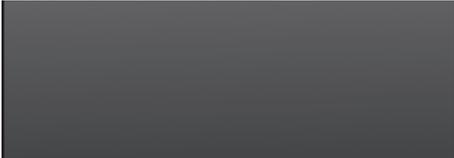




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CHAPTER FOUR - RECREATION SUPPLY AND DEMAND

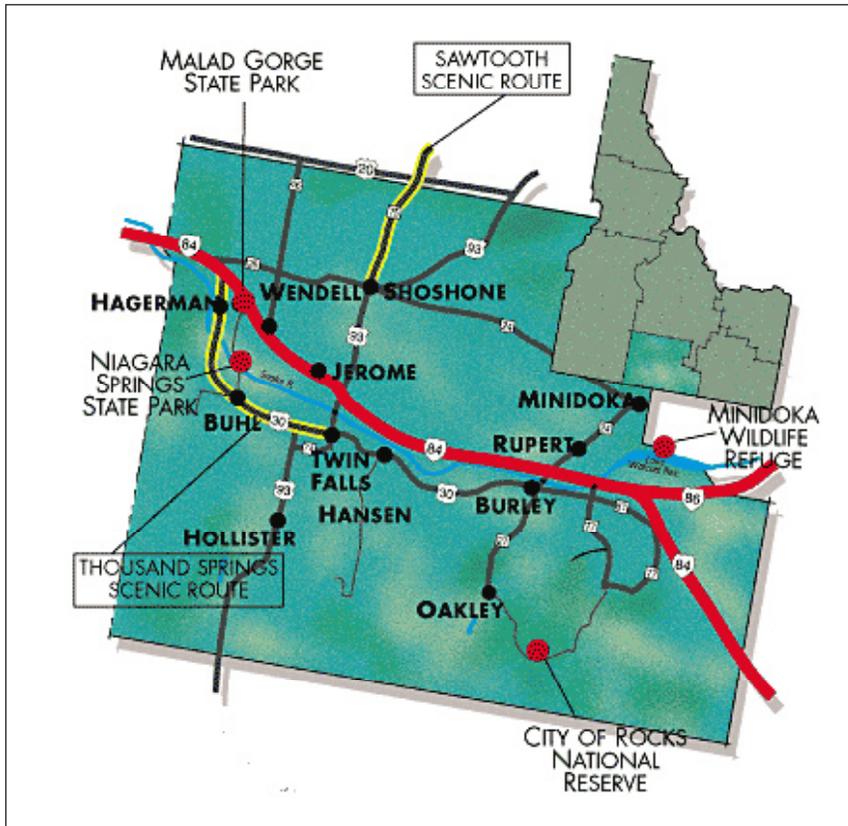
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AREA RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Castle Rocks State Park is located in the six county area promoted by the South Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation Development Association (SCIRTD) (www.visitidaho.org/placestogo/southcentral.aspx). Three scenic byways, the City of Rocks

Nature Preserve. The National Park Service has a significant presence in the travel region with three units, the Hagerman Fossil Beds and Minidoka Internment National Monuments and the City of Rocks National Reserve. The Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, about 2.5 hours from Castle Rocks State Park, produces steelhead and Rainbow trout to mitigate the



Backcountry Byway, the Thousand Springs Scenic Byway and the Sawtooth Scenic Byway, showcase spectacular scenery in this part of Idaho. Other attractions include the Minidoka Wildlife Refuge, Lake Walcott State Park, Pomerelle Ski Area, and the multi-unit Thousand Springs State Park, consisting of Niagara Springs, Malad Gorge, Billingsley Creek, and the Earl M. Hardy Box Canyon Springs

impact of dams on the lower Snake and Clearwater Rivers.

Recreational opportunities provided by the private sector include private hot springs, the Nature Conservancy's Thousand Springs Reserve, day use parks along the Snake River by Idaho Power Company's dams, and outfitted rafting and canoe trips on the Snake River.



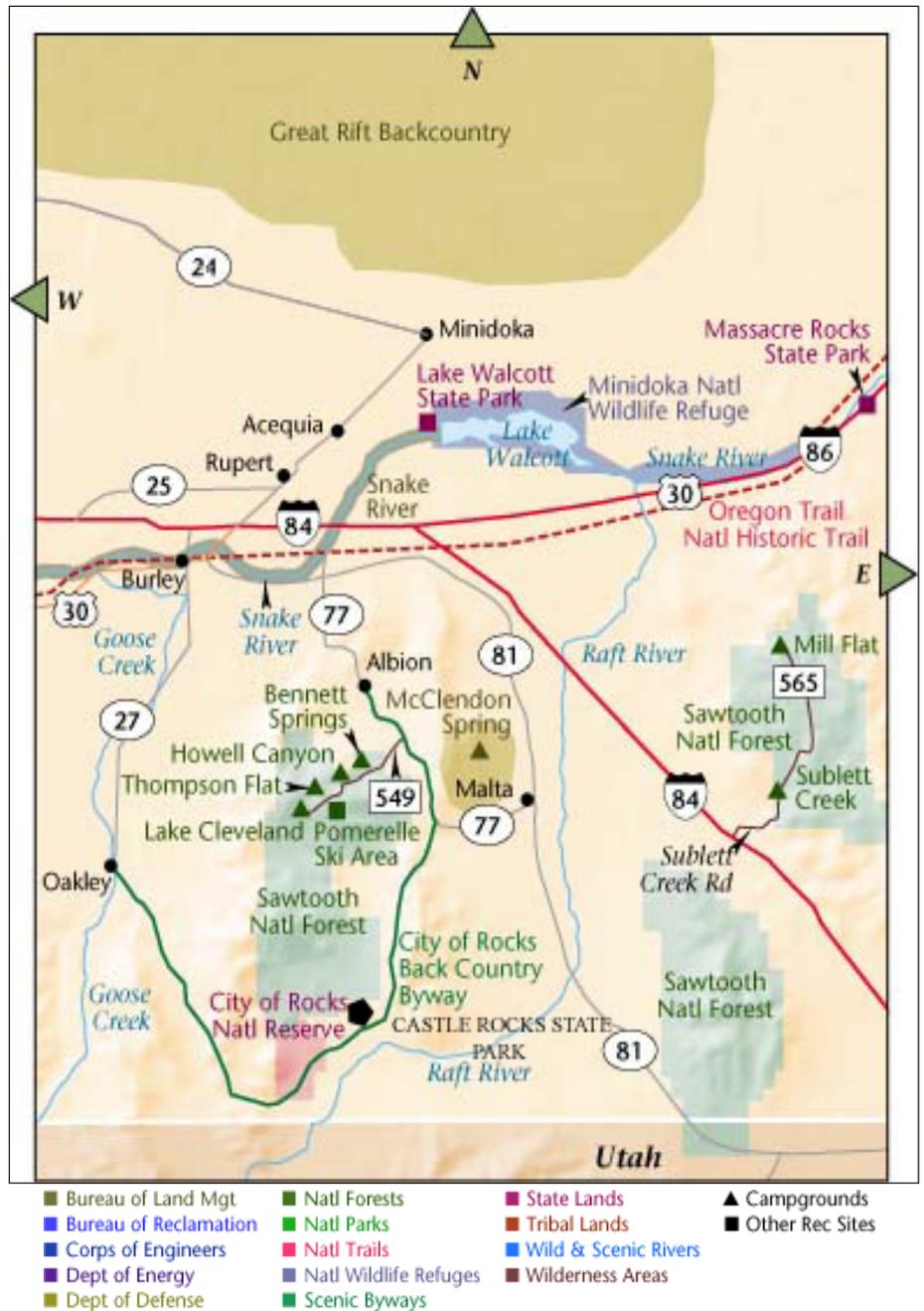
Belayers at Kid Rock in the Ranch Unit

There is a range of recreational opportunities on public lands in the area. The Sawtooth National Forest (See Appendix 4B)

Minidoka Ranger District has developed campgrounds, places for dispersed camping and trails for motorized and non-motorized users. Lake Cleveland, with camping and fishing, is a popular forest service recreation area.

Pomerelle Ski Area is on the national forest. (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/Sawtooth/>)

Although the Bureau of Land Management has fewer developed recreational areas, the BLM land is open to public use. There is a BLM primitive campground west of Malta. The McClendon Spring Campground is a staging area for



Recreational mapping of region (publiclands.org)

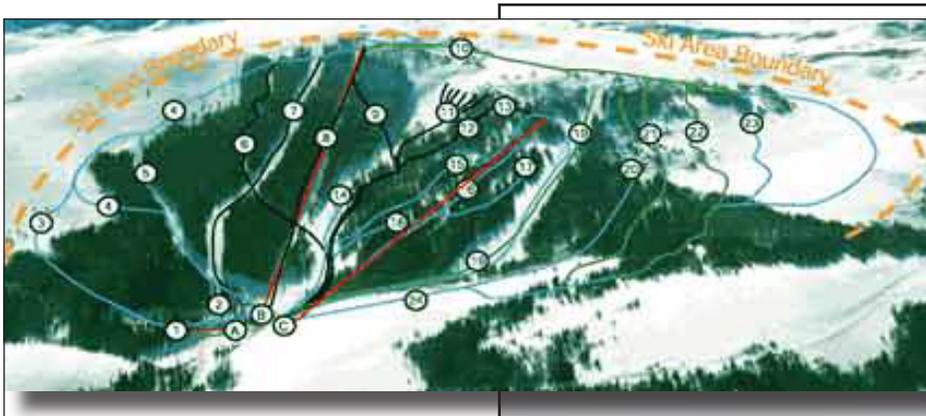
upland bird and antelope hunting. (<http://www.id.blm.gov/recreation/regions/southcentral.html>)

SCIRTDAs reports that more than 7,200 jobs, about 10% of the workforce in South Central Idaho, are in recreation related occupations. The economic impact is estimated at a half billion dollars in the Magic Valley.

AREA MARKET AND POPULATION

Major population centers are within 200 highway miles of Castle Rocks State Park. Travelers can be at the state park in less than half a day from Boise, Salt Lake City, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls and Ketchum-Sun Valley. Compared to the rest of Idaho, this region captures 5% of visitors to the state and has the lowest per visitor expenditure of Idaho's seven established travel regions (SCIRTDAs website Nov. 2005). Park staff report that many visitors come from foreign countries for the climbing experience. The local population is small and unlikely to make a large number of visits, although they may visit the park more frequently.

In 1999 – 2000, a statewide survey was conducted of motor vehicle travelers to provide practical data on resident and nonresident motor vehicle travelers in Idaho. Fifty-three percent of respondents said they use the internet to get travel information. Sixty-eight percent of respondents said they have internet access. All travelers listed web or



email information as the second of their top three choices for getting future travel information about Idaho.

OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

National legislation passed in 1965 requires that each state prepare long-range outdoor recreation plans. In Idaho, the document is known as the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP 2003).

The most recent edition, which covers the years 2003 to 2007 (IDPR 2003), identifies existing resources and systems, general outdoor recreation and tourism participation patterns and trends, issues and problems and recommends strategic solutions to these problems. The SCORTP is not a site specific detailing of facts and data. Local and regional planning, research and cooperation are strongly recommended in order to satisfy the outdoor recreation and tourism needs of Idaho.

Idaho has been divided into

Ski trails map of Pomerelle Mountain Resort (skisite.com)

POMERELLE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Not far from Lake Cleveland, situated in the Burley/Twin Falls Ranger District, Pomerelle Mountain Resort offers a challenging terrain for beginners as well as expert skiers. Open mid-November through mid-April, the facility offers both day and night skiing. Pomerelle has 22 ski runs, triple and double chair lifts, a rope tow, and a half-pipe for snowboarders. Powder skiers find much of what they like on these slopes. Cross-country skiers are welcome, as the facility offers two marked trail areas. Excellent snowmobiling, including parking and a shelter is one mile below the resort.

Pomerelle also opens in the summer, between July 4th and labor day for chair lift rides that offer panoramic views of the Magic Valley.

Description of Pomerelle as found at www.minicassiachamber.org



Cross country skiers ready to enjoy the snow at the Ranch Unit

seven travel planning regions to assist with the planning, funding, management and administration of recreation and tourism resources. Each travel region is identified with characteristics such as terrain or population that makes its resources, needs and potential unique. Castle Rocks State Park is in the South Central Region, comprised of Cassia, Minidoka, Lincoln, Gooding, Jerome and Twin Falls Counties.

The SCORTP (SCORTP 2003, pg. 97)(See Appendix 4A) presents facilities inventories by county and assesses demand by activity. The top ten adult activities are:

- Walking
- Hiking
- Watching wildlife other than birds or fish
- Swimming in a pond, lake or river
- Viewing fish
- Bird watching
- Biking
- Four-wheel driving
- Golf
- Outdoor photography

the Ranch Unit of Castle Rocks State Park was opened to the public, climbers had to access the rocks on public lands by a lengthy hike over Stines Pass. There was a group of users anxious to gain access to the rocks through the park once it was opened to the public.

In anticipation of the use by climbers, IDPR with a group of climbers, representatives of a climbing organization, and recreation planners for the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, crafted a “Climbing Management Plan” before the park opened to the public (IDPR 2003). The management plan includes recommendations and policies that guide use of fixed anchors, education of all recreational users and designation of trails to popular climbing routes. It also recommended a consistent management approach across state and federal lands.

The Idaho SCORTP predicts that climbing will grow in popularity in the Rocky Mountain Region by 6% in 2010 and 20% by 2020.

Though climbing was one of the first uses of the new park and is likely to remain one of its greatest attractions, there are other recreational opportunities that are likely to increase in popularity as the park is discovered. A third of the visitors surveyed in 2005 said they participated in wildflower identification and/or birding activities. There is a corral and existing use by equestrians who can ride for miles across the



Volunteers ready to help with pre-opening climbing route development

Visitors to the park surveyed in summer 2005 overwhelmingly indicated (97%) that rock climbing was the main reason for visiting Castle Rocks State Park. Opening of CRSP to climbing has been popular among climbing enthusiasts, many of whom (92%) also visited City of Rocks National Reserve on the same trip to climb there. The City of Rocks has been a popular, world-class climbing destination since being designated a national reserve in 1988. Before

adjacent public lands. As trails are developed, the number is likely to increase of people who list hiking, biking and walking as a main reason to visit the park. Winter use is facilitated through rental of snowshoes at the Ranch Unit.

RanchFest, a one-day festival celebrating ranching heritage has

of traditional ranch skills, and branding are featured. Music and cowboy poetry entertain the participants. RanchFest ends with a toe-tapping, western music concert.



been held in mid July in 2004 and 2005 at the Ranch Unit of Castle Rocks State park. Activities include a Dutch oven cook-off, horseshoe pitching contest, wagon rides, cow pie pitching contest and children's events such as roping and sack races. Demonstrations

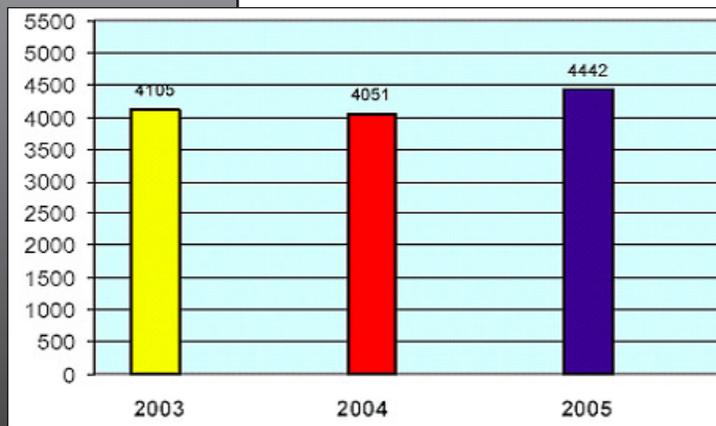
Picture above shows dutch oven demonstration during the 2004 RanchFest.

CURRENT PARK VISITOR PROFILE

MONTH	2003	2004	2005
JAN	0	25	25
FEB	0	40	50
MAR	0	125	125
APR	0	133	156
MAY	0	654	378
JUN	650	960	942
JUL	365	645	366
AUG	945	399	264
SEP	1,095	714	351
OCT	960	276	1,785
NOV	50	50	50
DEC	40	30	40
TOTAL	4,105	4,050	4,532

Castle Rocks visitation table

Visitor surveys were conducted in Castle Rocks State Park in the summer of 2005. Sixty some people responded to the survey. Of those, 26% said it was their first visit to the park. Preliminary survey results show that recreational rock climbing was the main reason for about 97% of the respondents to visit the state park. About 92% of the respondents said they visited the City of Rocks National Reserve



Bar Graph showing visitation to Castle Rocks State Park

MONTH	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
JAN	1,050	1,050	876	500	500
FEB	1,125	1,125	920	500	500
MAR	1,200	1,200	1,500	750	750
APR	1,800	1,500	3,219	5,967	5,223
MAY	9,278	11,193	8,943	12,289	8,010
JUN	11,982	12,618	12,976	13,025	12,786
JUL	10,527	12,756	13,527	11,176	10,640
AUG	11,664	8,067	8,007	12,685	11,771
SEP	9,375	12,862	12,945	13,004	9,774
OCT	7,796	6,257	11,467	7,721	8,178
NOV	2,379	3,088	3,453	2,250	3,244
DEC	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,000	750
TOTAL	69,874	73,214	79,333	80,867	72,124

City of Rocks National Reserve visitation table

during the same trip.

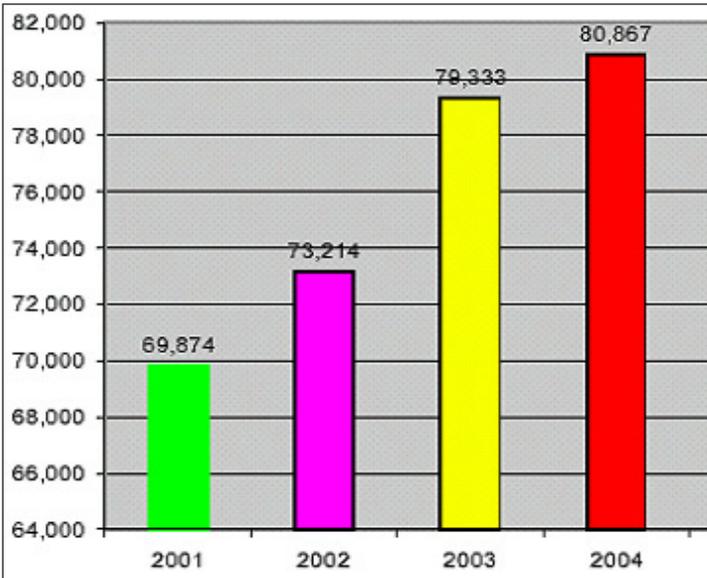
The final report on the visitor survey and demographics were not available to include in the master plan.

PROJECTED PARK VISITATION

It is impossible to predict the rate of increase in park visitation, but it is certain visitation will increase. Figure 1 shows visitation for the first three years the park has been open. The increase has been slight. The number of visitors at the City of Rocks declined from 2004 to 2005, see Figure 2, whereas the number of visitors to Castle Rocks State Park increased. Most of the visitors to Castle Rocks State Park also visited City of Rocks National Reserve

The number of visitors to the City of Rocks National Reserve may have declined in 2005 due to high gasoline prices. Until 2005, the visitation trend has been increasing. High gasoline prices have an effect on the number of people who drive for pleasure, which in turn affects the number of people traveling

the City of Rocks Back Country Byway. It is unknown how many people who travel the byway visit the state park. Opening the campground at the Smoky Mountain Unit is likely to result in more visitors to both the City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park.



Bar graph showing visitation to City of Rocks National Reserve

