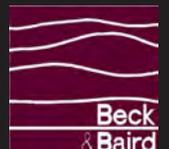




# CastleRocks State Park

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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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#### COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SECTION

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation  
5657 Warm Springs Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83716-8700 (208) 334-4199

#### BECK AND BAIRD

Landscape Architecture, Planning and Urban Design  
Post Office Box 7423  
Boise, Idaho 83707 (208) 342-4811

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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.

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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.

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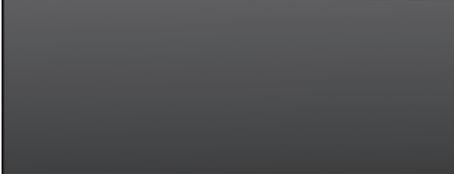
A special thanks to the Cassia County Commissioners, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Bureau of Land Management, and the USDA Forest Service for reviewing the master plan.

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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

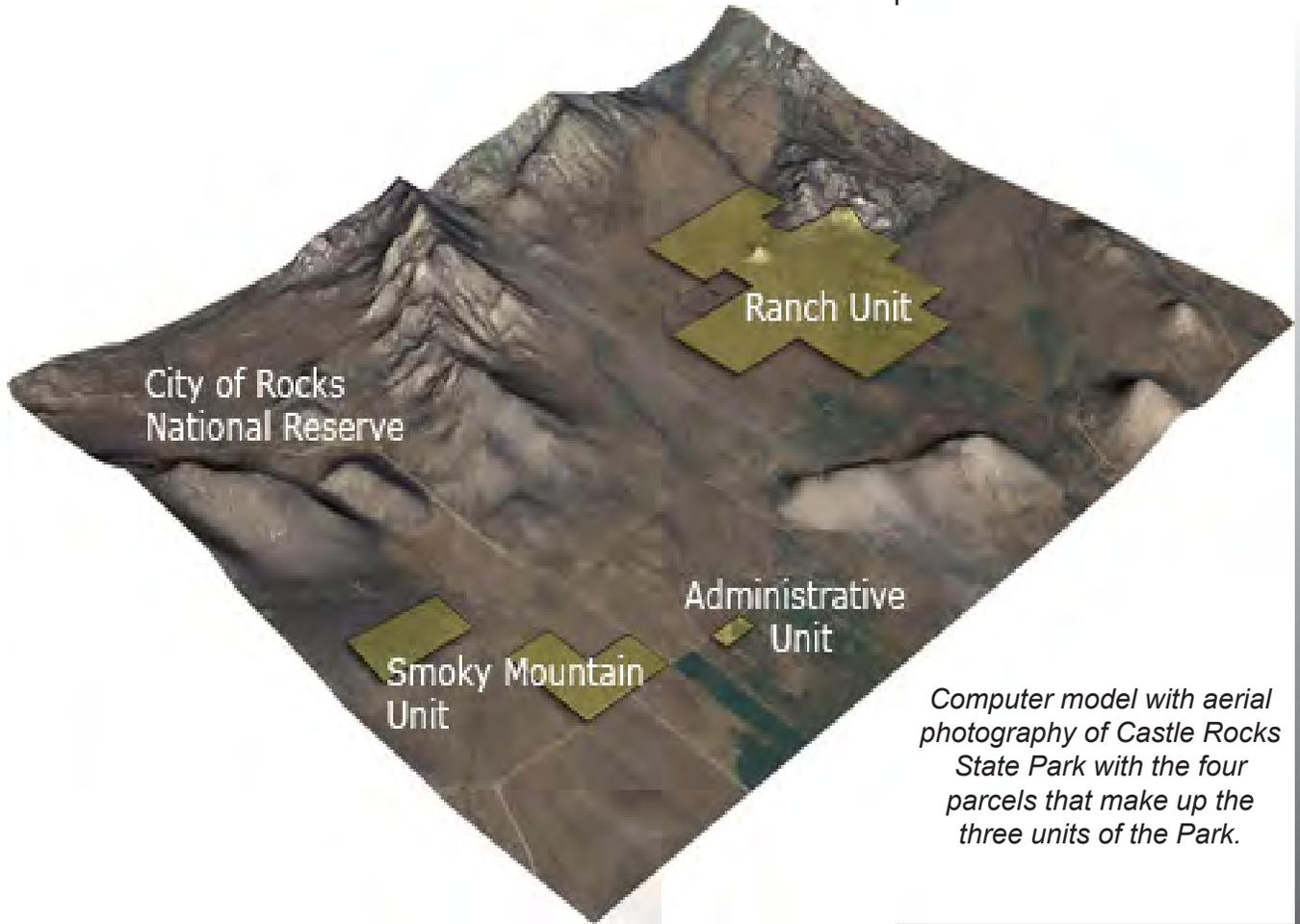
**CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK**



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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

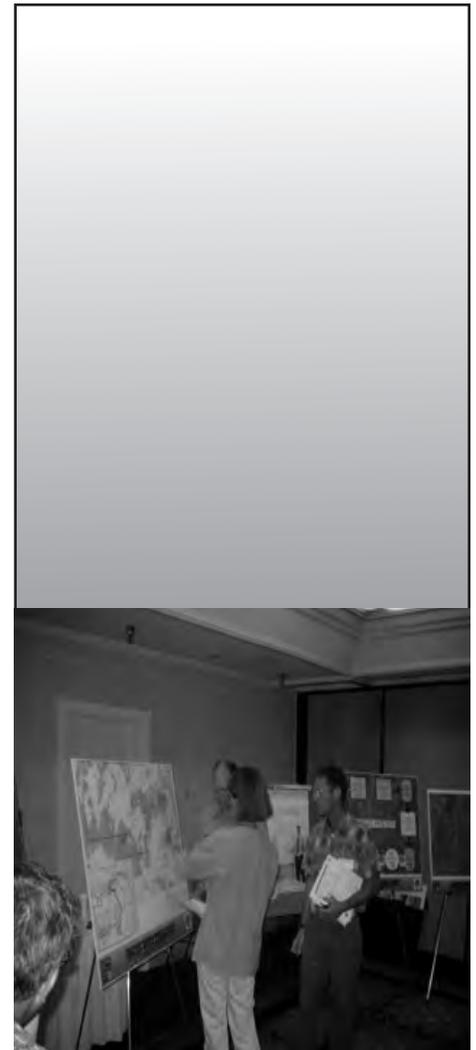
This meeting was held to introduce the master plan process to the public. The IDPR master plan project manager, park staff, and planning consultant discussed the planning process and timeline. Applications for the Stakeholder

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

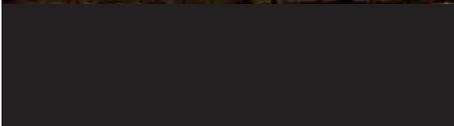
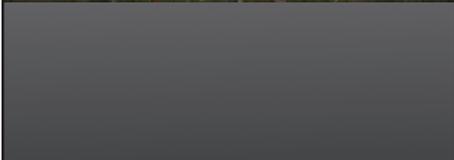
***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

- 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





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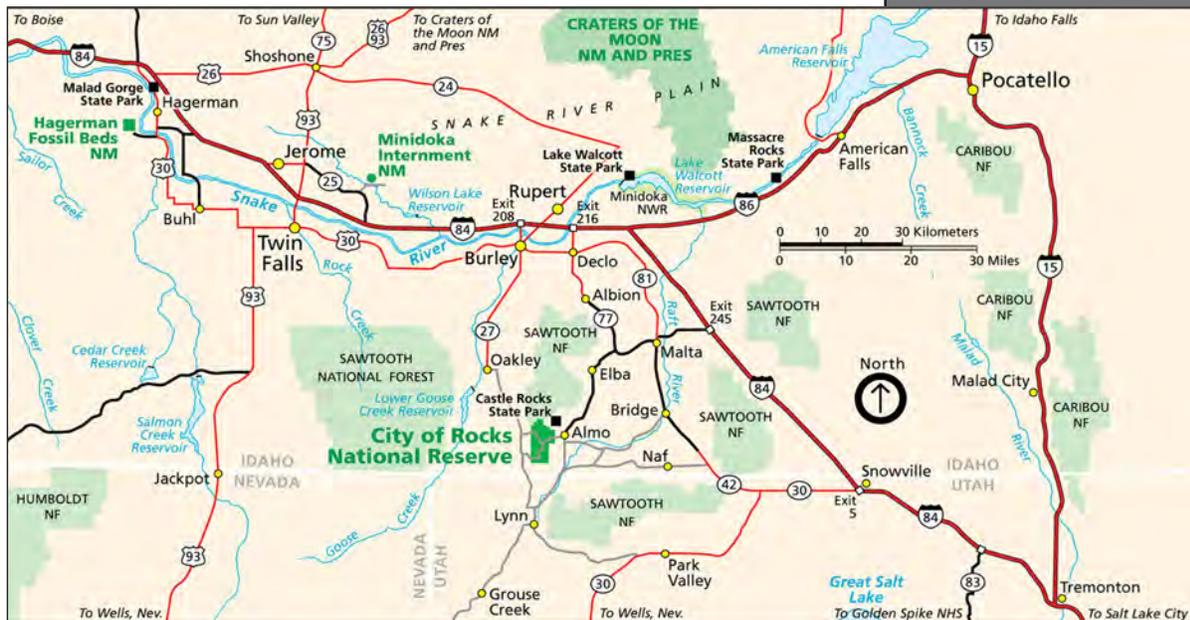
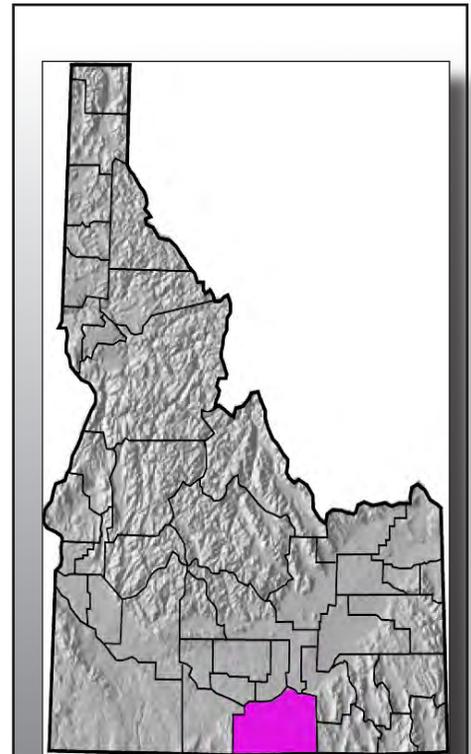
## CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK AND ITS LOCAL CONTEXT

Most of Castle Rocks State Park was once a 1,240 acre cattle ranch in Cassia County in south central Idaho. The park is in the southern part of the county near the border with Utah and Nevada. The picturesque park's most prominent features are the rock spires and granite monoliths, part of the same geologic formation for which the nearby City of Rocks National Reserve is named and one of the reasons it was brought into the national park system.

The landscape of south central Idaho is diverse. Cache Peak, 10,339 feet elevation, is just north of the park. Castle Rocks State

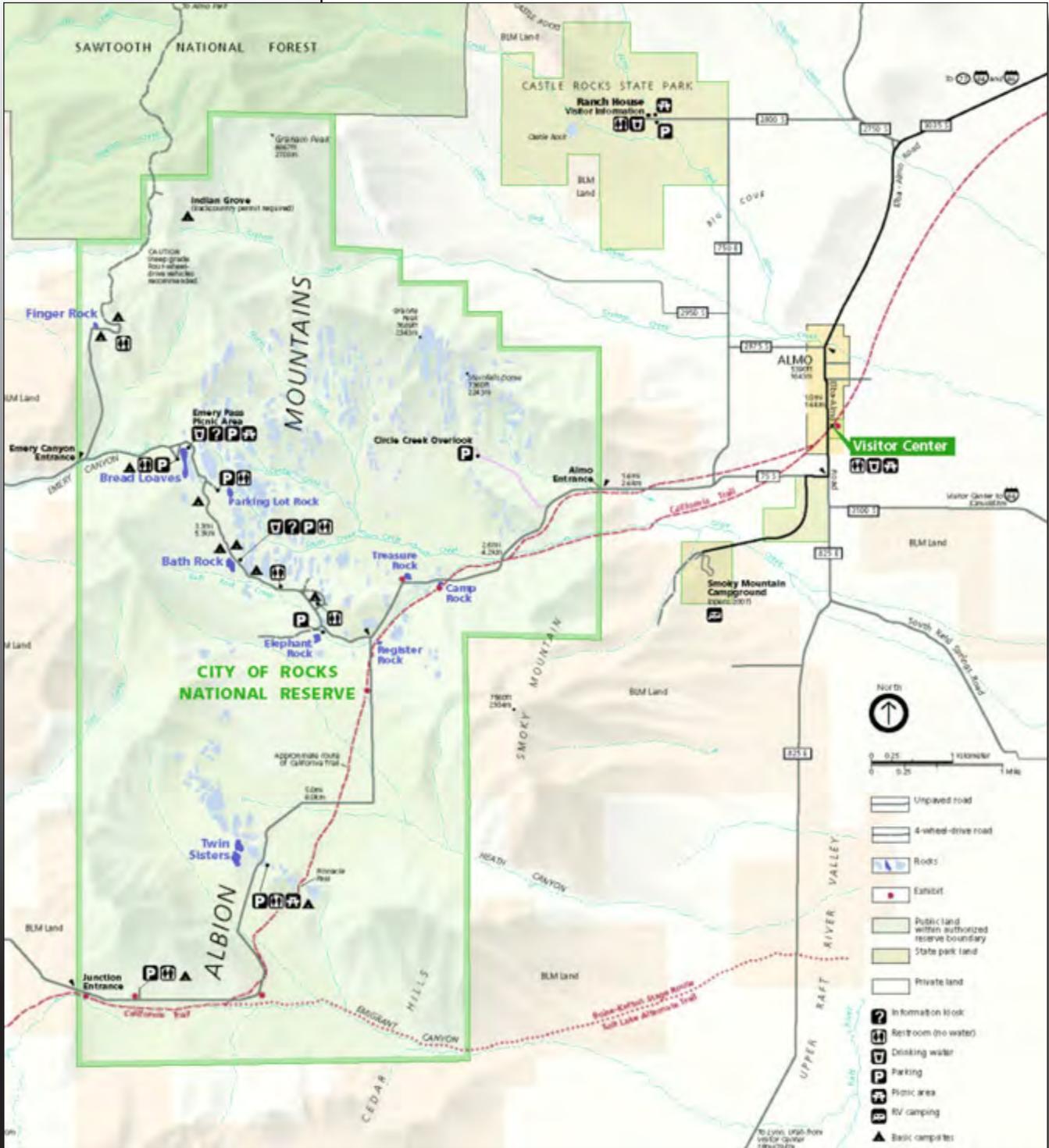
and textural visual contrast not found elsewhere in southern Idaho. The rocks, jutting hundreds of feet above the rolling sagebrush hills, introduce forms and colors that make this area unique.

Cassia County is sparsely populated in its southern reaches. In 2002, it ranked thirteenth among Idaho counties with a population of 21,720. Castle Rocks State Park is approximately equidistant between Albion, a town of nearly 300 people, and Oakley, with close to 700 people. The entire town of Oakley is on the National Register of Historic Places, as an outstanding example of Mormon colonization and late nineteenth-century architecture. Albion also has numerous properties on the National Register of Historic Places



Park is in rolling, sagebrush hills with elevations ranging between 5,360 and 7,400 feet. The northernmost pinyon-juniper stands in the Great Basin add elements of color

including the Albion Methodist Church, the Albion Normal School Campus, and Swanger Hall. The three park units are all within 2 miles of the unincorporated village of Almo.



Castle Rocks State Park Vicinity Map: This shows the relationship between the existing City of Rocks National Reserve and the state park. This map also shows the recreational opportunities and park facilities.

More than half the land in the 2,500 square mile county is in public ownership. The State of Idaho, mostly the Idaho Department of Lands, owns about 3% of the county's land. IDPR owns 1,892 acres. The Sawtooth National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service are the major federal landowners of about 56% of the county. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns land contiguous with the Ranch Unit of Castle Rocks State Park as well as owning the land that makes up the Smoky Mountain Unit. IDPR has leased this land through a Recreation and Public Purpose Act. The City of Rocks National Reserve, 14,407 acres of federal, state and private lands, is as close as one mile to the park.

### ***COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS***

There were 21,720 people living in Cassia County in 2002. It ranks 13th among Idaho's 44 counties in population and 9th in area. The growth rate of the county has fluctuated, with a 0.5% increase between 1980 and 1990 and a 9.6% increase between 1990 and 2000. The county is more rural than urban, 56% to 44%. The latest demographic figures are for 2002 (County Profiles of Idaho, www.idahoworks.com).

Agriculture and food processing are major components of the local economy, but so are trade, services and government. In 2000, the top four "employment by industry" categories were services, retail

trade, farm and manufacturing. The unemployment rate in 2002 was 6.4%, in 2001 it was 5.5%, and in 2000 it was 6.2%. Unemployment varies by season. The example is for 2002, when the lowest unemployment rates were in September (5.2%) and October (5.0%), which are farm harvest months. The highest rates were in the winter months of December (8.4%) and January (8.0%).

Per capita income in 2001 was \$22,121, which is 73% of the national average. The median age of county residents in 2000 was 31.1, up from 25.3 in 1980. A majority of county residents (53%) are in the 18 to 64 year age bracket.

There are five incorporated cities in the county: Albion, Burley, Declo, Malta, and Oakley. Almo and Elba are both unincorporated villages. Burley is the largest city and the county seat. In 2000, the population was 9,074. Albion, Malta, and Oakley, the incorporated cities closest to Castle Rocks State Park, had 2000 populations of 262 and 668. Albion's population decreased from 305 in 1990. Oakley's population increased from 635 in 1990. Both communities have an older population than the county in general. In Albion the median age in 2000 was 43.2. In Oakley it was 36.1.

A trend across Idaho is the increase in property values. In Cassia County, the median housing value in 1990 was \$46,100. In 2000, the median value had climbed to \$83,100.

*Established February 20, 1879 with its county seat at Albion. The county boundaries were later reduced in 1913 by the creation of Twin Falls and Power counties. The county seat was changed to Burley on November 5, 1918. Named for Cassia Creek, which was named for one of two words: cajeaux, peasant French for raft; or James John Cazier, member of the LDS Church and of the Mormon Battalion, later a colorful captain of an emigrant train, whose name was corrupted to cassia. Locally it is also believed that the name is derived from the name of a plant.*

*History of Cassia County  
- Idaho State University  
Digital Atlas*



*Example of archeological artifacts present in the Castle Rocks State Park*

### ***PREHISTORY AND HISTORY OF THE REGION***

The prehistoric record for the planning area is divided into three chronological periods. The Early Prehistoric Period, also known as the Paleo-Indian, dates from at least 12,000 Before Present (BP) to circa 7500 BP. This period is defined by fluted and stemmed projectile point types (Clovis and Scotts Bluff) that are often found in association with now-extinct megafauna and other large game. These hunter-gatherers, along with those of the following period, were highly mobile, with seasonal rounds that followed the migrations of large game herds.

The settlement patterns of the Middle Prehistoric Period (7500 BP to 1500 BP) followed the more localized movements of game and the seasonal availability of plant resources. This period also is defined on the basis of distinct projectile point types (Bitterroot, McKean, and Pelican Lake), and by a subsistence strategy that placed a greater emphasis on the procurement of small game and plant resources (Plew 2000).

The Late Prehistoric Period (1500 to 700 BP) is characterized by the development and use of the bow and arrow, and small corner-notched projectile points. Groups became more sedentary in this period, as evidenced by village occupations typically located in riverine contexts. Because of its abundant plant and animal resources, including pinyon

pine nuts, vegetables and game resources, the upper Raft River area served as a seasonal village center for the Shoshone into the historic period (HRA 1996). The appearance of utilitarian pottery late in the period also is a distinguishing feature. Two different types of pottery have been found in the general vicinity of the planning area - Shoshone and Fremont. The Shoshone pottery is local, whereas the Fremont pottery may be tradeware from points farther south. It is also possible the Fremont pottery-producing people lived in the upper Raft River valley in close proximity to Shoshone.

The introduction of the horse in the 1700s brought further changes that included the exploitation of bison by loose inter-tribal coalitions in Wyoming and Utah (Liljeblad 1960). During the nineteenth century, the Native American groups closest to the planning area were the Shoshone and Bannock, many of whom now live on the Fort Hall Reservation (Liljeblad 1960).

The first Europeans to enter the upper Raft River valley were fur traders. Between 1820 and 1830 the Hudson's Bay Company trapped beaver on the Raft River. By 1820, Mackenzie from the North West Company had established a system of mobile trapping and summer rendezvous sites that included the upper Raft River region. Later incursions into this region were made by the Hudson's Bay Company's Finan McDonald and Michel Bourdon



*Example of hunting blind used by past inhabitants in region*

in 1823, and Alexander Ross in 1824. Ross camped near the City of Rocks (HRA 1996). The Hudson Bay incursions were part of the Snake River Brigades, large fur trapping expeditions aimed at eliminating American competition on the Snake River plain.

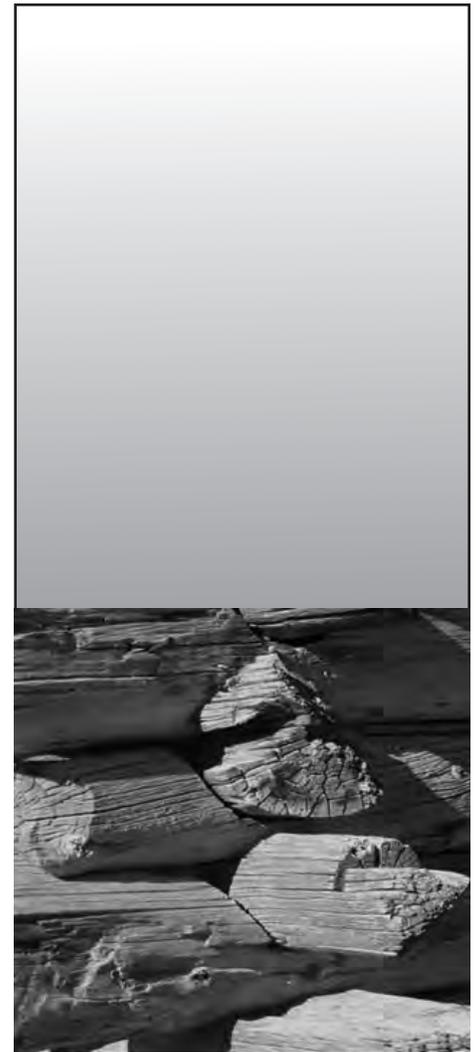
Peter Skene Odgen came to the area in 1824 and took over Ross' operation. At this time American trappers were competing with the British which led to further exploration of the Raft River and its tributaries. Odgen's party discovered Granite Pass in 1826 and Odgen's successor, John Work, explored the Goose Creek area between Junction Valley and Granite Pass. Work concluded that the area immediately west of the Raft River lacked enough beaver resources to warrant further attention (HRA 1996).

The upper Raft River valley is known for the number of overland emigrant trails that pass through the area. In 1842 Joseph B. Chiles traveled from California east and found that Granite Pass at the City of Rocks offered a practical route for California-bound traffic. A party traveled this route the next year under the direction of Walker, a friend of Chiles,' and thereafter regular California-bound emigrants and gold-seekers passed through Granite Pass. By 1846 Oregon-bound emigrants were also using the Granite Pass route as the area provided sheltered campsites with a good water supply and plant resources for the animals.

Native populations, including Pocatello's people, attacked emigrants on the Oregon and California trails. The wagon traffic had affected the Native people's way of life through overgrazing, depletion of game resources, and loss of other food sources in the area. In 1863 Pocatello agreed to negotiate a treaty that provided compensation to the Native population in exchange for unobstructed access to the emigrant routes. Soon after, Pocatello moved his band to the Fort Hall reservation. After that time some Shoshone families continued to travel to the upper Raft River area to collect pinyon nuts (National Park Service 1994).

After the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, a road was developed from Kelton, Utah, to Boise, Idaho to provide a connection for postal service, express, and freight operations between the railroad and the mining communities of southern Idaho. This brought continued traffic through the upper Raft River valley through a stage stop at the City of Rocks until 1882 when the construction of the Oregon Short Line supplanted all stage and freight services through the area.

Cattle ranching began in the area in 1875 partially in response to the growing market for meat needed by nearby mining communities. Quality ranchland was limited in the area surrounding the City of Rocks, which led to population expansion into adjacent areas. Between the late 1870s and the



*Detail of construction of log cabins used by early settlers*

early 1890s Mormon settlers began to move into adjacent valleys. These agricultural communities depended on water originating from the Albion Mountains.

Crop planting increased in the area between the mid 1890s and the 1920s with the development of new dry farming methods. Grain and hay crops were planted in fields where sagebrush was cleared. In the 1920s a farming recession resulted in a greater emphasis on stock ranching and grazing operations than cultivation. Most of the Ranch Unit was privately owned and operated as a ranch until it was acquired as a state park.

### ***CULTURAL HISTORY***

Human presence in this unique landscape has been documented to thousands of years in the past. An archaeological survey of the park in 2001 identified 41 sites, most prehistoric, and more than 80% of them judged to be in excellent to good condition. An object was carbon dated at more than 2,400 years old. The archaeologist attributed the good condition of the sites to the limited access to the property during its private ownership. Most of the archaeological finds indicated hunting and food processing were the major prehistoric human uses in the area.

A programmatic agreement between IDPR and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the Idaho State Historical Society, establishes guidelines and responsibilities of

IDPR in planning and development of park properties in relation to archaeological and historic resources (see Appendix 2A).

A comprehensive historic resources study completed in 1996 for the City of Rocks contains information that describes the historical resources of the nearby state park as well. “Distinct historic themes pertinent to the City of Rocks National Reserve include American Indian habitation, the fur trade, westward migration, the development of national and regional transportation networks, agricultural development, and recreation and tourism,” (HRA 1996).

The great waves of people moving east to west along the Oregon and California Trails, created marks on the landscape still visible today. An 1849 traveler, artist James F. Wiaklins on the California Trail reportedly named the City of Rocks. Emigrant diaries document consistent references to castles, spires, pyramids and silent sentinels. Many travelers used axle grease to write their names or messages on the rocks, some of which are still visible. The trail was constricted through the City of Rocks. There was no emigrant trail through the Ranch Unit, but the California Trail travels through both the Administrative and Smoky Mountain Units.

### ***HUMAN RELATIONSHIP WITH PARK AREA***

The prehistoric evidence found to date, indicates that early people

used the area for hunting and food processing and did not make large, semi-permanent encampments in the area of Castle Rocks. Fur traders came through the area as early as 1826, but did not stay. The travelers on the California and Oregon Trails mostly passed by, intent on getting to their intended destinations before winter.

Hardy Mormon pioneers, extending their range from the Salt Lake area into southern Idaho and northern Utah, began ranching and farming in the area in about the 1870s. By 1882, 35 Mormon families had settled along Almo Creek.

Farming and ranching required roads, diverting water from streams, building houses, out buildings, and fences; planting trees for shade and food; leveling fields, and other activities that changed the landscape. The ranch that became the state park was homesteaded in 1888. The ranch house was built circa 1912. The historic brick structure that serves as the administrative unit for both the state park and national reserve, was originally a ranch house, also built circa 1912.

The oldest, continuously operated mercantile in the state is the Tracy General Store in the unincorporated village of Almo. It was built in 1894. The store is a quarter mile north of the Administrative Unit. Other towns within 40 miles of the park are the Mormon pioneer settlements of Albion, Elba, Malta and Oakley, all settled in the 1870s. Oakley became known as the

religious center for the Mormon pioneers in the area. The Normal School in Albion was a residential campus for teacher training early in the 20th Century. The historic brick buildings are now unused.

### ***HISTORIES OF CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK AND CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE***

The sibling relationship between the City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park is one of the most important administrative features of the state park. The state park and the national reserve are managed by the same staff. The two units, both of national significance and state significance are related geographically and culturally. Part of Castle Rocks State Park is included in the National Historic Landmark (NHL) (See Appendix 2B) designation that covers the City of Rocks National Reserve. For that reason a history of both parks is appropriate to fully understand the development of Castle Rocks State Park at the present.

In 1941, the Historic Sites Survey conducted by the National Park Service identified the City of Rocks area as a historically significant site along the California Trail. In 1963, this area, incorporating what was to become the City of Rocks National Reserve (See Appendix 2B) was listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), under criterion A for its association with events that



*Spring runoff from Cache Peak and surrounding Albion Mountains*

made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history.

The City of Rocks National Historic Landmark (NHL) was designated on October 24, 1963. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966. It is listed in History and Prehistory in the National Historic Landmarks Program under theme X, "Western Expansion of the British Colonies and the United States, 1763-1898," subtheme D, "Western Trails and Travelers," facet 4 "California Trails and Settlement of California." The area also received a National Natural Landmark designation in 1974. The NHL boundary was revised on August 6, 1987 to encompass some 12,480 acres.

The NHL includes the valley and basins formed by spectacular granite monoliths through which the California Trail and the Salt Lake Alternate Route passed. The landmark boundary includes much of the City of Rocks National Reserve and extends north to include Castle Rock, the end of the stone monolith formations that can be viewed from the California Trail corridor. Overall, the landmark boundary includes about nine miles of the California Trail and Salt Lake Alternate Route corridors comprising some of the best-preserved remnants of overland emigrant routes in the nation.

The next wave of travelers, were from the 1960's to the 1980's

was attracted by the recreational climbing opportunities. This new demand created a need for increased management of the resources in the area. The idea of the reserve designation came about due to the urging of the Oregon-California Trails Association so as to "protect its significant historical and cultural resources...". Legislation was developed and introduced to allow for the creation of a new national reserve. The reserve designation would allow for cooperative management of the area with other agencies. The reserve officially was created on Nov. 18, 1988. City of Rocks is one of only four reserves and only itself and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve are in the National Park system. The reserve offers world-class climbing. Climbers literally come from around the world to scale the spires, rock faces and boulders.

The rocks in the state park were not accessible to the public until the state acquired the property and opened it to climbers and other recreational users on May 23, 2003. The northeast end of the NHL boundary overlays the City of Rocks National Reserve and part of the Ranch Unit. (See the Existing Site Conditions Map.) Lands that are part of the state park and within the NHL boundary are subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In 1996, a private landowner expressed willingness to sell Castle Rocks Ranch. Mr. Robert Harmish was the current landowner of the

Castle Rocks Ranch, approximately 1,240 acres located about 1.5 miles northeast of the City of Rocks National Reserve. As mentioned before, some of the land was already in the City of Rocks NHL boundary. Although concerned about the possible development of this pristine and historic property, the NPS could not easily move to acquire this property because it is restricted from purchasing land outside the reserve boundary established by Congress.

The NPS entered into conversations with IDPR, already working with the NPS to manage the national reserve, to explore the state's capacity to purchase the property. The complicated transaction resulted in NPS purchasing Castle Rocks Ranch and trading it to IDPR for property at Hagerman Fossil Beds, which was transferred from IDPR ownership to the NPS. This land exchange was accomplished with the assistance of the Conservation Fund and the Access Fund. The Conservation Fund purchased the Castle Rocks Ranch and held it until legislation and an appropriation from Congress was authorized to acquire the property.

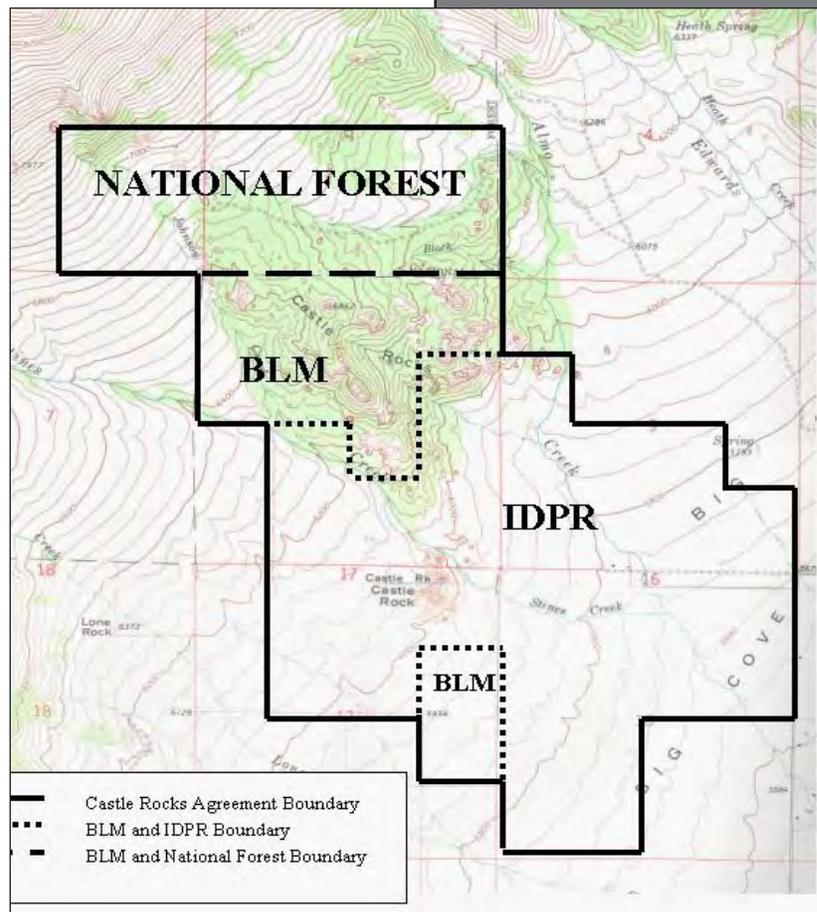
Officially, the Castle Rocks Ranch Acquisition Act of 2000 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to purchase the 1,240 acre ranch. The purchase was completed on March 15, 2001. The NPS was not authorized to manage the land for recreation or add it to the adjacent national reserve, but instead exchange the property with IDPR.

An environmental assessment by NPS was performed to facilitate this proposed land exchange and was completed in December of 2002. Since May 2003, IDPR has provided park facilities and managed recreation at Castle Rocks State Park. The NPS and IDPR officially signed the exchange agreement on August 21, 2003 (See Appendix 2D).

Also on this date, IDPR, the USDA Forest Service and the BLM signed a Memorandum of Understanding, "to coordinate and combine efforts to manage, protect and interpret public resources and uses in the multi-jurisdictional and geographical area known as Castle Rocks." The Interagency Recreation Area boundary is shown



*Illustration showing Ranch Unit and related Interagency Recreation Area boundaries*





*View of rock massive at Ranch Unit*

on the Existing Site Conditions Map. The MOU commits the agencies to share some duties across boundaries, strive for consistent policies, practices and rules for public activity, and jointly develop and implement plans. (See Appendix 2C.)

IDPR entered into a lease with the BLM for approximately 240 acres at nearby Smoky Mountain, which is located between the Ranch Unit and the entrance to the City of Rocks National Reserve. This site is ideally situated to provide camping for Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve.

IDPR purchased the acreage which is now the Administrative Unit before acquiring the Ranch

Unit and leasing the Smoky Mountain Unit. It is south and east of the ranch property. This centrally located site serves as the administrative headquarters, visitor center and maintenance area for both the park and the reserve.

Currently, Castle Rocks State Park administratively (IDAPA Code 67-4210 & 67-4212) consists of three named units: the Ranch Unit (1,240 acres) supplemented by 880 acres in the contiguous Interagency Recreation Area; Smoky Mountain Unit (240 acres under Recreation and Public Purposes Lease with the BLM), and the Administrative Unit (12 acres).



The dedication ceremony for Castle Rocks State Park, in August of 2003, was attended by Governor Kempthorne, Senator Craig, State Senator Darrington, State Representative Bedke, County Commissioner Christiansen, as well as leadership and staff from IDPR and NPS. Representation from the Access Fund was also present as they assisted in facilitating the original purchase for the National Park Service.

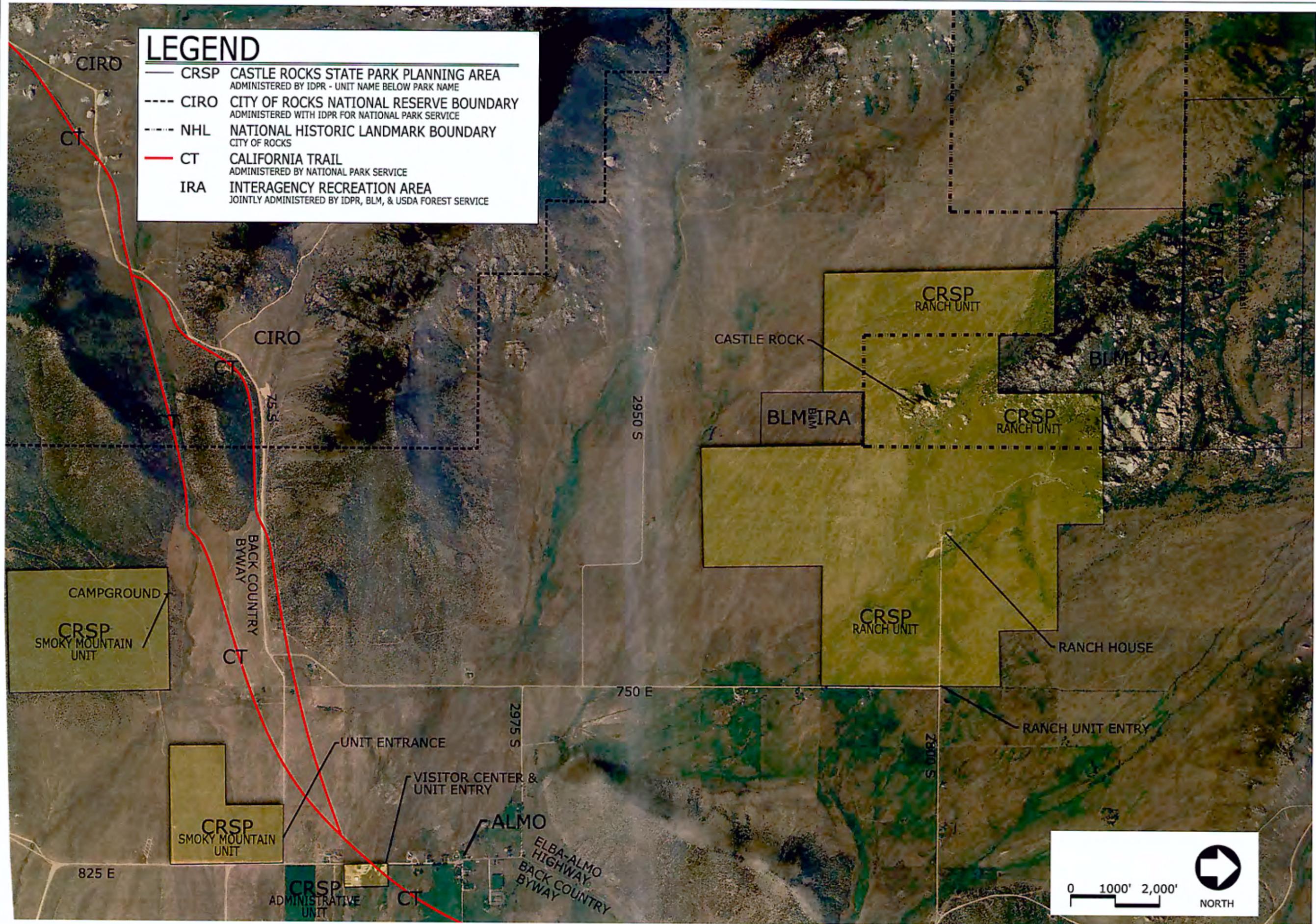
### *Chronological History of the Park*

- 2000, November 1 – Public Law 106-421 Castle Rocks Ranch Acquisition Act (See Appendix 2E)
- 2001, April 30 – May 5 Archeological field survey
- 2001, May 22 – 24 Castle Rocks Planning Charette
- 2001, August 27 – 31 - Archeological field survey
- 2001, September 24 - Archeological field survey report
- 2002, March 29 - PA between IDPR, NPS, and SHPO
- 2002, December 20 - Castle Rocks Ranch Land Exchange Environmental Assessment
- 2003, January 28 - MOA between SHPO, NPS, and IDPR
- 2003, April 18 - Castle Rocks State Park Climbing Management Plan
- 2003, May 5 - Finding of No Significant Impact for land exchange Environmental Assessment 2003, May 10 – Climbing routes opened by lottery in Castle Rocks State Park
- 2003, May 23 – Castle Rocks State Park opens to the public
- 2003, August 21 - Dedication of Castle Rocks State Park and signing of Exchange Agreement
- 2003, August 26 - Memorandum of Understanding between IDPR, BLM and USFS creates an Interagency Recreational Area
- 2004, July 17 - Ranchfest with concert by Muzzie Braun
- 2004, October 6 - Quitclaim deed signed and official IDPR ownership
- 2005, July 16 – Ranchfest with concert by Clark Ward and the Ridge Runners
- 2005, July 24 – 29 – Archeology field survey
- 2005, March 17 - Master planning for the park begins with an open house



# LEGEND

- CRSP CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK PLANNING AREA  
ADMINISTERED BY IDPR - UNIT NAME BELOW PARK NAME
- CIRO CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE BOUNDARY  
ADMINISTERED WITH IDPR FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- NHL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY  
CITY OF ROCKS
- CT CALIFORNIA TRAIL  
ADMINISTERED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- IRA INTERAGENCY RECREATION AREA  
JOINTLY ADMINISTERED BY IDPR, BLM, & USDA FOREST SERVICE



# CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS



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## CLIMATE

Castle Rocks State Park is located in a semiarid climate zone with low humidity, low to moderate precipitation, and extremes in both daily and seasonal temperatures. Rain and snow are from Pacific air masses pushed eastward by the prevailing westerly winds. The rain shadow extending from the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range allows only the strongest storms to bring precipitation into the region. Average annual precipitation ranges from 14 to 22 inches depending on elevation. The higher elevations receive the most moisture. Most precipitation occurs from March thru June. Snowfall can range from 35 to 68 inches a year. The summers are hot and dry with frequent thunderstorms.

Climate data was gathered from the Oakley weather station, which is closest geographically to the park. It is located northwest of the park and sits at a slightly lower elevation. The mean annual temperature is 48 degrees Fahrenheit (f). The extreme high was 105f and the extreme low was -27f. Average winter temperature is 31f with the average winter daily minimum at 21f. Average daily summer temperature is 67f with the average daily summer maximum at 83f.

## GEOLOGY

### *SETTING*

The terrain at the ranch unit showcases exemplary landforms

of granitic spires and domes protruding from the slopes of an enclosed upland mountain basin – Big Cove - in the Albion Range of southern Idaho. Unearthed by weathering and erosion of the Almo pluton, these granite towers vary in size and shape and rise upwards of 200 meters above the valley floor. The cove is “hollowed out” of the north half of the City of Rocks anticline, an elongate structural dome of Archean granite gneiss (part of the Green Creek complex) and overlying Proterozoic metasedimentary rocks into which the Almo pluton intruded. Circle Creek Basin and Twin Sisters Basin are similar topographic basins in the south half of the anticline. They are separated from Big Cove by a high ridge of Precambrian rock. The domical structure of these basins can be observed by tracing the curvature of a prominent layer of quartzite, the Elba quartzite, which caps most of the surrounding ridges. Like an overturned elongate bowl, the quartzite dips outward from the center of the arch.

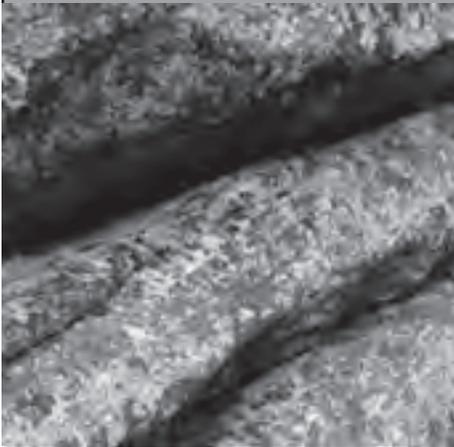
Three other gneiss-cored structural domes mantled by Proterozoic metasediments occur in the Albion Range. All are aligned in a chain-like fashion roughly NNE with the anticline. To the north Big Bertha dome and Independence dome form topographically high promontories that undergird Mount Harrison and Mt. Independence/Cache Peak. The smallest dome, Moulton dome, lies just south of the City of Rocks anticline. Of these four structural domes, City



*Blue skies with light clouds over Castle Rocks State Park*



*Example of a “Tafoni” geological formation which results from erosive activity*



*Striations created from “Pancake” weathering*



*Shea Lewis and Brad Shilling at example of pothole formation*

of Rocks is the largest. Granite of the Almo pluton is exposed only in the southern two domes where differential weathering between the granite and metamorphic rocks has formed upland basins that markedly contrast with the high relief of the two northern domes.

### ***SURFICIAL GEOLOGY***

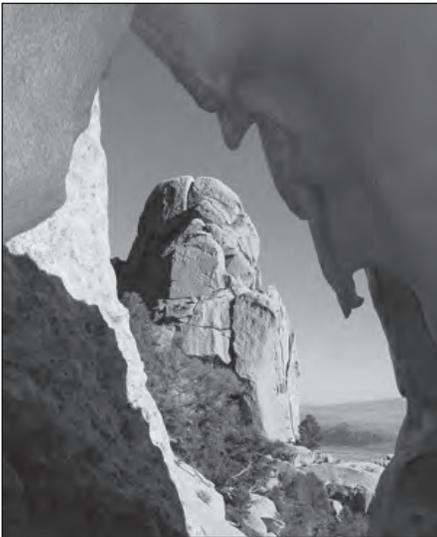
In Big Cove the Castle Rocks are surrounded by at least two stages of alluvial fans – active and abandoned - except on their northwest side where the granite is in contact with the Precambrian metamorphic basement. Abandoned fans represent at least one older depositional surface. Active fans are incised into the older fans on higher, steeper slopes before fanning out in the lower elevations of the cove. Cobbles and boulders weathered from the Elba quartzite are exposed on the surfaces of the fans. Fans play an important role in transmitting and storing water, which contributes to subsurface weathering of the granite into a gussic regolith or saprolite. The upper slopes of the fans contain relict solifluction lobes and remnants of large-scale landslides formed during the most recent alpine glaciation of the Albion Range. The alluvial fan surface down-slope of Castle Rocks has aggraded 45 cm in the last 2450 years based on a radiocarbon date obtained from an archeological site. Intermediate and small-scale landforms provide evidence of a complex erosional history that includes multiple episodes of the classic two-stage process commonly invoked for

the formation of tor and bornhardt landscapes. Perched quartzite cobbles and multiple levels of flared slopes on some spires result from exhumation and reburial produced by long-term variations in local climate. Many spires near the perimeter of the cluster have flared slopes at ground level indicating relatively recent exhumation. Although subsurface weathering along joints controls the overall distribution and shape of spires, the formation and growth of panholes and tafoni (concave cavities) may be the most important factor in shaping the spires once they are exhumed. Panholes are absent on freshly exposed rock and enlarge with time on sub-horizontal surfaces. The enlargement and coalescence of adjacent panholes is an important process in removing rock from the spires and may attribute to the formation of pickelhaubes – short spikes of remnant rock on the tops of spires. Their height may be indicative of the depth of former panholes. The rate of rock removal is related to the residence time of water within the panholes and is thus tied to climatic variation. Tafoni are well developed throughout Castle Rocks. They initiate on joint surfaces of all orientations and enlarge through the creation of a sheltered microclimate, typically along an under-hanging surface, that promotes the accumulation of salts.

### ***GEOLOGIC HISTORY***

The Albion Mountains stretch for 50 km between the Idaho/Utah border on the south and the Snake

River Plain on the north. Many of the mountain ranges in the Basin and Range of Utah, Nevada and southeastern Idaho consist of unmetamorphosed, fossiliferous Paleozoic sedimentary strata. But, the Albion Mountains is part of the Albion-Raft River–Grouse Creek metamorphic core complex, which exposes some of the most highly extended and deeply-derived rocks of the Basin and Range geologic province (Miller, 1980). Granite, granitic gneiss, schist and amphibolite belonging to the 2.5 Billion year old Green Creek Complex are the



oldest rocks in the range. These basement rocks are uncomfortably overlain by Proterozoic and Paleozoic sediments that were metamorphosed during crustal thickening in the hinterland of the Sevier orogenic belt (Armstrong, 1968). The highland created by the Sevier orogeny began to collapse and extend during the early Cenozoic. The formerly deep-seated Precambrian rocks were arched into broad domes

and structurally unroofed along large-scale low-angle normal faults (Miller and Bedford, 1999). During the Oligocene, the core complex was intruded by several bodies of granite that include the 28 million year old Almo Pluton of the Albion Mountains. Following emplacement of granitic plutons at depths of approximately 10 km, the region experienced rapid uplift. By 10 million years ago, a combination of low-angle normal faulting and erosion had exhumed the Almo Pluton, allowing ash flow tuffs from calderas associated with the nearby Yellowstone hot spot to be emplaced on the exposed granite (Miller and Bedford, 1999). During the late Miocene, most of these rhyolitic rocks were translated to the east on low-angle normal faults as the core complex continued to rise (Miller, et al. in prep). Quaternary uplift of the range has occurred along high-angle range-bounding normal faults. The present shape of the mountains results primarily from the headward erosion of streams that are tributaries of the Raft and Snake rivers on the north and east and Birch and Goose creeks on the west. Headward erosion by Raft River tributaries eventually breached resistant Proterozoic quartzites in the structural domes of the southern Albion Mountains. The Tertiary granite cores of the domes where much more easily weathered, particularly in regions of high joint density and hydrothermal alteration. Streams differentially eroded the weathered granite, leaving behind a spectacular landscape of domes,

fins, and spires rising out of broad valleys in the interior of the range. Well-preserved cirques and moraines indicate that the highest peaks of the Albion Mountains, Cache Peak (10,339 ft., 3151 m) and Mt. Harrison (9,265 ft., 2824 m), hosted alpine glaciers during the Pleistocene. Extensive areas of hummocky topography on the flanks of several peaks and ridges suggest that landslides have played an important role in the recent geomorphic evolution of the Albion Mountains.

### ***PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS***

The geologic history of the Albion Range has been the subject of many published papers beginning with Anderson (1931) who conducted a reconnaissance survey of the geology and mineral resources of Cassia County for the Idaho Bureau of Mines and Geology. His geologic map shows the over-all domal character of the range and distribution of granites, metamorphic rocks, unmetamorphosed upper Paleozoic rocks, and Tertiary volcanic and sedimentary rocks. Cunningham (1971) described the general geomorphology of the City of the Rocks (1971). Armstrong (1968) described the major rocks of the Albion Range, subdividing them into formal stratigraphic units, and was the first to date the igneous rocks. He mapped the entire Albion Range at a scale of 1:24,000 during the 1970's and early 80's, but died before his field maps could be compiled and published. Miller (1980, 1983) concentrated on the detailed structure of the

structural domes in the northern part of the range. Compton (1983), Covington (1983), and Todd (1980) focused on the regional-scale structures and the timing of deformation in core complexes of the Idaho-Utah border region. Miller and Bedford (1999) studied structures in the southern part of the range. Using Armstrong's field maps Miller, et al. (in preparation) remapped most of the Almo Quadrangle, which contains the City of Rocks. Professional geological societies have led several field trips into the area to expound on the characteristics and tectonic significance of the metamorphic core complex. Undergraduate geology field courses have conducted student projects in the Albion Range that have examined deformational structures, glaciation, landslides, and geomorphology. Some of these projects are initial attempts to evaluate current and recently active geological processes that are forming today's landscape.

### ***SOILS***

The soils found in the Castle Rocks State Park units vary with the terrain. The soils are characterized in general terms by unit as described in the Soil Survey of Cassia County (USDA 1994). A map of the soils classification can be found in Appendix 3D.

### ***RANCH UNIT***

This unit is on ground that is transitioning between alluvial meadows to granite pluton rock

outcroppings. The three soils that can be found in this unit are the Acord-Aninto group, Conneridge-Chen-Yeates-Hollow group, and the Itca-Birchcreek group also found in the Smoky Mountain Unit.

The Acord-Aninto soils are characterized as very deep and very well drained. They have slow permeability and a water capacity between 4 and 8 inches. Rooting depth is restricted with a clay layer typically found between 3-18 inches deep. Runoff is medium with a moderate hazard of erosion. There is also a moderate shrink-swell potential due to the clays found in the soils. The major use for this soil is as rangeland. Management factors include stones, cobbles, and gravels found on or below the surface as well as the hazard for water erosion.

The Conneridge-Chen-Yeates-Hollow soils are characterized as shallow to moderately deep and well drained, with medium to moderate soil permeability. Available water capacity is between 2 and 6 inches with rooting depth restricted by bedrock depths between 8 and 60 inches. Runoff velocities can be rapid or very rapid and there is severe to very severe hazard from water erosion. The major use for these soils is rangeland. Management factors are low available water and high content of gravel, cobbles and stones. Steep slopes and severe hazard for water erosion limit usability of these soils.

The Itca-Birchcreek soil complex

is characterized by shallow depths but good drainage. It has slow permeability and water capacity of only 1-2 inches. Rooting depth is poor and generally restricted to 10-20 inches due to a shallow depth to bedrock. Runoff is very rapid and there is a severe hazard for water erosion. The major use for this soil complex is woodland with some potential for grazing. Management factors are the stones and cobbles found on and below the surface as well as the shallow depth to bedrock. Low water capacity and a high erosion factor limit the grazing potential of the soil. The dominant vegetation of pinyon pine, juniper and big mountain sage also limit grazing opportunities. A general management consideration is to control grazing and disturbance of these fragile soils to limit erosion.

#### ***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

This unit is located in the alluvial flats of the Big Cove area between the hills of the Smoky Mountain Unit and the spires of the Ranch Unit. The dominant soil is the Declo-Darkbull soils group. Both the Declo and the Darkbull types are characterized as very deep and well drained with moderate permeability. The soils have moderate water capacity, between 3 and 11 inches, as well as potential rooting depth to 60 inches. Stormwater runoff is slow to moderate and the hazard of water or wind erosion is slight.

The major use for this soil complex is rangeland. There are no major



*Erodable soils and high spring runoff causes stream bank erosion*



*Almo Creek full of spring runoff*

management factors. A general management consideration is that the soils are not highly suitable for dryland grazing due to the low soil water capacity during the dry season.

***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT***

The two parcels that make up this unit are located on flat to hilly terrain that is dominated by the Itca-Birchcreek soil complex. The Itca-Birchcreek soils are described in the Ranch Unit.

A soil survey of the eastern part of Cassia County was completed in 1994 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

***WATER RESOURCES AND RIGHTS***

The largest stream running through the Ranch Unit is Almo Creek, which flows north to south and exits near the southeast corner of the unit. Creeks running through or near the park units start in the snow pack of Cache Peak north of the park. Also running through the Ranch Unit is Stines Creek, which joins Almo Creek in the middle of the unit. Lone Rock Creek runs by the southern most corner of the Ranch Unit. Paralleling this creek to the south is Little Cove Creek, which eventually runs through the Administrative Unit. Circle Creek flows between the two parcels that make up the Smoky Mountain Unit, but no creek flows through either parcel. These creeks eventually drain to the Raft River.

Castle Rocks State Park acquired the water rights that were used by the previous ranch owner. About 350 acres traditionally were irrigated on the east side of the ranch (NPS land exchange EA 2002). The water rights held by the state park are part of Snake River Administrative Basin 43 ([www.idwr.state.id.us/water/rights/](http://www.idwr.state.id.us/water/rights/))(See Appendix 3A). The park holds 9.5 shares in the Almo Water Company. This makes it one of the larger shareholders.

Recharging of ground water is a beneficial use attached to the park’s water rights. IDPR and the Almo Water Company are working on improving the water distribution infrastructure and have jointly funded development of new structures.

Little is known about the status of surface water quality or ground water quantity in the park units. Well testing in CIRO have shown water quality within criteria designated for safe use. Depth to groundwater at the Ranch Unit is approximately 20 feet (level 1 pre-ea) during the winter. Domestic water is supplied by wells in all three park units.

***VEGETATION***

Castle Rocks State Park is located in the upper Raft River Valley. Park elevations range from 5360 feet at the Administrative Unit to 7400 feet in the northwest corner of the Ranch Unit. At lower



*Example of past improvements of water distribution infrastructure*

elevations, the sagebrush-dominant plant community includes big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata tridentata*), gray rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), currant (*Ribes alpinum*), Sandberg's bluegrass (*Penstemon ambiguus*), Great Basin wildrye (*Leymus cinereus*), and an assortment of grasses and forbs such as Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.), lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), and arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*). At higher elevations, the woodland communities include single leaf Utah pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*), juniper (*Juniperus*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*). Riparian communities along streams and irrigation ditches support quaking aspen, willow (*Salix* spp.), elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.), currant (*Ribes* spp.), and woods rose (*Rosa*).

Vegetation in and around the park likely differs from pre-settlement conditions because of past grazing, farming, fire, and other disturbances. Often these influences result in the introduction and establishment of invasive plants or noxious weeds in disturbed areas. The most common plants in this category include cheatgrass, Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*) and spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*).

Within the park's boundaries, five

distinct plant communities are present depending upon elevation, soil type, and moisture availability. These plant communities include pinyon-juniper woodland, shrub (sagebrush)-steppe, aspen woodland, riparian scrub-shrub, and wetlands.

### **Pinyon-juniper woodland**

The pinyon-juniper woodland community generally occurs adjacent to sagebrush (shrub-steppe) areas in the park, but in rockier, higher, and rougher terrain. Occurring at the northern extent of its range in Idaho, this woodland community occurs in the Ranch Unit, at the southeast Smoky Mountain Unit, and on BLM and Sawtooth National Forest lands north of the Ranch Unit. Seven pinyon-juniper woodland communities are recognized as occurring exclusively in Idaho, and all are ranked most rare.

These woodlands are dominated by single-leaf pinyon pine, Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). Interspersed with these dominants are mountain big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata vaseyana*), curl-leaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), and Great Basin wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*).

The Albion Mountains contain the northernmost range of the single-leaf pinyon pine. The



*Wild Iris and Prickly Pear Cactus growing side by side*



*Rock formation reaching above surrounding pinyon-juniper woodland*

edible pinyon pine seed provides important proteins and fats for wildlife, served as an important food source for indigenous people, and is gathered by local residents. When removed by fire, various grasses and shrubs temporarily replace this community.

### **Shrub (sagebrush) -steppe**

The shrub-steppe (sagebrush-dominant) community occupies lower, drier elevations and dominates the western half of the Ranch Unit, the undeveloped portion of the Administrative Unit, and the northeast Smoky Mountain Unit. Common shrub species include Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*) basin big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata tridentata*), bitterbrush, gray rabbitbrush and green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*). The understory consists of an assortment of grasses and forbs such as Idaho fescue, Great Basin wildrye, cheatgrass, Indian-paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.), lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), phlox (*Phlox* spp.), and arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)

Much of this community has been altered by past disturbances that have led to monotypic stands of big sagebrush interspersed with plants with low forage value such as tansy mustard (*Descurainia pinnata*), rabbitbrush, Russian thistle (*Chenopodiaceae salsolatragus*), cheatgrass, and halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*). Crested wheatgrass (an exotic) dominates the understory where

past landowners seeded areas to improve livestock forage.

### **Aspen woodland**

At higher elevations, the quaking aspen -dominant woodland community generally occurs along the park's perennial and intermittent streams. Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), mountain alder (*Alnus incana*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*) typically occur in the understory of the aspen groves. Rocky Mountain juniper occurs more frequently in the aspen understory than elsewhere in the area.

### **Riparian scrub-shrub**

At lower elevations, the riparian scrub-shrub community occurs adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams, seeps and springs. This important transition zone between aquatic and upland terrestrial communities supports a greater diversity of wildlife and plant species than the adjoining uplands. Many of the riparian zones in the park also include wetlands.

Typical riparian plants in the scrub-shrub community include quaking aspen, willows (*Salix* spp.), Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum* Torr. Var. *douglasii*), box-elder (*Acer negundo*), mountain alder, chokecherry, horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.), elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.), bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.), rushes

(*Juncus* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and bluegrasses (*Poa* spp.).

Similar to wetlands, the presence of food, water, and cover in this riparian community supports a diversity of mammals, birds, and herptals. Consequently, the preservation and restoration of this plant community is critical to the maintenance and enjoyment of present and future wildlife populations in the park and surrounding area.

### **Wetlands**

In general terms, wetlands are lands where water is the dominant factor influencing the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities found in them. Common to all wetlands is that the soil or substrate is saturated or covered with water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps (USFWS 1992) (See Map 3.2 and 3.3) were used to identify the location and types of wetlands found within the park. Identified from high-altitude aerial photographs, the wetlands shown on the NWI maps are based on dominant vegetation types rather than on local soil or hydrologic (drainage) conditions. Consequently, the NWI wetland boundaries do not necessarily represent the boundaries of wetlands that come under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps

of Engineers (Corps) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Before initiating any Section 404 activities in park wetlands, wetland delineation studies will be required to determine wetland boundaries and site hydrologic, soil and vegetation characteristics. In April 2004, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction under Section 404 was extended to include irrigation waters and associated wetlands hydraulically connected to waters of the United States of America

### **Classification and Description**

The wetland classifications shown on the NWI maps are based on the Cowardin et al. (1979) system adopted by the USFWS. The structure of this system is hierarchical, progressing from systems and subsystems, at the most general levels, to classes, subclasses and dominance types. As depicted in the “Wetland Inventory Map,” wetland communities in the park fall into four categories. These include palustrine emergent (PEM), palustrine scrub-shrub (PSS), palustrine forested (PFO) and riverine streambed (R4SB). PEM wetlands are the most abundant type and cover the greatest area.

All four wetland types are found in the Ranch Unit in association with streams (i.e., Almo Creek, Stines Creek, Lone Rock Creek, and Johnson Creek) and irrigated lands found in the unit. Wetland occurrence in the other park units



*Example of riparian shrub-shrub community*



*Almo Creek with Cache Peak in distance*

is limited to a small, temporarily flooded PEM wetland along the south border of the northeast Smoky Mountain Unit. There are no wetlands at the Administrative Unit or southwest Smoky Mountain Unit.

PEM wetlands are associated with temporarily and seasonally flooded areas. It is the predominant wetland type found along Almo Creek in the eastern portion of the Ranch Unit where flood irrigation is seasonally applied to a large meadow complex used for summer livestock grazing. The irrigation ditches used to distribute water across the meadow complex generally support reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and/or cattail (*Typha latifolia*). Overall, this wetland type is characterized by erect, rooted, herbaceous hydrophytes (Cowardin et al. 1979).

PSS wetlands are found along natural and irrigation-dependent waterways. In the Ranch Unit these wetlands are commonly dominated by willows including Booth willow (*Salix boothii*), Geyer willow (*Salix geyeriana*), and others. Other common shrubs include Rocky Mountain maple, mountain alder, chokecherry, and elderberry. Overall, this wetland type is characterized by woody vegetation less than 20 feet tall and includes shrubs, young trees, and trees or shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions (Cowardin et al. 1979).

A few temporarily flooded PFO wetlands occur in the northeast corner of the Ranch Unit along a tributary to Almo Creek. These wetlands are dominated by trees, including quaking aspen, narrowleaf cottonwood, and whiplash willow (*Salix lasiandra*). Overall, this wetland type is characterized by woody vegetation that is 20 feet or taller (Cowardin et al. 1979).

Wetlands contained within a stream channel are classified as riverine. Most of the riverine wetlands found in the park are seasonally flooded and are depicted by the suffix C. Within the aquatic bed (streambed) class are areas of open water dominated by plants that grow principally on or below the water surface for most of the growing season. Vegetation is typically non-persistent and includes submerged or floating-leaved rooted vascular plants, free-floating vascular plants, submergent mosses and algae (Cowardin et al. 1979)

### **Wetland Functions and Values**

Wetlands function in a number of different ways and are important for various natural resource values. Functions are self-sustaining properties of a wetland ecosystem that exist in the absence of society and relate to ecological significance without regard to subjective human values (COE 1995). Groundwater discharge/recharge is an example of a wetland function. Values are benefits that derive from either one or more functions and the physical characteristics associated with a wetland (COE 1995). The

value of a given wetland function, or combination of functions, is based on human judgment of the worth, merit, importance, or quality attributed to those functions (MDT 1999). Examples of various wetland functions and values include:

- Habitat for federally-listed or proposed threatened and endangered species
- Habitat for sensitive, rare, or other special status species rated by the Idaho Native Plant Society, Idaho Conservation Data Center, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, BLM, and/or USDA Forest Service
- General wildlife habitat
- General fish/aquatic habitat
- Flood attenuation
- Long and short-term surface water storage
- Sediment/nutrient/toxicant retention and removal
- Sediment/shoreline stabilization
- Production export/food chain support
- Groundwater discharge/recharge
- Uniqueness
- Recreation/education potential

### **Wetland Mitigation Site**

A 10-acre wetland mitigation site and a 2.5-acre fringe area located in the Ranch Unit are protected in perpetuity with funds from an in-lieu-fee mitigation arrangement between the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and IDPR (See Appendix 3B). The two protected wetlands are mitigation for the 0.51-acre wetland loss associated

with the City of Rocks Back Country Byway Project.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ITD and IDPR, a wildlife-friendly, wooden 3-pole fence will be constructed by ITD around the mitigation site and fringe area to exclude cattle. Public pedestrian access will be maintained into these areas to view birds, wildlife and plants. Under the MOU, no specific pathway will be delineated or blazed, and the mitigation sites are to be operated and managed in accordance with the Master Plan for the park. (See Appendix 3B.)

The MOU directs IDPR to monitor, maintain, control noxious weeds, and protect the wetlands. A natural resource technician will monitor the protected wetlands, eradicate noxious weeds, repair fencing, prevent cattle from entering, keep reports on activities within the protected wetlands, and monitor and correct, if necessary, adverse conditions that would affect the health of these wetlands in perpetuity.

### **Wildlife**

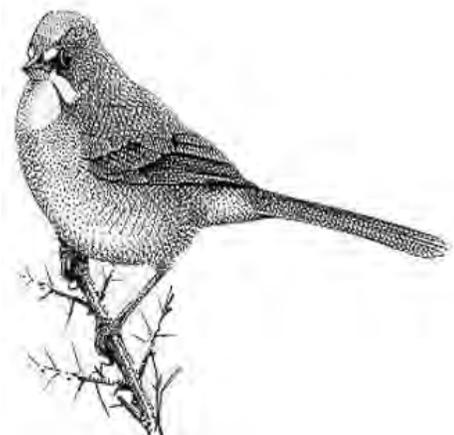
Because Castle Rocks State Park has many of the same geologic and vegetative conditions as the nearby City of Rocks National Reserve, wildlife populations and habitat in the park and reserve are much the same. Consequently, most of the wildlife information was obtained from the Comprehensive Management Plan for the City of Rocks National Reserve (National



*Blacktail Jackrabbit*



*Western Skink*



*Illustration of the Green Tailed Towhee*

Park Service 1994) and the City of Rocks Resource Management Plan (National Park Service 1996). Additional data and information were obtained from the Idaho Conservation Data Center, a herpetological inventory (Shive 2001) of the reserve and park, and a mammal inventory (Madison 2003) of the reserve.

A total of 53 mammals are included on the City of Rocks National Reserve checklist with a total of 35 species documented during the 2003 inventory (University of Idaho 2003). A partial list of common mammals in the area include mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), american badger (*Taxidea taxus*), porcupine (*erethizon dorsatum*), red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), least chipmunk (*Tamias minimus*), mountain cottontail (*Sylvilagus nuttallii*), blacktail jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*), Northern pocket gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*), Great Basin pocket mouse (*Perognathus parvus*), pinon mouse (*Peromyscus truei*), bushy-tailed woodrat (*Neotoma cinerea*), yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), montane vole (*Microtus montanus*), and long-eared (*Myotis volans*), little brown (*Myotis lucifugus*) and western small-footed (*Myotis ciliolabrum*) myotis.

About 155 species of birds are

known to occur in the area. Common, year-round residents include northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), black-billed magpie (*Pica hudsonia*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), mountain chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*), dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*), and Cassin's finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*). Other common species include sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*), common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), rock (*Columba livia*) and mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*), cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), rock (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) and house wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), mountain bluebird (*Sialia currocoides*), swainson's thrush (*Calharus ustulatus*), solitary (*Vireo solitarius*) and warbling vireos (*Vireo gilvus*), green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*), spotted towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), vesper's sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus*), and western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). The area also provides breeding and prey habitat for many raptor species including golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamiacensis*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), American kestrel (*Falco sparvarius*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), and great-horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*). Less common species include common poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*), gray flycatcher (*Empidonax weightii*), pinyon jay

(*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), and Virginia's warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*).

Breeding birds indicative of specific habitats found on the Ranch Unit are listed below:

Shrub-steppe: sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes monatanus*), green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*), Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), and vesper sparrow.

Pinyon-juniper woodland: chipping sparrow (*Spizella arborea*), western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), robin (*Turdus migratorius*), and Cassin's finch.

Aspen woodland: red-naped sapsucker (*Syphrapicus nuchalis*), mountain bluebird, and mountain chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*).

Riparian scrub-shrub: house wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), Lazuli bunting (*Passerina amoena*), and red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*).

Rock cliffs and ledges: white-throated swift (*Aeronautes saxatalis*), violet-green (*Tachycineta thalassina*) and cliff swallows, and red-tailed hawk (National Park Service 2002).

The herpetological inventory (Idaho State University 2001) identified 14 species of amphibians and reptiles as potentially present within the City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State

Park. Of these, 7 species were observed in the reserve including one amphibian, boreal chorus frog (*Pseudacris maculata*); two lizards, common sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*) and Western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*); and four snakes, rubber boa (*Charina bottae*), striped whipsnake (*Masticophis taeniatus*), gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*), and terrestrial gartersnake (*Thamnophis elegans*). The common sagebrush lizard, terrestrial gartersnake, great basin rattlesnake, gophersnake, and western skink were also observed in the Castle Rocks. Overall, the common sagebrush lizard and terrestrial gartersnake were the most widespread and abundant species observed with the sagebrush lizard occupying the greatest variety of habitat types. None of the observed species are considered BLM Sensitive or Idaho Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern.

### **Scenic Inventory and Resources**

All the park units are within the historic viewshed of the California Trail as well as the City of Rocks National Reserve. The views seen from the City of Rocks Back Country Byway are also important and critical to protect from scenic degradation. Cassia County adopted the "Historical Preservation Zone Ordinance". It is a tool that may protect important scenic areas within City of Rocks National Reserve, Castle Rocks State Park, and the City of Rocks Back Country Byway from



*Great Basin Rattlesnake coiled and ready to strike*



*View of Ranch Unit and Castle Rock from Smoky Mountain Unit*



*View looking northeast from Smoky Mountain Unit*



*View from Smoky Mountain unit over valley shows importance of viewsheds*

development that impacts the visual qualities important to this rural landscape. Each of the units of the park have differing concerns when it comes to scenic viewsheds and scenic qualities that are important to each park unit.

The Ranch Unit can be seen from great distances along the Byway and public roads that cross the Big Cove Valley. It also is important to remember how far one can see out of the Ranch Unit from its varying elevations. The outward views are especially important when considering the potential number of visitors who will engage in climbing and hiking at these higher elevations. The Cassia County Historic Preservation Zone covers most of the property west of the Castle Rock formation inside and outside the park. Another resource is the Cassia County Design Guidelines (1995) that describe appropriate development in southern Cassia County. The guidelines address development densities, setbacks and siting of built elements, massing and grouping of structures, architectural appearance, signage and planting design.

External views are the priority from the Administrative Unit at the bottom of the Almo Valley. The California Trail bisects a corner of this unit and staff coordinates interpretive activities from the visitor center. From the visitor center, the view northward is of the Castle Rock formation and numerous other formations dotting the toe of Cache Peak. Looking

westward, there are views into the City of Rocks. These are the views that would have been seen by travelers on the California Trail and are important to preserve as part of the emigrant experience.

The Smoky Mountain Unit is higher in elevation than the Administrative Unit. Some foreground views are screened by the pinyon-juniper woodlands. This unit is on higher ground along the southern viewshed border of the Byway route into and out of the City of Rocks. Development at this site should be planned with sensitivity to views from the Byway route.

The value of protecting these viewsheds can be seen in the growing popularity of heritage tourism (City of Rocks Back Country Byway Committee 1998) along with maintaining the visual quality of the experience traveling to and from the City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park. This visual quality of the rural landscape is part of the experience at both parks. The importance of viewshed protection has also been discussed in the Castle Rocks Planning Charette, the City of Rocks National Reserve Comprehensive Management Plan, and the Cassia County Design Guidelines Manual.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
FEDERAL AND  
STATE AGENCY, AND  
OTHER PLANNING  
AUTHORITIES**



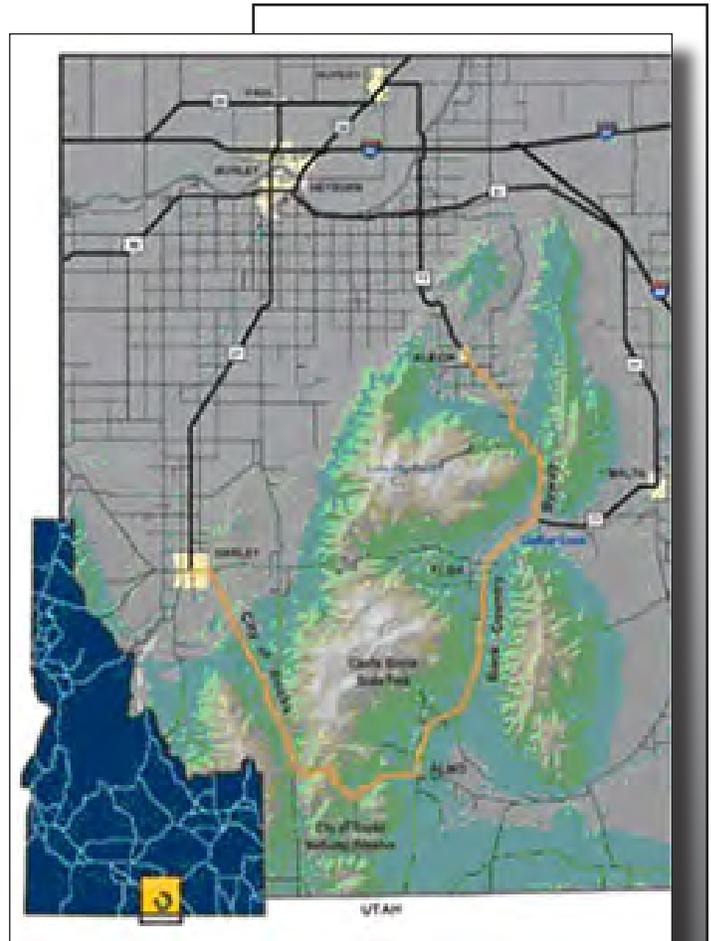
*View of Ranch Unit from entry road*

Cassia County ordinances govern land use on private lands adjacent to Castle Rocks State Park. The Cassia County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1992 and revised in 1999. It lists seven historical and geological sites recommended for protection from incompatible land uses, including Castle Rock and the City of Rocks National Reserve. The comprehensive plan predated establishment of Castle Rocks State Park. A 1993 Interim Historical Preservation Zone ordinance, amended in 1999, creates an overlay that encompasses part of the state park. The ordinance authorizes the planning and zoning commission to review proposed developments or changes to existing properties, to evaluate whether the changes meet the visual compatibility standards of the historic zone on private property.

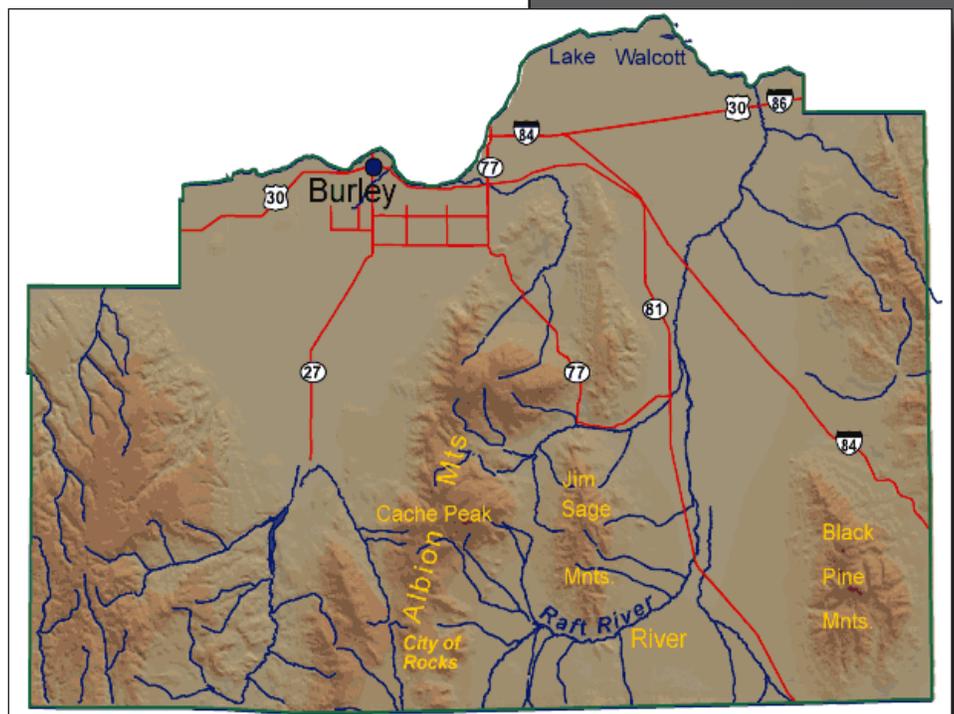
As previously mentioned, IDPR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA Forest Service and the BLM for the development and management of 880 acres of Interagency Recreation Area. IDPR must coordinate all planning and management activities that are related to this area with those agencies. IDPR has also signed a Recreation and Public Purposes lease for the 240 acres that makes up the Smoky Mountain Unit. Conditions in this lease must be met as a part of the agreement. The close coordination of recreational management goals benefits management of both

Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve.

Per the Memorandum of Agreement between IDPR, NPS, and SHPO, all uncompleted historical and cultural evaluation work on archeological sites will be completed as feasible. This agreement stems from the Section 106 review process required during the transfer of land between the NPS and IDPR. (See Appendix 2A.) Details of the State Historic



*Illustration of the Back Country Byway route between Albion and Oakley*





*Ranch house with newly added perimeter deck*

Preservation Plan can be found at [www.idahohistory.net](http://www.idahohistory.net).

### **LAND OWNERSHIP**

The Land Ownership Map shows land ownership adjacent to the Castle Rocks State Park units. Adjacent lands are both privately and publicly owned. (See Appendix 3C.)

### **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

Castle Rocks State Park is not on a major transportation route. The City of Rocks Back Country Byway is accessed from Interstate 84 to State Highway 27 on the west and State Highway 77 on the east. About 50% of the Byway is paved. Improvements to the Byway began in 2005.

The park is approximately 45 minutes south of Interstate 84 (See illustration to the right) and US Highway 30, which are the primary east-west routes. The park is approximately 30 minutes west-southwest of Interstate 84 and State Highway 81, which are the primary north-south routes other than the Byway.

There are approximately 400 to 500 vehicle trips per day along Idaho 77 between Albion and Conner Creek. This drops to 140 to 400 daily vehicle trips between Conner Creek and Almo, or the entrance to both Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve.

During 2005, safety improvements were being made to the Byway by widening the road and straightening of the curves. Also in 2005, Cassia County began a county wide transportation plan. No information was available at the time of printing of the master plan.

Approximately 58,000 vehicles per year enter the City of Rocks National Reserve through its three entries.

### **EXISTING UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Potable Water Supply is provided by a well at each of the park units.

Sewage Disposal is provided at each park unit using septic drain fields except the Smoky Mountain Unit where those services are currently proposed.

Electricity is available at all three park units via underground and overhead power lines.

There is land-line telephone service to the Ranch and Administrative Units. Cell phone service is limited. There is a pay phone at the visitor center. A radio system connects all three units.

### **FACILITIES INVENTORY, STAFFING AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Ranch Unit's primary structure is the ranch house. It is currently



*Existing home at Administrative Unit used as visitor center*

being used for visitor contact, display of historical/interpretive artifacts, and resale/support offices. A large deck greatly increases the house's circulation space. To the west of the ranch house is a modern storage shed. A water fountain is between the shed and the ranch house. Two small, old sheds remain north of the ranch house and are proposed to be removed. A vault toilet has been constructed between the parking area and the ranch house. Two pads for recreational vehicles, used by seasonal employees were built to the north and west of the ranch house. A large, landscaped amphitheater was constructed by the prior owner by placing stones in a semi-circle in the lawn area.

The Administrative Unit also has a house, which was renovated to be used as the primary visitor center for the Park and the Reserve. A new maintenance facility serves as the primary facility and has office and conference space. There is a paved parking lot for visitors and parking for staff on the opposite side of the house. A large lawn with shade trees separates the house from the Elba-Almo Road (825 E). A 5,250 sq ft maintenance shop with offices is constructed south of the house. This is surrounded by a gravel yard and is served by its own well and drainage field. Nearby structures are used to store fuel and hazardous materials.

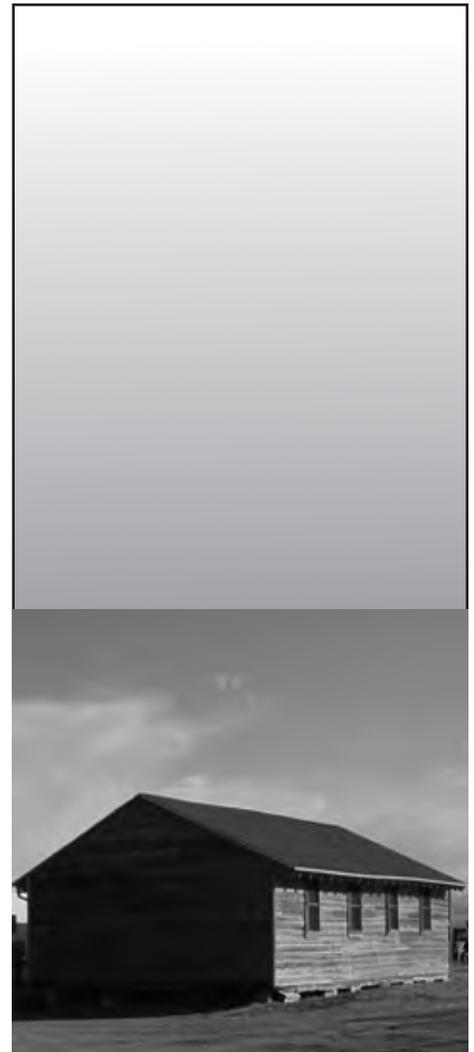
One wood building used for storage was originally an administrative building at the Minidoka Internment Camp during

World War II. The building will be returned to Minidoka Internment National Monument. Two other older buildings will be removed in 2006. An existing building is used as an employee residence. This site is suitable for new housing for park staff and RV sites for volunteers.

A new campground will be built in 2006 on the southwestern parcel of the Smoky Mountain Unit. The first loop of the campground will be a 37-unit recreational vehicle camping loop serviced by new water, electrical, and septic systems. The campground will be built at the end of a newly paved entrance road. A dump station will be constructed.

Staffing consists of a staff of six full time employees, 20-25 seasonal employees, and volunteers who help insure the smooth operation of the park.

Recreational opportunities in the park include rock climbing, bouldering, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, picnicking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, wildlife/wildflower photography, birding, and hunting. Climbing is the most popular activity at the Ranch Unit. Camping likely will become an important park activity when the new campground opens at the Smoky Mountain Unit. The new campground will also have a minimum of five spaces that can accommodate equestrian users.



*Wood building originally used for administration at Minidoka Internment Camp*

## CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATIONS IN THE PLANNING AREA

The Castle Rocks State Park units have been surveyed for cultural resources to different degrees of intensity over the past decade.

### *RANCH UNIT*

Archeological surveys have been conducted to identify and evaluate historic and prehistoric cultural resources on the Ranch Unit. During May and August 2001, National Park Service and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office archeologists conducted an archeological survey of the entire property. Based on these intensive surveys, a significant number of archaeological resources in good condition were identified.

To date, no cultural surveys have been done on the Sawtooth National Forest or BLM lands included in the Interagency Recreation Area. Surveys conducted on park lands gives indication that archeological resources extend into adjoining IRA lands.

The undisturbed condition of the archaeological resources found on the Ranch Unit is likely attributable to public inaccessibility due to past private ownership.

During the 2001 survey, a variety of prehistoric sites were found including lithic/artifact scatters, artifact scatters with sub-surface features, rock shelters, and

hunting blinds. A total of 28 archaeological sites were recorded. The prehistoric sites indicate that human use of the area has been ongoing for thousands of years. The few diagnostic artifacts recovered during surface surveys appear to be typical of others from the northern portion of the Great Basin culture area.

Since the 2001 survey, excavations have been conducted at a rock shelter site and an open air site. Intact archaeological materials were encountered at both locations.

The valley in which the Ranch Unit is located has supported Euro-American migration, settlement, agriculture and grazing for more than 150 years. This is evident from the presence of irrigation canals and ranching structures throughout the area. Although grazing has taken place across the entire ranch, the most intensive use has been on the eastern portion of the property, near and around the meadow. This meadow contains many of the resources (i.e., forage, water, and flat topography) needed to support ranching and early agricultural advancement in southern Idaho (National Park Service 2002). Several historic artifact scatters were recorded during the 2001 survey. The historic era resources are representative of several phases of agricultural development. At least one of the sites discovered during the archaeological survey appears to be remnants of early homesteading, possibly during the late 1800s or early 1900s. The primary historic materials



*Remnant of truck flatbed used during ranching activities*

now visible are those associated with ranching. The ranch house, corrals, roads, irrigation canals, and related infrastructure dominate the historic landscape and remnants of that use can be seen across much of the ranch (National Park Service 2002). To date, only the ranch-related buildings have been evaluated and found ineligible for listing in the NRHP.

#### ***ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

The Administrative Unit has been surveyed for cultural resources. The unit is disturbed and partially developed because of its past use as a private residence and its current use as a visitor center and park maintenance area. Because of previous and existing uses, the unit likely does not contain intact archaeological sites. However, the unit will be evaluated for cultural resources before construction is authorized in accordance with an agreement with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office.

#### ***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT - SOUTHWESTERN PARCEL***

The southwestern Smoky Mountain Unit was surveyed for cultural resources in 2000 by archeologists from the Vancouver National Historic Reserve and the National Park Service. A total of five sites and 22 isolated finds were recorded.

Sub-surface testing was conducted at three of the five archeological sites on July 20 and 21, 2004. These investigations revealed

that these sites are not eligible for listing in the NRHP (See Appendix 3E).

#### ***SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT - NORTHEASTERN PARCEL***

The northeastern parcel of the Smoky Mountain Unit has been fully surveyed for cultural resources in accordance with an IDPR agreement with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office and requirements set forth in the lease agreement with the BLM.

#### **ISSUES OF SPECIAL CONCERN**

##### ***SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES***

Federally-listed threatened and endangered species protected under the Endangered Species Act that occur in Cassia County include the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Snake River physa snail (*Physa natricina*), and Utah valvata snail (*Valvata utahensis*). Of these, only the bald eagle has been documented and none are expected to occur in the park.

##### ***NOXIOUS WEEDS***

Management of noxious weeds will be important in maintaining the character of this natural environment. Staff at Castle Rocks State Park and City of Rocks National Reserve is finalizing the 2006-2010 Weed Management Plan which catalogs the inventory of noxious weeds found within the park and plans for long term

management of the problem. This plan will help both parks meet their obligations under the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 as well as Idaho State Code 22-2407.

Idaho has approximately 300 exotic weed species throughout the state: 36 of these are considered “noxious”. The University of Idaho conducted inventories for noxious weeds in 1995 and again in 2003. The two parks were found to have seven noxious weed species. Those species are black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Field Bindweed (*Convolvus arvensis*), Musk Thistle (*Carduus nutans*), Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), and White Top (*Cardaria draba*). The plan works to prioritize the level of threat from each species and outline eradication strategies.

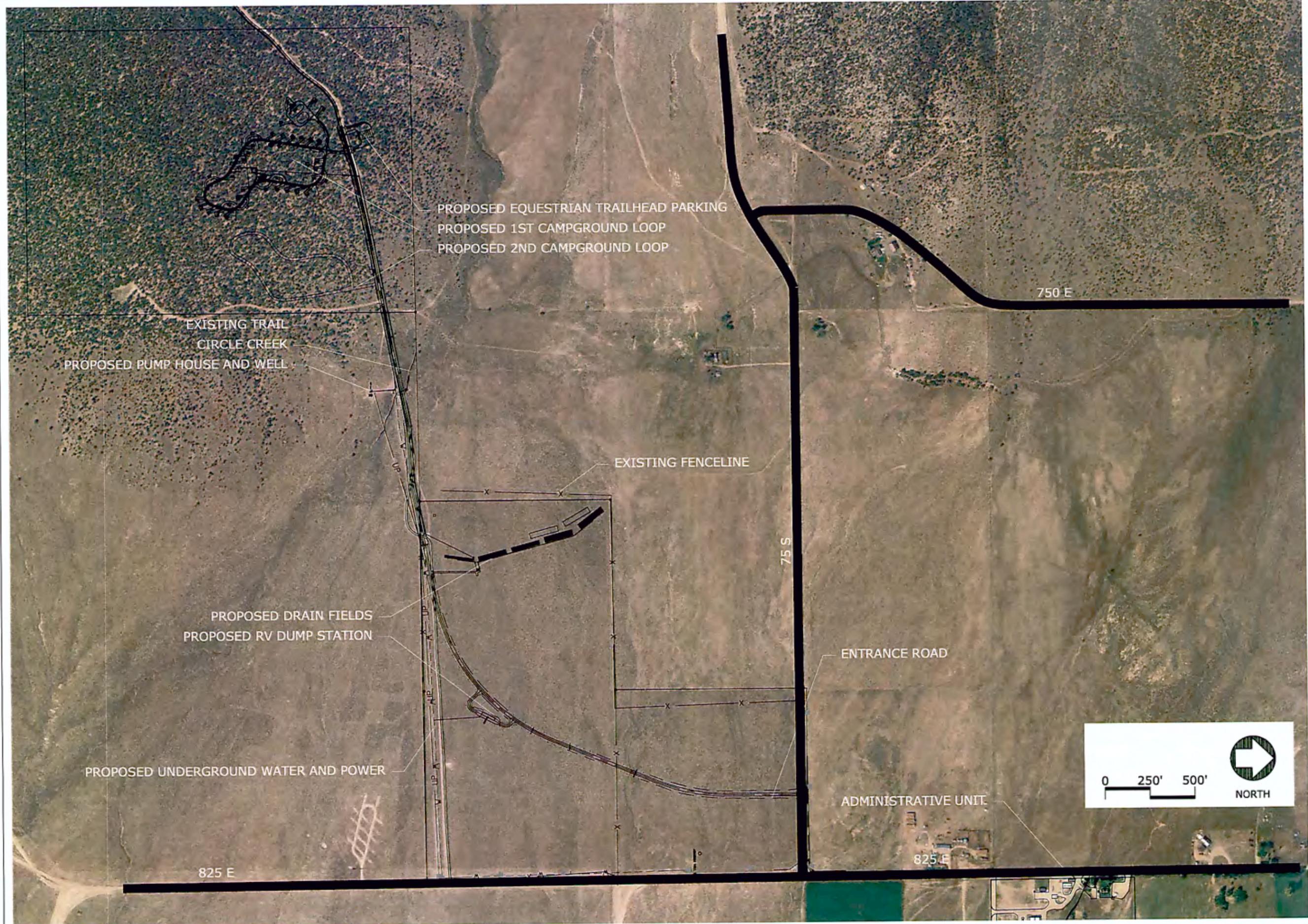


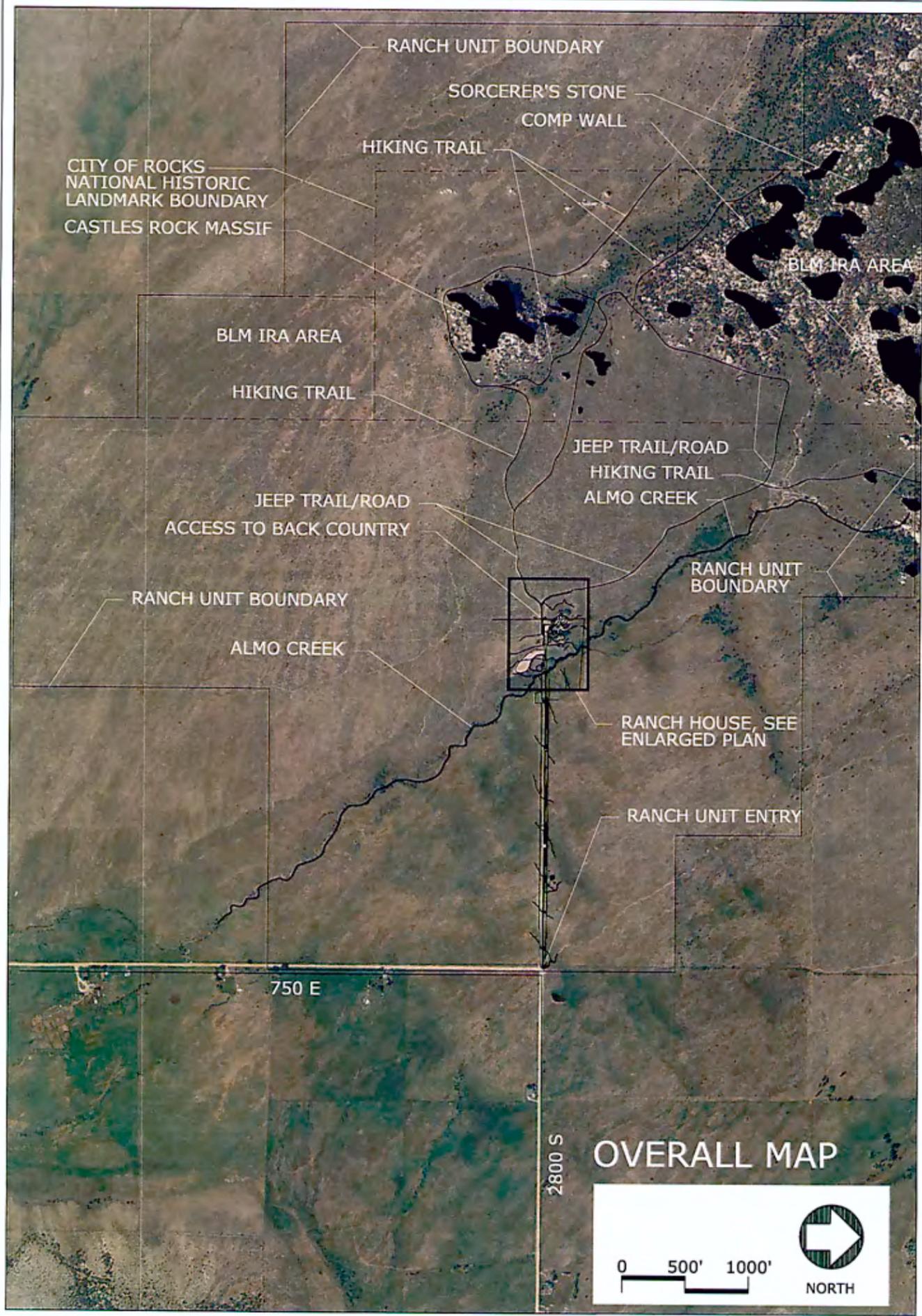


# CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK

FACILITY INVENTORY - SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT

MAP  
3.5





**CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK**  
FACILITY INVENTORY - RANCH UNIT



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Prepared by National Wetlands Inventory

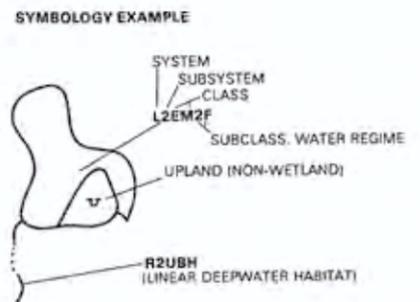
**CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK**  
 WETLAND INVENTORY LEGEND

For information on availability of NWI maps, call 1-800-USA-MAPS.

Regional Director (ARDE) Region 1  
USFWS - ASWE  
911 N.E. 11th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-4181

**SPECIAL NOTE**  
This document was prepared primarily by stereoscopic analysis of high altitude aerial photographs. Wetlands were identified on the photographs based on vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography in accordance with **Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States (FWS/OBS - 79/31 December 1979)**. The aerial photographs typically reflect conditions during the specific year and season when they were taken. In addition, there is a margin of error inherent in the use of the aerial photographs. Thus, a detailed on the ground and historical analysis of a single site may result in a revision of the wetland boundaries established through photographic interpretation. In addition, some small wetlands and those obscured by dense forest cover may not be included on this document.

Federal, State and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands in a different manner than that used in this inventory. There is no attempt, in either the design or products of this inventory, to define the limits of proprietary jurisdiction of any Federal, State or local government or to establish the geographical scope of the regulatory programs of government agencies. **Persons intending to engage in activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas should seek the advice of appropriate Federal, State or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.**



**NOTES TO THE USER**

- Subsystems, Classes, Subclasses, and Water Regimes in *Italics* were developed specifically for NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY mapping.
- Some areas designated as R4SB, R4SBW, OR R4SBJ (INTERMITTENT STREAMS) may not meet the definition of wetland.
- This map uses the class Unconsolidated Shore (US). On earlier NWI maps that class was designated Beach/Bar (BB), or Flat (FL). Subclasses remain the same in both versions.

**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY**  
 DATE: 8 / 86  
 SCALE: 1:58 000  
 TYPE: CIR

U Primarily represents upland areas, but may include unclassified wetlands such as man-modified areas, non-photographable areas and/or unintentional omissions.

SYSTEM	M - MARINE										SYSTEM	
SUBSYSTEM	1 - SUBTIDAL					2 - INTERTIDAL					SUBSYSTEM	
CLASS	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	AB - AQUATIC BED	RF - REEF	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	AB - AQUATIC BED	RF - REEF	RS - ROCKY SHORE	US - UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	EM - EMERGENT	SS - SCRUB-SHRUB	FD - FORESTED
Subclass	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Algal 2 Rooted Vascular 3 Unknown Submergent	1 Coral 2 Worm	1 Algal 2 Rooted Vascular 3 Unknown Submergent	1 Coral 2 Worm	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Persistent 2 Nonpersistent	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen

SYSTEM	R - RIVERINE						SYSTEM		
SUBSYSTEM	1 - TIDAL		2 - LOWER PERENNIAL		3 - UPPER PERENNIAL		4 - INTERMITTENT	5 - UNKNOWN PERENNIAL	SUBSYSTEM
CLASS	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	SB - STREAMBED	AB - AQUATIC BED	RS - ROCKY SHORE	US - UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	EM - EMERGENT	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	CLASS
Subclass	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble 3 Cobble-Gravel 4 Sand 5 Mud 6 Organic 7 Vegetated	1 Algal 2 Aquatic Moss 3 Rooted Vascular 4 Floating Vascular 5 Unknown Submergent 6 Unknown Surface	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic 5 Vegetated	2 Nonpersistent		1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen

\*STREAMBED is limited to TIDAL and INTERMITTENT SUBSYSTEMS, and comprises the only CLASS in the INTERMITTENT SUBSYSTEM.  
 \*\*EMERGENT is limited to TIDAL and LOWER PERENNIAL SUBSYSTEMS.

SYSTEM	P - PALUSTRINE										SYSTEM
SUBSYSTEM	1 - TIDAL		2 - LOWER PERENNIAL		3 - UPPER PERENNIAL		4 - INTERMITTENT		5 - UNKNOWN PERENNIAL		SUBSYSTEM
CLASS	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	AB - AQUATIC BED	US - UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	ML - MUD-LOCH	EM - EMERGENT	SS - SCRUB-SHRUB	FD - FORESTED	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	CLASS	
Subclass	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Algal 2 Aquatic Moss 3 Rooted Vascular 4 Floating Vascular 5 Unknown Submergent 6 Unknown Surface	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic 5 Vegetated	1 Moss 2 Lichen	1 Persistent 2 Nonpersistent	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen		1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen	

SYSTEM	E - ESTUARINE										SYSTEM		
SUBSYSTEM	1 - SUBTIDAL					2 - INTERTIDAL					SUBSYSTEM		
CLASS	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	AB - AQUATIC BED	RF - REEF	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	AB - AQUATIC BED	RF - REEF	SB - STREAMBED	RS - ROCKY SHORE	US - UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	EM - EMERGENT	SS - SCRUB-SHRUB	FD - FORESTED
Subclass	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Algal 2 Rooted Vascular 3 Floating Vascular 4 Unknown Submergent 5 Unknown Surface	2 Mollusc 3 Worm	1 Algal 2 Rooted Vascular 3 Floating Vascular 4 Unknown Submergent 5 Unknown Surface	1 Algal 2 Rooted Vascular 3 Floating Vascular 4 Unknown Submergent 5 Unknown Surface	2 Mollusc 3 Worm	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Persistent 2 Nonpersistent	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen	1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen

SYSTEM	L - LACUSTRINE										SYSTEM	
SUBSYSTEM	1 - LIMNETIC					2 - LITTORAL					SUBSYSTEM	
CLASS	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	AB - AQUATIC BED	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	RB - ROCK BOTTOM	UB - UNCONSOLIDATED BOTTOM	AB - AQUATIC BED	RS - ROCKY SHORE	US - UNCONSOLIDATED SHORE	EM - EMERGENT	OW - OPEN WATER/Unknown Bottom	CLASS
Subclass	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Algal 2 Aquatic Moss 3 Rooted Vascular 4 Floating Vascular 5 Unknown Submergent 6 Unknown Surface		1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic	1 Algal 2 Aquatic Moss 3 Rooted Vascular 4 Floating Vascular 5 Unknown Submergent 6 Unknown Surface	1 Bedrock 2 Rubble	1 Cobble-Gravel 2 Sand 3 Mud 4 Organic 5 Vegetated	2 Nonpersistent		1 Broad-Leaved Deciduous 2 Needle-Leaved Deciduous 3 Broad-Leaved Evergreen 4 Needle-Leaved Evergreen 5 Dead 6 Deciduous 7 Evergreen

**MODIFIERS**  
 In order to more adequately describe wetland and deepwater habitats one or more of the water regime, water chemistry, soil, or special modifiers may be applied at the class or lower level in the hierarchy. The format modifier may also be applied to the ecological system.

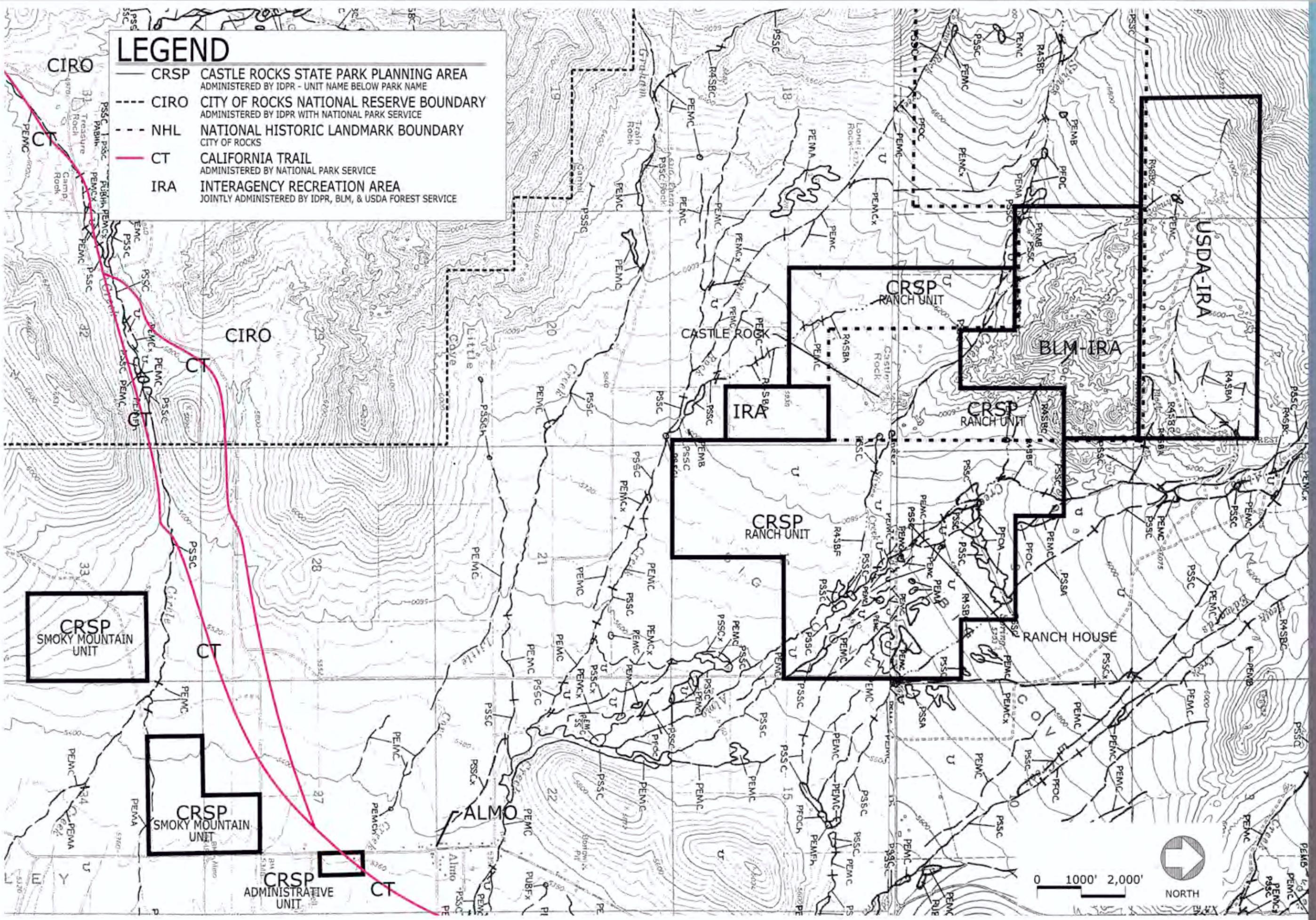
WATER REGIME		WATER CHEMISTRY			SOIL	SPECIAL MODIFIERS
Non-Tidal	Tidal	Coastal Salinity	Inland Salinity	pH Modifiers for all Fresh Water		
A. Temporarily Flooded B. Saturated C. Seasonally Flooded D. Seasonally Flooded/ Wet Dried E. Seasonally Flooded/ Saturated F. Semipermanently Flooded G. Intermittently Exposed H. Permanently Flooded J. Intermittently Flooded K. Artificially Flooded L. Subtidal M. Regularly Exposed N. Regularly Flooded O. Intermittently Flooded P. Intermittently Flooded/ Wet Dried Q. Saturated/Semipermanent/ Seasonal R. Intermittently Exposed/ Permanently Exposed S. Unknown	H. Permanently Flooded J. Intermittently Flooded K. Artificially Flooded L. Subtidal M. Regularly Exposed N. Regularly Flooded O. Intermittently Flooded P. Intermittently Flooded/ Wet Dried Q. Saturated/Semipermanent/ Seasonal R. Intermittently Exposed/ Permanently Exposed S. Unknown	*S. Temporary-Tidal *T. Semipermanent-Tidal *U. Unknown	*S. Temporary-Tidal *T. Semipermanent-Tidal *U. Unknown	1 Hypersaline 2 Euxaline 3 Mesohaline (Brackish) 4 Polyhaline 5 Mesohaline 6 Fresh	1 Acid 2 Circumneutral 3 Alkaline	g Organic n Mineral b Beaver c Partly Dried/Ditched d Farmed i. Diked/Impounded j. Artificial Substrate k. Spoil l. Excavated

\*These water regimes are only used in tidally influenced, freshwater systems.



# CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK WETLAND INVENTORY MAP

MAP  
3.2



## LEGEND

- CRSP CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK PLANNING AREA  
ADMINISTERED BY IDPR - UNIT NAME BELOW PARK NAME
- CIRO CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE BOUNDARY  
ADMINISTERED BY IDPR WITH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- NHL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY  
CITY OF ROCKS
- CT CALIFORNIA TRAIL  
ADMINISTERED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- IRA INTERAGENCY RECREATION AREA  
JOINTLY ADMINISTERED BY IDPR, BLM, & USDA FOREST SERVICE

CIRO

CIRO

ALMO

USDA-IRA

BLM-IRA

IRA

CRSP RANCH UNIT

CRSP RANCH UNIT

CRSP RANCH UNIT

RANCH HOUSE

CRSP SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT

CRSP SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT

CRSP ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

0 1000' 2000'



NORTH



# BLM ELBA-SMOKEY ROCKS STATE PARK

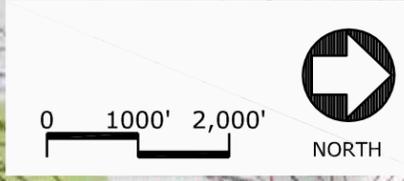
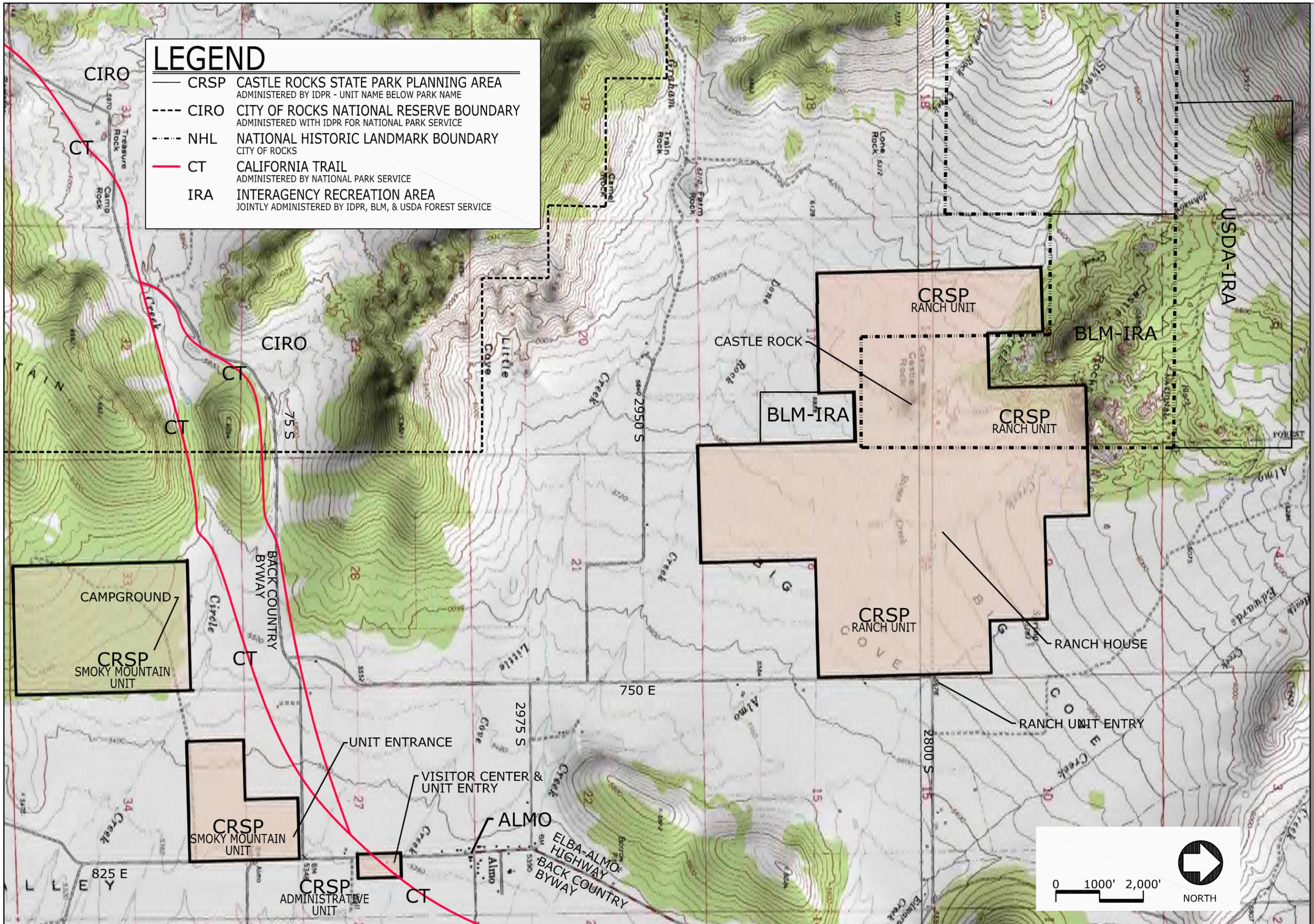
TOPOGRAPHY AND PHYSIOGRAPHY

MAP

3.1

## LEGEND

- CRSP CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK PLANNING AREA  
ADMINISTERED BY IDPR - UNIT NAME BELOW PARK NAME
- CIRO CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE BOUNDARY  
ADMINISTERED WITH IDPR FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- NHL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY  
CITY OF ROCKS
- CT CALIFORNIA TRAIL  
ADMINISTERED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- IRA INTERAGENCY RECREATION AREA  
JOINTLY ADMINISTERED BY IDPR, BLM, & USDA FOREST SERVICE





# CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK

FACILITY INVENTORY - ADMINISTRATION UNIT

MAP  
3.6





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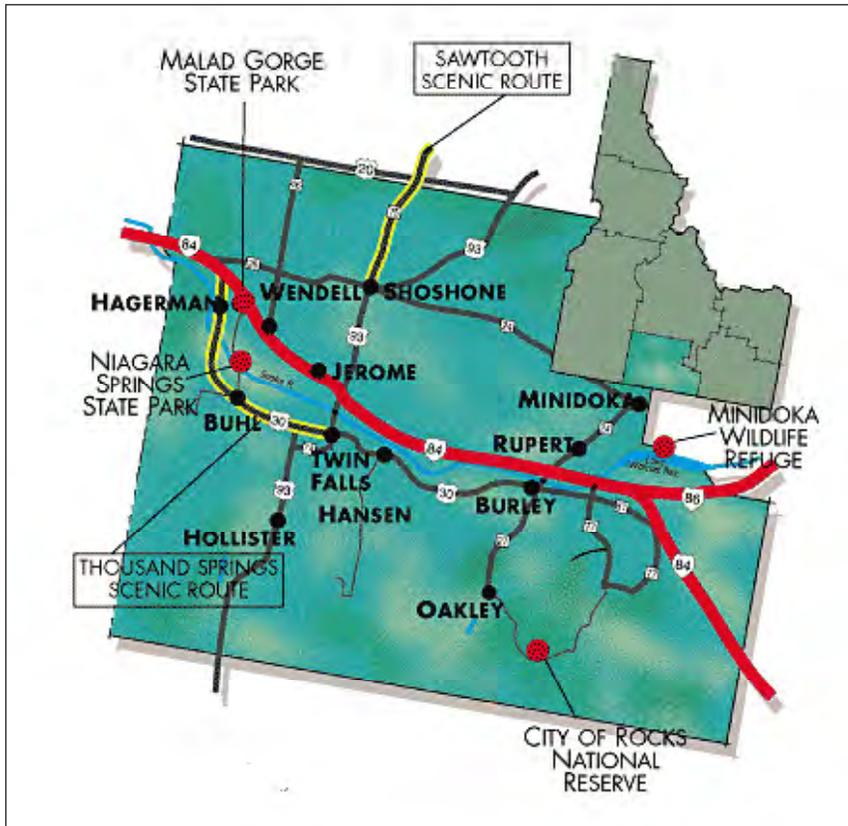
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Area Market and Population	4-3
Outdoor Recreation Activity Participation	4-3
Current Park Visitor Profile	4-6
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## AREA RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Castle Rocks State Park is located in the six county area promoted by the South Central Idaho Tourism and Recreation Development Association (SCIRTA) ([www.visitidaho.org/placestogo/southcentral.aspx](http://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.



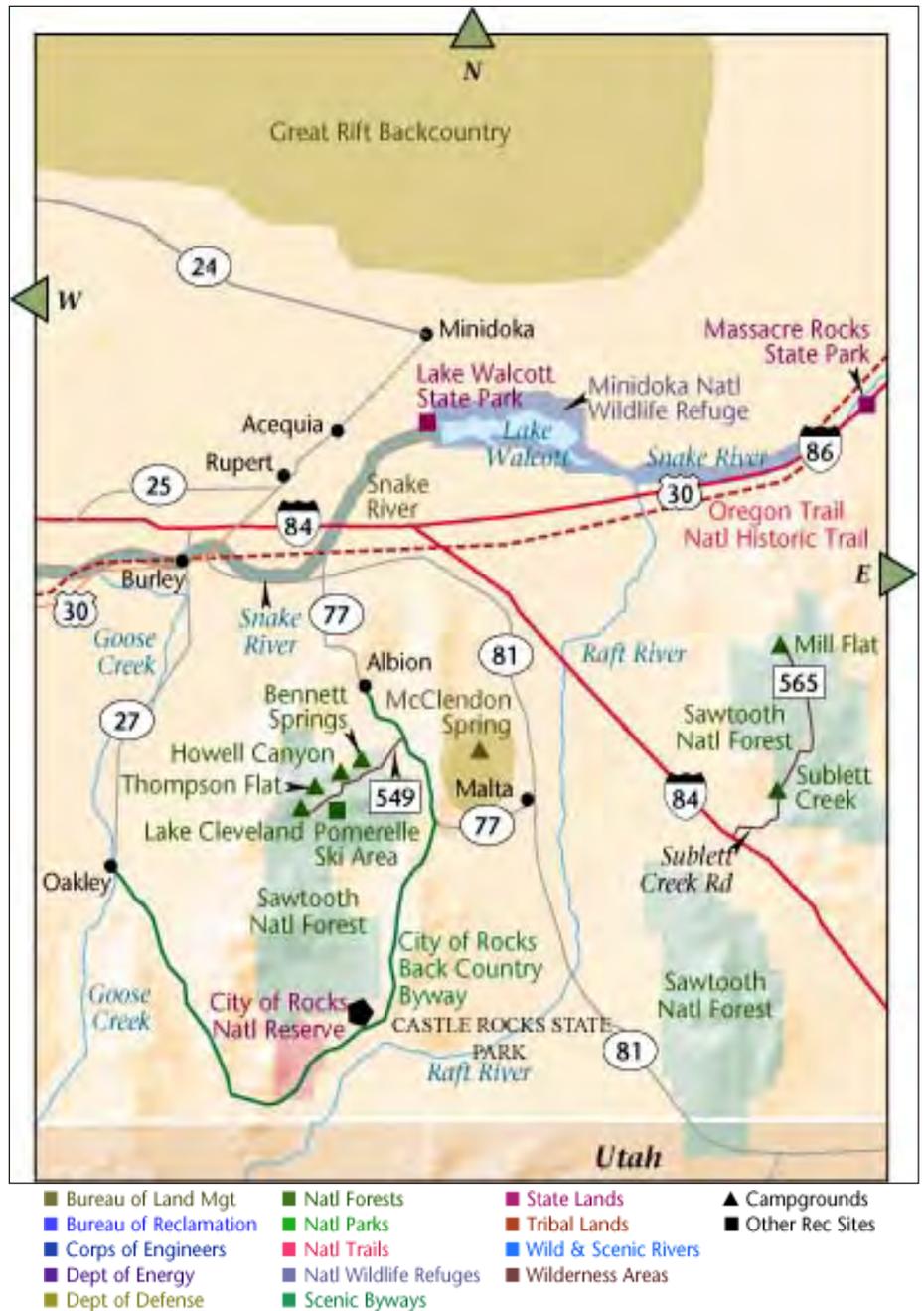
*Belayers at Kid Rock in the Ranch Unit*

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)

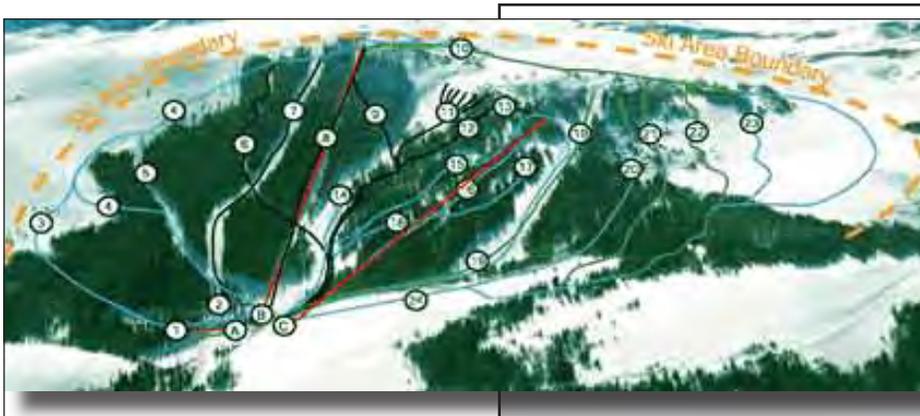
upland bird and antelope hunting. (<http://www.id.blm.gov/recreation/regions/southcentral.html>)

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](http://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](http://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

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

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*

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

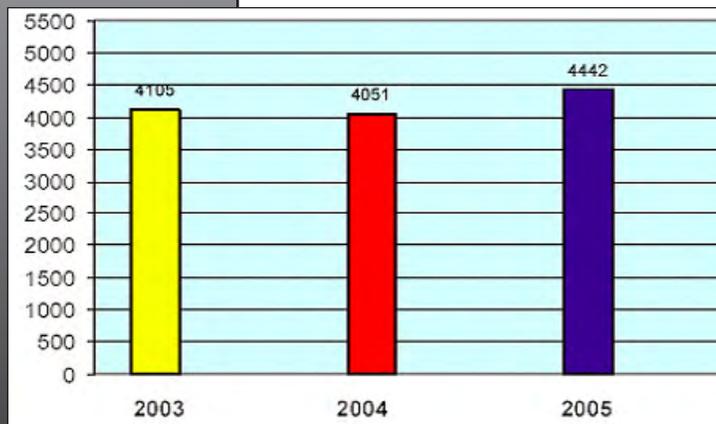
*Picture above shows dutch oven demonstration during the 2004 RanchFest.*

## 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,105</b>	<b>4,050</b>	<b>4,532</b>

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	9,276	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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69,874</b>	<b>73,214</b>	<b>79,333</b>	<b>80,867</b>	<b>72,124</b>

City of Rocks National Reserve visitation table

during the same trip.

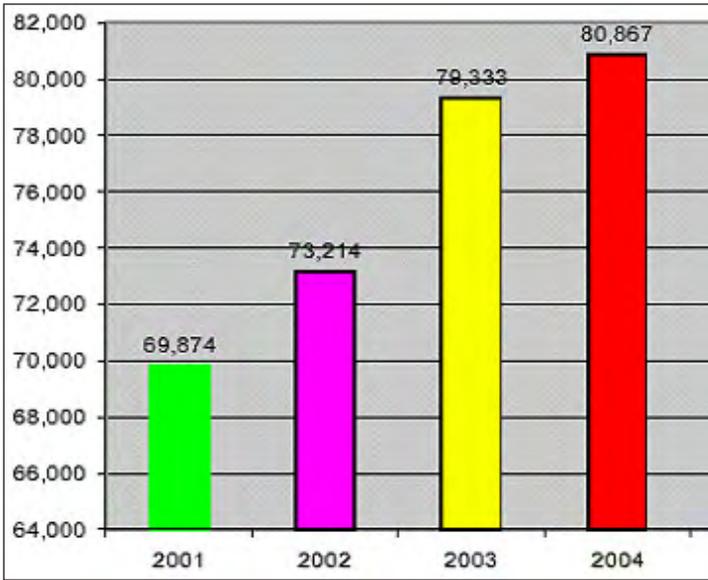
The final report on the visitor survey and demographics were not available to include in the master plan.

## PROJECTED PARK VISITATION

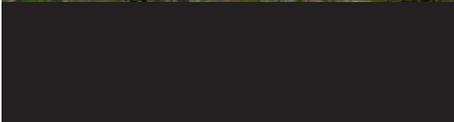
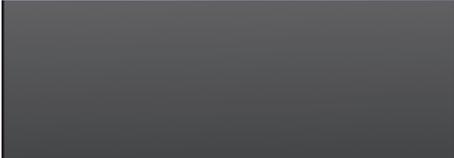
It is impossible to predict the rate of increase in park visitation, but it is certain visitation will increase. Figure 1 shows visitation for the first three years the park has been open. The increase has been slight. The number of visitors at the City of Rocks declined from 2004 to 2005, see Figure 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



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## PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Castle Rocks State Park has several values that give it statewide significance. The most obvious are the granite spires and domes, part of the 25 million year old Almo Pluton. The rocks are part of the same geologic feature in the nearby City of Rocks, a unit of the National Park System. The area attracts climbers from around the world, who come to test their skills on the spires, domes and outcrops of the Castle Rocks amidst a scenic, natural setting.

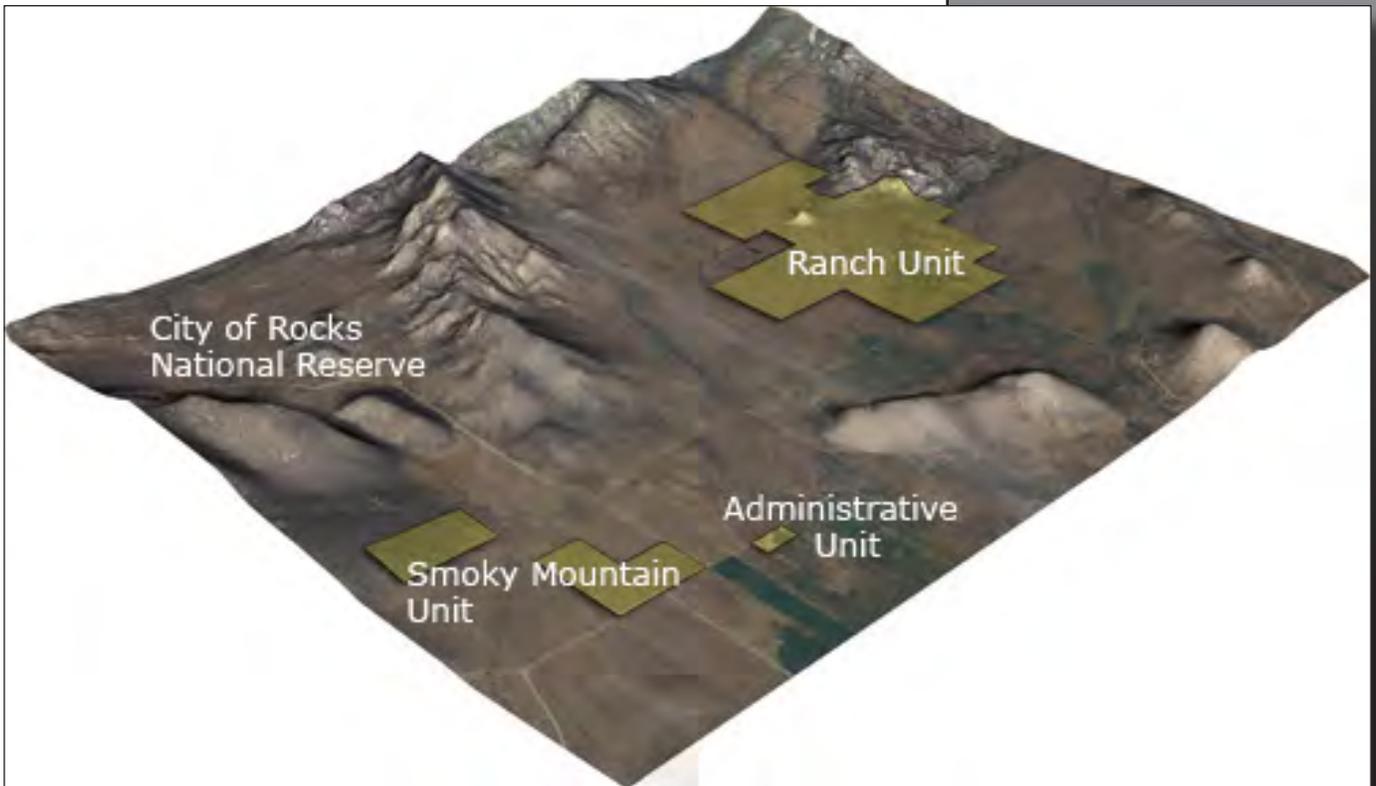
The cultural history of the area is rich with prehistoric, westward migration and early settlement

center at the Administrative Unit and the ranch house, corral and pastures on the Ranch Unit, are fine examples of ranching settlement from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ecologically the park is significant. It is the northern most range of the pinion forest in the Great Basin desert. The only record of Ringtail in Idaho is from the park, and it provides habitat for the Cliff Chipmunk (BLM species of concern) and Pinyon Mouse. Sage grouse, now uncommon over their former range, dance on leks in the park during mating season. The Ranch Unit is also important winter range for mule deer.



*Pinyon juniper framing rock formations in distance*



artifacts and stories. The California Trail, a southern departure from the Oregon Trail, crosses the Administrative Unit. The visitor

Castle Rocks State Park, the newest addition to the state park system, is made up of three units that offer a diverse set of recreational

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



*View towards City of Rocks from potential yurt location near Smoky Mountain unit*

opportunities. The Ranch Unit is the centerpiece of the park and its granite spires and monoliths are part of the geologic crown jewels of the Northern Great Basin, which also includes City of Rocks National Reserve. The 1,240 acre ranch, which was in private ownership until 1999, is nestled in pastoral Big Cove at the base of Cache Peak, which rises above the ranch to more than 10,000 feet in elevation. Recognizing the uniqueness of world class climbing opportunities, surrounded by a wonderful ranch facility representing the cultural richness in the surrounding rural landscape helped motivate the NPS and IDPR along with other conservation partners to quickly act to preserve this gem of a setting for future public use.

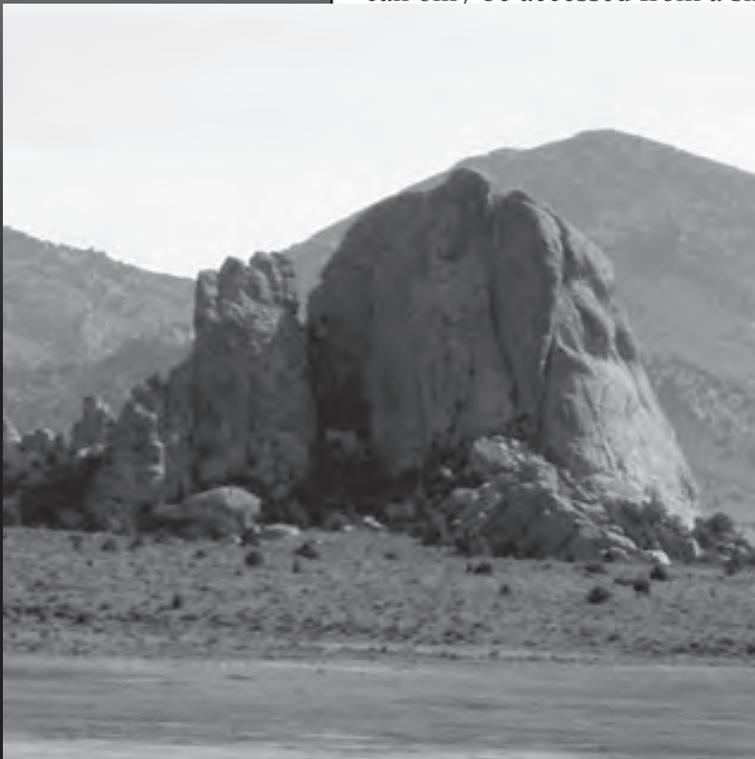
point where Big Cove Road (2800 South) ends at the ranch house. This, timeless example of rural architecture, guarded by poplar tree sentinels and serenaded by the babbling of nearby Almo Creek, is the jumping off point to climbing, hiking, riding, and other exploration opportunities.

Adding to the value and size of the ranch property, under an agreement between IDPR and the USDA Forest Service and BLM, an additional contiguous 880 acres is jointly managed as an Interagency Recreation Area. The coordinated management of these lands will protect sensitive natural resources such as nesting raptors, archeological sites, and the pinyon-juniper woodlands and allow for increased recreational and interpretive opportunities.

*View of Castle Rock formation at the Ranch Unit*

Unlike the larger City of Rocks National Reserve, the Ranch Unit can only be accessed from a single

The 12-acre Administrative Unit, near the village of Almo has the historic California Trail running through one corner of the property. This gives the park another interpretive and educational opportunity for the California Trail. Currently this site houses the visitor center and administrative offices that service both Castle Rocks State Park and City of Rocks National Reserve. A maintenance building has been constructed at this centrally located site. Approximately four acres of the site is in pasture.



Smoky Mountain, the third unit of the park, offers additional recreational opportunities on the two parcels of land, totaling

240 acres owned by the BLM and managed by IDPR under a Recreation and Public Purposes lease. Although lacking the stunning granite monoliths of the Ranch Unit, the Smoky Mountain Unit is perfectly suited for development of a campground. A 37 unit, full-service recreational vehicle campground will be built in 2006.

## **PARK CLASSIFICATION**

### ***PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM***

All Idaho state parks are classified using the “State Park Classification and Resource Area Designation System” adopted by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board in August 2005. “Through park classification, the dominant character and principal values of an area are defined, and use and management policies are established,” according to the classification document. The classifications are: Natural Park, Recreation Park, Heritage Park, and Recreation Trailway. Classification of the unique attributes of a park is the first step in focusing the planning, development, and management efforts important in balancing public recreational opportunities and resource integrity.

Each classification has unique criteria ( See Appendix 5A), a distinct purpose, compatible uses, appropriate development intensity and specific management principles. Consideration is also given to any national, state or

regional designations that may already exist in relation to the park. A classification system allows the programming, orderly development and appropriate use of park lands based on management policies.

### ***CLASSIFICATION OF CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK***

The Castle Rocks property came into the state park system in 2003 through a land exchange with the National Park Service. The federal documentation of the exchange, in an Environmental Assessment (U.S. Dept. of Interior 2002), states that, “The intent of IDPR is to designate and manage the new park under its Natural Park classification.” That classification was affirmed unanimously by planning team participants during a charette in May 2001. The planning team consisted of individuals from state and federal agencies who had knowledge of the site resources and values (Castle Rocks Planning Charette Final Report, 2001, pg 21).

### ***THE PURPOSE OF A NATURAL PARK***

Natural Parks are established to maintain the ecological integrity of areas of Idaho possessing exceptional resource values that illustrate Idaho’s natural history. Natural Parks provide for the use and enjoyment of these resources in a manner that will enhance the understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of these resources for the enjoyment of present and future generations.



*Saddlehorn formation in Ranch Unit*

***DESIRED VISITOR EXPERIENCES***

Visitors to Natural Parks will be offered the opportunity to find solitude, a leisure atmosphere, observation/study of natural features, positive experiences in natural surroundings, and a friendly and safe environment. This includes the development of personal outdoor ethics, development of knowledge of natural processes, and opportunities for directed and/or independent study.

***RESOURCE AND SITE QUALIFICATIONS***

A Natural Park must contain natural resources of statewide significance. Statewide significance means that the unit contains unique, natural values of sufficient extent and importance to meaningfully contribute to the broad illustration of the state's natural history. These include natural (botanical, zoological, and geological) and scenic qualities, which are both beautiful and representative of the state.

A Natural Park should be sufficiently comprehensive to allow effective management of a community of indigenous flora and fauna. A Natural Park should also provide a variety of opportunities for public enjoyment in a natural setting with minimum negative effect to the resource. A park may contain resource values other than those for which the park received

its overall classification. These secondary resources should be of a lesser magnitude than the resources for which the park received its overall classification. The use and protection of these secondary resources will be addressed by subsequent resource area designations. The existence of these secondary resources should not unduly affect the determination of the overall park classification.

Natural Parks should be established where significant and unique aspects of the state's natural resources exist.

**MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

Resource Management - Management will be directed at maintaining the ecological integrity and interpreting the natural values of the unit. Management will seek to maintain balance in the ecological community and reestablish missing elements of that community, such as indigenous plant and animal life to the extent practical.

Compatible Uses - Visitor use includes both interpretation and outdoor recreation in a natural setting. In addition to being an outdoor classroom, a Natural Park is a place for participating in those outdoor recreational activities which can be accommodated without detriment to the natural character and features of the park and do not detract in any way from the natural scene. In the broad sense, park use falls predominantly in the aesthetic

portion of the recreational spectrum. Natural Parks are not intended to accommodate all forms or unlimited volumes of recreation use. Compatible uses could include hiking, interpretive programming, nature study, individual camping, group camping, picnicking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, grazing, equestrian use, boating, swimming and other recreational pursuits which do not significantly degrade from the natural process or aesthetic qualities of the area.

Physical Developments - Facilities required for the health, safety, and protection of users, as well as those consistent with compatible uses shall be provided. Location, scale and design of all facilities shall be complementary to the environment and to the values being preserved. Facilities should support customer services, enhance the visitor's experience and provide for staff operational needs. Typical development might include: group campgrounds, individual campsites, lodges, marina facilities, boat launches, swimming beaches, visitor/interpretive centers, program areas, trails, trailhead facilities, staff housing areas, maintenance yards, and other similar facilities.

## **PARK MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS**

A vision statement should provide a desired future condition of a park. While the vision looks to the future, a mission statement should describe the current focus

of the park. Park staff can regularly review the mission statement to see if it still accurately describes the management focus.

### **Park Mission Statement**

“The mission of Castle Rocks State Park 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”.

### **Park Vision Statement**

“Castle Rocks State Park is 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 State Park will be recognized as a special place where time stands still and the visitor is a

respectful guest.”

## **PARK GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **A. Natural Resources**

- A1. Define the scope of ranching activities in the park.
  - Grazing Management Plan
- A2. Provide natural resource stewardship.
  - Hunting Management Plan
- A3. Provide archaeological resource stewardship.
- A4. Protect view of front massif.
  - Views into the park
  - Key locations within park

### **B. Community**

- B1. Safeguard, in partnership with the local community, the rural landscape and its visual values.

### **C. Development**

- C1. Tie together the Ranch, the Smoky Mountain, and the Administrative Units into a cohesive park.
- C2. Create visitor services facilities at the Smoky Mountain Unit.
- C3. Provide for access, circulation and parking.

### **D. Transportation**

- D1. Provide better circulation between units, i.e. bike paths/ road lanes, equestrian trails, etc

### **E. Health/Safety**

- E1. Provide for emergency access to the interior of the Ranch Unit.

### **F. Education/Interpretation**

- F1. Provide interpretation of the natural resources, ranching history and archaeological resources.
- F2. Partner with educational and non-profit institutions to enhance Interpretive programs.

### **G. Recreation**

- G1. Provide a world-class

*Climbing Ranger Brad Schilling at Backyard Boulders in Ranch Unit*



climbing experience.

G2. Enhance day use opportunities such as picnicking, birding, pine nut gathering, hunting, horseback riding, attending workshops and classes.

G3. Provide areas where groups can gather.

- Picnic Shelter at Ranch Unit within walking access of ranch house

G4. Enhance non-motorized recreational trail opportunities.

- Provide trail access to and through the park other than the main entrance.
- Provide a trail system within the park that accommodates different kinds of non-motorized users.

G5. Diversify overnight facilities.

- Expand campground facilities at Smoky Mountain Unit
- Develop Primitive camping at Smoky Mountain Unit
- Provide Bunkhouse at Ranch Unit in close proximity to existing ranch house
- Explore partnerships with BLM for backcountry yurts near the Smoky Mountain Unit.
- Possible conversion of ranch house into overnight facilities

## H. Land Ownership and Management

H1. Assist partners in managing contiguous public lands so the boundaries between CRSP and federal lands are “invisible.”

## I. Social/Psychological

I1. Continue and expand upon use of park for events such as RanchFest.

## J. Staffing

J1. Provide adequate employee housing, and volunteer sites.

J2. Encourage the increased use of volunteers in development and programs.

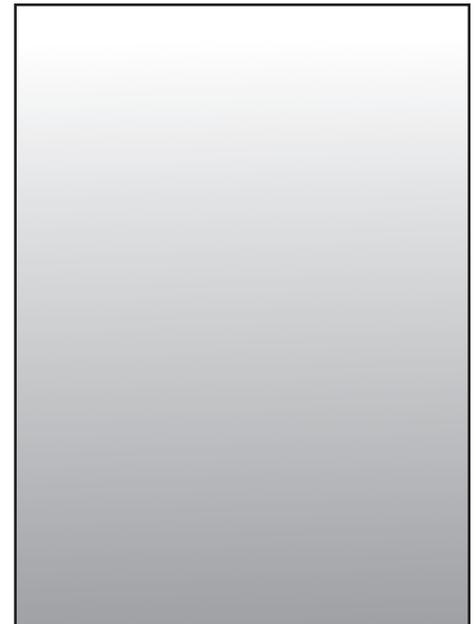
## K. Land Use

K1. Manage livestock grazing for long-term health of pasture, and for wildlife (such as wintering mule deer, and sage grouse leks).

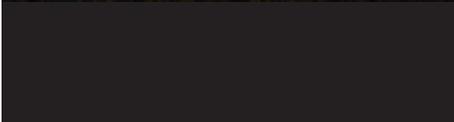
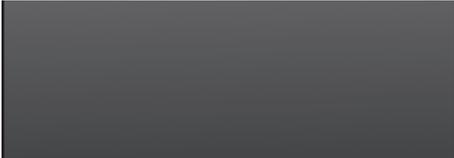
## L. Accessibility

L1. Develop new facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities.

L2. Evaluate current facilities for potential for improving accessibility. Weigh possible improvements against priority resource values.



*Looking at the Ranch Unit, with the Castle Rock and other formations at the base of Cache Peak. View from the Smoky Mountain Unit*



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## **RESOURCE AREA DESIGNATION SYSTEM**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation is charged with the dual mission of protection and preserving the resources of the state park system and of providing recreation opportunities and facilities for public use. Classification of Castle Rocks State Park as a Natural Park recognizes its natural and scenic resource significance. The sense of solitude is a hallmark of the experience at this park. It is in this remarkable setting that IDPR must bring together diverse recreational, educational, and interpretive opportunities while protecting the sometimes fragile resources.

The resource area designation process identifies areas in a park that are most suitable for various activities within the framework of resource protection. Designations define the patterns of human activity in a given area. Designations control use and development and guide the arrangement of park activities and facilities to obtain a balance between visitor enjoyment and protection of park resources.

### ***PURPOSE***

Some resources, such as historic structures, archeological and paleontological sites, and sensitive riparian and wetland habitats, require greater protection than others. Development and

recreational activities have to be limited in these areas. Other sites are suitable for intensive recreation, camping, trails and interpretive facilities. To integrate land characteristics, protection needs and area-specific suitability for development and/or recreation activities, a resource area designation system has been developed for use in parks statewide. This system considers the unit's classification and purpose, the area's resource values and sensitivities, recreation potential, and desired visitor experiences.

Resource values are the relative importance of historical, cultural and natural resources to society. Resources of national, statewide or regional significance are to be considered of high value and importance. Archaeological and paleontological sites and historic structures are of high value. Specific factors used in evaluating resource values include rarity, endangerment and uniqueness. Resource sensitivity is a term used to qualify the degree to which a resource can be adversely affected by human activity. Cultural and natural resource sensitivities play key roles in determining appropriate development and use in specific areas. The designation of resource areas is based on analysis and integration of resource management and protection objectives, resource constraints, and resource sensitivity information.

### **SUNSET IN ALMO VALLEY**

*Across the summer fields of home  
I gazed at close of day  
And memory paints the vision clear,  
Emotion bids it stay.*

*A fringe of willows with the hill  
back-dropped  
The mountain valley shows  
Gold against the amethyst  
Green against the rose.*

*Touched by a light that hath no name,  
A glory never sung,  
Aloft on sky and mountain wall  
Are God's great pictures hung.*

*The granite spires of castled rocks  
No longer are gray-browed;  
They melt in gold and rosy mist;  
The rock is softer than the cloud.*

*The valley holds its breath,  
A warm light is unfurled.  
The silence of Eternity  
Seems falling on the world.*

*What presence from the  
Heavenly heights  
To those on earth incline?  
What enters in my soul to stay?  
It is a symphony divine!*

*A symphony of color sifts  
Through purple veils of air  
And wraps the willowed stream  
and field  
With loving mystic care.*

*Continues on following page*

### **PROCEDURE**

A resource area designation system has been developed to classify all lands managed by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Six levels of protection (or appropriate levels of development/activity) are recognized in this system. These levels span a wide range of resource management strategies, from low resource impact management in the Scientific Area to high resource impact management in the Recreation and Service/Support Areas. All land within a state park shall receive resource area designations during the preparation of the master plan for the unit. Depending upon the unique characteristics of each park, any or all of the six resource area designations may be utilized; however, it should not be expected that all resource area designations will appear in all parks. Resource areas are designated and their boundaries delineated by the Planning Review Team during the park's master planning process and are approved by the Idaho Park and Recreation Board with its adoption of the plan. Resource area boundaries may be refined during the preparation of subsequent implementation plans by park staff. Resource area changes or relocation of resource area boundaries require staff analysis, justification and Board approval.

### **RESOURCE AREA DESCRIPTIONS**

Descriptions of these resource

area designations along with management objectives, characteristics, and typical activities are outlined below. A map depicting the various area designation boundaries for lands administered by Castle Rocks State Park is displayed on the "Resource Area Designation Map" (See Map 6.1).

A table describing all the categories in the Resource Area Designation System is in Appendix 5A. The designations for Castle Rocks State Park are explained below.

### **SCIENTIFIC AREA**

The Scientific Area is designated with the letter (S) on the Resource Area Designation Map.

Description - Scientific areas encompass resources that have unique or exceptional natural, scenic, and educational value. These may include: outstanding geological formations or features illustrating geological processes; fossil evidence of the development of life on earth; an ecological community illustrating characteristics of a physiographic province or a biome; a biota of relative stability maintaining itself under prevailing natural conditions, such as a climax community; an ecological community illustrating the process of succession and restoration to a natural condition following disruptive change.

Management Objectives - The primary objective is to protect and perpetuate the individual features

of unique natural or scientific significance or areas of land or water which possess inherent conditions of exceptional natural, scientific or educational value.

Physical development shall be limited to the facilities absolutely necessary for protection, research, and educational projects, and where applicable for interpretive services. Human access to Scientific Areas is limited to educational and scientific purposes. Appropriate management may include prohibition of use to protect the resource from degradation. This resource area shall be adequate in size to protect the values within the area. Resource modification can occur in this resource area to maintain or restore these areas in as natural a state as possible.

**Resource Area Characteristics**  
- Although Scientific Areas are primarily established to safeguard unique resources, these areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are isolated, relatively inaccessible and free of all but natural sounds. As visits to these areas must be approved by park staff, visitors to these areas are assured a personal experience that is undisturbed by other park users.

**Typical Activities** - Activities causing extremely low impact to the natural resources, such as guided interpretive walks and scientific study.

## ***NATURAL AREA***

The Natural Area is designated with the letter (N) on the Resource Area Designation Map.

**Description** - Lands and waters containing outstanding natural communities and possessing natural integrity. This area encompasses exceptional geologic, wildlife, botanical, lacustrine, riparian, and riverine environments. Natural Areas are established to promote, to perpetuate, and where necessary, to restore the natural character of the land.

**Management Objectives** - The primary objective is to preserve the resource in a near-natural state. Appropriate management includes protection of the resource from degradation, inappropriate development, and over-use. Resource modification can occur in these resource areas only to maintain or restore these areas in as near-natural state as possible.

**Resource Area Characteristics**  
- Natural Areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are secluded, with subdued noise levels and a serene, peaceful environment. In these areas, a visitor may occasionally encounter individuals or small groups seeking a similar experience.

**Typical Activities** - Activities causing low impact to the natural resources, such as hiking,

*A lover's claim on all is mine I see  
to have and hold.  
For beauty seen is never lost.  
I'm flushed with joy untold!*

*My heart beats high in ecstasy!  
God's colors all are fast!  
The beauty of this sunset hour  
Into my soul has passed.*

*The golden valley pales and shades;  
Slow fades the vision from the sky,  
And like a benediction  
This glory, too, must die.*

*No whisper from the mountain pines,  
No fragrant cedars tell  
Of her, who paused and gazed  
this day,  
And love those scenes so well.*

*Poem written by Pearl Ruth Taylor in 1922 at age 16.*



*Looking towards the ranch house from Castle Rock in the Ranch Unit*

wildlife watching, photography, cross-country skiing, dispersed picnicking, small-group interpretive walks, and boating activities that do not degrade the environment or detract from the desired visitor experience.

***HERITAGE AREA***

The Heritage Area is designated with the letter (H) on the Resource Area Designation Map.

Description - These areas encompass structures and features of significant historic, cultural, archeological or architectural value.

Management Objectives - Preservation of historic and structural integrity is of paramount importance. Emphasis will be placed upon provision of opportunities for education and interpretation in and around areas, structures and features of historic, cultural, archaeological and architectural value. Appropriate management is to facilitate visitor appreciation without degradation of the resource.

Resource Area Characteristics - Heritage Areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. Although able to accommodate groups of visitors, these areas are quiet, passive and thought-provoking. During periods of peak use, visitors to these areas are almost certain to encounter other visitors seeking the same

experience.

Typical Activities - The Heritage Area is a moderate use area for historic-period preservation, restorations, and interpretation. Activities include those causing low impacts to the resource, such as personal inspection, photography, scientific study, small-group interpretive walks and special events. Recreation-related facilities are generally secondary and will be separated from the site(s) of historic/cultural resources by sufficient buffers. Activities in keeping with the historical period of the historic/cultural resources are encouraged.

***RECREATION AREA***

The Recreation Area is designated with the letter (R) on the Resource Area Designation Map.

Description - Lands and waters offering moderate to high levels of diverse recreation and development opportunities, with a secondary function of conserving the natural character of the surroundings.

Management Objectives - The primary objective of a Recreation Area is to provide recreation opportunities so that park visitors can safely enjoy the park and its resources. Appropriate management is to facilitate recreation without irreparable resource damage. The highest level of development and activity in a park is intended to occur within this resource area. Recreation Areas are established where cultural



*Natural shelter created by leaning rocks at Backyard Boulders formation*

resources are absent and the soils, slope, drainage and vegetation can support intensive recreational activities. The landscape within this area can be modified substantially to meet this objective.

**Resource Area Characteristics**  
- Recreation Areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. These areas are public and dynamic. They are readily accessible, busy, crowded, noisy and characterized by almost continuous activity. Visitors to a Recreation Area during periods of peak use are certain to encounter many other visitors engaged in a wide variety of recreational and social activities.

**Typical Activities** - Typical activities include those causing potentially moderate to high impacts to area resources, such as developed camping; group sports; developed picnicking; boat mooring, launching and beaching; swimming; beach activities; non-motorized trail use; motorized trail use; parking; outdoor interpretive programming; and overnight lodging in dorms, lodges, cabins, yurts or recreational housing. Also included are the activities listed in the Natural and Heritage Areas above.

### ***SERVICE/SUPPORT AREA***

The Service/Support Area is designated with the letters (S/S) on the Resource Area Designations Map.

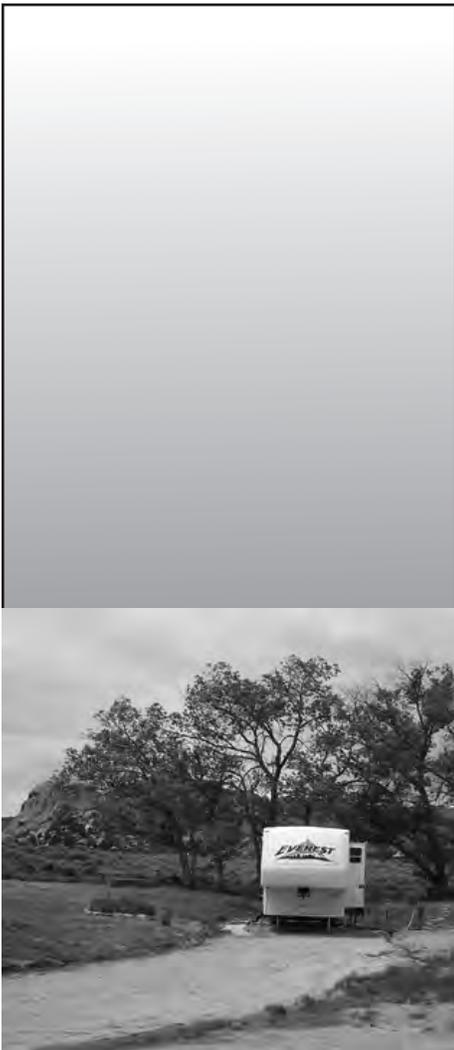
**Description** - Lands necessary to provide services to park visitors, housing to park employees, and support the maintenance of park facilities, equipment and vehicles.

**Management Objectives** - The primary objective is to support activities in the other five areas in a safe, efficient and economic manner. Although activities in this area are essential to the other areas, they are not necessarily aesthetically compatible. Appropriate management is to centralize service, support and maintenance functions in specific, limited areas buffered from activities in the other areas. Facilities in this area should be designed and managed to efficiently accommodate the maximum levels of use anticipated.

**Resource Area Characteristics**  
- Service Support Areas have certain characteristics and atmosphere that cumulatively and subconsciously impart the desired visitor experience. Service Support Areas providing visitor services are readily accessible, busy, noisy and characterized by continuous daytime activity. Visitors to Service Support Areas during daylight hours are certain to encounter many other visitors seeking services and engaged in a wide variety of recreational and social activities. Service Support Areas supporting staff functions only, e.g., park maintenance and staff housing facilities, are not open to the public.



*Existing picnic facility at amphitheater near ranch house*



*Existing RV pad for use by volunteer hosts - one of two near ranch house*

Typical Activities - Typical visitor activities include park admission, registration, fee collection, visitor information, retail sales, indoor/outdoor interpretive programming, provision of developed moorage, developed parking, and concession operation. Staff activities include seasonal and permanent employee housing and activities associated with shop buildings, storage yards, fueling facilities and utility stations.

### ***DEVELOPMENT OF MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES***

Two management alternatives were created based on resource characteristics and capabilities and feedback from public workshops, the planning review team, the stakeholder advisory team, park staff, and written comments from the public. The creation of preferred development alternatives organizes, clarifies and refines the multitude of issues reviewed during the planning process into a cohesive plan.

#### **Management Alternative A – Low Level Development**

The concept behind the low level management alternative is that minimal development of the three units of Castle Rocks State Park will guarantee the preservation of both the solitude one senses upon visiting as well as the cultural heritage of each park unit. This strategy will allow the maximum protection of the park's

resources while developing low impact activities and interpretive opportunities. (See Map 6.2)

General considerations with this plan include:

- A) Strengthen the cohesiveness between the units through common design elements, aesthetics and signage.
- B) Increase coordination of activities with other agencies active in protection and management of the resources of the park such as the NPS, BLM, USDA Forest Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the State Historic Preservation Office.
- C) Develop new, or review of existing, management plans for resource issues such as grazing, wildfire, noxious weeds, and cultural resources.

Management objectives identified as unique to this management alternative include:

- A) Ranch Unit: This alternative recommends maintaining the unit in its current state with little modification. It would permit access to climbing and hiking opportunities farther in the park, but keep them at a primitive level. No roads would be developed beyond the ranch house. The emphasis would be on interpretation of cultural and historical resources that would not impact the pristine nature of the current park.
- B) Administrative Unit: Both

plans recommend increasing interpretive and picnic activities at this unit while planning for conversion of the current visitor center if a new visitor center is built at the Smoky Mountain Unit to administrative offices.

- C) Smoky Mountain Unit: Both plans call for a new visitor center to be developed in the future at this unit due to its central location between the park and national reserve. This alternative limits campground development to the amount agreed to in the Recreation and Public Purposes lease between IDPR and BLM.

### **Management Alternative B** **– High Level Development**

The concept behind the high level management alternative is to maximize access to the three units of Castle Rocks State Park to offer diverse recreational opportunities while protecting a core area with the most significant natural resources.

General considerations with this plan would be the same as the low level development concept and include: (See Map 6.3)

- A) Strengthen the cohesiveness between the units through common design elements, aesthetics and signage.
- B) Increase coordination of activities with other agencies active in protection and management of the resources of the park such as the NPS, BLM, USDA Forest Service,

Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the State Historic Preservation Office.

- C) Develop new, or review of existing, management plans for resource issues such as such as grazing, wildfire, noxious weeds, and cultural resources.

Management objectives unique to this management alternative include:

- A) Ranch Unit: Increased access for recreational activities is key to this alternative. The plan proposes developing an access road to the Castle Rock formation. The road would provide easier access to a larger segment of park visitors. Development of trails that lead to other areas of the park as well as links to other public lands should be developed. A bunk house is planned near the existing ranch house to provide group camping opportunities. Construction of a pond, which would have to be stocked, would provide a fishing opportunity and serve as a reservoir for irrigation water. Finally, a covered picnic shelter will provide a space designated for picnicking and a gathering place for groups.
- B) Administrative Unit: Both plans recommend increasing interpretive and picnic activities at this unit while planning for conversion of the current visitor center if a new visitor center is built at the Smoky Mountain Unit.
- C) Smoky Mountain Unit: Both



*Meeting of PRT and SAT members at ranch house*



*Flagging laid out in summer of 2005 to evaluate potential trails to rock formations*



*IDPR jeep - One goal is to maintain existing ranch roads for administrative purpose*

plans call for a new visitor center to be developed in the future at this unit. This alternative recommends working with BLM to develop back country yurts in close proximity to the Smoky Mountain Unit.

- D) Expand camping at Smoky Mountain Unit per lease agreement with BLM.

### **Preferred Management Alternative Selection Process**

The selection process was designed to:

- A) clearly define the problems discovered through analysis of the project, B) consolidate a comprehensive range of planning options identified through committee and public input C) presentation of alternatives and selection of the preferred management alternative by Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Planning Review Team.

### **Proposed Development, Land Use Plan, and Facility Designation**

The High Level Management Alternative was selected by the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Planning Review Team after careful consideration of the resources and input received after review of the alternatives by the public. This alternative was selected because it would enhance the unique recreational opportunities found at Castle Rocks State Park while continuing to protect the sensitive natural

and cultural resources that make this such a special place. Some modifications were made to this alternative to comply with feedback from the SAT, PRT and the public.

The elements of the selected alternative are described on Map 6.4: “Proposed development, land use plan, and facility designation” map at the end of this chapter.

### ***DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THE CASTLE ROCKS RANCH UNIT***

#### **Park Entrance and Fee Collection**

- The main entry into the park will be the driveway leading to the ranch house.
- Park entry fees will be collected at the entry near the road. A self-service fee station will be used. An information kiosk will be located near the entry.

#### **Access, Circulation and Parking**

- A turn-around large enough for tour buses and vehicles pulling trailers will be located at the entry.
- Vehicular circulation will be improved by moving the corral, equestrian loading and parking up the hill from the ranch house. The current parking lot will serve day use visitors.
- Develop a road to the Castle Rock formation. A small parking lot and restroom will be developed at the end of the road. The group’s decision was not to build a loop road, but

to evaluate it in the future if public demand warrants it and if resources can be protected.

- The entry road bridge over Almo Creek will be rebuilt.
- Improve existing trails and develop new trails that improve access to other key natural features of the park. Develop interpretive sites along trail routes. Where possible, plan trails that will improve access to other adjoining public lands.
- Continue to use existing jeep trail as emergency and administrative access to remote areas of the park.
- Realign entry road

### **Education and Interpretation**

- The relocated corral can service activities that enhance educational opportunities regarding the ranching heritage of the park.
- The ranch house will serve as a visitor contact place and satellite visitor center. The ranch house currently has small displays about families that lived on the ranch. The ranch house interpretive displays will focus on the ranching heritage of the area. Remodeling may occur to serve new activities.
- Livestock grazing and associated ranching activities will continue as a way to emphasize the ranching heritage. RanchFest will be continued to involve the local community and visitors in recognizing and celebrating the ranching heritage of the area.
- Rock art, archeological surveys and digs will provide examples

of the rich prehistoric culture and artifacts of the park.

- The mitigation wetland will be devoted to maximizing biological diversity and non-consumptive recreation such as birding, wildflower and wildlife viewing. The wetland will be fenced, receive aggressive treatment of noxious weeds and will be monitored.

### **Recreational Opportunities**

- The CRSP Climbing Management Plan, 2003, is incorporated as a supplement to this master plan. Climbing routes will be increased where possible without harm to the natural and cultural resources.
- The trails management plan will address the needs of climbers who want to access the rocks, equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers. The plan will identify possible links to other public lands, other units of the park, and the CIRO.
- All trails within the ranch unit will remain non motorized.
- The existing interior ranch road will be maintained for administrative use and emergency access into the park. It will also serve as a trail for approved uses such as equestrian, pedestrian, or mountain biking.
- A pond should be built near Almo Creek, if environmentally feasible, north of the ranch house. It will be stocked with non-native fish to provide fishing opportunities.
- Existing game hunting opportunities will be



*Almo Creek full with spring run-off*



*Visitor Center at the Administrative Unit*

maintained.

### **Housing and Facilities**

- A bunk house, which will be available to the public, either as individuals or groups, by reservation, will be constructed near the ranch house. Housing for staff will also be developed for supervisory and security purposes.
- A group picnic area with covered shelter will be constructed near Almo Creek north of the ranch house. A road and parking area will provide access.

### ***DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT***

#### **Education and Interpretation and Recreational Opportunities**

- An interpretive display will provide another link to the California Trail, which crosses the Administrative Unit.
- An information kiosk will link this unit to the Ranch and Smoky Mountain Units and provide information about CRSP.
- Picnic tables will be located on the shaded lawn.

#### **Maintenance and Operation**

- The current visitor center will be converted to staff offices once the new one is constructed. Staff housing will be developed along with volunteer host recreational vehicle sites.

### ***DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT***

#### **New Visitor Center**

- A new visitor center will be shared by CRSP and CIRO and will be the main point of contact for the state park. Fees will be collected at the visitor center.

#### **Education, Interpretation, and Recreational Opportunities**

- The new visitor center will be the primary contact point for park and reserve visitors. The center may include an indoor theater.
- An amphitheater will be developed at the campground within walking distance of the camp sites.
- The existing campground will be expanded according to the BLM lease agreement.
- Expand camping opportunities with the addition of a tent camp loop and back country yurts. Identify possible links to other public lands recreational opportunities in the trails management plan.

<b>Castle Rocks State Park</b>			
<b>Opinion of Probable Cost :: Cassia County, Idaho :: June 2006</b>			
<b><i>Cost Estimate Item</i></b>	<b><i>Level of Priority</i></b>		
	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>LOW</b>
<b><i>Overall Park Development</i></b>			
Signage - One at each park and 3 along routes to park	\$ 24,000.00		
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 24,000.00</b>		
<b><i>Ranch Unit</i></b>			
Entry Information Kiosk	\$ 6,000.00		
Entry gate, turn-around & paved entry road to ranch house	\$ 190,000.00		
Reconstruction of bridge along entry road with rails	\$ 30,000.00		
Relocate existing corrals	\$ 28,000.00		
New Corral loading, turn around and small parking lot	\$ 15,000.00		
Realignment and expansion of current parking lot	\$ 30,000.00		
Develop park road to Castles formation with turnaround	\$ 250,000.00		
Parking at Castles formation	\$ 8,000.00		
3 Vault toilet facilities at Castles w/ site improvements	\$ 40,000.00		
Improvement of existing trails and jeep trail		\$ 125,000.00	
Construction of new trails		\$ 75,000.00	
Interpretive and Recreational signage along trails		\$ 10,000.00	
Construct new fishing pond			\$ 30,000.00
Construct trail to pond			\$ 9,000.00
Improvements to existing Ranch House	\$ 105,000.00		
New bunk house	\$ 840,000.00		
Group picnic shelter and tables with vault toilet	\$ 80,000.00		
Picnic shelter service access road and turnaround	\$ 18,000.00		
Picnic shelter parking	\$ 5,000.00		
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,645,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 210,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 39,000.00</b>
<b><i>Administrative Unit</i></b>			
California Trail Interpretive Trail Kiosk	\$ 6,000.00		
Information Kiosk	\$ 6,000.00		
Picnic tables			\$ 3,000.00
Convert current visitor center into staff offices			\$ 60,000.00
Develop housing, infrastructure for full-time and seasonal employees and volunteers		\$ 240,000.00	
Develop volunteer host recreational vehicle sites		\$ 36,000.00	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 12,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 276,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 63,000.00</b>
<b><i>Smoky Mountain Unit</i></b>			
Develop new visitor center			\$ 2,200,000.00
Center will have indoor theater for interpretation			
Center will service both CRSP and CIRO			
New amphitheater with restroom			\$ 300,000.00
40 camp site campground loop expansion	\$ 2,310,000.00		
New tent camping loop with vault toilet (15 units)		\$ 180,000.00	
Develop 4 back country yurts with new 10' access trail	\$ 120,000.00		
4 Vault toilets (One at each unit)	\$ 60,000.00		
New trails for access to other public lands			\$ 60,000.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,490,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 180,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,560,000.00</b>
<b>Sub-Total for each level of priority</b>	<b>\$ 4,171,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 666,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,662,000.00</b>
<b>Overall total for all proposed development</b>			<b>\$ 7,499,000.00</b>

# MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE 'B' - HIGH LEVEL DEVELOPMENT

## CONCEPT

The access to the three units of Castle Rocks State Park (CRSP) will be maximized to offer more diverse recreational opportunities while maintaining as much of a core area still in the Natural resource area designation as possible.

## GENERAL

- The three units will be linked through design elements and signage. A CRSP logo will be used on signs, information kiosks and printed materials. Road signs and a location map at each unit will cue the visitor that there are three park units with different services and activities. Informational signage and interpretation regarding historical trails should be developed.
- Park staff will continue to work with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service for natural resource management of the park and adjacent federal land. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game will continue to be a partner in wildlife management. The State Historic Preservation Office will be a key partner along with the other agencies in stewarding the significant cultural and archaeological resources of the park.
- A grazing management plan for heritage interpretation will be developed to assure continued ranching use, resource protection, and an income stream.
- A wildfire management plan will be developed for the highest level of benefit for wildlife, pasture and wildflower viewing while protecting significant park values and visitors from wildfire.
- A buffer zone will be developed with the Almo community and the Cassia County Commission to define and protect vistas into and out of the park.

## ADMINISTRATION UNIT

### (A1) Education and Interpretation and Recreational Opportunities

- A interpretive display will provide another link to the California Trail, which crosses the administrative unit.
- An information kiosk will link this unit to the ranch and Smoky Mountain units and provide information about CRSP.
- Picnic tables for use by staff and public, will be located on the shaded lawn.

### Maintenance and Operation

- The current visitor center will be converted to staff offices once the new one is constructed. Staff housing will be developed along with volunteer host sites with necessary services.

## SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT

### New Visitor Center

- (B1) A new visitor center will be shared by Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve. The visitor center will be the main entrance for both. Fees will be collected at the visitor center.

### Education, Interpretation, and Recreational Opportunities

- The new visitor center will be the primary contact point for park and reserve visitors. The center will develop an indoor theater for standard orientation A/V and all weather use.
- (B2) An amphitheater will be developed at the campground within walking distance of the camp sites.
- The existing campground will be expanded per BLM lease agreement.

## RANCH UNIT

### Park Entrance and Fee Collection

- (C1a) The main entry into the park will be the driveway leading to the ranch house.
- (C1b) Park entry fees will be collected at the entry. A self-service fee station will be available at the entry. An information kiosk will be located near the entry.

### Access, Circulation and Parking

- (C1a) A turn around large enough for tour buses and vehicles pulling trailers will be located at the entry.
- (C1b) Vehicular circulation will be improved by moving the corral, equestrian loading and parking up the hill. The current parking lot will serve day use visitors.

### Education and Interpretation

- (C2) The relocated corrals can service activities that enhance educational opportunities regarding the ranching heritage of park.
- (C3) The ranch house will serve as a visitor contact place and satellite visitor center. The ranch house currently has small displays about families that lived on the ranch. The ranch house interpretive displays will focus on the ranching heritage of the area.
- Livestock grazing and associated ranching activities will continue as a way to emphasize the ranching heritage. Ranchfest will be continued as a celebration to involve the local community and visitors in the ranching heritage of the area.
- Rock art, archaeological surveys and digs will provide examples of the rich prehistoric culture and artifacts of the park.
- (C4) A mitigation wetland will be devoted to maximizing biological diversity and non-consumptive recreation such as birding, wildflower and wildlife viewing. The wetland will be fenced and monitored with aggressive treatment of noxious weeds.

### Recreational Opportunities

- The Castle Rocks State Park Climbing Plan Management Plan, 2003, is incorporated as a supplement to this master plan.
- A trails management plan will be developed as a supplement to this master plan. It will address the needs of climbers who want to access the rocks, equestrians, hikers and perhaps mountain bikers. The plan will identify possible links to other public land and to the other units of CRSP and the City of Rocks National Reserve.
- All trails within the ranch unit will remain nonmotorized.
- (C5) Day use facilities at the ranch unit will be expanded by adding a group picnic area with a covered shelter.
- The current ranch road will be maintained for administrative use and emergency access into the park. It will also serve as a trail for approved uses such as equestrian, pedestrian, or mountain biking.

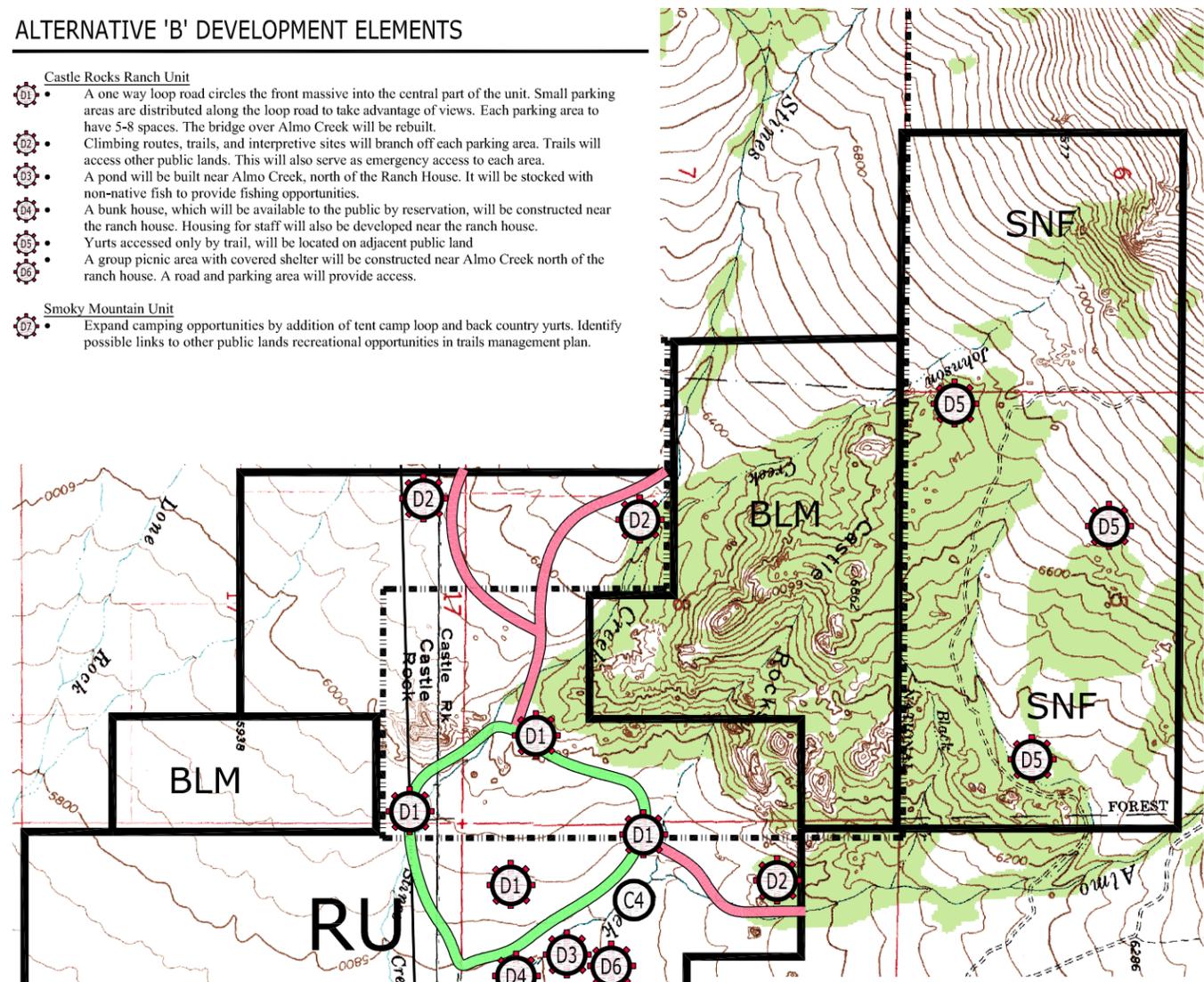
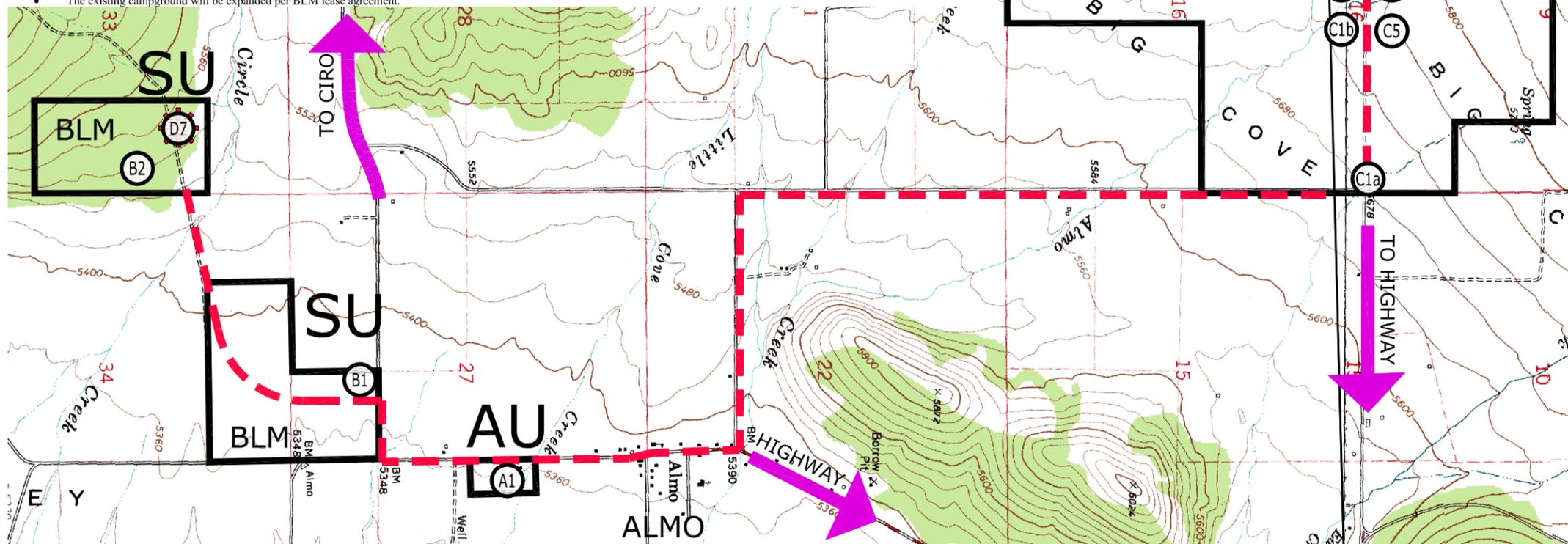
## ALTERNATIVE 'B' DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS

### Castle Rocks Ranch Unit

- (D1) A one way loop road circles the front massive into the central part of the unit. Small parking areas are distributed along the loop road to take advantage of views. Each parking area to have 5-8 spaces. The bridge over Almo Creek will be rebuilt.
- (D2) Climbing routes, trails, and interpretive sites will branch off each parking area. Trails will access other public lands. This will also serve as emergency access to each area.
- (D3) A pond will be built near Almo Creek, north of the Ranch House. It will be stocked with non-native fish to provide fishing opportunities.
- (D4) A bunk house, which will be available to the public by reservation, will be constructed near the ranch house. Housing for staff will also be developed near the ranch house.
- (D5) Yurts accessed only by trail, will be located on adjacent public land
- (D6) A group picnic area with covered shelter will be constructed near Almo Creek north of the ranch house. A road and parking area will provide access.

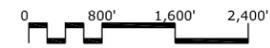
### Smoky Mountain Unit

- (D7) Expand camping opportunities by addition of tent camp loop and back country yurts. Identify possible links to other public lands recreational opportunities in trails management plan.



## LEGEND

- CRSP CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK
- IDPR ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY
- RU RANCH UNIT
- SU SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT
- AU ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
- NHL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
- NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - CITY OF ROCKS
- BLM BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
- SNF SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST
- INTER-UNIT ACCESS ROUTE



# MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVE 'A' - MINIMAL DEVELOPMENT

## CONCEPT

Minimal development of the three units of Castle Rock State Park will guarantee the preservation of both the unique solitude one senses upon visiting as well as the cultural heritage of each park unit. This strategy will allow the maximum protection of the park's resources while developing low impact activities and interpretation opportunities.

## GENERAL

- The three units will be linked through design elements and signage. A CRSP logo will be used on signs, information kiosks and printed materials. Road signs and a location map at each unit will cue the visitor that there are three park units with different services and activities. Informational signage and interpretation regarding historical trails should be developed.
- Park staff will continue to work with the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service for natural resource management of the park and adjacent federal land. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game will continue to be a partner in wildlife management. The State Historic Preservation Office along with these other agencies will be a key partner in stewarding the significant cultural and archaeological resources of the park.
- A grazing management plan for heritage interpretation will be developed to assure continued ranching use, resource protection, and an income stream.
- A wildfire management plan will be developed for the highest level of benefit for wildlife, pasture and wildflower viewing while protecting significant park values and visitors.
- A buffer zone will be developed with the Almo community and the Cassia County Commission to define and protect vistas into and out of the park.

## ADMINISTRATION UNIT

### A1 Education and Interpretation and Recreational Opportunities

- A interpretive display will provide another link to the California Trail, which crosses the administrative unit.
- An information kiosk will link this unit to the ranch and Smoky Mountain units and provide information about CRSP.
- Picnic tables for use by staff and public, will be located on the shaded lawn.

### Maintenance and Operation

- The current visitor center will be converted to staff offices once the new one is constructed. Staff housing will be developed along with volunteer host sites with necessary services.

## SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT

### New Visitor Center

- A new visitor center will be shared by Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve. The visitor center will be the main entrance for both. Fees will be collected at the visitor center.

### Education, Interpretation, and Recreational Opportunities

- The new visitor center will be the primary contact point for park and reserve visitors. The center will develop an indoor theater for standard orientation A/V and all weather use.
- An amphitheater will be developed at the campground within walking distance of the camp sites.
- The existing campground will be expanded per BLM lease agreement.

## RANCH UNIT

### Park Entrance and Fee Collection

- The main entry into the park will be the driveway leading to the ranch house.
- Park entry fees will be collected at the entry. A self-service fee station will be available at the entry. An information kiosk will be located near the entry.

### Access, Circulation and Parking

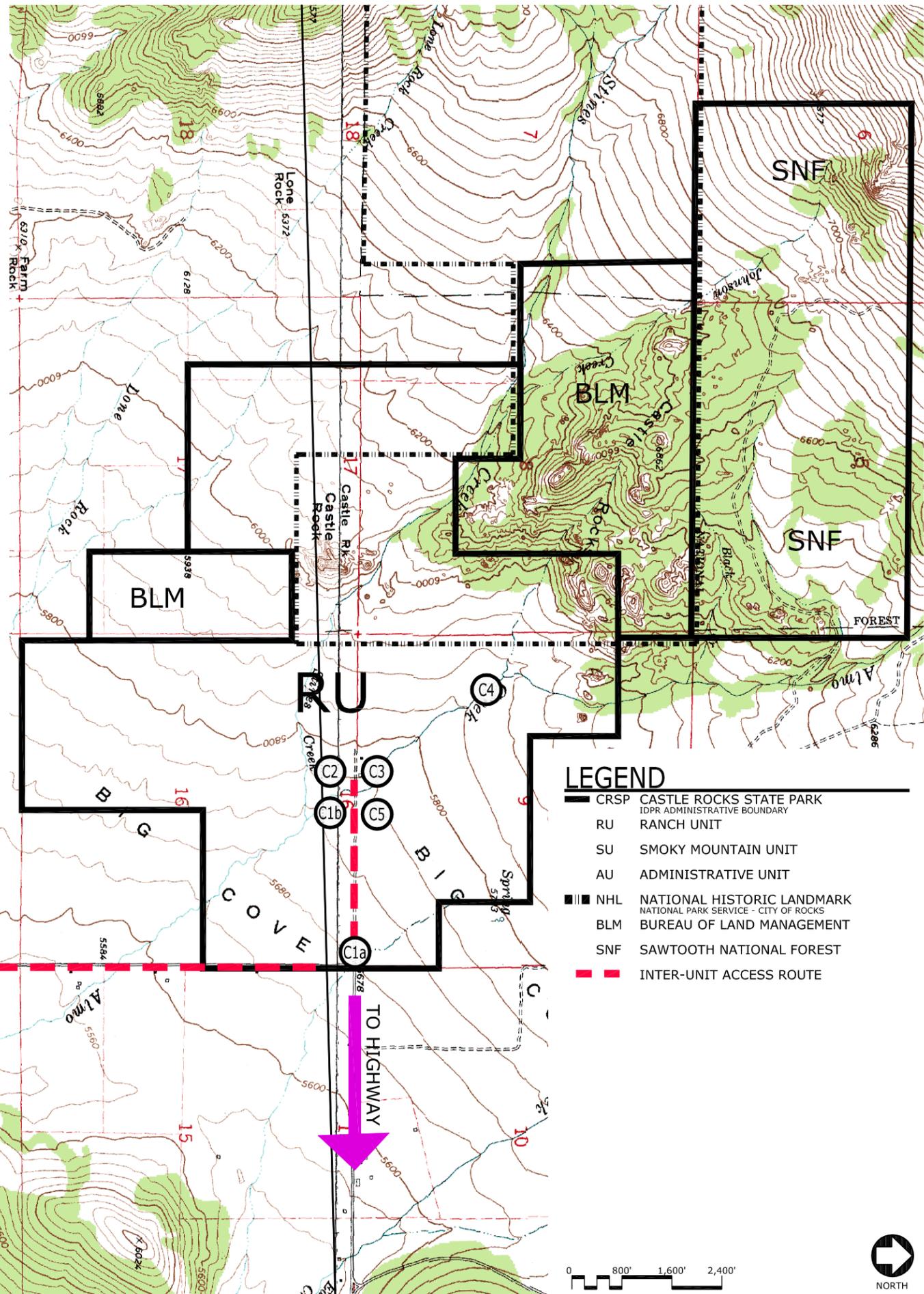
- A turn around large enough for tour buses and vehicles pulling trailers will be located at the entry.
- Vehicular circulation will be improved by moving the corral, equestrian loading and parking up the hill. The current parking lot will serve day use visitors.

### Education and Interpretation

- The relocated corrals can service activities that enhance educational opportunities regarding the ranching heritage of park.
- The ranch house will serve as a visitor contact place and satellite visitor center. The ranch house currently has small displays about families that lived on the ranch. The ranch house interpretive displays will focus on the ranching heritage of the area.
- Livestock grazing and associated ranching activities will continue as a way to emphasize the ranching heritage. Ranchfest will be continued as a celebration to involve the local community and visitors in the ranching heritage of the area.
- Rock art, archaeological surveys and digs will provide examples of the rich prehistoric culture and artifacts of the park.
- A mitigation wetland will be devoted to maximizing biological diversity and non-consumptive recreation such as birding, wildflower and wildlife viewing. The wetland will be fenced and monitored with aggressive treatment of noxious weeds.

### Recreational Opportunities

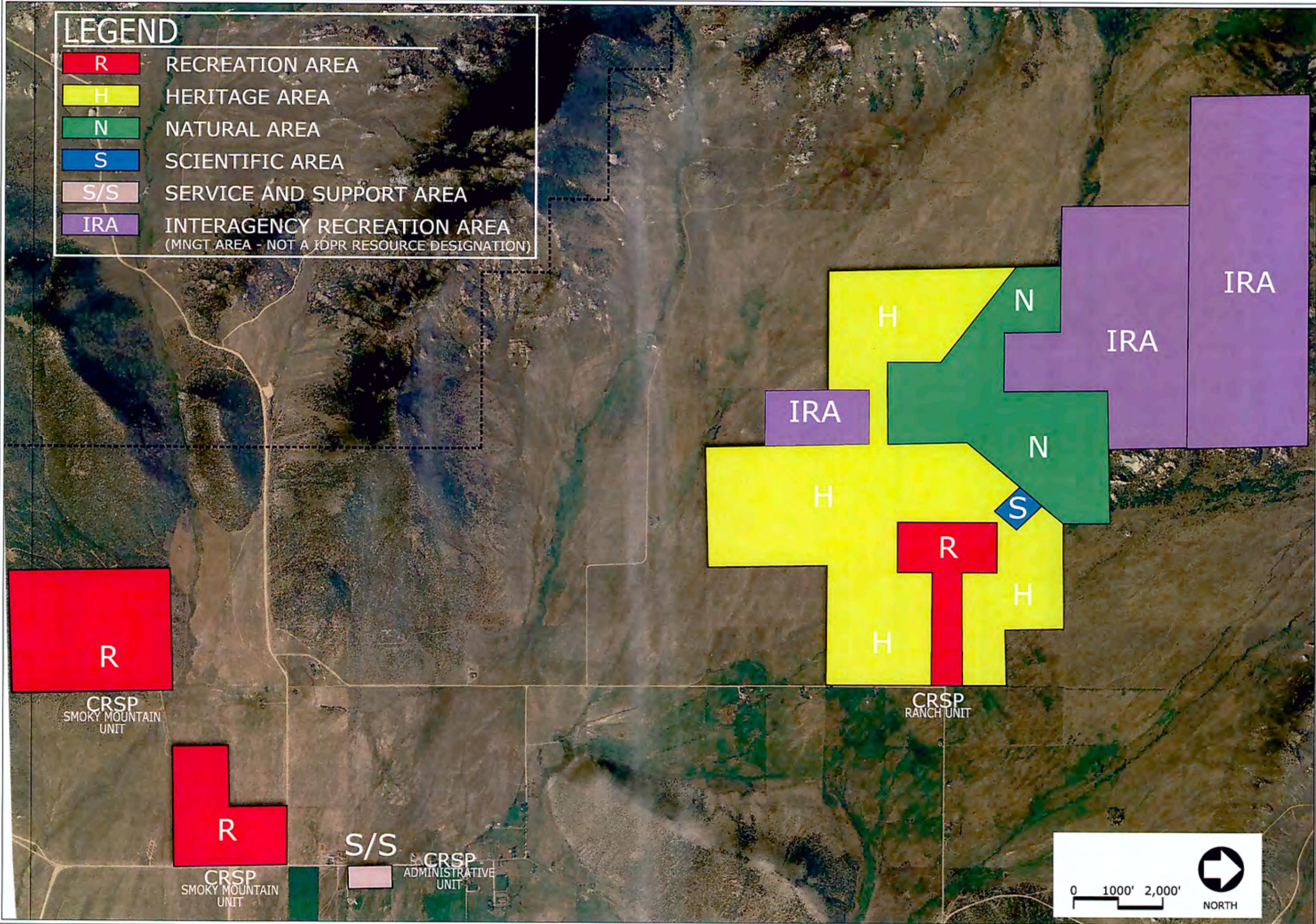
- The Castle Rocks State Park Climbing Plan Management Plan, 2003, is incorporated as a supplement to this master plan.
- A trails management plan will be developed as a supplement to this master plan. It will address the needs of climbers who want to access the rocks, equestrians, hikers and perhaps mountain bikers. The plan will identify possible links to other public land and to the other units of CRSP and the City of Rocks National Reserve.
- All trails within the ranch unit will remain nonmotorized.
- Day use facilities at the ranch unit will be expanded by adding a group picnic area with a covered shelter.
- The current ranch road will be maintained for administrative use and emergency access into the park. It will also serve as a trail for approved uses such as equestrian, pedestrian, or mountain biking.



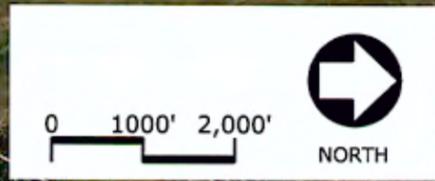


# LEGEND

R	RECREATION AREA
H	HERITAGE AREA
N	NATURAL AREA
S	SCIENTIFIC AREA
S/S	SERVICE AND SUPPORT AREA
IRA	INTERAGENCY RECREATION AREA (MNGT AREA - NOT A IDPR RESOURCE DESIGNATION)



## CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK RESOURCE AREA DESIGNATION MAP



MAP  
6.1

**GENERAL**

- The three units will be linked through design elements and signage. A CRSP logo will be used on signs, information kiosks and printed materials. Road signs and a location map at each unit will cue the visitor that there are three park units with different services and activities. Informational signage and interpretation regarding historical trails should be developed.

**ADMINISTRATION UNIT**

**(A) Education, Interpretation and Recreational Opportunities**

- An interpretive display will provide another link to the California Trail, which crosses the Administrative Unit.
- An information kiosk will link this unit to the Aanch and Smoky Mountain Units and provide information about CRSP.
- Picnic tables for use by staff and public, will be located on the shaded lawn.

**Maintenance and Operation**

- The current visitor center will be converted to staff offices once the new one is constructed. Staff housing will be developed along with volunteer host sites with necessary services.

**SMOKY MOUNTAIN UNIT**

**New Visitor Center**

- (B1) A new visitor center will be shared by Castle Rocks State Park and the City of Rocks National Reserve and will be the main point of contact for the state park. Fee will be collected at the visitor center.

**Education, Interpretation, and Recreational Opportunities**

- (B2) The new visitor center will be the primary contact point for park and reserve visitors. The center will develop an indoor theater with standard orientation A/V.
- (B3) An amphitheater will be developed at the campground within walking distance of the camp sites.
- (B4) The existing campground will be expanded per BLM lease agreement.

**Expansion of Camping Opportunities**

- (B4) Expand camping opportunities by addition of tent camp loop and back country yurts. Identify possible links to other public lands recreational opportunities in trails management plan.

**RANCH UNIT**

**Park Entrance and Fee Collection**

- (C1) The main entry into the Ranch Unit will be the driveway leading to the ranch house. Park entry fees will be collected at the entry. A self-service fee station will be available at the entry. An information kiosk will be located near the entry.

**Access, Circulation and Parking**

- (C1a) A turn around large enough for tour buses and vehicles pulling trailers will be located at the entry.
- (C1b) Vehicular circulation will be improved by moving the corral, equestrian loading and parking up the hill. The current parking lot will serve day use visitors. Develop a road to the Castle Rock formation. A small parking lot and restroom will be developed at the end of the road.
- (C2) The entry road bridge over Almo Creek will be rebuilt.

**Education and Interpretation**

- (C3) The relocated corrals can service activities that enhance educational opportunities regarding the ranching heritage of park.
- (C4) The ranch house will serve as a visitor contact place and satellite visitor center. The ranch house currently has small displays about families that lived on the ranch. The ranch house interpretive displays will focus on the ranching heritage of the area. Livestock grazing and associated ranching activities will continue as a way to emphasize the ranching heritage. Ranchfest will be continued as a celebration to involve the local community and visitors in the ranching heritage of the area. Rock art, archaeological surveys and digs will provide examples of the rich prehistoric culture and artifacts of the park.
- (C5) A mitigation wetland will be devoted to maximizing biological diversity and non-consumptive recreation such as birding, wildflower and wildlife viewing. The wetland will be fenced and monitored with aggressive treatment of noxious weeds.

**Recreational Opportunities**

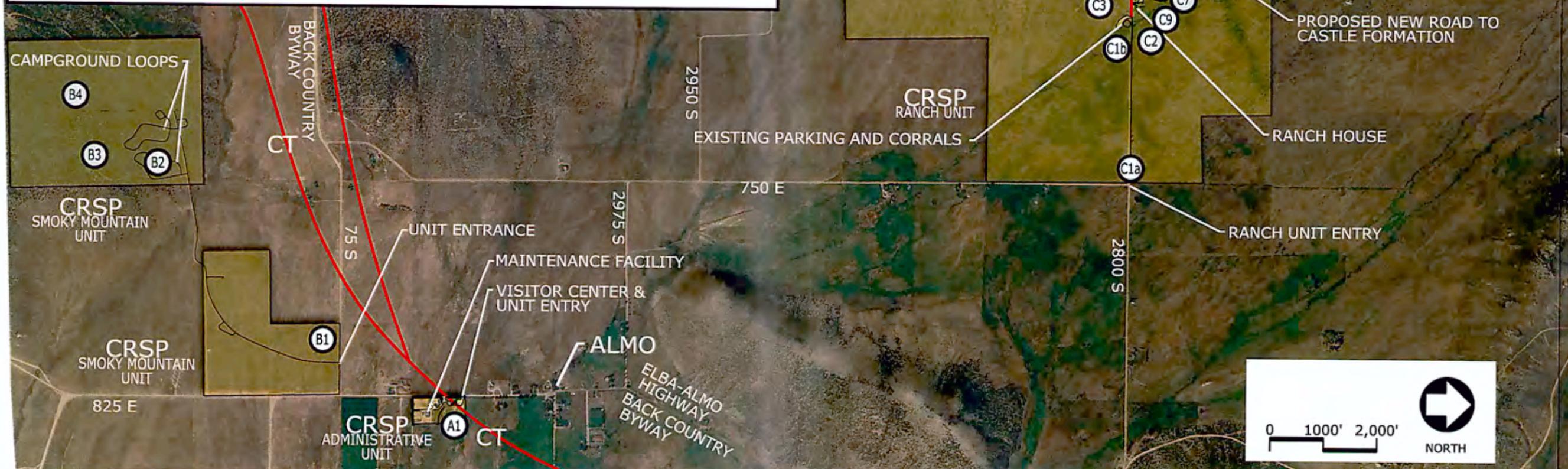
- (C6) The Castle Rocks State Park Climbing Plan Management Plan, 2003, is incorporated as a supplement to this master plan and will be implemented as needed.
- (C7) A trails management plan will be developed as a supplement to this master plan. It will address the needs of climbers who want to access the rocks, equestrians, hikers and perhaps mountain bikers. The plan will identify possible links to other public land and to the other units of CRSP and the City of Rocks National Reserve. The plan will identify routes to key parts of the park and provide interpretive opportunities along those routes.
- (C8) All trails within the ranch unit will remain nonmotorized.
- (C9) The current ranch road will be maintained for administrative use and emergency access into the park. It will also serve as a trail for approved uses such as equestrian, pedestrian, or mountain biking.
- (C10) A pond will be built near Almo Creek, north of the Ranch House. It will be stocked with non-native fish to provide fishing opportunities.

**Housing and Facilities**

- (C11) A bunkhouse, which will be available to the public by reservation, will be constructed near the ranch house.
- (C12) A group picnic area with covered shelter will be constructed near Almo Creek north of the Ranch House. A road and parking area will provide access.

**LEGEND**

- CRSP CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK PLANNING AREA  
ADMINISTERED BY IDPR - UNIT NAME BELOW PARK NAME
- CIRO CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE BOUNDARY  
ADMINISTERED WITH IDPR FOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- NHL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY  
CITY OF ROCKS
- CT CALIFORNIA TRAIL  
ADMINISTERED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
- IRA INTERAGENCY RECREATION AREA  
JOINTLY ADMINISTERED BY IDPR, BLM, & USDA FOREST SERVICE



**CASTLE ROCKS STATE PARK**  
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, LAND USE PLAN & FACILITY DESIGNATION