

# CastleRocks State Park

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Master Plan  
August 2006



## **The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation mission as defined by the Idaho Legislature**

To formulate and put into execution a long-range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archeological, or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness recreational opportunities, and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged.

This agency's programs and activities are operated free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender age or disability. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against or who needs further information regarding discrimination should write: Director, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83702-0065, or National Parks Service, Equal Opportunity Officer (010), P.O. Box 37127, Washington DC 20013. Costs associated with this publication are available from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation in accordance with Section 60-202, Idaho Code HB366:10/02/100/33011.

# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

## CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK



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# *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank the many people that contributed to the Castle Rocks State Park Master Plan to make it a success. I express my appreciation and thanks to the Stakeholder Advisory Team. The members of this Team are: Jeanette Babbitt, Jay Black, Doug Colwell, Laura Jones, Suzi Neitzel, Hannah North, Dave Ogren, Mike Todd, Clark Ward, Earl White, and Mike Wissenbach.

I also express my appreciation and thanks to the members of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Planning Review Team members: Director Robert Meinen, Division Administrator – Management Services David Ricks, East Region Manager Garth Taylor, Park Manager Wallace Keck, Non-Motorized Trails Coordinator Leo Hennessy.

Special thanks are given to Park Manager Wallace Keck for his participation throughout the Master Plan process and helping to coordinate with the public meetings. Thanks to the Castle Rocks State Park staff members Venna Ward, Randy Farley, Brad Shilling, Juanita Jones, and Jodi Vincent for their input and help.

I would like to recognize and thank the many members of the public that attended meetings and park visitors that completed the park surveys and supplied valuable input.

Thanks to the Cache Peak Emergency Services in Almo, Marsh Creek Event Center in Albion, and the Canyon Springs Red Lion Hotel in Twin Falls for providing facilities for the master plan public meetings.

I would like to thank the efforts of the Comprehensive Planning Coordinator, Rick Just, and the Human Dimension Researcher, Dr. Francis Achana, for providing the public surveys that were used to gather public input from park visitors. I also want to thank the Communication Program Manager Jennifer Wernex for providing News Releases for the Master Plan Process.

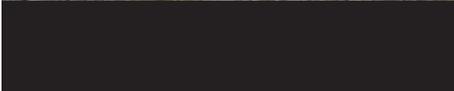
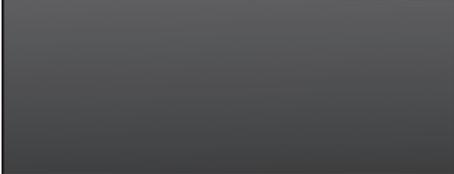
A special thanks to the Cassia County Commissioners, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Bureau of Land Management, and the USDA Forest Service for reviewing the master plan.

I would like to recognize and thank the consulting firm of Beck & Baird for a job well done. The consulting team consisted of Dan Baird, Principal; Jim Mihan, Landscape Architect; Dr. Mary McGown, Landscape Architect; Mike Pepper, KMP Planning & Consulting; Steve Jacobowics, AMEC, and Jason Pfaff, Visual Genesis.

Thanks to the members of the Idaho Park and Recreation Board for their efforts at the February 15, 2006 and the August 01, 2006 board meetings.

Kelly Burrows  
Development Planner

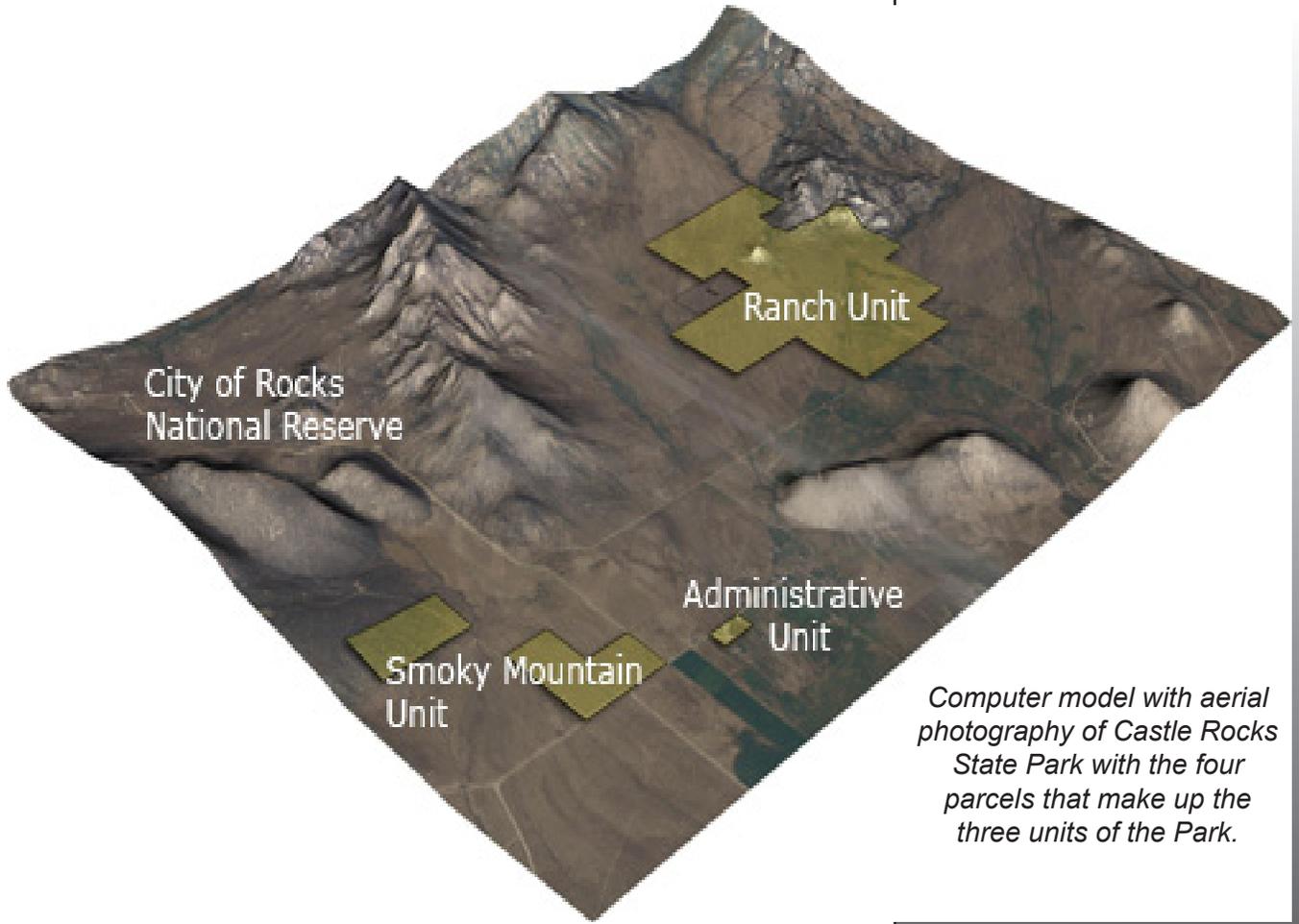
**CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK**



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*Computer model with aerial photography of Castle Rocks State Park with the four parcels that make up the three units of the Park.*

**THE FUTURE AT A GLANCE**

The following are excerpts from the 2003-2007 Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP). This document is the most comprehensive source of Idaho information on outdoor recreation and tourism available. It was designed by a multi-agency planning team to assist in the decision-making needs of a variety of tourism providers.

“Use projections should always be viewed cautiously. The preferred

recreational activities of today may be the “been there, done that” activities of tomorrow. Recreational habits are influenced by weather, income, population growth, availability and other factors. Even so, it is useful to see that the projections are based on today’s patterns.”

“J.M. Bowker, Donald B.K. English and H. Ken Cordell developed projection models for the publication Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends, 1999. It is the only ongoing, comprehensive assessment of outdoor recreation

### **BEGINNINGS OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM**

*In 1965, two things came together that resulted in the creation of a state park system in Idaho. First, Roland and Averell Harriman agreed to donate what is now Harriman State Park to the State of Idaho on the condition that a professional agency be created to manage it. Second, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was created. Statewide recreation planning was required to qualify for the federal funds which were used to develop state and local recreation facilities. It would take a state agency to do that.*

*Prior to the authorization of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, there existed in the state areas designated "scenic and recreational," usually parks and campgrounds. Since 1907 these areas had been administered by the State Land Board. In 1947, state parks were transferred to the Highway Department, and responsibility grew with the addition of a number of roadside areas, where motorists on the freeway*

trends in the country. The researchers created models based on today's behavior as sampled through the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment."

"According to the study, demand for water-based recreation activities will grow faster than population growth in the Rocky Mountain Region in the next several years. These activities include non-pool swimming, canoeing and visiting a beach or water slide. Additionally, the region will probably need additional urban recreation resources for biking, picnicking, family gatherings and walking, as well as the get-away-from-it-all resource of developed camping in coming years."

Dispersed land activities are anticipated to grow in the Rocky Mountain Region in the near future. They include rock climbing, primitive camping, horseback riding, backpacking, hiking and off-road driving. Winter activities continue to grow in popularity, including snowmobiling and downhill skiing. Cross-country skiing is also anticipated to show strong growth in the coming years. Hunting is expected to rise; fishing is projected to grow faster than hunting, and non-consumptive activities are anticipated to have the largest percentage of growth among wildlife-related activities in the next couple of decades. Beyond traditional recreational pursuits, there lie emerging recreational activities that didn't exist 10 or 20 years ago. From adventure racing to zorbing, extreme outdoor

recreation is also on the rise.

With growing population and increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities, development and management of the finite resources of the state will become more challenging. It is therefore crucial that careful planning, development and management be a part of any large outdoor recreation or tourism project.

## **PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN IDAHO-AN OVERVIEW**

### **AUTHORITY**

In 1965, the Idaho State Legislature enacted legislation creating the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). The legislation reads, in part:

It is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Parks and Recreation shall formulate and put into execution a long range, comprehensive plan and program for the acquisition, planning, protection, operation, maintenance, development and wise use of areas of scenic beauty, recreational utility, historic, archeological or scientific interest, to the end that the health, happiness, recreational opportunities and wholesome enjoyment of life of the people may be further encouraged.

The Idaho Park and Recreation Board is responsible for administering, conducting and

supervising the IDPR. The Legislature has given the Board the power to:

- Make expenditures for the acquisition, care, control, supervision, improvement, development, extension, and maintenance of all lands under the control of the department.
- Appoint local or regional advisory councils to consider, study, and advise the department in the development, use and maintenance of any areas to be considered as future park sites.
- Cooperate with the federal government and local governments of the state for the purpose of acquiring, developing, extending or maintaining lands which are designated as state parks.
- Construct, lease or otherwise establish public park or recreational facilities and services, and charge and collect reasonable fees to operate these facilities and services.
- Apply to any appropriate agency or officer of the federal government for aid from any federal program respecting outdoor recreation, and obligate the state regarding the responsible management of any federal funds transferred to it for the purpose of federal enactment.

## ***POLICY***

The Idaho Park and Recreation Board has established operational policies to guide IDPR staff in the

acquisition, planning, development, and protection of land for public outdoor recreation use. They are as follows:

**Acquisition.** Acquisition of recreation lands is vital to the state park system and should occur in tandem with the needs of a growing population. Public use of these acquired areas should be made possible as soon as the department is able.

**Planning.** Few responsibilities of a state park system are more important than planning. To ensure people's recreating needs will be met by the state park system, there should be current and advance planning for recreation facilities and services. Such planning shall follow the Master Plan Guidelines document adopted by the Board. Planning shall be in conformance with the supply, demand, and needs as outlined in the Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP).

A state park classification system has been adopted to aid in the proper planning, development, and management of park lands. Four classifications have been defined: natural, recreation, heritage, and recreation trailway.

The department shall plan for appropriate conservation-education facilities and activities that will enhance the public's use and enjoyment of the system. The department shall plan for creative and informative

*might pull off for a night's rest. In 1949 control of the parks system was transferred to the State Land Board. A Parks Division was created within the Land Board in 1953. John W. Emmert, a retired former superintendent of Glacier National Park, took charge of the Idaho program in April 1958. This form of administration continued until 1959 when Emmert was replaced with three regional directors.*

*History of Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation  
- idahoparks.org*



*Cover of a turn of the century Home and Comfort Stove found on site*

interpretive programs. In the planning, development, and implementation of interpretive programs, the department shall identify and emphasize the values that are of primary importance for each park.

**Development.** Services and facilities shall be in accordance with the park classification and resource area designations (zoning) of each park. Considerations for facilities and service shall be:

1. Within the park system, provision shall be made for a wide range of interests and activities enjoyed by Idaho residents and tourists.
2. Each park will be developed for as many activities as is consistent with its classification, and will be managed to insure the wise use and protection of the facility or resource.
3. To allow full park use by individuals who may or may not own recreational equipment, IDPR may consider the rental and sale of items appropriate in parks.
4. Park facilities developed to facilitate service and provide recreational opportunity shall be architecturally suited to the theme and purpose of the park.
5. No facilities or services shall be permitted within a park that encourage or contribute to rapid deterioration of the park environment or adjacent property.
6. Access for people with disabilities will be provided in compliance with current ADA

standards.

**Protection.** Lands acquired for the state park system should remain dedicated to that use and protected against exploitation.

### ***DIRECTION***

The 2003-2007 Idaho Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) surveyed Idahoans to rank 19 issues in outdoor recreation on their importance. The following were ranked as their top ten issues:

1. Protecting water quality.
2. Protecting existing access to public lands.
3. Protecting natural resources on public lands.
4. Educating youth about natural resources and the environment.
5. Controlling invasive species.
6. Educating adults about natural resources and the environment.
7. Providing recreation safety instruction to youth.
8. Providing outdoor recreation education for youth.
9. Providing access for the disabled.
10. Rehabilitating outdoor recreation facilities.

### **AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN CONGRUENCY ANALYSIS**

#### ***PURPOSE***

The following analysis was prepared, upon the conclusion of the planning process, to emphasize how the resulting park master plan

is congruent with the agency's mission and vision statements, and the initiatives of the agency strategic plan.

### ***AGENCY MISSION***

The mission of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is "To improve the quality of life in Idaho through outdoor recreation and resource stewardship."

The Castle Rocks State Park master plan mission is "To protect and interpret its geological features, ranching heritage, and prehistory. The park will be managed to preserve its intrinsic values such as scenic views, silence and nature. Through innovative partnerships, the park will provide appropriate recreational opportunities and public access."

### ***AGENCY VISION***

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will live up to the trust of Idahoans by striving to understand the recreational needs of the people, practicing wise resource stewardship and carefully maintaining facilities. We will promote ethical behavior, safe practices and the sharpening of outdoor skills. While recognizing private property rights the agency will protect access to public lands. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will continue its role as a leader in outdoor recreation through partnerships, innovation and good work.

The Castle Rocks State Park master plan envisions an inspiring park with diverse opportunities. The park's unique qualities encourage discovery and solitude in a protected geologic setting, where the natural beauty, ranching heritage, and prehistoric culture enrich visitor experiences.

The unique natural, cultural and scenic resources are maintained as a living landscape to enhance resource values. Recreational uses are compatible with preserving the qualities of a vital remnant of the Great Basin. Innovative partnerships with governments, local communities, organizations, and users enable stewardship of park resources that will ensure enjoyment for future generations.

Castle Rocks will be recognized as a special place where time stands still and the visitor is a respectful guest.

### ***AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN***

The Idaho Park and Recreation Board adopted the agency strategic plan, Working for Recreation—The 2006-2010 Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, on April 25, 2005. From that document, the Board has developed 3 strategic initiatives. They are:

- Focus on Core Responsibilities
- Consider the day-to-day management of our legislatively authorized parks and programs our first priority
- Devote a significant share of agency resources to improving

Sunday, August 24, 2003

REGIONAL NEWS

## **BRIEFLY**

### **New Idaho park offers glimpse of the past**

ALMO (AP) — The new Castle Rocks State Park is a place for rock climbing and trail riding in the future, and honors the wagon trains which passed by more than a century ago, dignitaries said at its dedication ceremony.

The word recreation used to be hyphenated as "re-creation," National Park Service Deputy Regional Director Art Eck said.

Those enjoying Idaho's newest state park can reconnect with the past as they create new experiences.

Castle Rocks and the nearby City of Rocks National Reserve were stops along the old California Trail. The settlers left their own graffiti on the rocks there.

Pointing to the formations behind him, Eck said, "It's important they remain there for us and for future generations."

Officials from both the National Park Service and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation signed a land exchange agreement, which made the park possible.



*Mike Pepper facilitating meeting of Stakeholders Advisory Team*

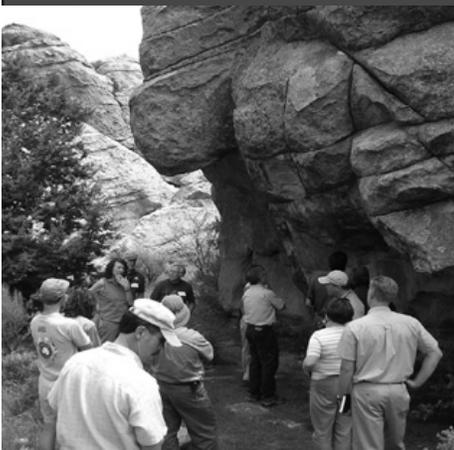
- the condition of our facilities
- Determine what outdoor recreation facilities are needed by the public and determine the best way to see that they are provided
  - Be responsive to scheduling resources to customer requests through an enhanced reservation system
  - Address the Issues Associated with Growing Demand
  - Assure public access for outdoor recreation through key land acquisitions, easements, education and partnerships
  - Provide education, mediation and regulatory programs to enhance user opportunities and experiences
  - Seek ways to bring sustainable funding for outdoor recreation into alignment with demand
  - Provide Outdoor Recreation Leadership
  - Assume a leadership role in seeking partnerships with other agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to enhance outdoor recreation
  - Improve communication with the public and partners about outdoor recreation opportunities and issues

## **PRELIMINARY POLICY STATEMENTS**

Prior to beginning the planning process, the following policy statements were developed to guide participants, to outline planning goals, to establish limits, to identify authorities from which approval must be obtained and to provide a

yardstick to measure the success of the final product:

1. The Master Plan will follow the IDPR State Park Master Plan Guidelines and be consistent with all policies adopted by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board.
2. The master plan will follow the direction outlined in the agency's current strategic plan.
3. The master plan will comply with the provisions of the local county or city comprehensive plans and land use-development ordinances.
4. Public involvement throughout the course of the master plan process will be pursued in an open, honest and fair manner, utilizing processes and techniques outlined in the IDPR Public Involvement Guide. A Stakeholder Advisory Team will be an integral component of the planning process.
5. The master plan will inventory the existing natural systems, and cultural and historical resources within the park's boundaries to determine the limitations and opportunities presented by the site.
6. The master plan will establish the classification of the park using the criteria outlined in the IDPR State Park Land Classification and Resource Area Designation System.
7. The master plan will identify and promote recreational activities, compatible with the park's classification, that address the region's recreation needs as identified



*Joint tour of Castle Rocks State Park by PRT and SAT team members*

in the most recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP).

8. The master plan will explore and recognize the relationship between the park and the local community and be sensitive to the needs of the park's host community.

## SUMMARY OF INPUT - MEETING SUMMARIES

Collection of ideas and opinions from stakeholders and public is critical to the success of the master planning process set forth by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). Input is gathered from many sources to insure that diverse interests and perspectives are represented in the master planning process. Ideas and opinions are collected at meetings held throughout the planning process and in written comments. Meetings are held at several times and places to maximize participation of interests including the local public, park users, park stakeholders, other agencies, park staff, and IDPR staff. Following is a summary of those meetings.

Preliminary Open House  
Castle Rocks Ranch House  
March 17, 2005

This meeting was held to introduce the master plan process to the public. The IDPR master plan project manager, park staff, and planning consultant discussed the planning process and timeline. Applications for the Stakeholder

Advisory Team were made available.

Planning Review Team Orientation meeting  
Headquarters Building, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation  
May 4, 2005

The purpose of this meeting was to bring together IDPR planning and management staff, park management staff, and the consultant team to review the details of the planning process and major planning issues. IDPR staff on the planning review team (PRT) include: IDPR Director, Bob Meinen; East Region Manager, David Ricks; Division Administrator of Management Services, Garth Taylor; East Region Planner and Project Manager, Kelly Burrows; Castle Rocks State Park Manager, Wallace Keck, and Non-motorized Trails Coordinator, Leo Hennessy. A key part of this meeting was selecting 15 people to serve on the Stakeholder Advisory Team (SAT), which assists the PRT and design team in the planning process. Ten SAT members actively participated:

*Jeanette Babbitt,  
Oakley resident, adjacent land owner  
Jay Black,  
Almo resident, rancher  
Doug Colwell,  
American Alpine Club, Boise,  
adjacent land owner  
Laura Jones,  
Almo resident  
Suzie Nietzel,  
Idaho State Historical Preservation  
Office*



*One of three Public Input Workshops held in Almo, Albion, and Twin Falls*

*Hannah North,  
adjacent land owner, climber  
David Ogren,  
local citizen, business owner  
Mike Todd,  
Idaho Fish and Game  
Clark Ward,  
Almo resident, rancher  
Mike Wissenbach,  
National Park Service  
Earl White,  
Back Country Horsemen Association*

Stakeholder Advisory Team  
Orientation and Park Tour  
Castle Rocks State Park Ranch  
House, June 16, 2005

The goals of this meeting were to familiarize the SAT with the planning process and to tour the three park units with IDPR and park staff, and the planning consultants. The SAT was given an overview of the IDPR park system as well as a review of specific opportunities and constraints found at Castle Rocks State Park (CRSP).

Planning Review Team Input  
Workshop  
Marsh Creek Event Center, Albion  
August 10, 2005

Prior to the meeting, PRT members were given background information about the park along with an explanation of the perceived opportunities and constraints associated with the park. After an in-depth discussion, the PRT assisted with the identification and prioritization of issues to be considered in the planning and development of the park.

Public Input Workshops

Marsh Creek Event Center, Albion  
August 10, 2005  
Red Lion Hotel, Twin Falls  
August 10, 2005  
Cache Peak Emergency Services  
Building, Almo  
August 24, 2005

Three workshops were held to allow the maximum number of people to ask questions and to provide opinions about what they would like to see in the park. The consultant presented information about the park and its resources. There were 11 members of the public at the Albion meeting, 7 at the Twin Falls meeting, and 35 at the Almo meeting. Issues raised by the public at these meetings was ranked in importance by the public. This information has been organized for use in the planning process. (See Appendix 1A)

Staff Input Questionnaire and  
Interviews  
June 7, 16, August 10, 2005

A questionnaire was distributed to park staff to garner input from them about park planning and development issues. Additionally, the consultant conducted interviews with staff where possible during the park tour and public meetings.

Planning Review Team/Stakeholder  
Advisory Team Work Session  
Cache Peak Emergency Services  
Building, Almo, August 26, 2005

The PRT and SAT reviewed the issues raised at the three public input workshops. It was the goal of this meeting to review, discuss and

prioritize the results of the public meetings. A secondary goal of this meeting was to review and approve draft vision and mission statements for the park.

Public Open House  
Castle Rocks State Park, Ranch House  
October 25, 2005

A public open house was held to review two management alternative plans for Castle Rocks State Park. One alternative reflected a low level of development and the other a higher level of development, based on activities and services suggested in public input. The public was asked to comment on what they liked or did not like in each alternative.

Planning Review Team/Stakeholder Advisory Team Joint Meeting  
Cache Peak Emergency Services Building, Almo  
November 9, 2005

A final joint meeting of the PRT and SAT was held to review the management alternatives and to select a preferred alternative to be developed into the final park master plan by the consultant.

Public Open House  
Castle Rocks State Park,  
Maintenance Shop Conference Room  
March 15, 2006

A final public open house was held to review the draft master plan and receive comments from the public. The Idaho Department

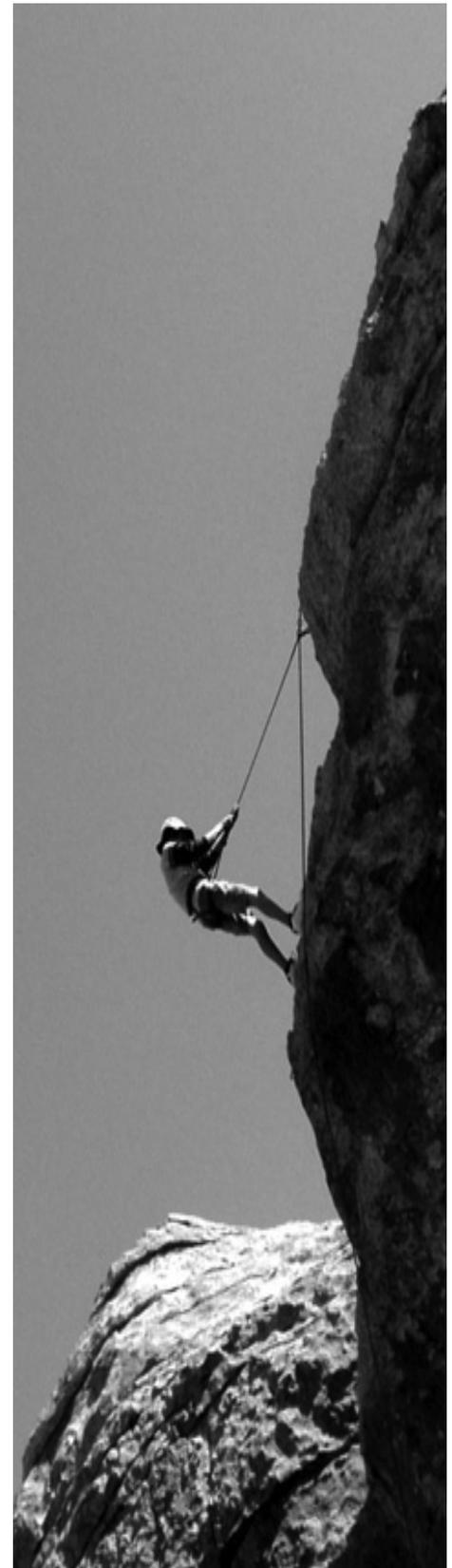
of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) Project manager, Park Manager and Planning Consultant presented a summary of the findings within the master plan and reviewed the process that was used to obtain the results found within the draft master plan. Comments received at this meeting were taken back to be incorporated into the final plan.

Cassia County Commission  
Cassia County Courthouse  
Burley, Idaho  
March 27, 2006

The Project Manager presented the Castle Rocks State Park Draft Master Plan to the Cassia County Commissioners on March 27th at the Commission's regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The meeting was well attended by 55 members of the public. Also in attendance were the park manager and representatives from the USDA Forest Service.

Draft Master Plan Presentation  
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation - Board of Directors  
IDPR Park Headquarters Building  
Boise, Idaho  
May 17, 2006

The draft master plan was presented to the Board of Directors for their review and comments. The plan was presented by the Park Manager with the Planning Consultant and the Park Manager present for questions.



*Climber at the Ranch Unit of  
Castle Rocks State Park*

## **SUMMARY OF INPUT - COMPILATION OF SIGNIFICANCE, QUALITIES, ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES AND DESIRED EXPERIENCES**

Input from all sources is compiled in categories that describe the significance of the park, qualities of importance to the park, issues at the park, and opportunities or experiences to develop at the park.

Written comments submitted by the general public and stakeholders in the project in the form of letters and emails have been recorded by this planning process and can be made available for review. If interested, please contact Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Comprehensive Planning Section. Contact information is available on the inside cover of this master plan.

## **PARK SIGNIFICANCE**

Common themes emerged when the public and the PRT and SAT were asked to articulate the significance of Castle Rocks State Park. They are not arranged in order of priority or importance.

- Although Castle Rocks State Park offers world-class climbing opportunities, it has cultural, archaeological and natural resources that make it more than a climbing park.
- The ranching heritage is an important activity at Castle Rocks State Park that should be

continued. This is only one of two state parks where ranching is a key component of the park's culture.

- The park consists of three units, each with unique characteristics. Future uses should be sensitive to the different attributes.
- Castle Rocks State Park holds a large water right (9.5 shares) in the Almo Water Company. Irrigation of pastures in the park should continue to maintain the existing water table and stream flow characteristics.
- It is important to offer year-round activities.
- Hallmark experiences of the Ranch Unit are discovery and solitude.
- Castle Rocks State Park offers a different recreational opportunity than City of Rocks National Reserve and should be handled accordingly with careful attention given to its capacity for camping at Smoky Mountain and its smaller yet more secluded climbing opportunities at the Ranch Unit.
- Castle Rocks State Park contains rare geological and archeological resources. Preservation and interpretation of these resources should be a high priority.
- Strengthen the Park's relationship with the resources found in City of Rocks National Reserve and the California Trail.
- The pinyon pine-juniper woodland, and the rolling and rugged terrain provide numerous opportunities for



*Example of unique geological features (Backyard Boulders )*

passive recreational activities such as birding and wildflower photography that should not be overshadowed by other more prominent activities.

- Castle Rocks State Park should take advantage of its proximity to the Scenic Byway and City of Rocks in the marketing of its resources to potential visitors from the State of Idaho and beyond.
- The Ranch and Smoky Mountain Units provide access to other public lands and those connections should be taken into consideration during the planning process.
- Adjacent property owners expressed the need to clearly define park boundaries to prevent trespass by park users.

## **PARK QUALITIES**

The three park units differ in size, resources, designated use and other attributes. The attributes are not listed in priority order.

### ***RANCH UNIT***

#### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- Geologic features are significant
- A variety of non-game wildlife are present, including the first Idaho recorded sighting of a ringtail
- A variety of plant life including the northern most pinyon pine-juniper upland forest
- Access to irrigation water, artesian well, and natural water run-off from surrounding

Albion Mountains

- Riparian areas provide visual and plant diversity
- Rich in cultural and archeological resources

#### **Visitor Experience/Recreation**

- World-class rock climbing
- Existing trails and opportunities for future trails
- Access to other back country public lands that offer varying recreational opportunities
- Ranching facilities such as ranch house and corrals provide a basis of support for recreational activities
- Single point access and direct route to facilities and parking

#### **Education/Interpretation**

- Activities such as “RanchFest” provide education and entertainment while deepening the connections with the local community
- Ranching interpretation and educational opportunities at ranch house
- Corrals provide opportunity for educational and interpretive events
- Existing amphitheater provides opportunity for group education and interpretation activities

#### **Operations**

- IDPR manages Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve (the latter, under a cooperative agreement with NPS) with shared staff, administrative offices and equipment, which reduces duplication and increases efficiency



*Example of diverse ecosystem with pinyon juniper, aspen, narrow leaf willow, and sage growing next to each other*

- Volunteers are an important asset
- Volunteer groups help with visitor services and trail maintenance
- Volunteers also improve visitor's experience by assisting with education and interpretation as well as RanchFest and other special events

### **Partnerships and Land**

#### **Acquisition**

- Proximity to nearby scenic byway, which is receiving road improvements
- Proximity to City of Rocks National Reserve is a natural marketing partnership
- Park manager maintains partnerships with key federal, state and local agencies
- Interagency Recreation Area Agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and USDA Forest Service promotes seamless management of recreation uses

### ***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT***

#### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- The pinyon pine-juniper woodland will provide visual separation of users in the campground

#### **Visitor Experience/Recreation**

- Access to other public lands
- Single point access and direct route to facilities and parking
- Provide information about history of park units

#### **Education/Interpretation**

- The entrance road crosses the California Trail where interpretation of this theme could occur

#### **Operations**

- Smoky Mountain Campground is in close proximity to both the national reserve and the other units of CRSP

### **Partnerships and Land**

#### **Acquisition**

- IDPR has a Recreation and Public Purpose Lease with the BLM for the Smoky Mountain Unit

### ***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

#### **Natural and Cultural Resources**

- Relatively flat land allows accessibility and full use of the property

#### **Visitor Experience/Recreation**

- Visitor center with information about other units of the park, its natural history, and the City of Rocks National Reserve (CIRO) as well as recreational, educational, and experience resale items
- Lawn areas and mature trees provide a respite from summer heat
- Existing building is a renovated home that reflects the cultural heritage of early residents

#### **Education/Interpretation**

- California Trail interpretation and educational opportunities at visitor information and

- orientation
- Use of pioneer wagons to interpret California Trail, which crosses this unit and the Smoky Mountain unit

### **Operations**

- Recently completed maintenance facilities will improve staff capabilities

### **Partnerships and Land**

#### **Acquisition**

- The Administrative Unit is in the community of Almo, two miles south of the Ranch Unit and one mile east of the CIRO

## **PARK ISSUES**

### ***RANCH UNIT***

#### **Natural Resources**

- Noxious weed control (applies to all units)
- Need natural resource management plan to balance grazing operations with wildflower viewing and other resources.
- A management plan to guide protection and interpretation of cultural resources, especially archaeological resources
- Grazing needs to be maintained and managed
- Wetlands need to be excluded from grazing activities
- Protection of wetlands needs to be considered in the Grazing Management Plan
- Water rights should continue to be utilized as in past manner
- Water delivery system needs to be upgraded to be more efficient; appropriate ditch maintenance is needed

- Fire management plan needs to be developed (applies to all units)
- Protect surface water quality (applies to all units)
- Improve non-motorized trails

#### **Visitor Experience/Recreation/ Facility Development**

- Park units need a signage system so visitors know which facilities are available in each unit of the park (applies to all units)
- Open climbing zones and finalize interagency climbing management plan
- Challenge to physically link all three units – physically, thematically and operationally
- There are diverse recreational demands and user types
- There is a demand for fishing and hunting activities
- Park boundaries should be well-marked
- Park provides limited handicap access
- Need to develop more year-round activities such as cross country skiing and snowshoeing
- Construct trails
- Improve emergency and maintenance access throughout park
- Increase event opportunities such as RanchFest
- Rebuild or relocate entry road bridge over Almo Creek in Ranch Unit

#### **Interpretation/Education**

- Protect, restore and interpret cultural resources. Identify and prioritize zones within park



*View of rock formations found at the Ranch Unit of Castle Rocks State Park*



*Park visitors exploring the unique pinyon pines*

**Operations**

- Need more staff and volunteers to increase educational and interpretation opportunities
- Need more staff to provide proactive maintenance of the park units
- Irrigation structures need to be improved

**Land Acquisition/Partnerships**

- Work with BLM and USDA Forest Service to improve management of Interagency Recreation Area (IRA)
- Increase interconnections and access to other public lands

***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

**Interpretation/Education**

- Improve interpretive activities related to California Trail

**Operations**

- Need more and improved staff housing and volunteer RV accommodations

**Land Acquisition/Partnerships**

- Keep GSA lease with NPS

***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT***

**Natural Resources**

- Improve non-motorized trails and linkages to activities on Smoky Mountain Peak and Almo
- Protect pinyon pine forest

**Visitor Experience/Recreation/  
Facility Development**

- Park will provide fully accessible handicap access
- Develop more year round

- activities such as cross country skiing and snowshoeing
- Study the feasibility of motorized trails for all-terrain vehicles and coordinate trail development for equestrians while minimizing conflicts between users
- Partner with BLM and other agencies to develop non-motorized access opportunities

**Interpretation/Education**

- Develop interpretation and viewing stations of the California Trail

**OPPORTUNITIES,  
IDEAS & DESIRED  
EXPERIENCES**

***RANCH UNIT***

The public and members of the SAT and PRT identified these ideas, suggestions, potential opportunities and desired visitor experiences for this park unit

- Develop a road to provide better access to Castle Rock, design to be minimally intrusive
- Develop a bunkhouse near existing ranch house and would be available by reservation
- Develop an accessible shelter for picnics and other group events
- Create additional or overflow parking for events
- Relocate corrals to allow for expansion of activities
- Expand climbing opportunities
- Expand hiking opportunities
- Develop a pond for fishing and water storage

- Renovate the ranch house into interpretive space, staff offices or overnight rental
  - Create handicap accessible interpretive trail from parking area to Castle Rock
  - Develop a rest area at Castle Rock which may include picnic and rest room facilities
- campground loop

***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

- Develop housing for permanent and seasonal staff
- Develop RV accommodations for volunteer staff
- Take advantage of opportunities for interpretation of the California Trail
- Finish maintenance facility
- Remove the following buildings: wagon garage, Minidoka building, and metal storage shed

***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT***

- Develop one primitive group camp site
- Build cabins or yurts
- Include primitive tent sites with parking
- Additional rest rooms without water
- Provide space between future tent and recreational vehicle camping spaces
- Develop trails plan that addresses needs of motorized and non-motorized
- Develop visitor center that can be shared with City of Rocks National Reserve
- Develop amphitheater for group activities
- Develop a second RV

