for the major recreation categories shown in Chart 3.14-2 are expected to increase from 2.6 (2000) to 3.4 (2010 projections, ARNF Forest Plan), to 5.3 (2025 PEIS extrapolation) million (Clear Creek and Sulphur districts). The NVUM survey for the ARNF (NVUM 2001) was performed during the 2000 recreation seasons. The NVUM data indicate ARNF annual forest visits (not RVDs) were 6.2 million during the survey period.

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

Chart 3.14-2. Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests RVDs by Use



The ARNF currently has three downhill ski areas operating under special use permits—Eldora, Loveland, and Winter Park—which cumulatively receive an average of 1.3 million skier visits annually. Berthoud Pass has not operated as a downhill ski area since the 2000–2001 season. Projections for ski visitation in Colorado indicate that the rapid growth rate for this sport that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s will not continue in the following decade. Expansion of existing areas within Colorado is expected to accommodate the modest growth rates projected for downhill skiing. Skier visits are expected to grow from 1.8 million (2000), to 2.2 million (2010 projections, ARNF Forest Plan), to 2.7 million (2025, PEIS extrapolation) (Clear Creek and Sulphur districts).

#### Forest Management for Recreation

ARNF lands are managed using ROS classifications, and recreation areas are categorized for developed and dispersed recreation use. The ARNF *National Visitor Monitoring Results* (2001) reports that developed recreation use has increased 31.4 percent and dispersed recreation use by 42.2 percent. Developed recreation sites on the ARNF within the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-11 through Map 3.14-14, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. Existing use of ARNF developed recreation facilities is at capacity on many weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Due to a lack of resources, the maintenance of existing sites and construction of newly developed recreation facilities have been limited and have not kept pace with increased use.

The predominant dispersed recreation activities on the ARNF included dispersed camping, trail use, and coldwater fishing. The greatest increase in dispersed recreation use is expected for mountain biking, dispersed camping, canoeing and rafting, winter-oriented activities, and coldwater fishing. The ARNF *National Visitor Monitoring Results* (2001) states the following in regard to ARNF dispersed use:

*“Generally, a large surplus of land is available with the potential to support additional dispersed recreation activity opportunities well into the future. However, the key limitation to participating in dispersed recreation activities is access to dispersed areas, parking availability, limited dispersed campsites, and the availability of information on dispersed opportunities.”*

To support the demand for dispersed recreation, construction of supporting facilities (parking areas, trailheads, designated dispersed campsites) would be required.

Lands directly adjacent to I-70 are managed for dispersed recreation and ski-based resorts, while more remote areas of the forest, approximately 0.5 mile from I-70, are managed for backcountry recreation. ARNF goals for land within the Corridor include providing various recreational opportunities, and adding and improving trailheads and nonmotorized trails at key areas such as the Continental Divide, high peaks, and alpine peaks.

#### Garfield County

The rural character of Garfield County offers numerous recreational opportunities for residents and travelers. The county includes large areas of publicly owned and federally managed lands as addressed above in the BLM and the WRNF descriptions. Most recreation sites in the inventory area are under the jurisdiction of the city of Glenwood Springs. These sites include several community parks (Vogelaar, Veltus, Two Rivers A.E. Axtell, and Centennial parks) and the western terminus of the Glenwood Canyon Trail. The Glenwood Hot Springs, which are privately held, are a primary attraction to the area. Map 3.14-1, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report, illustrates the parks, recreation sites, and trails within the portion of Garfield County in the Corridor. Several trails (Boy Scout, Bear Creek, and Transfer Trail) and one campground (Rock Gardens Campground) are present within the Corridor in the eastern portion of unincorporated Garfield County.

#### Eagle County

Eagle County is one of the fastest growing counties in Colorado. Demand for recreation opportunities has grown along with the population over the past 25 years. During this timeframe, the economic trend in Eagle County has continuously shifted away from agriculture, resource production, and manufacture toward what has clearly become the county’s economic base: tourism and recreation. The county includes large areas of publicly owned and federally managed lands as described above in the BLM and the WRNF descriptions. Recreation opportunities provided in county and municipal areas include playgrounds, picnic areas, ballfields, and community parks within unincorporated Eagle County and Gypsum and incorporated towns of Eagle, Avon, and Vail. Vail is a primary recreation destination with amenities such as the Vail Ski Area, the Vail Trail, tourist shopping areas, scheduled events (recreational and cultural), and a multitude of community parks.

Developed recreation sites in Eagle County located within the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-2 through Map 3.14-6, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. Summer recreational opportunities in Eagle County outnumber winter activities and include hiking trails, mountain biking trails, paved public bike paths, golf courses, tennis courts, a Gold Medal fishery (trout stream), kayaking, and whitewater rafting. Public access to the Eagle River is located in Eagle on the north side of the river from the county fairgrounds, with additional access adjacent to the Gypsum ponds and on BLM lands near Red Point and Red Canyon as noted in the *Eagle Area Community Plan 1996*. Eagle County has initiated an Eagle County Regional Trails (ECO Trails) system, which was formed in 1996. The intent is to create a scenic regional trail system that connects local communities through the Eagle River Valley from east Vail to Tennessee Pass and Glenwood Canyon.

### Summit County

Developed recreation sites in Summit County are illustrated on Map 3.14-7 through Map 3.14-11, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. Summit County is bordered by the Gore, Tenmile, and Williams Fork mountain ranges, which provide recreation activities such as skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, hiking, bicycling, fishing, rafting, and boating. Four major ski areas are located in the county: Arapahoe Basin, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, and Keystone. Unincorporated Summit County, Silverthorne, Dillon, and Frisco each encompass community parks, opens space, and trails. However, the primary recreation destinations within Summit County are on WRNF lands, which contain numerous backcountry trails. The Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail is one of the few trails in Summit County that runs parallel and adjacent to I-70, rather than perpendicular and away from I-70. Hotels, restaurants, and shops (such as galleries and sporting goods) are patronized by the same people who use the vast recreational activities available in Summit County (*Tourism Jobs Gain Ground in Colorado*, CBEF 2001).

### Clear Creek County

Developed recreation sites in Clear Creek County located within the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-11 through Map 3.14-14, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report. Clear Creek County offers a diverse range of recreation opportunities on forest, county, and municipal lands, including rafting, hiking, biking, riding the historic narrow gauge railroad, and touring historic mines. Recreation sites within the Corridor in Clear Creek County include the Loveland Ski Area and the Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route, which runs parallel to I-70 from Idaho Springs to US 40, the Charlie Tayler Water Wheel Park, as well as numerous other recreation areas within the municipalities of Georgetown and Silver Plume. Georgetown is a gateway to the Guanella Pass Scenic and Historic Byway. In addition, a number of private rafting firms provide rafting in Clear Creek along I-70. The town of Idaho Springs supports this industry by providing and maintaining creek access at numerous locations. Recreation opportunities on ARNF land within Clear Creek County are addressed above in the ARNF description.

Clear Creek County's "Greenway Initiative" (Clear Creek County 2003) is a proposed local/regional trail/recreation system that generally follows I-70 through the County. The proposed greenway would include access points to Clear Creek for kayaking, rafting, fishing, and general use. The trail system would tie into transit nodes identified in the *Master Plan* (2003) and provide connection to municipal trail systems, county trail systems, and the ARNF trail system. Implementation of the "Greenway Initiative" will be dependent on funding and other considerations.

### Jefferson County

Unlike other communities along the Corridor, there are no federally managed lands in the vicinity of I-70 within Jefferson County. While there are portions of three national forests present within Jefferson County, none are located within 3 miles north or south of I-70. There are, however, many Jefferson County open space lands, Denver mountain parks, and regional trails located in close vicinity to I-70 throughout the county. Close proximity to the Denver metropolitan area and easy access from I-70 has resulted in heavy recreational use within Jefferson County. I-70 in this area is bordered on both sides by the largest of Denver's mountain parks (Genesee Park at 2,340 acres) in which bison and elk herds can be viewed. Matthews/Winters Park also borders I-70 on two sides within Jefferson County. Trails within Matthews/Winters Park include Dakota Ridge Trail, Village Walk Trail, Red Rocks Trail, and Morrison Slide, all located south of I-70 near C-470. These trails are heavily used for both hiking and mountain biking. Apex Park is located approximately 1 mile north of I-70 and is also heavily used for both hiking and mountain biking.

The Lookout Mountain Nature Center and Preserve located 2 miles north of I-70 encompasses more than 110 acres and 1.4 miles of trail. Activities on the preserve include picnic areas and trail links to parks and to Buffalo Bill's Museum and Grave.

I-70 cuts through the Dakota Hogback, located at the eastern portion of the Corridor. The world's first Stegosaurus and Apatosaurus fossils were discovered on the west side of the hogback in 1877, 1.5 miles from I-70, and many bones can be viewed in the sandstone layers of the Morrison Formation today. This site, Dinosaur Ridge, is one of 11 sites in Colorado with National Natural Landmark status. Developed recreation sites in Jefferson County located within the inventory area are illustrated on Map 3.14-15, provided in the Resource Maps section of this report.

### Grand County

I-70 provides access to recreation areas in Grand County including the SolVista and Winter Park resorts. In addition, Grand County hosts the world-renowned Rocky Mountain National Park and the tourist destination of Estes Park. However, Grand County is not directly adjacent to I-70 and does not contain recreational sites within the inventory area.

### Pitkin County

Pitkin County hosts many important recreational destinations including the Aspen Ski Area and Maroon Bells Wilderness Area. These areas are primarily accessed via I-70 arterials. There are no Pitkin County recreation sites within the inventory area.

### Routt County

Routt County hosts many important recreational destinations including the Steamboat Resort, and other popular recreation activities including snowmobiling, golf, tennis, and hot air ballooning. These areas may be accessed via I-70 arterials. There are no Routt County recreation sites within the inventory area.

## 3.14.3 Environmental Consequences

This section addresses direct and indirect impacts on recreation resources that would result from the implementation of the project alternatives under consideration.

Direct impacts on recreation properties have been analyzed through a GIS overlay process, which compares alternative footprints to recreation properties.

Indirect impacts are related to the change in recreation experience that can be attributed to changes in the setting or increased use of recreation sites. The potential for increased access to and use of forest lands is analyzed by:

- PEIS-extrapolated recreation use on forest lands (2025). Predicted recreation-oriented trips (per project alternative) in 2025 (travel demand model) are compared with the extrapolated 2025 national forest visitation.
- Possible induced or suppressed resident population growth in the Corridor (in relation to 2025 DOLA projections) resulting from project alternatives and assumptions regarding resident visitation of forest lands.

These quantitative analysis results are discussed in light of existing management issues and the planning horizons of the WRNF and ARNF plans (2020 and 2010). Appendix M, Recreation Resources, contains additional methodology information for the assessment of indirect impacts.

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

#### 3.14.3.1 Direct Impacts

The GIS overlay analysis identified a total of 13 recreation resources that would potentially be directly affected by project alternatives. Table 3.14-3 identifies the recreation resources that would be potentially affected, the type of impact(s), a description of the impact, and potential applicability of Section 4(f). Illustrations documenting the effects of the alternatives on recreation resources are provided in Appendix M, Recreation Resources.

Analysis of direct impacts on recreation resources includes consideration of the following:

- **Impact type.** Identification of permanent or temporary impacts. Direct impacts can occur within an alternative's footprint or construction disturbance zone, and may be permanent or temporary. Permanent impacts result from encroachment into a site or discontinuity of a trail, which could permanently affect its function. Temporary impacts result from encroachment into a site or discontinuity of a trail, which can be mitigated to maintain site function.
- **Impact description.** Identification of crossing, encroachment, or disruption (for example, loss or discontinuity of trail).
- **4(f) potential.** Identification of properties subject to Section 4(f) requirements. See section 3.16, Section 4(f) Evaluation.
- **6(f) potential.** Identification of properties subject to Section 6(f) requirements. See section 3.14.1.3.

While Appendix M provides detailed descriptions of direct impacts on recreation resources, the following text and Table 3.14-3 provide a summary and an overview of these impacts.

#### Impacts Common to All Alternatives

All project alternatives, except the No Action and Minimal Action alternatives, would include third tunnel bores at the Continental Divide (EJMT) and Twin Tunnels and would, consequently, affect two recreation resources in close proximity to these tunnels: the Loveland Ski Area and the Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route. The third bore at the EJMT would likely require a cut-and-cover tunnel trench that would conflict with the ski run "The Face" at the Loveland Ski Area, and may also conflict with the access tunnel under I-70 that provides return to the base area from the north to the south side of I-70. The approach to the third tunnel bore at Twin Tunnels would require crossing over the Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route. It is anticipated that this trail could be spanned to mitigate this impact.

#### No Action

The No Action alternative would consist of several planned or permitted projects, which are described in Chapter 2, Description and Comparison of Alternatives. Impacts on recreation resources would include activities at each improvement project and development that is occurring along the Corridor. Impacts associated with these projects are addressed in other environmental documents including the *Eagle County Airport Interchange EA*, the *SH 9 EIS*, the *Gaming Area Access EIS*, and the *Hogback Parking Facility EA*. No additional direct impacts on recreation resources are anticipated to occur under the No Action alternative.

#### Minimal Action

The Minimal Action alternative would affect a total of eight recreation sites. Of the eight recreation sites affected, seven would be considered temporary impacts, such as disruption of trails that would be relocated or realigned to mitigate affected segments.

#### Transit

The Rail with IMC and the AGS alternatives would result in the greatest impacts on recreation resources. The Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives would affect a total of 12 recreation sites, of which 9 would be considered temporary impacts. The Dual-Mode and Diesel Bus in Guideway alternatives would affect a total of six recreation sites, of which four would be considered temporary impacts.

#### Highway

The Highway alternatives would affect between eight and nine recreation sites. Both the Six-Lane Highway 55 mph alternative and the Reversible/HOV/HOT Lanes alternative would affect a total of nine recreation sites, of which seven would be considered temporary. The Six-Lane Highway 65 mph alternative would affect a total of eight recreation sites, of which six would be considered temporary.

#### Combination

The Combination alternatives would result in among the greatest impacts on recreation resources, with a total of between 11 and 12 recreation sites affected, of which between 9 and 10 would be considered temporary. Impacts on recreation resources for the Combination Six-Lane Highway with Rail and IMC or Combination Six-Lane Highway with AGS alternatives would be similar to those of the Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives. However, because the transit portion would be built in the median in the Combination alternatives, and not along the side of the existing highway, impacts on the Prospector Trail and USFS Visitor Center Parking Lot/Trailhead would be avoided.

Table 3.14-3. Direct Impacts Associated with Project Alternatives

Description of Recreation Resource (Jurisdiction)	Carried Forward for 4(f) and 6(f) Analysis	No Action	Minimal Action Alternative	Transit Alternatives				Highway Alternatives			Combination Alternatives			
				Rail with IMC	Advanced Guideway System	Dual-Mode Bus in Guideway	Diesel Bus in Guideway	6-Lane Highway 55 mph	6-Lane Highway 65 mph	Reversible/HOV/HOT Lanes	6-Lane Highway with Rail and IMC	6-Lane Highway with AGS	6-Lane Highway with Dual-Mode Bus in Guideway	6-Lane Highway with Diesel Bus in Guideway
<b>Two Rivers Park (City of Glenwood Springs)</b> Approximately a 14-acre park located at the confluence of the Roaring Fork River and the Colorado River. A memorial has recently been added to the Two Rivers Park, honoring 14 fallen firefighters who perished while battling a blaze on Storm King Mountain.	No. Improvements to the eastbound off-ramp would occur within CDOT's right-of-way adjacent to Two Rivers Park. At the Tier 1 level of analysis, there is insufficient information to determine if there would be any indirect impacts on the park.	N/A	To be determined at Tier 2.	Same as Minimal Action		Same as Minimal Action		Same as Minimal Action			Same as Minimal Action			
<b>Vail Trail (Eagle County)</b> About 11-mile bike path located within Vail and unincorporated Eagle County. The Vail Trail closely parallels I-70, along the south side, between mp 171 and 182, through Dowd Canyon to east Vail. I-70 crosses over the Vail Trail at mp 171.4 and again at mp 181.8.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying CDOT's right-of-way. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Disrupts 0.4 mile of trail between mp 171.4 and mp 171.8 associated with Dowd Canyon curve safety modification. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	Temporary Crosses trail at mp 171.4 and again at mp 181.8. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	N/A	Same as Minimal Action	N/A	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action					
<b>Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail (WRNF)</b> 19-mile biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing trail. Extends along I-70 from east Vail (mp 182) to west Frisco (mp 201). Crosses under I-70 along Polk Creek near mp 185.3, where it transitions from the north side of I-70 to the south side.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying an easement through the WRNF. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Disrupts 2.4 miles of trail from construction of Vail Pass auxiliary lanes from mp 185.3 to mp 187.7. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	Temporary Disrupts trail near mp 184.7. Crosses over trail at mp 185.3. Disrupts 2.4 miles of trail from mp 185.3 to mp 187.7. Disrupts trail near mp 189.9. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	N/A	Same as Minimal Action		Same as Minimal Action			Same as Minimal Action			
<b>Parking and Scenic Pullout (WRNF)</b> Parking area access to Gore Range Trail and Trailhead.	No. Impacts on site access would occur on portions occupying an easement through the WRNF. The Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives would span over this access, and access to pullout would be maintained. No adjustments or changes in the alignment of the actual trail would occur. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	N/A	Temporary Crosses over parking area access scenic pullout access near mp 196. Both AGS and rail would be elevated in this location, and access to pullout would be maintained.	N/A	N/A		Same as Rail with IMC						
<b>Gore Range Trail (WRNF)</b> 5 1/2-mile hiking and cross-country skiing trail through Eagles Nest Wilderness Area. Trail extends from Green Mountain Reservoir to Copper Mountain, near mp 195 at the north side of I-70. Access to the Gore Range Trail is a trailhead near the parking area/scenic pullout north of I-70 at mp 195.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying an easement through the WRNF. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Disrupts 0.1 mile of trail from mp 195.3 to mp 195.4. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	Temporary Disrupts 0.3 mile of trail from mp 195.1 to mp 195.4. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through realignment of the affected segment.	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action		Same as Minimal Action			Same as Minimal Action			
<b>Two Elk National Recreation Trail (WRNF)</b> 11-mile hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing trail. Crosses under I-70 through Timber Creek Canyon near mp 183.7. Northern terminus of trail ends at Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail north of I-70.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying an easement through the WRNF. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Vail Pass auxiliary lane would cross this trail at mp 183.9. Crossing of this trail would be maintained.	Temporary Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives would cross this trail at mp 183.9. Crossing of this trail would be maintained.	N/A	Same as Minimal Action		Same as Minimal Action			Same as Minimal Action			
<b>Corral Creek Trail (WRNF)</b> 4-mile hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing trail. Crosses under I-70 along Corral Creek, near mp 191. Southern terminus of trail ends at Tenmile-Vail Pass National Recreation Trail south of I-70.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying an easement through the WRNF. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	N/A	Temporary Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives would cross this trail at mp 185.3. Crossing of this trail would be maintained.	N/A	N/A		Same as Rail with IMC		N/A				
<b>Loveland Ski Area (ARNF)</b> Loveland ski lease encompasses about 2,300 acres managed for downhill skiing. Located within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, east of EJMT. Accessed from I-70 at exit 216 (Loveland Pass).	Yes. 4(f). See section 3.16 for more details.	N/A	N/A	Permanent Requires a third tunnel bore at the EJMT and would result in use of a portion of the Loveland Ski Area to the north of I-70.	Same as Rail with IMC	Same as Rail with IMC		Same as Rail with IMC			Same as Rail with IMC			

<sup>a</sup> The Land and Water Conservation Fund

3.14 Recreation Resources

Description of Recreation Resource (Jurisdiction)	Carried Forward for 4(f) and 6(f) Analysis	No Action	Minimal Action Alternative	Transit Alternatives			Highway Alternatives			Combination Alternatives			
				Rail with IMC	Advanced Guideway System	Dual-Mode Bus in Guideway	Diesel Bus in Guideway	6-Lane Highway 55 mph	6-Lane Highway 65 mph	Reversible/HOV/HOT Lanes	6-Lane Highway with Rail and IMC	6-Lane Highway with AGS	6-Lane Highway with Dual-Mode Bus in Guideway
<b>Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (ARNF)</b> 3,100-mile trail from Canada to New Mexico. Crosses under I-70 through an underpass at Herman Gulch/Bakerville and continues on to Loveland Trails confluence at exit 218.	No. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail was exempted from Section 4(f) by Public Law 95-625. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Crosses trail at mp 218 interchange. Crossing of this trail would be maintained.	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action
<b>Georgetown to Silver Plume Bike Trail (Clear Creek County)</b> 1.5-mile bike trail located between Silver Plume and Georgetown on the south side of I-70. Trail closely parallels I-70 between mp 225.7 and mp 227.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying CDOT's right-of-way. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Disrupts trail from interchange modification at mp 226. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through relocation of the affected segment.	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action
<b>Georgetown Lake Recreation Area</b> 83 acres located on the southeast side of I-70 between mp 228.3 and mp 229.3. Recreation activities include wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, picnicking, and ice skating.	No. Not considered 4(f) use based on commitment to meet temporary occupancy per 23 CFR 771.135 (p)(7). See section 3.16 for more details.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Temporary Combination alternatives construction zone would overlap the <u>access</u> to the Georgetown Lake Recreation Area. The construction zone would be minimized to avoid impacts.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Prospector Trail and USFS Visitor Center Parking Lot/Trailhead</b> Associated with the USFS Clear Creek Ranger District Visitor Center located within Idaho Springs, on the southwest quadrant of I-70 and Mt. Evans Road (103). Parking at this visitors center also provides trailhead for Prospector Trail, an interpretive trail.	Yes. 4(f). See section 3.16 for more details.	N/A	N/A	Permanent Spans edge of parking lot mp 239.5 to 239.6. Alternatives would also cross the Prospector Trail.  Both Rail with IMC and AGS alternatives would be elevated in this area. The continuity of this trail would be maintained.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Charlie Tayler Water Wheel Park (Clear Creek County)</b> Interpretive park located along Clear Creek below Bridal Veil Falls on the south side of I-70. The Bridal Veil Falls drop nearly 300 feet into Clear Creek behind the Charlie Tayler Water Wheel.	Yes. 4(f). See section 3.16 for more details.	N/A	Permanent Alternative footprint would overlap into the interpretive park. Impact would displace the northern half of the park for the entire length of the park.	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action
<b>Scott Lancaster Memorial Bike Path/Colorado Bikeway Route (Clear Creek County)</b> 5-mile bike path/trail located between the western edge of Idaho Springs and the junction of US 6 and I-70; follows the old Georgetown railroad on the south side of Clear Creek.	No. Impacts would occur on portions of the trail occupying CDOT's right-of-way. Adjustments or changes in the alignment of the trail would not impair the continuity of the trail. Therefore, a "use" of land would not occur. Resource not purchased or improved with LWCF <sup>a</sup> and, therefore, would not warrant a 6(f) evaluation.	N/A	Temporary Crosses trail in two locations; mileposts 238.9 and again at 240.6. Disrupts trail from interchange modification at mp 239 and mp 241. Crossing of this trail would be maintained. Continuity of this trail would be maintained through relocation of the affected segment.	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action	Same as Minimal Action
SUMMARY	3 recreation properties were identified as having a potential 4(f) use and were evaluated in section 3.16.	N/A	7 temporary 1 permanent 8	9 temporary 3 permanent 12	4 temporary 2 permanent 6	7 temporary 2 permanent 9	6 temporary 2 permanent 8	7 temporary 2 permanent 9	10 temporary 2 permanent 12	9 temporary 2 permanent 11			

<sup>a</sup> The Land and Water Conservation Fund

**3.14.3.2 Indirect Impacts**

Indirect effects are caused by the action later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include changes in accessibility or use of recreation resources.

**Potential to Induce or Suppress Recreation Use on Forest Lands**

Methods

The potential for project alternatives to result in an increase or a decrease in visitation to forest lands is presented using the methodology described in Appendix M, Recreation Resources. Although many additional factors ultimately affect recreational patterns (such as forest service management, the national economy, technology, and user preference), this methodology focuses on transportation (specifically I-70) impacts. The following factors have been taken into consideration:

- Predominant developed and dispersed recreation uses on WRNF and ARNF lands
- Winter and summer division of major recreation activities
- WRNF and ARNF “splits” in winter and summer I-70 forest destination trips
- Forest service projections for increased recreational visitation (2020 and 2010; and 2025 PEIS extrapolations), independent of project alternatives
- Skier visits and winter and summer RVDs, 2000 and 2025 (extrapolated based on USFS projections)
- Residential (in-Corridor) and nonresidential (out-of-Corridor) use levels, 2000 and 2025
- Qualitative effects on general recreation activities from project alternatives (based on discussions with USFS planners)
- USFS goals and objectives related to management of recreation resources (desire to increase recreation use and ability to maintain and manage)

Indirect impacts on recreation resources are evaluated based on predicted increased/decreased national forest destination trips (in relation to USFS projections) to WRNF and ARNF by project alternative. The detailed methodology is presented in Appendix M. The evaluation is generally based on the following analysis components in relation to projected 2025 forest visitation:

- Increase/decrease in nonresident (out-of-Corridor) visitation: based on possible induced/suppressed forest destination trips (travel demand model) by project alternative.
- Increase in resident (in-Corridor) forest destination trips: based on possible induced growth (see section 3.9, Social and Economic Values) by project alternative.

As previously discussed, WRNF (2020) and ARNF (2010) forest visitation projections were made independently of I-70 considerations. Therefore, the analysis assumes that 2025 Baseline forest destination trips (travel demand model) are consistent with the PEIS extrapolated 2025 USFS projections.

Impacts on winter and summer visitation (winter and summer RVDs and skier visits) are described in terms of changes in winter and summer forest destination trips. As previously discussed, the term “RVD” is a forest service indicator that describes the type of activity and time period of use. Downhill skiing is the predominant winter forest use activity. Skier visitation is generally reported as “skier visits” (based on ticket sales), not RVDs. Winter and summer RVDs (2000 and 2025) were

estimated based on summarized major recreation category data from ARNF and WRNF and assumptions provided in Appendix M methodology.

Impact Analysis, WRNF

Table 3.14-4, Chart 3.14-3, and Chart 3.14-4 summarize impact analysis results for the I-70 WRNF districts by alternative. The No Action and Minimal Action alternatives are predicted to suppress forest destination trips and affect winter and summer RVDs and skier visits. The Highway alternatives are predicted to slightly increase WRNF (I-70 districts) nonresident forest destination trips, while the Transit and Combination alternatives are predicted to induce forest destination trips and affect skier visits and winter and summer RVDs by 0.6/0.5 million winter/summer trips and 1/0.8 million winter/summer trips, respectively. Possible induced growth associated with the Combination alternatives is predicted to increase annual resident forest use by 0.3 million winter trips and 0.2 million summer trips in 2025. A qualitative discussion of expected project alternative impacts on recreational use based on major recreation activities is provided in the following section, Implications for Forest Recreation Resources.

Anticipated growth (including the increase in second homes and the transient population) in Corridor counties is already a concern for WRNF planners due to an associated growth in recreational activity and national forest visitation. Possible induced growth associated with the Transit and Combination alternatives would only increase such pressures on recreational resources.

**Table 3.14-4. Indirect Impacts, White River National Forest<sup>a</sup>**

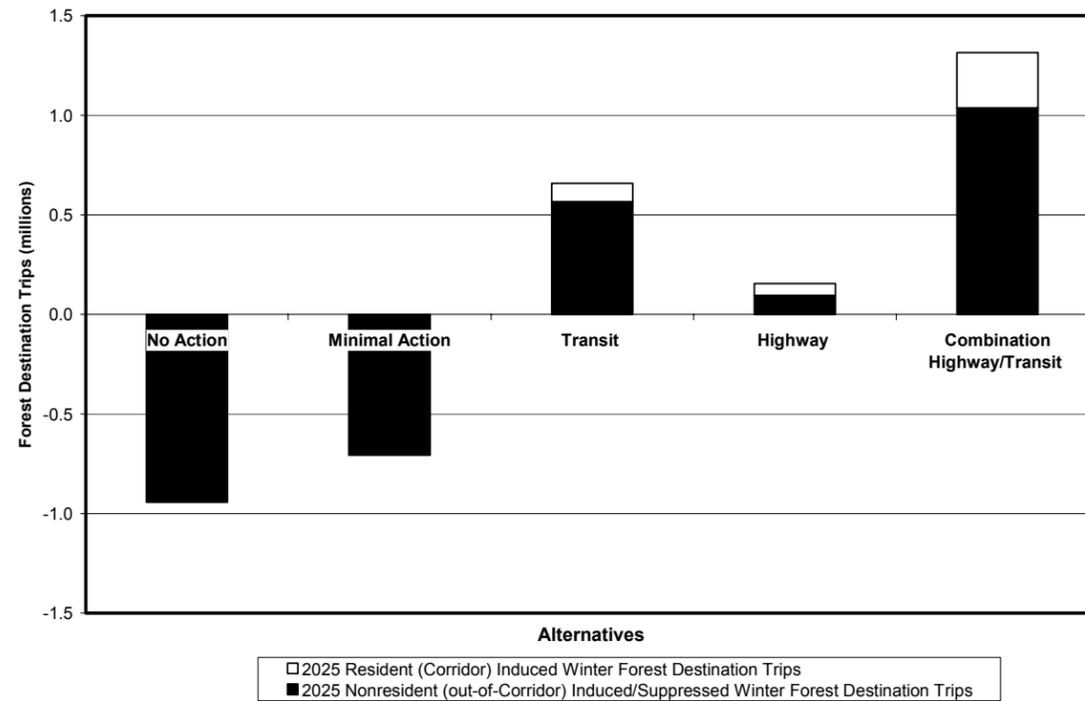
Alternative	2025 Winter Impacts			2025 Summer Impacts		
	Annual Change in Nonresident (out-of-Corridor) Winter Destination Trips (millions)	Annual Change in Resident (Corridor) Winter Destination Trips (millions)	Baseline 2025 Skier Visit / Winter RVD Projections <sup>b</sup>	Annual Change in Nonresident (out-of-Corridor) Summer Destination Trips (millions)	Annual Change in Resident (Corridor) Summer Destination Trips (millions)	Baseline 2025 Summer RVD Projections <sup>b</sup>
No Action	-0.94	0	8.67 million skier visits	-0.76	0	7.10 million summer RVDs
Minimal Action	-0.71	0	5.13 million winter RVDs	-0.57	0	
Transit	0.57	0.09		0.46	0.07	
Highway	0.09	0.06		0.08	0.04	
Combination	1.04	0.28		0.84	0.20	

<sup>a</sup> Includes Sopsris, Aspen, Eagle, Holy Cross, and Dillon districts.

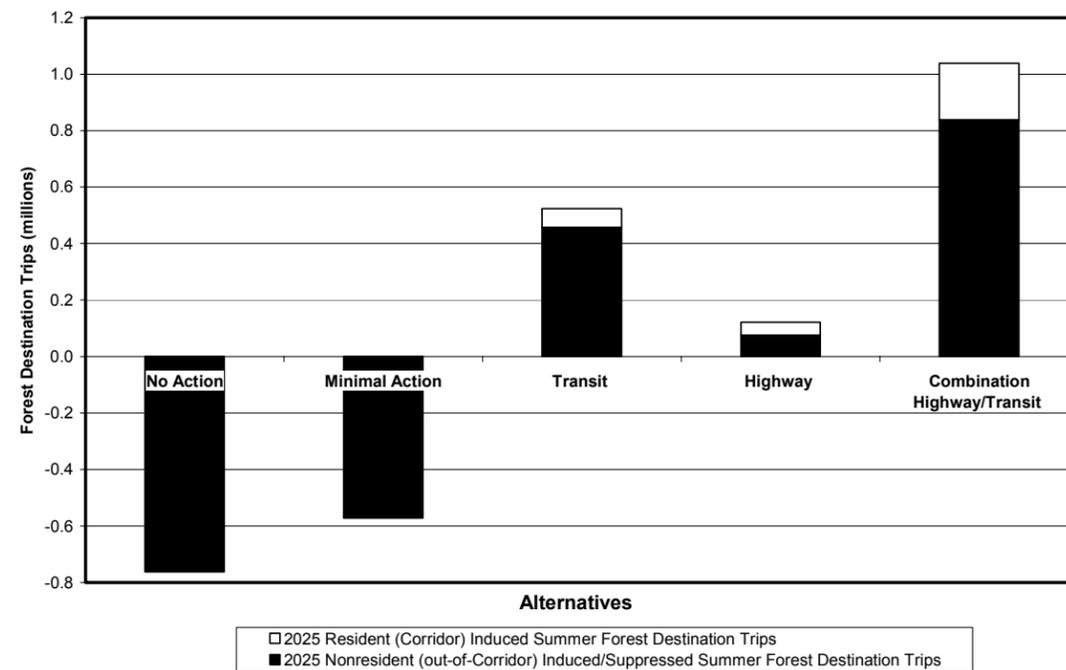
<sup>b</sup> These are 2025 USFS projections (extrapolated) for comparison with predicted “changes” for each alternative. These projections represent the “Baseline” condition for 2025 national forest visitation.

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

**Chart 3.14-3. WRNF – Possible Change in 2025 Winter Forest Destination Trips by Alternative**  
2025 projected skier visits = 8.67 million; 2025 projected winter RVDs = 5.13 million (I-70 Districts)



**Chart 3.14-4. WRNF – Possible Change in Summer 2025 Forest Destination Trips by Alternative**  
2025 projected summer RVDs = 7.10 million (I-70 Districts)



#### Impact Analysis, ARNF

Results of the indirect impact analysis for the ARNF are shown in Table 3.14-5, Chart 3.14-5, and Chart 3.14-6. The No Action and Minimal Action alternatives are predicted to suppress RVDs and skier visits. The Highway alternatives are predicted to slightly increase ARNF visitation, while the Transit and Combination alternatives are predicted to induce forest destination trips and affect skier visits and winter and summer RVDs by 0.21/0.23 million winter/summer trips and 0.39/0.43 million winter/summer trips, respectively. Possible induced growth is not indicated for any of the project alternatives in the area of the ARNF (Corridor counties of Clear Creek and Gilpin) and induced resident trips are not expected. A qualitative discussion of expected project alternative impacts on recreational use based on major recreation activities is provided in the following section, Implications for Forest Recreation Resources.

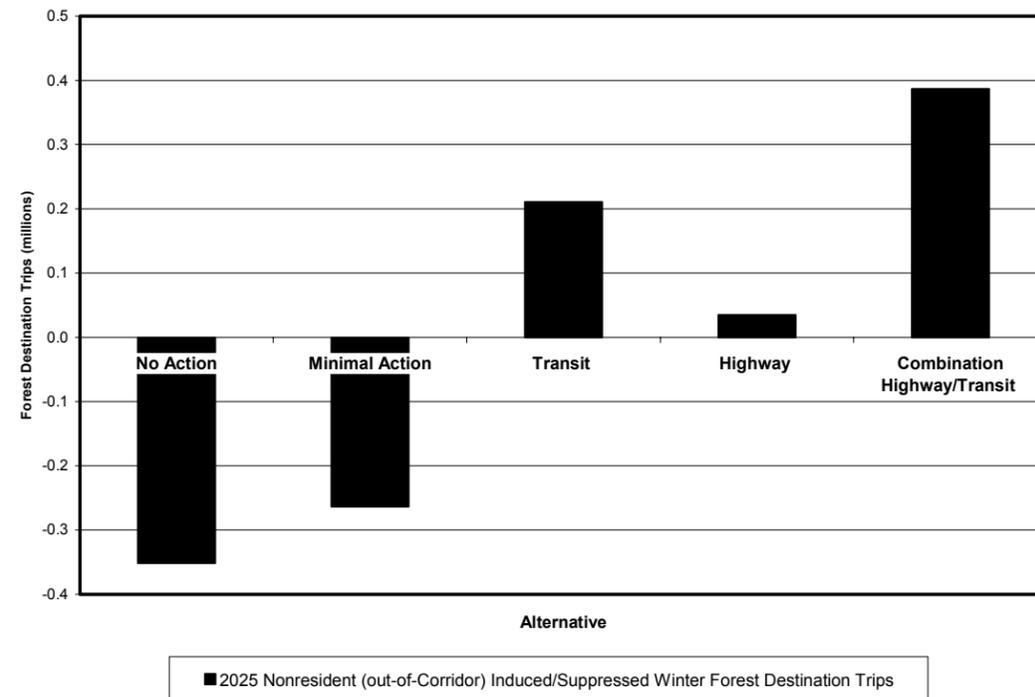
**Table 3.14-5. Indirect Impacts, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests<sup>a</sup>**

Alternative	2025 Winter Impacts			2025 Summer Impacts		
	Annual Change in Nonresident (out-of-Corridor) Winter Destination Trips (millions)	Annual Change in Resident (Corridor) Winter Destination Trips (millions)	Baseline 2025 Skier Visit / Winter RVD Projections <sup>b</sup>	Annual Change in Nonresident (out-of-Corridor) Summer Destination Trips (millions)	Annual Change in Resident (Corridor) Summer Destination Trips (millions)	Baseline 2025 Summer RVD Projections <sup>b</sup>
No Action	-0.35	No change. Induced growth is not predicted for the ARNF area of the Corridor.	2.37 million skier visits	-0.39	No change. Induced growth is not predicted for the ARNF area of the Corridor.	4.32 million summer RVDs
Minimal Action	-0.26		2.05 million winter RVDs	-0.29		
Transit	0.21		0.23			
Highway	0.04		0.04			
Combination	0.39		0.43			

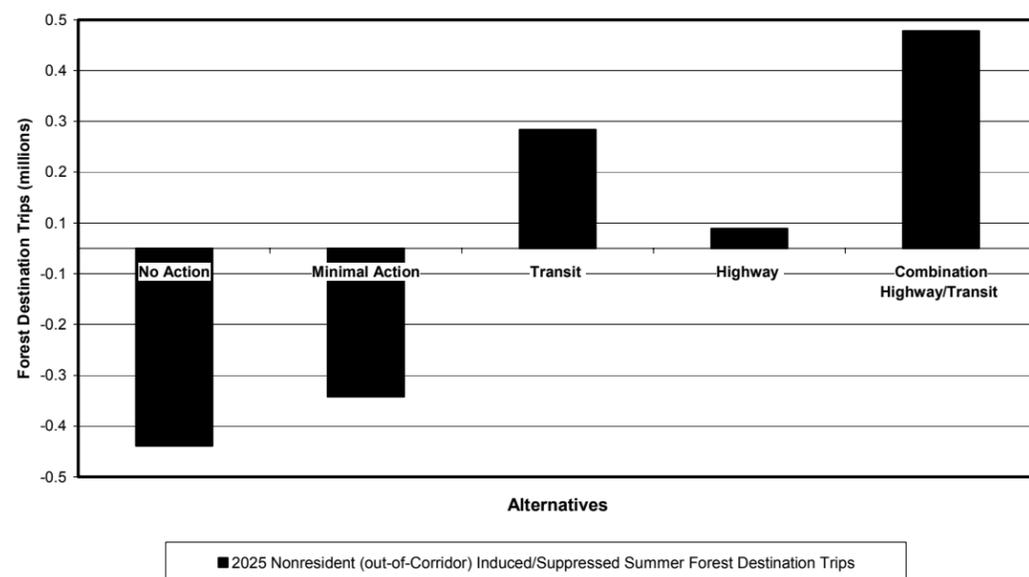
<sup>a</sup> Includes Clear Creek and Sulphur districts.

<sup>b</sup> These are 2025 USFS projections (extrapolated) for comparison with predicted “changes” for each alternative. These projections represent the “Baseline” condition for 2025 national forest visitation.

**Chart 3.14-5. ARNF – Possible Change in 2025 Winter Forest Destination Trips by Alternative**  
 2025 projected skier visits = 2.37 million; 2025 projected winter RVDs = 2.05 million (I-70 Districts)



**Chart 3.14-6. ARNF – Possible Change in 2025 Summer Forest Destination Trips by Alternative**  
 2025 projected summer RVDs = 4.32 million (I-70 Districts)



Implications for Forest Recreation Resources

The above predictions for possible indirect impacts are theoretical and are provided as an indication of possible “pressure” for visitation/recreational use associated with project alternatives. Actual future forest visitation will be the result of many interrelated factors:

- Forest management activities could limit visitation based on ROS class and capacity considerations. For example, in areas of national forests where increased recreation may negatively affect the setting resource conditions, the USFS would likely institute management techniques to develop and concentrate use in some areas, disperse use, or limit access and/or use to preserve the resource conditions and settings that support the specific ROS classes.
- Infrastructure maintenance and improvements necessary to accommodate developed recreation use could be limited by funding/resources availability.
- Transit alternatives might encourage more use of developed recreation areas and ski areas as shown in Table 3.14-6 (because dispersed areas might be more difficult to access by transit riders). However, it is expected that “feeder system” connections to trailheads and other forest access points would allow for some more dispersed-type activities such as backpacking and hiking in wilderness areas. Bicycling would depend on the capability of the transit system to transport such equipment.
- Highway alternatives might allow for greater dispersed access and use of recreational resources that require motorized or nonmotorized equipment (see Table 3.14-6). Such activities would include snowmobiling, big game hunting, and kayaking.
- Recreation activity types would likely be affected to different degrees in association with project alternatives as summarized in Table 3.14-6. Transit alternatives are expected to encourage increased use of developed areas and related activities such as downhill skiing/resort use. Highway alternatives are expected to encourage increased use of dispersed areas and related activities such as camping, mountain biking, and ATV use.
- Corridor planning organizations might act to limit induced growth (associated resident visitation would be affected).
- Resource constraints (such as water supply) would limit induced growth.
- Anticipated visitation increases might be suppressed due to overcrowding and experience-related factors.

The most important factor in possible impacts on forest visitation and recreation use would be forest management activities. These activities are discussed in relation to cooperative efforts between Corridor communities and federal and state agencies in section 3.14.4 and in Chapter 4, Cumulative Impacts Analysis.

### 3.14 Recreation Resources

**Table 3.14-6. Indirect Impacts on Recreation Activity Type Visitation by Alternative<sup>a</sup>**

Alternative	Recreation Activity Type (Potential Impacts on Visitation)							
	Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding, Resort Recreation	Developed Areas (picnicking, trailheads, information)	Light Equipment Activities (fishing, backpacking)	Motorized Vehicle Sports (ATVs, snowmobiles, motor boats)	Dispersed Camping and Hiking	Heavy Equipment Activities (kayaking, canoeing, hunting, camping)	Viewing Scenery (general)	Viewing Scenery (dispersed – wildlife)
No Action	Suppressed							
Minimal Action	Suppressed							
Transit	Induced	Induced	Induced	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Induced	Suppressed
Highway	Little Effect	Little Effect	Little Effect	Induced	Induced	Induced	Little Effect	Induced
Combination	Induced							

<sup>a</sup> Impacts based on discussion with WRNF and ARNF forest planners (July 2004); note that local transit service is assumed to meet demands for access to trailheads and ski areas; also note that outfitter/guide services may allow more dispersed recreation opportunities to Transit riders

#### 3.14.4 Mitigation Measures

Efforts to avoid direct impacts on recreation resources would be included in the design of alternative footprints. Tier 2 studies will be necessary to maximize these efforts.

The potential to mitigate impacts associated with project alternatives would vary with the type and level of impact incurred. Impacts on recreation resources anticipated to be most easily mitigated are associated with crossing of a trail where there is an existing I-70 crossing. As long as the crossing is maintained with the implementation of the alternative, the impact would be avoidable. Potential for mitigation would vary, from areas of potential encroachment into the edge of a park that would not affect the property function, to displacement of a portion of a trail that could be accommodated within the alternative template, to encroachment into a park or recreation site where the function of the site would be impaired or displacement of a portion of a trail would be difficult to accommodate within the alternative template. Primary mitigation measures that are recommended to avoid or reduce effects would be replacement (or enhancement of functions) of parkland/trail due to encroachment or disruption from project alternatives, project design to reduce the area of effects, and realignment of affected trails.

Mitigation of indirect impacts would include USFS consideration of forest management plans and the continuing and evolving use of management techniques. One technique used to manage forest visitation and use is to provide areas for information dissemination relating to forest recreation opportunities, rules and regulations, low-impact recreating principles, and educational experiences. Another key factor in forest management is the building and maintenance of recreation use facilities (such as trash collection, restrooms, picnic areas, camping areas, trails, and roads). These facilities are required not only for forest visitor/recreationist use but also to protect forest resources and watersheds. Ongoing management techniques include reservation requirements, activity restrictions for specific areas, permit systems, restricted access, and user fee systems. The availability of resources and funding for implementation of forest management techniques is a major factor in both the accommodation of increased visitation and the protection of forest resources. Such issues involve community/agency coordination activities suggested as strategies in the 2003 SCORP and in the Forest Service Colorado Recreation Strategy documents. The SCORP suggests these goals can be achieved by establishing funding partnerships through regional collaborative forums and through state/federal cost-share agreements to renovate federal properties.

The SCORP acknowledges CDOT’s role in outdoor recreation management through its roles in statewide transportation planning; distribution of federal Transportation Enhancements funds and Recreational Trails Program funds; and the Scenic Byways Program.

*“Public access to outdoor sites and management of travel on public lands is challenged by the capacity of our statewide transportation infrastructure and of our natural resources sites to accommodate the volume of demand.”*

Related SCORP strategic actions would include:

- Make mountain pass access nodes an explicit part of the CDOT Corridor Visions regional plans. Plan for parking, transit stops, sanitary facilities, and recreation use zones.
- Implement the “Snow Park” concept currently used by other states to manage demand for winter recreation. Establish parking fees to finance snow removal and recreation management presence.
- Pay special attention to OHV management through collaborative processes to identify trail networks and through identification of “hot spots” that require focused management strategies.
- Facilitate efficient access to recreation sites from transportation networks. Include outdoor recreation and tourism in the CDOT regional planning processes. Consider intermodal transportation networks and transportation hubs development. Consider off-peak use incentives. Consider river access “hot spots” mitigation actions. Increase the capability to access recreation sites on mountain passes from road networks.