



# Recreation & Trails Existing Conditions Memo

## About the Analysis

This memo summarizes existing conditions related to recreation and trails in Huerfano County. It was developed as part of the 2023 Huerfano County Cooperative Planning Projects. This memo will describe the existing conditions of the recreation landscape in Huerfano County, including public facilities, private facilities, and seasonal events. It will also provide an overview of relevant policies, ongoing projects, and community perspectives from recent public engagement events. The findings of this memo will complement other topic memos and inform recommendations for the updated Huerfano County Comprehensive Plan.

## Key Takeaways

- The County does not manage the vast majority of recreational assets within its bounds
- Many of the existing recreational roads and trails are located on the northwest and southwest portions of the county and are not easily accessible without access to a personal vehicle
- Public engagement results have indicated that residents are interested in more access to recreational facilities and trails, as well as more programming for young residents
- There is a need for recreational facilities and programming to support older residents of Huerfano County, who could benefit from increased access to activities and amenities that could improve their health

## About Recreation & Trails

Recreation is a key dimension of quality of life. The amount, location, and quality of recreational amenities can all support or detract from quality of life. Huerfano County's several current [mission statements](#) speak to the importance of recreation and tourism offerings as they relate to wellness, community pride, and land stewardship. Recreational amenities also affect other important components of life in Huerfano County—specifically transportation, economic development, land use, and public health.

## Existing Recreation & Tourism Offering

### Facilities

Huerfano County hosts many recreation amenities and visitor attractions including trails, racing events, festivals, campgrounds, and several other public and private recreation facilities. According to the [COTREX](#) database, a recreational trails database managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Huerfano County contains 358.5 miles of roads and trails currently used for recreation (Table 1)





that are managed by several different land managers (Table 2).<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages the majority (93%) of recreational trails and roads found in the county. Many of the existing recreational roads and trails are located on the northwest and southwest portions of the county and are not easily accessible without access to a personal vehicle. Existing roads and trails provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation—approximately 53% of trail facilities allow hiking and equestrian uses, 35% allow bicycles, 40% allow off-highway vehicles (OHVs), 52% allow all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and 55% allow motorcycles. In the winter months, approximately 14% of trails are available for snowmobiles, skiers, and snowshoers.

Huerfano County contains a mix of developed recreation facilities (parks, campgrounds, golf courses) and undeveloped recreation facilities (wildlife areas, forest trails, wilderness areas). There are also opportunities for birding, hunting, and sightseeing across the county. One popular sightseeing destination is the Scenic Highway of Legends (State Highway 12) which travels from Trinidad to Walsenburg. Part of the National Scenic Byway System, this byway features unique scenic, historic, and geological attributes. While not directly attributable to Scenic Highway traffic, the segment of byway between Cuchara and La Veta sees approximately 292,000 vehicles per year.<sup>2</sup>

About 75% of land in Huerfano County is owned privately, a higher percentage of private land ownership compared to Colorado as a whole (57%). The other 25% of land consists of federal lands (Forest Service and BLM), state land (State Trust Lands, State Parks) and county and municipally owned land.

Huerfano County contains 40,000 acres of State Trust Lands, most of which are leased for agriculture. Recreation is allowed on sites that have a recreation lease through the Public Access Program (seasonal and limited access to sportsmen and anglers) or a private recreation lease. Many State Trust Land sites in Huerfano County do not allow public access, although Guillermo Ranch, Schultz Canyon, and Black Hawk offer seasonal recreational access for hunters and anglers. Other state lands, such as state parks and state wildlife areas do allow public access and have many more facilities to support public visitation (campgrounds, trails, restrooms, picnic tables, etc.). Lathrop State Park, located southwest of Walsenburg, is a popular destination for locals and visitors. According to XX, about 50% of visitors are from within 15 miles, and 23% of visitors are from over 60 miles away.

[Insert County-Scale map of Recreation Trails/Roads]

[Insert County-Scale map of Recreation Destinations]

## Access

According to County Health Rankings, a socioeconomic database supported by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, recreation access in Huerfano County is limited compared to state and national metrics. In Huerfano County, 44% of people live close to a park or recreation

<sup>1</sup> While COTREX aims to be exhaustive, data is not updated regularly and may not provide a complete picture of trails, especially those on land managed by municipalities. For example, COTREX does not contain any information about trails at Cuchara Mountain Park, which is currently managed by Huerfano County.

<sup>2</sup> <https://dtdapps.coloradodot.info/otis/trafficdata/series/55/true/false/>





facility, much lower than across Colorado (90%) and the United States (84%).<sup>3</sup> This metric is determined by the number of people within a county who reside in a census block that is within half a mile of a park, within one mile of a recreational facility in an urban area, or within three miles of a recreational facility in a rural area.<sup>4</sup>

As indicated by the 2023 Visioning Survey, county residents deeply value the remote, quiet qualities of the area. In addition, many people entering designated wilderness areas seek a sense of solitude in nature. A lack of access to recreation in Huerfano County likely contributes to this sense of quietness and solitude in many recreation areas.

## Economy

Recreation and tourism support many jobs in Huerfano County—about 18% of county employment is related to travel & tourism sectors. This is slightly higher than the Colorado average of 14%. Employment categories included in the travel & tourism sectors include retail, passenger transportation, arts & entertainments, and accommodation and food. In Huerfano County, the average wage across travel & tourism sector employees was approximately \$24,500, which is about 40% lower than the average wage across all travel & tourism employees in Colorado.

## Information

Community members interested in parks and recreation facilities can visit the [county website](#) to reserve facilities and register for activities.

The travel and tourism website [Spanish Peaks Country](#), managed by the Huerfano County Chamber of Commerce, provides a wealth of information about recreation and tourism opportunities in the county. Information includes destination locations, recommended itineraries, food & beverage options, and a calendar of events.

The [City of Walsenburg](#) has information about local recreation amenities on their municipal websites, the same information page is not available on the Town of La Veta website.

## Regional Context

Huerfano County is situated near several popular recreation areas, including La Veta Pass, Great Sand Dunes National Park. The County is a gateway to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Spanish Peaks ranges, which include especially scenic and challenging terrain. The broader region is popular for several recreational activities, including hiking, backpacking, biking (road, gravel, mountain), motorcycling, hunting, fishing, and off-roading.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/colorado/huerfano?year=2023>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/health-behaviors/diet-and-exercise/access-to-exercise?year=2023>





**Table 1. Recreation Facilities by Type**

FACILITY TYPE	MILEAGE
Trail	158
Roads	170.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>328.5</b>

Data Source: Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX)

To add information about trail difficulty and surface type. This data is not available via COTrex.

**Table 2. Recreation Facilities by Land Manager**

LAND MANAGER	FACILITY MILEAGE	% OF TOTAL
USFS (San Carlos Ranger District)	301.8	91.8%
USFS (Conejos Peak Ranger District)	3.3	1%
Town of La Veta	.2	0.06%
BLM	12.1	3.7%
National Parks	3.1	1%
Colorado State Parks	8	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>328.5</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data Source: Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX)

**Table 3. Recreation Facilities by Allowed Use**

ALLOWED USE	FACILITY MILEAGE	% OF TOTAL
Snowmobile, Ski, Snowshoe	46.8	14.2%
Motorcycle	181.5	55.3%
ATV	169	51.4%
OHV	131	39.9%
Highway Vehicles	131	39.9%
Hiking Trail	175	53.3%
Horse	175	53.3%
Bike	118	35.9%

Data Source: Colorado Trail Explorer (COTREX)



## Festivals, Events, and Races

There are several seasonal events that take place in Huerfano County. Events include cultural and historical interpretation events, music festivals, endurance races, and farmers markets. While many of these events are likely more locally oriented, some events like the Sonic Bloom Festival bring in thousands of visitors from around the state and country.

### Festivals & Cultural Events

- Pioneer Day
- Gardner Hippie Days
- Sonic Bloom Music Festival
- Concerts at Cuchara Mountain Park
- First Chair Festival
- La Veta Oktoberfest
- Farmers Markets
- Antiques at the Spanish Peaks
- Spanish Peaks Museum Festival
- Celtic Music Festival

### Races

- Cuchara Trail Runs
- Cuchara Snowshoe Races
- Spanish Peaks Half Marathon
- Spanish Peaks 5/10k
- Stonewall Century Ride





## Public Recreation Amenities

Huerfano County contains a wide variety of public recreation facilities with opportunities for camping, hiking, picnicking, golf, and more. Most of these facilities are managed federally in the National Forest system. While the county’s two municipalities have some park facilities, there are no formal trail systems within Walsenburg and La Veta. Instead, trail opportunities in the county are accessible in State Park and National Forest areas. Cuchara has several recreation areas in addition to the mountain park. Gardner has no formally designated park or outdoor recreation facility. These facilities do not include the many public roads in the county that are used for recreation and exercise purposes.

**Table 4. Public Recreation Facilities**

NAME	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
Bear Lake Campground	Camping	San Isabel NF
Blue Lakes Campground	Camping	San Isabel NF
Civic League Park	Playground, picnic, courts	Walsenburg
Cordova Pass Campground	Camping	San Isabel NF
Cuchara Mountain Park	Multi-season recreation area	Unincorporated County
Fiesta Park	Sports fields, playground, garden	Walsenburg
Greenhorn Mountain Wilderness	Trails	Pike-San Isabel NF
Huerfano Community Center	Gym, Event Space	Walsenburg
Huerfano State Wildlife Area	Wildlife viewing, trails	Unincorporated County
La Veta Town Park	Playground, picnic, skate park	La Veta
La Vista Campground	Camping	San Isabel NF
Lake Isabel	Trails, boating, fishing	San Isabel NF
Lathrop State Park	Trails, fishing, boating, golfing	Unincorporated County
Miners Plaza	Stage, open space	Walsenburg
Piñon Campground	Camping	Lathrop State Park
Pinon Street Park	Playground, courts, picnic	Walsenburg
Purgatoire Campground	Camping	San Isabel NF
Raymond Aguirre Community Center	Event Space	Gardner
Southern Colorado Astronomical Park	Observatory	Unincorporated County
Spanish Peaks Wilderness	Trails, climbing	San Isabel NF





State Trust Lands (Guillermo Ranch, Schultz Canyon, South Middle Creek, Blackhawk)	Hunting, Wildlife	Unincorporated County
Wahatova State Wildlife Area	Wildlife viewing, trails	Unincorporated County
Walsenburg City Park	Playground, picnic, skate park	Walsenburg
Walsenburg Golf Course	RV camping, golf	Walsenburg
Yucca Campground	Camping	Lathrop State Park

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## Private Recreation

Most privately owned recreation facilities consist of guiding/outfitting businesses, RV parks, and golf courses (mini and regular), and gyms.

**Table 5. Private Recreation Facilities**

NAME	ACTIVITIES	LOCATION
Ayers Family Fitness	Gym	Unincorporated County
Bears Den Mini Golf	Mini Golf	Unincorporated County
Circle the Wagons RV Park	RV Camping	La Veta
Crown Lanes	Bowling	Walsenburg
Dakota Campground	Camping, RV camping	Walsenburg
Fulldraw Outfitters	Guide, Outfitter	Unincorporated County
Grandote Peaks Gold Club	Golf Course	La Veta
La Veta Anglers	Guide, Outfitter	La Veta
La Veta Pines RV Park	RV Camping	Unincorporated County
Story Creek Outfitters	Guide, Outfitter	Unincorporated County
The T/M Ranch	Guide, Outfitter	Unincorporated County
Twin Lakes Canoe & Kayak Adventures	Boat Outfitter	Walsenburg
Two Peaks Fitness	Gym, Classes	La Veta





## Recreation Land Managers Existing Policy

County Policies (as stated in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan)

- **Land Use and Growth Policy:** Encourage the provision of open space in the County for preservation or recreational purposes.
- **Land Use and Growth Policy:** Ensure continued public access to public lands within Huerfano County and work to obtain access where it is not presently available.
- **Economic Development Policy:** Develop and promote outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities throughout Huerfano County including but not limited to hiking and historic trails, historic sites, birding, virtual tours, reopening Grandote Golf Course, non-motorized outdoor sports, endurance rides, and clays courses.
- **Economic Development Policy:** Special events such as endurance rides, alpine events, train ridership, historical, scientific, sporting and musical gatherings should be encouraged, bringing support to lodging, retail, restaurants and other existing businesses.
- **Economic Development Policy:** Develop and promote artistic, cultural, historic and music assets such as a county-owned amphitheater or a county-wide cultural district.
- **Public Services & Amenities Policy:** Implement the Huerfano County Parks and Trails Master Plan.
- **Public Services & Amenities Policy:** Preserve and develop access to public lands through roads or trails as may be appropriate for all outdoor activities.

### Municipal Goals & Policies

#### La Veta

In 2020, La Veta completed their Parks, Open Spaces & Trails Master Plan. This plan supports the Town’s vision to create “an interconnected community-based system of parks, open spaces and trails for people of all ages and abilities and to connect to the regional trail system.” The goals of this plan are to create a trail system that connects key facilities with recreation amenities and the future school, to upgrade existing recreation facilities to meet current community needs, to connect La Veta to the Front Range Trail, and to recognize the economic benefits of recreation amenities to the local community. The plan identifies potential trail alignments and signage enhancements that would create new recreation amenities, better connect existing amenities, and increase awareness of existing amenities. Priority projects from this plan include trail signage, new playground and fitness stations, a river trail along the north side of town, and a pedestrian bridge on Garland Street.

#### Walsenburg Comprehensive Plan

The City of Walsenburg Comprehensive Plan outlines eight action items related to Recreation. These include fostering partnerships with county and government agencies to improve recreation facilities, creating an inventory of existing trails, working with property owners to provide trail easements, and create a maintenance and investment strategy. The following action items are most relevant to the county: improving Fiesta Park and extending a regional trail along the Cucharas River from Lathrop State Park to Walsenburg.

- Create partnerships and work with other agencies to improve recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors.





- Huerfano County to improve Fiesta Park
- Huerfano County to extend a regional trail along the Cucharas River from Lathrop State Park to Walsenburg.
- Work with property owners to provide easements and develop a regional trail along the Cucharas River, with access from Fiesta Park.

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### Stakeholders & Land Managers

The Forest Service is a major recreation stakeholder in Huerfano County. The Pike & San Isabel Forest Plan, which was developed in 1984, sets a variety of goals for the forest related to forest health, wildlife and wilderness protection, and resource management. The plan does not contain any goals specifically related to collaboration with Huerfano County.





## Major Projects Overview

### County Projects

Thorne Ranch is a 1,748-acre county-owned property west of Walsenburg. This property has a rich history as the historic townsite of Badito, the oldest settlement in the region and former county seat. In 2022, the county developed an RFP for an agricultural operator to manage irrigating, farming, and maintenance on the site while the county plans other community assets for this location.

The county purchased the property for water resources and for its potential as a recreational tourism amenity. Plans and visioning exercises for Thorne Ranch have included a range of recreational uses, including RV camping, picnicking, and hiking, along with farming uses. The property's location along Highway 69 and the Huerfano River makes it a strategic location for both agricultural and recreational uses.

The County also recently acquired 47 acres at the base of the former Cuchara Mountain Resort. The County recently pursued recreation planning and implementation assistance to support the viability of Cuchara Mountain Park, the county's only downhill ski area. A recent master plan for mountain park articulates a future vision for the area as a recreational asset and public amenity. The mission and goals of the park, as stated in the master plan, are as follows:

### *Mission*

The Cuchara Mountain Park, as created by Huerfano County, is an environmentally friendly destination for year-round recreation, education, and cultural programs in harmony with nature.

### *Goals*

- Offer residents and visitors a place to recreate, gather, and connect with nature
- Attract tourists be self-sustaining, and provide economic benefits to Huerfano County
- Provide a pleasant venue for music, arts, and cultural events and programs
- Increase access to and use of the San Isabel National Forest through partnerships with the Forest Service
- Offer outdoor experiences that are accessible to all
- Offer eco-friendly facilities and activities

The initiatives and implementation activities outlined in the plan rely heavily on volunteer support at present. The more complex initiatives in the plan, such as scaling up winter operations and hosting large events, would require County administrative capacity and operating capacity. Community engagement efforts conducted during the planning process indicated that the community was most interested in improving resident-serving recreation amenities and programs before investing in visitor-facing, revenue-generating improvements to the mountain park that come with high capital costs.

The County is also in the process of developing a guide to gravel biking. While the county is not presently known as a hub for gravel biking, gravel riding has become popular in the broader





region. Trinidad hosts multiple gravel race events each year, including Colorado Gravel Grinder events.

### Municipal Projects

The Town of La Veta is in the process of implementing their Parks, Open Spaces, & Trails Master Plan. The Town is also interested in creating an off-street bike path in the downtown area. Although this project is not listed in the town's recent Trails plan, the project would support the Southern Loop Trail concept. See the Transportation Existing Conditions memo for an additional discussion of the Southern Loop Trail concept.

## Public Input

### Visioning Survey

The Visioning Survey conducted as part of this Comprehensive Plan update process gathered various feedback related to recreation in Huerfano County. Respondents to the survey highlighted recreational amenities and the county's scenic qualities as community strengths:

- 94% of respondents indicated that "Scenic Beauty" is one of Huerfano County's greatest strengths
- 60% indicated that "Recreational amenities and wildlife" are one of county's greatest strengths. Some write in comments highlighted the county's "remote and peaceful" qualities, "remote nature," and rural environment as strengths.

The feedback also indicated a need for improvements to trails and better access to active transportation (walking, biking, transit) opportunities:

- 41% of respondents indicated that improvements to trails were one of the most-needed transportation improvements in the county. 32% indicated that improvements to bicycle facilities (bike lanes, bike racks, bike routes) were most needed.
- 36% of respondents noted that public and active transportation access is one of the county's greatest weaknesses.

Responses also highlighted a need for more community events, which support social cohesion and a sense of place:

- 27% of respondents cited a lack of activities or community events and 26% cited a lack of social cohesion/sense of community as weaknesses.
- Write-in responses also highlighted an interest in parks, outdoor programs and sports for youth, and skiing opportunities.

When asked about businesses and job opportunity areas they would like to see in the county, respondents indicated interest in business types that would also serve a recreational tourism economy:

- 70% of respondents were interested in more casual restaurants in the county
- 51% were interested in more retail stores in the county





- 52% were interested in manufacturing facilities (this could include recreation-related manufacturing, although the survey did not specifically ask about types of manufacturing businesses. One write-in comment indicated interest in bicycle manufacturing, fishing and hunting equipment manufacturing, or off-road motorcycling accessories manufacturing)
- 40% were interested in hotels and lodging
- 30% were interested in basic services, such as laundry and convenience stores
- Write-in comments indicated interested in recreational businesses and amenities, including water world, a swimming pool, youth activities, and outdoor recreation in general

### Focus Group

A Quality-of-Life focus group was held in early May 2023 to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to quality of life in Huerfano County. This group included recreation, cultural and historic resources, and public health stakeholders. Strengths identified include a rich cultural history, a wide array of scenic and outdoor resources, and community pride. Weaknesses identified include a lack of management capacity to staff and maintain recreational resources, including the swimming pool and water park. Other weaknesses include challenges with recreation access and lack of familiarity with fish & game rules. Opportunities identified include the development of more tourism amenities and the belief that a unified vision for the region may instill hope and pride in community members. Threats identified include divisions within the community, a lack of visitor infrastructure, and a lack of consistent attendance to support existing programs.

**Figure 1. Quality of Life SWOT Analysis Summary**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incredible array of outdoor opportunities &amp; scenic areas</li> <li>• Rich cultural history and artistic feel</li> <li>• Community pride</li> <li>• Multigenerational ties</li> <li>• Gardner school</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties managing recreational resources (e.g., swimming pool, water park)</li> <li>• Uneven access to recreation</li> <li>• Lack of familiarity with fish &amp; game rules</li> <li>• Lack of tourism amenities</li> <li>• Lack of mental health facilities/support</li> <li>• 48<sup>th</sup> in health outcomes in CO</li> <li>• Lack of childcare and children's activities</li> <li>• Lack of women's healthcare</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to work together to produce a unified vision for the region</li> <li>• Geology-based tourism</li> <li>• Outfitters (people go to Westcliffe right now)</li> <li>• Create more tourism amenities</li> <li>• Create an "infusion of hope" in the community</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divisions within the community</li> <li>• Lack of infrastructure to support visitation</li> <li>• Apathy and hopelessness</li> <li>• Lack of consistent attendance to support programs</li> </ul>

## Potential Areas of Focus

**Condition:** Huerfano County is home to many older residents, and the proportion of the county's older residents is expected to grow. Exercising and spending time outside are excellent preventive health measures, but residents currently lack access to these resources compared to other Colorado communities.

### Response (Potential Recommendations):

- Identify and address barriers to recreation access for older residents of Huerfano County
- Support activity programs for older adults, particularly programs that encourage exercise and spending time outdoors
- Follow guidance from AARP's [rural livability](#) program, which provides resources and trainings related to age-friendly development
- Prioritize the development and maintenance of recreational amenities that serve older and/or disabled residents, such as ADA-compliant trails and paved trails

**Condition:** Huerfano County lacks easy connectivity between neighborhoods and downtowns and trail systems/recreation amenities. There are few true neighborhood parks and open spaces, and many of the trail systems located within the county are located primarily on the southern and western edges of the county, far from municipalities and neighborhoods. This makes it challenging for residents to access outdoor spaces and trails. This challenge is even greater for residents without cars. In addition, strong connections between communities and trails also support a strong recreational tourism industry.

### Response (Potential Recommendations):

- Continue implementation of County Trails Master Plan, coordinate with municipal planning efforts to ensure alignment



- Identify key recreational destinations, such as Lathrop State Park; support active transportation and multi-modal connections to those destinations
- Support bike paths and other multimodal connections between municipalities
- Consider pursuing planning and improvements through the US DOT Safe Routes to Schools program

**Condition:** The community has an interest in more access to recreation facilities, programs, and activities, particularly youth-oriented programming. Key recreational amenities within the County, such as the waterpark, have fallen into disrepair and no longer serve the community. With a current ranking of 48<sup>th</sup> in health outcomes in Colorado, Huerfano County should make increased efforts to support healthy and active lifestyles among residents.

**Response (Possible Recommendations):**

- Support the use of community centers and other space for structured indoor and outdoor recreational programming
- Encourage community fitness programs for all ages and abilities
- Explore shared use agreements that support access to recreation and fitness amenities. For example, facilitate contracts that support community access to existing public, private, or nonprofit facilities before or after business hours; also called joint use, open use, or community use agreements
- Prioritize upgrades or new development of recreational facilities close to schools, job centers, and neighborhoods

**Condition:** The county lacks a cohesive, visionary recreation strategy. The county’s tourism website does a good job amassing information and resources related to recreation and visitor-facing activities. By distributing additional recreation information, the county could better support resident and visitor access to trails and recreation areas. Having accurate information is a critical component of safe, responsible recreation.

**Response (Possible Recommendations):**

- Create an interactive map to show the spatial distribution of existing recreation facilities relative to communities, businesses, and parking
- In all county-produced recreation information, highlight relevant rules and regulations for particular trails and recreation areas
- Partner with land managers within the county, including Colorado Parks & Wildlife and the San Isabel National Forest, to distribute accurate recreation information online and in-print
- Consider adding wayfinding signage (trail signage, navigation signage, trailhead kiosks) in key locations. This can increase awareness of recreation opportunities without building new facilities
- Consider creating a community advisory board dedicated to supporting sustainable recreation and tourism activities on a county-wide scale. Refer to the example of the Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation (STOR) Board in Gunnison County.





**Condition:** Huerfano County residents strongly value the quiet character of the County. Many people have been drawn to visit or relocate to Huerfano County because of the area's scenic and remote qualities. The County has an opportunity to help preserve these qualities through thoughtful recreation planning and decision-making.

**Response (Possible Recommendations):**

- In the development of new recreation destinations and facilities, consider the location, the capacity of the county to manage new facilities, the desired recreation experience, and the desired audience (locals vs. visitors).
- Consider the use of trail cameras, trail logs, or Strava data to measure levels of use at recreation facilities within the county

**Condition:** The county is not currently maximizing revenue and community benefits from tourism. Other communities in Colorado and elsewhere have implemented measures to ensure that tourism revenue is put back into the community in the form of housing and infrastructure funds.

**Response (Possible Recommendations):**

- Consider opting into Colorado's new [lodging tax diversion program](#), which allows counties and local marketing districts to divert revenue from tourism to affordable housing and childcare

**Condition:** The county has more work to do to develop, promote, and sustain its recreational facilities, including the Cuchara Mountain Park base area and Thorne Ranch.

**Response (Possible Recommendations):**

- Support a gravel bike riding event in Huerfano County; work to expand Trinidad Rad Dirt Fest and Colorado Gravel Grinder events to Huerfano County.
- Support the viability of Thorne Ranch as a recreational amenity for residents and visitors
- Continue implementing the recommendations of the Cuchara Mountain Park Master Plan

