

2019

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Annual Report



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2019 OVERVIEW

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Annual Report recaps park activity for the period of January 1 through December 31.

Water and Visitation

A strong winter snowpack resulted in high river flows throughout the spring and early summer limiting some whitewater boating opportunities. Visitation increased in the later summer as the river receded to lower flows.

Revenue Comparison

	2019	2018	% of Change
Camping	\$ 274,308.76	\$ 242,582.34	13.08%
Commercial Agreements	\$ 817,195.92	\$ 911,534.23	-10.35%
Donation	\$ 3,810.23	\$ 62.51	5,995.39%
Gift Certificates	\$ 600.00	\$ 706.00	-15.01%
Park Passes	\$ 184,123.11	\$ 179,517.54	2.57%
Registrations	\$ 31,336.63	\$ 40,605.80	-22.83%
Penalty Assessments	\$ 27.50	\$ 594.00	-95.37%
Licenses	\$ 37,239.75	\$ 29,229.88	27.40%
Search and Rescue	\$ 138.00	\$ 81.00	70.37%
Special Activities	\$ 118,547.31	\$ 3,355.59	3,432.83%
	\$ 1,467,327.21	\$ 1,408,268.89	4.19%

Visitation Within the AHRA

	2019 People	2018 People	% of Change
January	8,522	28,248	-69.83%
February	15,657	18,647	-16.03%
March	33,371	22,715	46.91%
April	45,040	49,802	-9.56%
May	74,820	84,315	-11.26%
June	165,931	176,177	-5.82%
July	228,227	223,364	2.18%
August	185,450	112,743	64.49%
September	49,618	39,060	27.03%
October	43,113	23,530	83.23%
November	17,582	20,301	-13.39%
December	15,112	16,749	-9.77%
	882,443	815,651	8.19%

SPECIAL ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS (SAAS)

Special Activity Agreements Approved in 2019

Applicant Group Name	Event Type	Location
October Films	Filming	Lone Pine & Parkdale
TransRockies Run	Race	Railroad Bridge
Chaffee County Search & Rescue	Training	Big Bend
Timberline Events	Race	Railroad Bridge
Down River Rendezvous	Equip Demo	Numbers, BV - BCNM
Lucky Ducky Race	Race	Salida Boat Ramp - Bandshell
Colorado Whitewater Assoc	Training	Arkansas River Access Points
Pole, Peddle, Paddle	Race	Big Bend River - Salida
RunOff	Race	IW - Salida
Civic Brand - Saltbox	Filming; Photo	Big Bend River - Wellsville
Royal Gorge Whitewater Festival	Festival	Canon City
JC Films	Filming	Various
PerformanceTours/Justin Park	Filming	Fish Bridge - Stone Bridge
PaddleFest	Festival	BV
FIBArk	Festival	Salida
Echo Canyon	Photo	Bighorn- Gorge
Chaffee County Search & Rescue	Training	Stonebridge
Colorado Springs Search & Rescue	SRT	Parkdale - Spikebuck
Fort Carson / Garcia	Training	Canon City - Pueblo
USRA - Nat Raft Race	Race	Browns
Open Canoe	Race	SA - RN
Raft Masters	Filming	Pinnacle - Parkdale
Fremont County Tourism Council	Filming	Bighorn Sheep Canyon

AHRA WORK SECTIONS

Leadership Team

AHRA is organized into work sections for the purpose of daily operations. Each of these sections has specific responsibilities and is staffed by both permanent and temporary employees who are designated specific job assignments. A large portion of the visible field-work is completed by our many dedicated temporary employees. In 2019, AHRA employed 23 temporary and 9 permanent staff members.

The following permanent staff members supervised the sections noted below:

Administration	Administrative Assistant	Jennifer Crawford
Special Use Agreements	Rationing & Agreement Coordinator	John Kreski
Law Enforcement (LE)	Senior Ranger	Glenn Cottone
Law Enforcement (LE)	River Ranger Supervisor	Tappan Brown
Law Enforcement (LE)	Land Ranger Supervisor	Jeff Hammond eff. Dec '19
Maint - Facilities	Park Resource Tech - Facilities	Kenneth Lindbloom
Maint - Construction	Park Resource Tech - Construction	Steve Wyatt
LE/Management	Park Manager	Rob White
LE/Management	Operations Manager	Tom Waters

Temporary Employees

Department	Temp Employees
Administration	4
Special Use Agreements	2
LE - River Rangers*	5
LE - Land Rangers*	5
LE - OHV Rangers	1
Maint - Facilities	5
Maint - Construction	1

*Count includes one intern.

ADMINISTRATION



Responsibilities for the administrative section include greeting visitors, answering phone inquiries, completing sales, handling field revenue, generating administrative reports, and maintaining park-related web and social media pages.

Among the items processed/sold are CPW licenses, registrations, and park passes; BLM fuelwood permits, Christmas tree permits, and mining permits; as well as books, maps, and other items provided for sale by the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA).

Each year, the administrative team organizes and puts on several activities and events including Junior Rangers and Tots on Tuesdays youth programs, Cleanup-Greenup, and various campground and environmental education programs. On behalf of CPW and AHRA, we'd like to extend a "thank you" to our many volunteers who donate their time and travel miles to help with these and other opportunities throughout the year.

Community Events

Event Name	Event Type	Location
Cañon City Whitewater Festival	Boating Competition	Cañon City
FIBArk	Boating Competition	Salida
Paddlefest	Boating Competition	Buena Vista
Water Fest	Conservation	Salida & Buena Vista
Holiday Open House	Education, Public	Salida
Kickoff to Summer	Education, Public	Salida
3rd Grade Field Day	Education, Youth	Salida
4th Grade Raft Trip	Education, Youth	Salida
Adventure Camp	Education, Youth	Buena Vista
Conservation Camp	Education, Youth	Buena Vista
Career Fairs	Education, Youth	Salida, BV, & Leadville
Ecology Field Trip	Education, Youth	Buena Vista
Family Nature Night	Education, Youth	Salida
Service Learning	Education, Youth	Salida
Stream Explorers (w/ GARNA)	Education, Youth	Buena Vista

Junior Rangers Program	Education, Youth	Salida, BV, & Leadville
Fremont Fall Heritage Festival	Hike	Cañon City
Interpretive Hikes	Hike	Multiple Locations
Cleanup-Greenup	Impact Mitigation	Multiple Locations
National Public Lands Day	Impact Mitigation	Multiple Locations
Bike Your Park Day	Trails and Cycling	Hayden Meadows
Gathering of the Guides	Workshop	Salida

Volunteer Hours

Opportunity Name	Hours
Cleanup-Greenup*	28
Bluebird Project	98
Campground Host	1,089
Citizens Task Force	275
Maintenance & Construction, and Trail support	5
Naturalist/Environmental Educator	930
Special Projects	150
Raptor Monitoring Program	273
TOTALS	2,846

Thank you to all of our volunteers for their contributed time and energy!

*The table above reflects only those hours that were reported in our visitor database. We'd like to thank the hundreds of individuals who assisted in our river-wide Cleanup-Greenup this year. Your effort represents hundreds of hours of unclaimed work in keeping our river clean.

SPECIAL USE AGREEMENTS



The Special Use Agreement section exists to accurately and efficiently administer AHRA Special Use Agreements as well as administer the Rationing Plan for commercial boating on the Arkansas River within the AHRA. AHRA had 59 commercial contractors in 2019 conducting 99 different activities. Permitted contractors provided various combinations of activities such as whitewater rafting and kayaking, float fishing, walk & wade fishing, shuttle services, rock climbing, hiking, Mt. biking, and photo/video imaging to over 193,030 paying clients in 2019. In 2019, the overall commercial use of paying clients at AHRA decreased by -12.70% as compared to 2018. Total Gross Receipts outfitters received from all commercial operations within the AHRA in 2019 was -10.53% below receipts received in 2018. This total includes revenue from total gross receipts and *does not* include administrative and assessment fees. In 2019, commercial contractors contributed a total of \$817,196 in use fees. The Arkansas River within the AHRA remains one of, if not the most commercially rafted rivers in the United States.

The AHRA Rationing Plan regulates commercial boats per day (bpd) carrying capacities on thirteen different river sections. In 2019, river sections had commercial bpd carrying capacities ranging from 360 bpd to 10 bpd with differing section specific boating restrictions.

Data control methods and commercial use verification controls are used to manage contractor Special Use Agreement compliance. Assisting in this program is a two-person temporary Count Crew responsible for collecting spot checks and maintaining an electronic database for trip log comparison.

Commercial Special Use Agreements by Type

Activity	2019	2018
Boating	48	48
Imaging	26	27
Walk and Wade Fishing	15	15
Shuttle Services	6	7
Rock Climbing, Hiking, and Mtn Biking	5	3
TOTAL	100	100

Rationed Days by Section

Section	2019	2018
1e: The Numbers	3	2
2b: Browns Canyon	6	6
2d: Big Bend to Salida	5	7
3a: Salida East to Rincon	5	20
3b: Rincon to Vallie Bridge	19	20
4a: Vallie Bridge to Texas Creek	8	13
5: The Royal Gorge	11	10
TOTAL	57	78

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The ranger section patrols all portions, both land, and river, of AHRA throughout the year. The section is divided into three sections: land, river, and off-highway vehicle.

Land Rangers, a team of five temporary employees assigned to land-based operations, are responsible for managing visitor use in the busy recreation sites and campgrounds, and for collecting field revenue which is critical to AHRA operations. These vital field staff are the primary personnel our visitors come into contact with during the summer months.

River Rangers, a team of five temporary employees, specialize in whitewater boating activities on the river. Since the Arkansas River is one of, if not the most commercially rafted rivers in the United States, much of the river rangers' time is spent administering the State River Outfitter Licensing Program. These rangers actively monitor river flows, mitigate hazards, provide whitewater search and rescue support, inspect commercial and private boat trips for adequate safety equipment, investigate boat accidents, and provide expert river education to AHRA visitors in the field.

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Rangers are part of a four-person multi-agency trail crew working in the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The trail crew members represent Colorado Parks & Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service. Funding for this collaborative effort comes from an OHV grant, funded by OHV registrations. The trail crew maintains trails and OHV routes, provides input on new OHV routes, and enforces OHV registration and equipment requirements in the San Isabel National Forest as well as at the Big Bend OHV Track. The trail crew promotes motorized recreation by encouraging safe riding practices and Stay the Trail and Tread Lightly guidelines. The trail crew also works with local OHV riding clubs to promote volunteer opportunities by means of the U.S. Forest Service Adopt a Trail program.

All **Full-Time Rangers** are certified Level I Colorado Peace Officers. All AHRA temporary law enforcement rangers have limited commissions. These Title 33 officers only enforce Colorado Parks and Wildlife laws and regulations. When necessary, all rangers can take appropriate law enforcement action necessary to protect our visitors, preserve the resource and ensure compliance with other administrative regulations. While law enforcement may not be the primary function of any ranger's job, it is an important and necessary responsibility of all rangers. It should also be noted that AHRA rangers work closely with other local, state and federal peace officers and resource managers in the performance of their duties.

In the winter, the full-time rangers continue to patrol AHRA sites along the river corridor. Winter search and rescue activities usually amount to assisting other

agencies with motorists that end up in the river. Full-time rangers also conduct snowmobile patrols as well as avalanche rescue activities. Additionally, AHRA rangers manage three snowmobile trail-grooming contracts and patrol snowmobile trails on Bureau of Land Management, National Forest and other public lands in Chaffee, Lake, Gunnison and Saguache counties as part of the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Snowmobile Program responsibilities. Winter is also the ideal time for Rangers to complete most of their training and recertification, to organize and evaluate programs and plan for the upcoming high-use season.

Investigated and Reported Incidents

	2019	2018
Reportable Commercial Boat Accidents	27	16
Private Boat Accidents	4	1
Commercial Non-Boating Accidents	1	0
Private Non-Boating Accidents	0	0
Medical Assists	1	0
Inter-Agency Assists / SAR	5	1
Vandalism / Theft	7	1
Law Enforcement	0	1
Other Incidents	5	2
Fatalities Investigated* (included in totals above)	3	1
TOTAL	53	22

Citations Issued

	2019	2018
Pass / Permit Violations	3	35*
Resource Protection Violations	17	4
Public Safety Violations	1	3
Records / Reporting Violations	2	0
Commercial Outfitter Citations (included in totals above)	2	2
TOTAL	25	42

* Includes Notice of Violation citations (windshield citations). These citations were not issued in 2019.

MAINTENANCE – FACILITIES



Facility Maintenance is a team of five temporary employees. Their primary role is to maintain all AHRA-managed facilities throughout the river corridor. These duties include maintaining vault toilets/changing areas; ash removal from grills and fire rings; developing new recreation sites; designing new signs as well as updating existing signs; maintaining solar systems in campgrounds; weed control; maintaining visitor center, shop, and garage bays; recycling cardboard, paper, and metals; ground maintenance; and traffic counter maintenance.

Some noteworthy projects completed by this crew in 2019 include the following: Constructed a secure cabinet for AHRA's revenue and a secure area for law enforcement evidence; worked on a functioning water model and trailer that displayed the Arkansas River waterway for demonstrations; designed and installed signage for the new Numbers recreation site; installed an interpretive sign at Fisherman's Bridge depicting Native American Indian Life in the Arkansas Headwaters; and placed a memorial plaque on a large stone for Kim Saltus-Johnson in front of a shade shelter donated by family members.

MAINTENANCE – CONSTRUCTION



It has been a very eventful year at AHRA for site development. We were able to purchase some new equipment this year, and have been busy putting it to work. Many projects large and small were completed to enhance the sites up and down the river. From gravel to rock work, site maintenance staff are working hard to get the sites the best they can be. Cleanup, leveling, and boat ramp work are the main concerns.

LE/MANAGEMENT



The Law Enforcement (LE)/Management section oversees and coordinates the daily visitor service and maintenance operations and overall programs and projects for the entire work unit within this document. This section serves as the communication link between field staff and the Southeast Region Office in Colorado Springs and Colorado Parks and Wildlife offices in Denver and Littleton. This section works closely with the Bureau of Reclamation, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy, Pueblo Water, Colorado Springs Utilities, Arkansas River Outfitters Association (AROA), and Trout Unlimited (TU) to ensure the success of the Voluntary Flow Management Program (VFMP). They also work closely with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to ensure that management plan goals and directives are being met. Most importantly, this section works with staff and the public to provide the many community and resource-wide coordination activities and efforts needed throughout the 152-mile river corridor while continuing to develop and enhance communication and cooperation among visitors as well as current and potential partners.

This year, as in past years, all AHRA staff continued to maintain the essential quality of management practices and public services that help conserve the Arkansas River and its unique features for everyone's enjoyment.