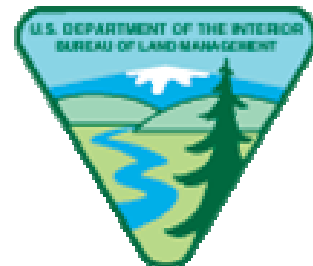


# *The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area 2008 End of Year Report*



**Welcome** to the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area’s Annual Report for 2008. This annual report covers the activities of the AHRA from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

Commercial visitation, revenue and private boat numbers were down for AHRA in 2008. High water, a declining economy and high gas prices were major factors contributing to the downturn.

**The Citizens Task Force** (CTF) continues to be an instrumental force behind the success of the AHRA. This advisory committee meets five times a year and provides recommendations to the management team on many critical and diverse issues facing the recreation area. It is expected that under the current management plan, the CTF will continue to play an important role for the partners that form AHRA – Colorado State Parks, BLM, Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service. The Citizens Task Force is composed of two representative members from each of the following AHRA constituency groups:

Anglers	Private Boaters
Commercial Permittees	Local Governments
Environmentalists	River Front Property Owners
Water Users	

For the purpose of daily operation, AHRA is organized into work “sections”. Each of these sections has specific responsibilities and is staffed by both full-time and seasonal employees with specific job assignments. The many dedicated seasonal employees at AHRA accomplish the visible fieldwork. In a typical season, AHRA employs nearly 30 seasonal staff members. In 2008 AHRA employed 23 seasonal staff. For 2008, the following full-time staff members supervised the work sections noted below:

### **AHRA Sections and Supervisors**

Maintenance -	John Fell and Ken Lindbloom (Parks)
Rangers -	Stew Pappenfort & Glenn Cottone (Parks)
Administration -	Rose Bayless (Parks)
Commercial Agreements-	John Kreski (Parks)
SCEP Ranger -	Star Jamison (BLM)
Management -	Rob White, John Geerdes (Parks) and John Nahomenuk (BLM)

In 2008 two Colorado State Parks full-time staff changes occurred. River Ranger Supervisor Sean Shepherd transferred to the Division of Wildlife at the end of April and Assistant Park Manager John Geerdes was put on special assignment at the Southeast Region Office in mid October. With the Governor’s hiring freeze in effect it is uncertain when these positions will be filled. The full-time BLM Contact Representative position eliminated in April 2005 has not been reinstated and so Heather Wright remains in the same capacity with the position being funded jointly by State Parks and BLM as alternating seasonal positions.

The following special activities took place within the recreation area in 2008.

<b><u>Special Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
• USFS OHV Training	Big Bend
• National Public Lands Day	Collegiate Peaks Overlook
• Fremont Co. Search and Rescue Training	Five Points
• TV Filming / Indigo Films	Browns Canyon
• Colorado Tourism Photo Shoot	Browns Canyon
• Radical Media Filming	Pinnacle – Spike Buck
• Sledging Film	Numbers – Railroad Bridge
• Royal Gorge Raft Race	Royal Gorge
• “How to” Video on Kayaking	Browns Canyon
• Memorial Service	Browns Canyon
• Transrockies Run	Numbers – Railroad Bridge
• Family Challenge	Railroad Bridge
• FIBARk	Park-wide
• Rubber Duck Race	Canon City
• Clean Up/Green Up	Arkansas River
• Paddlefest	Buena Vista Whitewater Park
• Riverboard Demonstration	Salida Whitewater Park
• Build Your Own Boat Race	Canon City
• Easter Sunrise Service	Collegiate Peaks Overlook
• Kayak and Raft Surf Contest	Buena Vista Whitewater Park
• CSC Fire Dept. Swift Water Training	Browns Canyon
• Gold Prospectors of Colorado Picnic	Point Barr
• Kayak Instruction	Lower Arkansas River
• Adventure Race	Buena Vista to Fisherman’s Bridge
• Snowmobile Racing	Hayden Meadows
• Wedding	Collegiate Peaks Overlook
• 3 P Race	Big Bend

### **AHRA Administrative Section**

The Administrative section was staffed by one full-time State Parks Program Assistant, Rose Bayless, two temporary administrative assistants - Heather Wright who works for State Parks 6 months from April through September and the Bureau of Land Management for 6 months from October through March, and Bob Dickey who works from May through September- and one summer GOCO Naturalist/Volunteer coordinator, Phyllis Cron. The Administrative section staff meet and greet visitors to the AHRA Visitor Center, field thousands of phone calls and provide a full range of information services on recreational activities including camping, boating, fishing, gold panning, hiking and biking, etc. They handle sales and recordkeeping, including revenues from concession agreements, State Parks Passes, camping permits and recreational vehicle and boat registrations, and retail sales of items provided by the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association. Staff serve as the base radio dispatcher to AHRA staff in the field and provide administrative support to all AHRA employees as needed. The Administrative section also coordinates AHRA special events, such as the Annual Arkansas River Cleanup/Greenup, and meetings. Other duties include filing, docketing and maintaining law enforcement penalty assessment records, training seasonal employees, volunteer recruitment and maintaining AHRA budget, visitation and revenue information.

**Administrative Services, Sales and Revenue Statistics  
(January through December 2008):**

2008	Activity	Compared to 2007
449	Annual Passes Sold	15.13%
\$22,460.00	Revenue from Annual Passes Sold	29.9%
274	Aspen Leaf Passes Sold	-7.43%
\$5,440	Revenue from Aspen Leaf Passes Sold	-6.11%
\$95,045.09	Revenue from Daily Individual and Vehicle Passes	1.61%
\$69,828.18	Revenue from Camp Permits**	-2.01%
1790	Boat, Snowmobile and OHV Registrations Sold	-10.63%
\$46,462.25	Revenue from Registration Sales	28.9%
\$754,549.34	Revenue from Commercial Agreements***	-12.26%

\*\* Reservation Revenue is included in this total

\*\*\* Total includes administrative fees and fines not reflected under the Special Use Agreement Section summary

**Administrative Section Visitor Contacts for 2008**

# Of People	Type of Activity	Compared to 2007
24,604	Visitor Center	-5.71%
819	Personal Interpretation	-64.51%
5887	Non-Personal Interpretation	-8.22%
1097	Environmental Education	-21.02%

**Volunteer Hours for 2008**

# of Hours	Type of Activity	Compared to 2007
2180 hrs	Volunteers (groups or individuals)	-35.3
319 hrs	AHRA Advisory Groups (CTF, RAAC)	-35.9
<b>2499 hrs</b>	<b>Total Volunteer Hours in 2008</b>	<b>-35.25%</b>

A variety of **Interpretive and Environmental Education** programs and services were presented to the public throughout 2008. Junior Ranger programs took the lead with GOCO Interpreter Phyllis Cron fascinating kids with programs such as: “Close Encounters of the Scaly Kind”; “Don’t Bug Me”; “Birds on the Brain”; and “Spider Sniffing”. Children ages 5-12 stormed the gates each Wednesday morning in Salida and Thursday afternoon in Buena Vista to watch Ranger Phyllis weave her web of magic and to investigate nature’s secrets. The grand finale was the Junior Ranger raft trip on August 6, with 29 participants. It was many a child’s first time on the river, and although the stretch of river from Johnson’s Village to Fisherman’s Bridge is a gentle one, the kids were thrilled and had the time of their lives.

AHRA continued to be very active in 2008 with Project Wild, environmental education for area schools, local recreation programs and other youth groups to provide environmental education that is consistent with their own curriculum.

AHRA participated in many community events including Paddlefest in Buena Vista as well as the Headwaters Institute Guide Training and FIBArk, both held in Salida. AHRA and GARNA (Greater Arkansas River Nature Association) partnered on many educational and interpretive programs, projects and events such as the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual National River CleanUp/GreenUp. GARNA also assists AHRA with grant writing and administration, interpretive signs and displays, and the GARNA sales outlet at the AHRA Visitor Center, which consistently grows in sales and popularity with the public. AHRA assisted GARNA during the summer of 2008 with

volunteers who provide the workforce at the Heart of the Rockies Visitor Center in Poncha Springs

Overall AHRA visitation numbers in 2008 decreased from 2007 with total activities down by 10.33%.

### Recreational Use of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Two-Year Comparison

ACTIVITY*	2008 PEOPLE	2007 PEOPLE	'07 TO '08 % CHANGE	
SIGHTSEEING	235,221	256,577	-8.32%	
FISHING	Shore	67,053	71,206	-5.83%
	Boat	10,211	10,615	-3.81%
PICNICKING	41,909	43,879	-4.49%	
BOATING	Commercial	265,422	295,172**	-10.08%
	Private	27,488	30,118	-8.73%
OTHER (Minerals, Visitor Center, Hunting and Swimming)	29,008	44,839	-35.31%	
TRAIL	22,640	23,980	-5.59%	
INTERPRETIVE	7,803	10,111	-22.83%	
CAMPING	30,058	35,183***	-14.57%	
<b>ACTIVITIES TOTAL</b>	<b>736,813</b>	<b>821,680</b>	<b>-10.33%</b>	

\*May include participants in multiple activities

\*\*Actual visitor number, includes guides and clients

\*\*\*Number of nights camping

AHRA revenues saw a 7.7% decrease in 2008 as compared to 2007.

### AHRA YEAR 2008 REVENUES

Year 2008 By Month	Park Passes	Camping Permits/ Reservations	Registrations	Special Use Agreements	Other: Penalties, Donations, Misc.	<b>TOTALS</b>
January	\$1,806.64	\$28.00	\$1,517.50	\$0.00	\$28.00	<b>\$3,380.14</b>
February	\$1,885.55	\$10.00	\$882.75	\$4,423.72	\$322.00	<b>\$7,524.02</b>
March	\$4,603.26	\$223.00	\$3,998.75	\$20,477.12	\$0.04	<b>\$29,302.17</b>
April	\$11,644.69	\$3,178.00	\$4,438.75	\$19,519.82	\$336.01	<b>\$39,117.27</b>
May	\$18,475.01	\$9,727.06	\$5,615.25	\$135,256.16	\$526.00	<b>\$169,599.48</b>
June	\$27,724.45	\$14,109.51	\$6,337.50	\$227,803.37	\$2,178.75	<b>\$278,153.58</b>
July	\$24,561.26	\$18,981.00	\$7,317.25	\$0.00	\$2,774.31	<b>\$53,633.82</b>
August	\$17,024.72	\$14,099.10	\$5,312.50	\$450.00	\$2,782.24	<b>\$39,668.56</b>
September	\$9,225.77	\$7,080.81	\$4,700.75	\$6,569.01	\$2,126.50	<b>\$29,702.84</b>
October	\$3,668.31	\$1,932.90	\$2,074.50	\$91,441.71	\$869.50	<b>\$99,986.92</b>
November	\$1,433.43	\$416.80	\$1,029.50	\$220,935.29	\$145.00	<b>\$223,960.02</b>
December	\$892.00	\$42.00	\$3,237.25	\$27,673.14	\$53.00	<b>\$31,897.39</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$122,945.09</b>	<b>\$69,828.18</b>	<b>\$46,462.25</b>	<b>\$754,549.34</b>	<b>\$12,141.35</b>	<b>\$1,005,926.21</b>

## AHRA YEAR 2008 EXPENDITURES -COLORADO STATE PARKS ONLY-

Year 2008 By Month	Full Time and Seasonal Personnel	Operating	Utilities	Capital Equipment	Controlled Maintenance	GOCO, Grants & Misc. Accounts	<b>TOTALS</b>
January	\$54,746.55	\$7,121.97	\$870.06	\$0	\$6,021.66	\$2,131.61	<b>\$70,891.85</b>
February	\$55,227.54	\$6,837.07	\$716.44	\$0	\$2,038.82	\$684.00	<b>\$65,503.87</b>
March	\$57,289.99	\$7,167.33	\$630.25	\$0	\$127.11	\$211.33	<b>\$65,426.01</b>
April	\$61,531.13	\$10,301.36	\$2,561.96	\$0	\$44,215.63	\$16,747.41	<b>\$135,357.49</b>
May	\$74,169.79	\$14,665.08	\$1,045.36	\$0	\$13,295.02	\$300.95	<b>\$103,476.20</b>
June	\$74,090.47	\$16,555.87	\$1,715.90	\$0	\$12,117.20	\$15,472.60	<b>\$119,952.04</b>
July	\$86,162.08	\$20,949.14	\$1,761.66	\$0	\$0	\$6,553.91	<b>\$115,426.79</b>
August	\$82,968.26	\$18,743.00	\$2,785.94	\$0	\$2,865.91	\$7,051.33	<b>\$114,414.44</b>
September	\$67,289.38	\$14,209.66	\$5,388.68	\$0	\$6,414.52	\$5,618.49	<b>\$98,920.73</b>
October	\$63,472.69	\$4,912.90	\$832.30	\$0	\$363.59	\$2,360.80	<b>\$71,942.28</b>
November	\$50,879.03	\$7,548.93	\$1,768.64	\$11,000.00	\$45.84	\$2,408.62	<b>\$73,651.06</b>
December	\$50,938.17	\$7,800.65	\$4,125.56	\$0	\$1,595.20	\$2,779.64	<b>\$67,239.22</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$778,765.08</b>	<b>\$136,812.96</b>	<b>\$24,202.75</b>	<b>\$11,000.00</b>	<b>\$89,100.50</b>	<b>\$62,320.69</b>	<b>\$1,102,201.98</b>
Total Expenditures for Water Purchases in 2008				Water Purchase/Lease			\$0
				Temporary Storage Contract 650 acre-feet			\$13,344.50
				USGS Gauges			\$13,260.00
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>\$1,128,806.48*</b>

\*Does not include pro-rated system wide Division expenditures

### AHRA Ranger Section

**The Ranger Section** patrols all portions, both land and river, of the AHRA throughout the year. The three full-time staff members typically hire up to twelve seasonal staff members to assist them with their patrol responsibilities. The AHRA Seasonal Work Program (SWP) budget for FY 07/08 allowed eight, 40 hour per week seasonal rangers for the 2008 summer season. The river section had four, 40 hour per week seasonal river rangers assigned to it. The land section had four, 40 hour per week seasonal rangers. This was down one 20 hour per week Land Ranger position from the 2007 season. In addition to these eight SWP rangers there was one SWP Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Ranger that was funded by an OHV grant. This position was supervised by the Assistant Park Manager in the absence of the River Ranger Supervisor. Because of reduced budgets, AHRA continues to struggle to regain its former SWP ranger staffing levels.

Seasonal rangers assigned to land-based operations are responsible for managing visitor use in the busy recreation sites and campgrounds and for collecting field revenue critical to AHRA operations. These vital field staff are the primary resource our visitors come into contact with during the summer months. Because of SWP budget and associated seasonal staff cuts, the seasonal staff was unable to maintain typical coverage of two shifts per day, seven days a week, patrolling both upstream and downstream of Salida. Even with some seasonal shifts covered by full-time supervisors, there were some weekdays with only one shift both up and downstream.

Four of the AHRA seasonal rangers specialize in whitewater boating activities on the river. Known as river rangers, they patrol whitewater sections of the Arkansas otherwise inaccessible

to AHRA staff. These rangers actively monitor river flows and hazards, provide whitewater search and rescue support, inspect commercial and private boat trips for adequate safety equipment and operations, investigate boat accidents and provide expert river education to AHRA visitors in the field. As the Arkansas River is the most commercially rafted river in the United States, much of the river rangers' time is spent administering the state River Outfitter Licensing Program. In addition, river rangers also undertake a variety of resource related projects such as river camp and picnic site monitoring and the control of invasive plant species in remote sections of the recreation area.

The OHV ranger is part of a three-person multi-agency trail crew working in the Upper Arkansas River Valley. The trail crew members represent Colorado State Parks, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. 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 requirements. 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.

The three full-time park rangers, the state park manager, and the assistant park manager are all certified Colorado peace officers. Additionally, all AHRA seasonal law enforcement rangers are limited commission, Title 33 officers. When necessary, all rangers can take the 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.

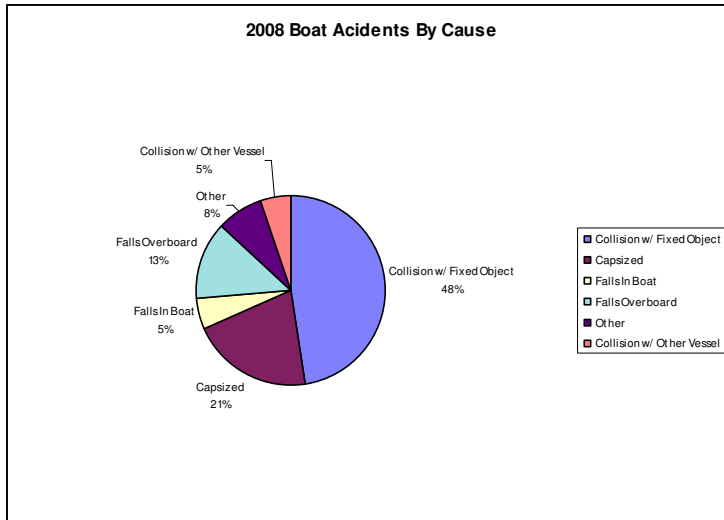
In the winter the full-time rangers continue to patrol AHRA sites along the river corridor. Winter search and rescue activities usually amount to assisting other agencies with motorists that end up in the river and snowmobile patrols/avalanche rescue activities. Additionally, rangers manage several snowmobile trail-grooming contracts and patrol snowmobile trails on Bureau of Land Management, National Forest and other public lands within the river corridor as part of the Colorado State Parks Snowmobile Program responsibilities. Winter is also the ideal time for rangers to complete most of their training and re-certifications, to organize and evaluate programs and plan for the up-coming high use season.

### **Summary of Public Safety Field Actions**

River Outfitter Safety Inspections	87
River Outfitter Office Records Inspections	7
River Assists	190
Search, Rescue and Recovery Operations	17
River Hazard Removal Operations	15

\*There was one private river fatality within the AHRA in 2008.

\*There were four commercial river fatalities within the AHRA in 2008.



<b>2008 BOAT ACCIDENTS BY CAUSE</b>	
CAUSE	TOTAL
Collision w/ Fixed Object	18
Capsized	8
Falls In Boat	2
Falls Overboard	5
Other	3
Collision w/ Other Vessel	2
<b>TOTAL ACCIDENTS</b>	<b>35</b>

Note: Many "Collision with Fixed Object" accidents resulted in capsized, falls in boat, or falls overboard.

### Investigated and Reported Incidents for the Year 2008

	Number	Fatal
Reportable Commercial Boat Accidents	34	4
Private Boat Accidents	3	1
Other Commercial Accidents	2	
Other Non-Commercial Accidents	1	
OHV Accidents	3	1
Interagency Assists / SAR	8	4
Vandalism / Theft	22	
Hazard Removal / HAZMAT	16	
Other	2	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>10</b>

### Citations Issued for the Year 2008

<b>Year</b>	<b>2008</b>
Pass/Permit Violations	584
Resource Protection Violations	10
Public Safety Violations	4
Records/Reporting Violations	2
OHV Violations	4
Snowmobile Violations	0
Other Violations (Illegal rafting outfitting)	1
<b>*Total</b>	<b>605</b>
*Above total includes 4 citations to commercial outfitters	



## AHRA Special Use Agreement Section

**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 82 commercial contractors in 2008. Permitted contractors provided various combinations of activities such as whitewater rafting, float fishing, walk and wade fishing, shuttle services and photo/video imaging to over 215,763 clients in 2008. In 2008 commercial use at AHRA decreased by 10.76% from 2007. Gross revenue received from commercial operations within the AHRA in 2008 was 7.43% below revenue received in 2007. The Arkansas River remains the most commercially rafted river in the United States.

This section also administers the AHRA Rationing Plan that regulates commercial boat per day (bpd) carrying capacities on thirteen different river sections. In 2008, river sections had commercial bpd carrying capacities ranging from 360 bpd to 10 bpd with differing section specific boating restrictions.

In addition, this section develops data control methods and commercial use verification for Contractor Special Use Agreement compliance. Assisting in this program is a three person seasonal Count Crew responsible for collecting Spot Checks and maintaining an electronic database for Trip Log comparison. This section also has a seasonal Rationing Program Assistant, who is employed during the winter months to assist with annual boat allocations and oversee the Special Use Agreement Application program.

### AHRA Commercial Special Use Agreements By Type

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Boating .....	55	55
Imaging .....	9	10
Walk and Wade Fishing.....	15	15
Shuttle Services.....	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>84</b>

### Rationed Days By Section

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
Section 1c – The Numbers .....	19	22
Section 2b – Browns Canyon.....	12	7
Section 2d – Big Bend to Salida .....	8	10
Section 3 – Salida to Vallie Bridge.....	34	44
Section 4b – Texas Creek to Parkdale .....	4	2
Section 5 – The Royal Gorge.....	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>96</b>

## **AHRA Bureau of Land Management**

**The Bureau of Land Management** recreation staff continues to see some changes over what was reported in the 2007 report. BLM recreation staff members in 2008 were the River Manager, a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) individual, a seasonal recreation Off-Highway Vehicle trail crew member and a winter seasonal administrative position (October 2008 – March 2009).

The BLM River Manager (John Nahomenuk) works side by side with the Colorado State Park Manager to assure that the decisions within the Arkansas River Recreation Management Plan (ARRMP) are fully implemented, as well as working with a multitude of other agencies, interest groups and organizations unique to this multi-agency partnership. He is also responsible for the maintenance and enhancement, where possible, of the overall health of the public lands along the river corridor. The River Manager receives management recommendations from the Arkansas River Citizens Task Force. The BLM River Manager is responsible to the Royal Gorge Field Office Renewable Resource Supervisor (Paul Trentzsch) located at the BLM headquarters in Canon City, CO.

Starr Jamison continued in 2008 to be part of the Student Career Employment Program (SCEP) as a Recreation Technician. The SCEP position requires the student to complete 640 hours of mentoring, and if successful, will be offered a position (budget allowing) with BLM upon graduation. Starr is expected to graduate in May of 2009. This position is targeted to work out of the AHRA office in Salida. Duties this position will be responsible for include management of the BLM upland recreation program associated with the Arkansas River corridor. This position is directed to work closely with AHRA staff, other Federal and state agencies, local government entities and with various user groups. This includes project planning, grant acquisition, preparation and input into NEPA documents, volunteer program management, resource monitoring, implementation of the Fourmile and Arkansas River Travel Management Plan and providing resource protection and monitoring of two BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) and to four Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

This position provides assistance to visitors in BLM uplands and carries out patrols and maintenance on public lands immediately adjacent to AHRA sites along the river corridor. It also provides support for OHV partnership projects, coordinates volunteer resource improvement projects and works to support AHRA in the Geographical Information System process. The position is also part of an AHRA team that performs resource monitoring (in its ninth year) of lunch and campsites within Browns Canyon.

Heather Wright continued to work as the seasonal BLM and State Parks Visitor Contact Representative during the 2008 season. Her year-round support to the Administrative section and AHRA provides much needed consistency to our very busy office.

In 2008, staff members continued to work closely with our Congressional Delegation to develop legislation for a Browns Canyon Wilderness Bill. No legislation was drawn in 2008 for a Browns Canyon Wilderness Bill as issues regarding motorized access continue to be discussed with proponents and opponents.

BLM received a 2000 (+ or -) page proposal that details the construction, display and de-construction of the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Over the River art project. The proposal calls for

draping approximately 6 miles of the Arkansas River with translucent fabric. The proposal will be used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. A consultant will be selected by the BLM to prepare the EIS in 2009. All costs to the BLM associated with the project are paid for by the proponent. The art display, if approved, would not occur until 2012 at the earliest.

## **AHRA Maintenance Section**

**The Maintenance Section** is responsible year-round for the routine daily site cleaning, repair, and improvements for the entire recreation area from the Crystal Lakes Recreation Site near Leadville, to the Parkdale Recreation Site near Canon City.

The maintenance section is extensively involved in site improvements and modifications suggested by our visitors, outfitters, and staff. During 2008, these improvements included: two additional shade shelters erected at Parkdale's group picnic area including new ground material underneath the shelter and all picnic tables aligned & leveled; the majority of all park wood structures were given wood preservative treatment; picnic tables were added to Hayden Meadows and Big Bend OHV's new shade shelter; Collegiate Peaks Scenic overlook shelter had all metal frame work repainted and new interpretive signs installed; Ruby Mt. had a new "Welcome To Ruby Mt". sign installed at the entrance; new information panels with maps were installed in the three panel entrance signs as part of a continued effort to improve the visitor's experience in our park.

Extensive utilization of Department of Corrections Sign Shop, volunteer groups, community service workers, and Youth Corps helped AHRA achieve many of its maintenance goals in 2008.

## **AHRA State Park Management**

**The State Park Manager and Assistant Park Manager** oversee and coordinate the daily visitor service and maintenance operations and overall programs and projects for the entire work unit described above. They are the communication link between field staff and the Southeast Region office in Colorado Springs and State Park offices in Denver and Littleton. They also work closely with the Bureau of Land Management, the Division of Wildlife and the US Forest Service to insure that management plan goals and directives are being met and to implement the Arkansas River Voluntary Flow Program each year. Most importantly, they work with the public to provide the many community and resource wide coordination activities and efforts needed throughout the 150-mile river corridor and continue to develop and enhance communication and cooperation among visitors as well as current and potential partners.

As mentioned earlier in the report, in October 2008 the Assistant Park Manager was temporarily assigned to the Southeast Region Office to assist them with their operations. This temporary assignment is expected to last at least through October 2009.

This year, as in past years, 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.

## 2008 Annual Report Accomplishments

- ❖ Hosted the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Arkansas River Clean-up/Green-up
- ❖ Hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Contractors Workshop
- ❖ Hosted Volunteer Recognition Reception in cooperation with DOW and GARNA
- ❖ Participated in the Colorado Conference for Volunteerism
- ❖ Completed a reroute of trail #6034 in the Fourmile Travel Management Area on National Public Lands Day.
- ❖ Hosted 3-Day Swiftwater Rescue training course for AHRA staff, Salida Fire Department and other federal and state agencies
- ❖ Responded to six river related fatality investigations and a number of other search and rescue operations
- ❖ Assisted with a Hazardous Materials incident upstream of Rincon involving an overturned semi-truck carrying 1100+ twenty pound propane tanks
- ❖ Worked closely with FIBArk race coordinators to increase and assist with safety during river race events
- ❖ The multi-agency OHV trail crew maintained, rerouted and cleared 17,068 feet of trail, made 592 contacts and worked on trail projects throughout the Upper Arkansas River Valley
- ❖ Planned, prepared and supervised Colorado Youth Corps Association projects
- ❖ AHRA maintenance staff contributed over 700 hours towards noxious vegetation control on lands under AHRA jurisdiction
- ❖ Refinished picnic tables at Parkdale, Riverside, Big Bend and Hayden Meadows
- ❖ Completed the second phase of the Parkdale group picnic area shade shelter, including landscaping and picnic table installation
- ❖ Worked with a contractor to install snow guards on the Visitor Center buildings
- ❖ Relocated the water line for the Visitor Center sprinkler system
- ❖ Improved drainage and the parking area at the Visitor Center
- ❖ Road work and maintenance were performed at the Numbers, Collegiate Peaks Overlook and Fisherman's Bridge
- ❖ Boat ramp improvement and maintenance were performed at Pinnacle Rock and Maytag with major improvements at Texas Creek
- ❖ Installed new culvert and improved drainage and a bus parking area at Hecla Junction
- ❖ Installed new culvert and improved drainage at Stone Bridge
- ❖ Performed track maintenance in the Big Bend riding area and placed road base in the OHV parking area
- ❖ Worked at Salida East on cleaning up fill material left behind by contractors
- ❖ Replaced the steps at the Numbers boat ramp
- ❖ Handrail replacement and staining project at Hayden Meadows
- ❖ Investigated fraudulent use of vehicle passes
- ❖ Assisted Fremont County with homicide investigation
- ❖ Cited an illegal outfitter at Hecla Junction
- ❖ Mapped fishing access sites between Salida and Stone Bridge
- ❖ AHRA staff worked several boat, sports, travel and fishing trade shows in Denver and Colorado Springs
- ❖ Recruited a land ranger intern from Central Michigan University and a river ranger intern from Taylor University in Indiana
- ❖ Took receipt of new John Deere backhoe

- ❖ Rob White, John Kreski and Stew Pappenfort attended the 2008 Colorado River Outfitters Association (CROA) Conference.
- ❖ Law enforcement staff developed critical incident investigation procedures and flowchart
- ❖ Reworked the boat ramp at Pinnacle Rock to provide better drainage
- ❖ Hosted Naturally Neighbors volunteer fair in partnership with GARNA and DOW.
- ❖ Presented AHRA Dam Diversion grant request to the Colorado Water Conservation Board
- ❖ Prepared portage options and secured private property permissions in preparation for high runoff.
- ❖ Set up Division of Wildlife, Total Licensing System at front desk in the AHRA Visitor Center
- ❖ Rob White, John Geerdes, John Nahomenuk, Mike French and a select group of AHRA Outfitters met with Governor Bill Ritter in Salida on May 11th to discuss the importance of AHRA and recreation/tourism to the upper Arkansas River Valley
- ❖ Coordinated DOC crews work at various recreation sites
- ❖ Rob White and John Nahomenuk attended the River Management Society Symposium
- ❖ Completed weed spraying with Chaffee County Weed Department
- ❖ Worked on the Maytag boat ramp to ready it for increased use due to high flows
- ❖ Completed temporary repairs at Hecla Junction
- ❖ AHRA staff participated in several environmental education and water safety presentations for local elementary schools
- ❖ River Rangers Tim Wyatt and Rusty Wardlow responded to a capsized raft and recovered it at the Wellsville Bridge. Tim & Rusty saved the lives of two children trapped under the raft
- ❖ Attended meetings and submitted Parks' comments regarding the proposed Over The River project by Christo and Jeanne-Claude
- ❖ Rose Bayless began working with the State Parks 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee
- ❖ Assisted Fremont County Sheriff's Office and The Colorado Bureau of Investigation with the investigation of a homicide that occurred between the Lone Pine and Spikebuck Recreation Sites
- ❖ Mike French, Rob White, John Geerdes & BLM staff met with personnel from Nestle Waters to discuss their possible acquisition of the Hagen Fish Hatchery and the potential associated benefits Nestle Waters could provide to AHRA
- ❖ Mike French, Rob White, John Geerdes and John Nahomenuk toured the Arkansas River Placer property (adjacent to the Numbers Recreation Site) to discuss the potential of an FS exchange for the property or the possibility of State Parks acquiring the land
- ❖ Attended many water related meetings covering various topics including the Voluntary Flow Management Program, Southern Delivery System, Nestle Waters acquisitions, Ark. Basin Round Tables, Ark. Basin Water Forum and the Colorado Watersheds and Governors Drought Conference
- ❖ Met with property owners adjacent to the Helena Diversion Dam (BV Dam, AKA Silver Bullet) regarding a scouting/portage trail
- ❖ Surveyed AHRA visitors in a statewide Parks Visitor Survey
- ❖ Tamarisk control at Parkdale and Texas Creek
- ❖ Installed new information signs at 10 AHRA recreation sties
- ❖ Coordinated a Junior Ranger Raft Trip in cooperation with Noah's Ark and Four Corners Rafting

- ❖ Conducted a Browns Canyon monitoring trip with BLM
- ❖ Spent a day filming Ranger Station with ESPN
- ❖ AHRA Staff held meetings with representatives of the AHRA outfitting community to discuss river safety, the Special Use Agreement and associated Riders to determine if injuries and fatalities could be reduced on the Arkansas River within the AHRA
- ❖ Reviewed and approved 35 special activity permits

This concludes the 2008 Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area Annual Report. If you should have any questions regarding this report please contact Rob White, the AHRA Park Manager, or John Nahomenuk, the AHRA River Manager at (719)539-7289 or via e-mail at [ahra@state.co.us](mailto:ahra@state.co.us). Additional copies of this report can be downloaded from: [www.parks.state.co.us/Arkansas/](http://www.parks.state.co.us/Arkansas/).