



2023 Annual Report

Resource Protection

Park Rangers

Bevin Carithers

Erin Hartnett

Lucero Torres

Jeff Hiebert

Chris White

Kevin Grady

Denny Morris

Juan Ocampo

Sarah Andrews

John Queen

Sully Tun-Ake

Bailey Eddy

Warren DeKoven

Jess Anderson

Phary Om

Melissa Gorgi

Park Deputies

Matt Sanderson

Tony Tagliatela

Kelly Boden

Josh Scrudder

K9 Staff

Dax

Scout

Trinity

Switch

Zee

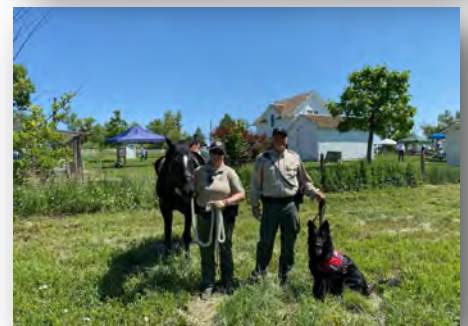
Equestrian Staff

Rohan

Starlight

2023 Program Highlights

- ◆ Expanded commitment to cultural responsiveness, inclusion, and community engagement by hiring our first Spanish-speaking Community Engagement Park Ranger. Continued to deepen our relationship with the San Lazaro Community through hands-on family programming in Spanish and English.
- ◆ Revised open space rules and regulations to be in compliance with the Misdemeanor Reform Act (SB21-271), which created a new tier of offences known as civil infractions with a maximum fine of \$100. Civil infractions replaced nearly all of the previous open space regulations classified as petty offences.
- ◆ Collaborated with county IT staff to create a new resource protection incident reporting and patrol database. The enhanced database allows staff to track their patrol operations, complete reports, and search data on mobile devices, including Mobile Dispatching Centers (MDC), throughout the county.
- ◆ 23 participants in the Left Hand Outdoor Challenge program and volunteer mentors completed eight challenges and 1,076 hours of volunteer service showcasing leadership, outdoor skill acquisition, and teamwork.
- ◆ A reinvigorated mountain bike patrol program created opportunities for staff to safely patrol county trails and open space areas and certified three rangers as Level 1 Fundamental Skills Instructors.



Resource Protection Strategic Goals and Values

In 2019 the resource protection work group completed its first strategic vision. This vision contained a desired future condition (purpose), four strategic goals, and six guiding values. As the fifth anniversary of this working document approaches, accomplishments, challenges, and actions will be reviewed and revised, and a revised version of the vision will guide the program through 2028 and beyond.

Strategic Goals:

Goal 1: Assemble an effective, efficient, and well-equipped team that is diverse, inclusive, and guided by the Resource Protection Purpose and Values.

Goal 2: Foster a positive outdoor ethic and encourage safe recreational experiences through trail-based patrol, regulation enforcement, and easily understood and accessible rules and regulations.

Goal 3: Inspire park visitors to protect and steward open spaces through engaging educational programs, meaningful volunteer experiences, and community outreach efforts.

Goal 4: Collaborate with partner agencies and community organizations to implement a robust resource protection patrol, training, and safety program.

Resource Protection Values:

- ◆ We value our natural resources and healthy ecosystems.
- ◆ We value the responsibility the people of Boulder County have given us to protect open space lands through education, outreach, and enforcement of rules and regulations.
- ◆ We value the unique skills and contributions that our teammates bring to the job. This diversity fosters a positive, innovative, and professional work group.
- ◆ We value our safety and the safety of others. We recognize the need for specialized training and being prepared for the demands of the job.
- ◆ We value park visitors' diverse experiences on open space by welcoming all members of our community to the outdoors.
- ◆ We exemplify these values by sharing our passion for the outdoors with others and providing the best in public service.



Resource Protection Strategic Goal 1

Assemble an effective, efficient, and well-equipped team that is diverse, inclusive, and guided by the Resource Protection Purpose and Values.

Assembling an efficient, effective, and diverse team continues to be at the forefront of the resource protection program. This effort includes updated policies and procedures that guide operations, equipment that provides for safety and efficiency, and technology that assists with the successful completion and documentation of tasks.

- ◆ Completion of the new ranger incident reporting application allows rangers and deputies to record their patrol times and locations, civil infractions, warning notices, and incident reports on all mobile devices.
- ◆ Updated ranger policies and procedures included a new wellness policy for rangers and policy allowing for the humane dispatch of injured and sick animals.
- ◆ The adoption and installation of MDCs and dual band radios continued in 2023. Four Chevy Tahoe SUVs replaced high milage vehicles, including the last remaining Jeep Wranglers. These vehicles were outfitted with the latest safety features, mobile networks, and communication equipment.
- ◆ Resource protection established two designated workspaces at the South East Community Hub in Lafayette, allowing rangers to complete administrative tasks in the southern part of the county while responding to calls for service and executing patrols in open space areas, traditionally less frequented than those in the northern/mountain areas.
- ◆ The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation funded the inclusion of a new K9 team member, K9 Dotti, as well as the equipment needed to safely house and care for her. Dotti has been assigned to Ranger Kevin Grady and will begin intensive SAR training in 2024 with in-house trainers from Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States and members of the Sheriffs Office K9 unit.
- ◆ Seasonal hiring and training practices were updated in 2023 to further enhance ongoing efforts to attract and retain a more diverse group representation of staff within the resource protection team. These practices focused on engagement activities and events in diverse and traditionally underrepresented communities, enhanced cultural awareness training for staff, and training opportunities selected specifically for first-time rangers.



Resource Protection Strategic Goal 2

Foster a positive outdoor ethic and encourage safe recreational experiences through trail-based patrol, regulation enforcement, and easily understood and accessible rules and regulations.

The resource protection work has focused on fostering a positive outdoor ethic and encouraging safe recreation experiences by invigorating the bike patrol program, decriminalizing the majority of our regulations, working on a solution-focused response to homeless encampments, and improving signage to increase compliance.

- ◆ Formalized and expanded the bike patrol program by creating a new program policy, certifying three rangers to be instructors, revamping training, and purchasing new bikes and racks. With these changes, we expect to see an increase in mountain bike and e-bike patrols focusing on safety and visitor engagement.
- ◆ Declassified nearly all open space rules and regulations from petty offenses to civil infractions to be in compliance with the Misdemeanor Reform Act (BS21-271). This law was enacted to address inequities in the criminal justice system that disproportionately affects, low-income people, people of color, and other marginalized community members. The change means that the maximum fine for a parks violation is \$100 and can not result in jail time.
- ◆ Adopted a more comprehensive approach when addressing homeless encampments by utilizing Boulder County's Co-Responders , who can provide the people experiencing homelessness with resources for food, housing, and employment opportunities, and by contracting ServPro to clean up camps as soon as legally and ethically possible. These solutions, combined with increased patrol, have helped keep additional camps from being established on open space.
- ◆ Coordinated with the Sign Team and E&O to improve permanent and temporary signs to address muddy trail closures, afterhours violations, and to provide increased language access.



Strategic Goal 2: Patrol and Enforcement Summery



Figure 1. Top 5 violations reported by rangers and deputies on open space parks and properties in 2023.

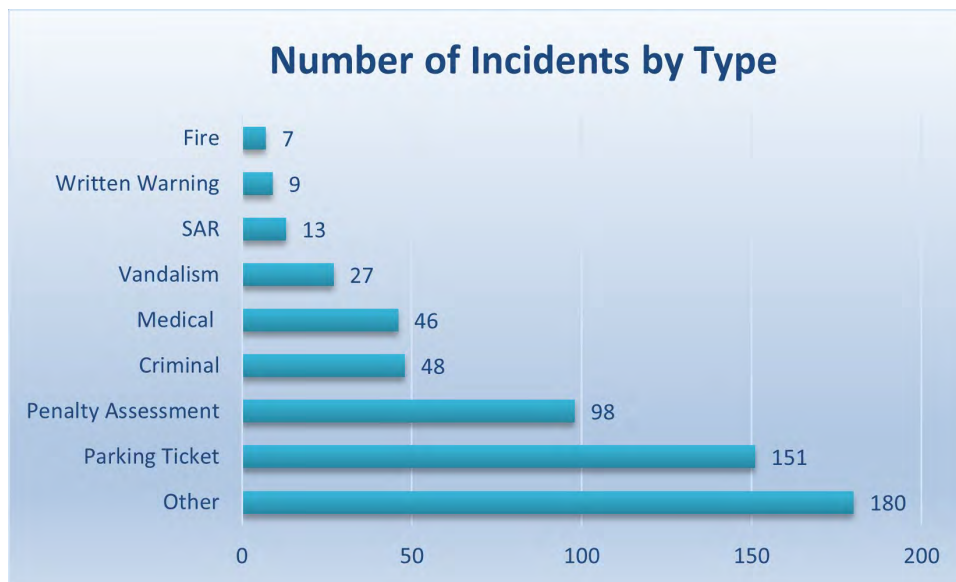


Figure 2. Total number of incidents requiring the response of at least one park ranger or park deputy in 2023 sorted by incident type.

Strategic Goal 2: Patrol and Enforcement Summery

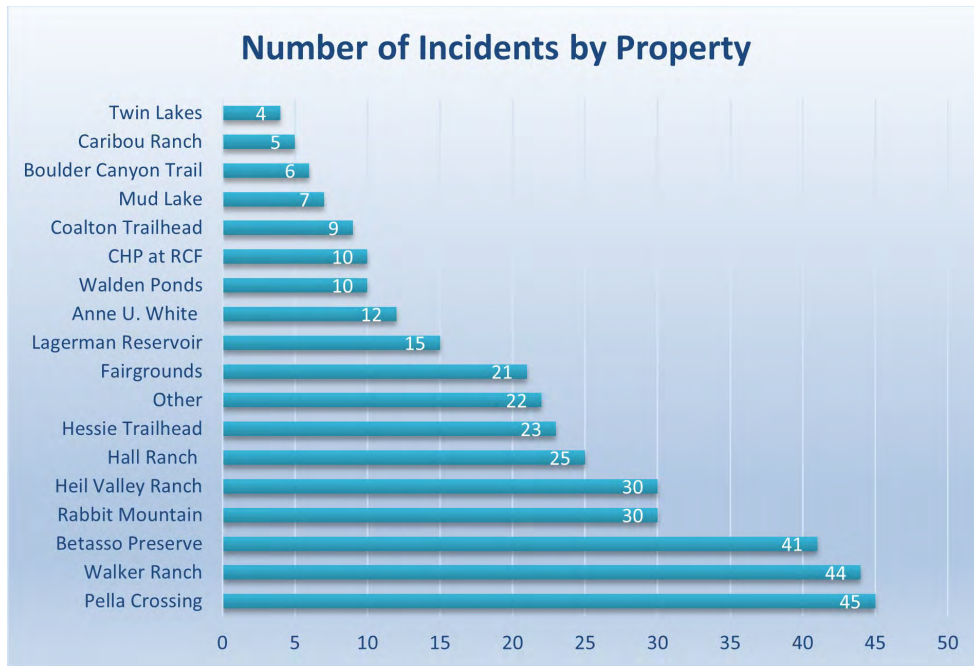


Figure 3. Total number of incidents categorized by property requiring the response of at least one park ranger or park deputy in 2023.

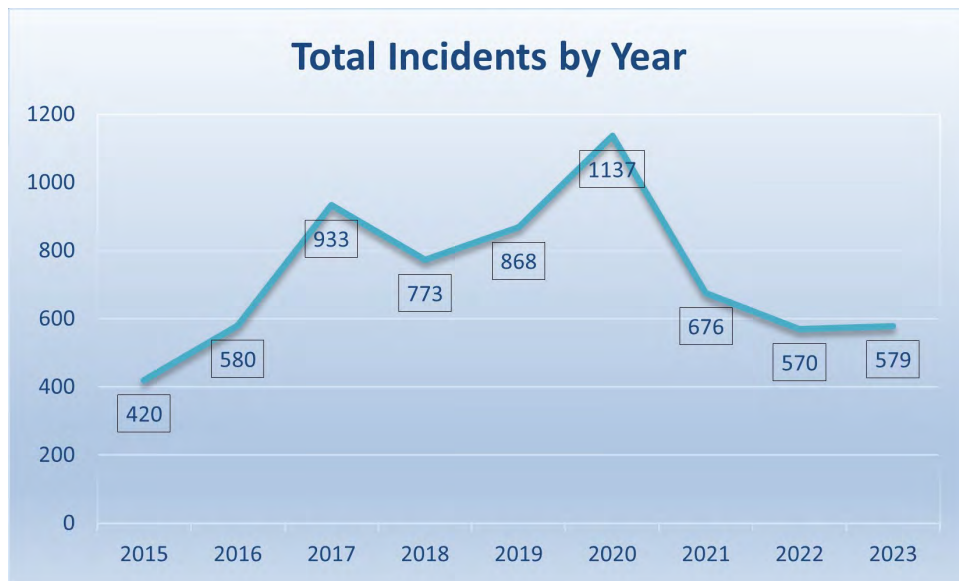


Figure 4. Total number of incidents requiring the response of at least one park ranger or park deputy from 2015—2023.

Resource Protection Strategic Goal 3

Inspire park visitors to protect and steward open spaces through engaging educational programs, meaningful volunteer experiences, and community outreach efforts.

Inspiring park visitors to protect and steward open space lands is a labor of love for all of the resource protection team. Everyone contributes to this goal by planning, coordinating, or participating in meaningful community engagement events and programs.

- ◆ Rangers continue to train, communicate, and provide special opportunities year-round for the 50 active members of the Volunteer Ranger Corps and the 100+ Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol volunteers.
- ◆ Community outreach events included bilingual programs for the Cottonwood Institute, National Night Out, Latino Conservation Week, low-income family fishing clinic, Girl Scout programs, K9 demos, Outdoor Leadership with Warren Tech Academy, Ranger Skills Seminars, and Certified Interpretive Guide training for Red Rocks Community College, Boulder Rural Safety Day, Barnyard Critters, and more.
- ◆ Rangers assisted the Outdoorist Oath event at Walker. This Oath is a commitment to action any outdoorist can take to support our planet, inclusion, and adventure.
- ◆ Rangers, together with the San Lázaro community, held eight programs that focused on family-friendly experiences in the outdoors.
- ◆ Left Hand Outdoor Challenge completed a successful year of events designed to build leadership skills, outdoor ethics, and stewardship in local teens.
- ◆ The Mounted Patrol Program engaged community members at Barnyard Critters Day, Boulder Rural Safety Day, National Night Out, Share-the-Trail programs, and on park patrol. The program sustained a great loss this year when Rohan, a faithful member of the mounted patrol program for nearly 20 years, passed away. Rohan brought much joy to park visitors on the trail and at hundreds of community events and will be greatly missed by his owner, Jeff Hiebert, the rest of the resource protection teams, and his life-long friend Starlight.



Resource Protection Strategic Goal 4

Collaborate with partner agencies and community organizations to implement a robust resource protection patrol, training, and safety program.

Training is a pillar of the resource protection program and key to staff safety. Rangers are required to complete at least 40 hours of annual in-service training in addition to training in defensive tactics, implicit bias, hazing/firearms, wildland fire, and emergency medical response.



- ◆ A new seasonal field training program for rangers was piloted in 2023. Dubbed by staff as Community Oriented Ranger Training (CORT), the program is designed to lead new employees through a problem-based learning process that gives trainees the necessary skills to operate successfully, safely, and independently in the field. The problem-based learning (PBL) and teaching model emphasizes the need for the training officer to function primarily as a mentor, rather than an evaluator, while trainees work through community, park-based problems.
- ◆ Rangers completed 40 hours of Red Cross Emergency Medical Response training, including professional CPR, AED, and oxygen administration.
- ◆ Rangers continued to provide training in 12-passenger van operations, CPR, first aid, ATV/OHV safety, bike patrol, trailer training, situational awareness, and radio use.
- ◆ K9 Search and Rescue team members trained and collaborated with law enforcement agencies from Boulder County, Larimer County, Jefferson County, Garfield County, Mesa County, Eagle County, Grand County, and Routt County.
- ◆ Rangers and deputies collaborated on the Boulder County Fair operations plan. Rangers filled 12 shifts at the county fair, providing 108 hours of service.
- ◆ Rangers continued to serve in numerous leadership roles within the Rocky Mountain Ranger Association, including vice chair, funding committee chair, and International Ranger Federation liaison. Staff also served on numerous department teams, advisory committees, and in leadership roles with professional organizations locally, regionally, and nationally.
- ◆ Resource protection staff provided training at the Ranger Excellence School in Larimer County and hosted a Level 1 Fundamental Skills Instructor certification training with the Bike Instructor Certification Program.



Las Aventuras de San Lazaro

Our continued commitment to Boulder County's Spanish-speaking community launched in January at San Lazaro where program coordinator Susana Rodriguez held a reunion to give community members the opportunity to plan events with rangers for the year. The community also decided to name the program *Las Aventuras de San Lazaro*. 2023 programs highlights included:

- ◆ CPR/First Aid course led in Spanish where 12 participants received certifications
- ◆ Wildflower hike at Heil Valley Ranch with Education and Outreach
- ◆ Astronomy program with David Sutherland that took place in the San Lazaro neighborhood
- ◆ Day trip to Rocky Mountain National Park led by National Park Service bilingual rangers
- ◆ Second annual Christmas Tree harvest event at Reynolds Ranch where 70 people attended
- ◆ Camping event at Golden Gate Canyon State Park. Nine families attended for their first camping experience
- ◆ Two youth mountain bike events in partnership with Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance
- ◆ Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion Strategic Plan (CRISP) Summit where Susana participated in a panel discussion and co-led a breakout session with Juan Ocampo.

To round out a great year, rangers attended San Lazaro's annual posada (traditional Christmas celebration) and shared food, gifts, and festive games. This was a great way to kick off the holidays and celebrate together in San Lazaro's community space.

Nuestro compromiso continuo con la comunidad hispanohablante del condado de Boulder al principio del año en San Lázaro, donde Susana Rodríguez organizó una reunión para brindarles a los miembros de la comunidad la oportunidad de planificar eventos con los guardabosques para el año. La comunidad también decidió nombrar el programa *Las Aventuras de San Lázaro*. Los programas de 2023 incluyeron:

- ◆ Curso de RCP/Primeros Auxilios impartido en español donde 12 participantes recibieron certificaciones
- ◆ Caminata sobre flores silvestres en Heil Valley Ranch con el departamento educación
- ◆ Programa de astronomía con David Sutherland que se llevó a cabo en San Lázaro
- ◆ Excursión de un día al Parque Nacional de las Montañas Rocosas dirigida por guardabosques bilingües del Servicio de Parques Nacionales
- ◆ Segundo evento anual de cosecha de árboles de Navidad en Reynolds Ranch al que asistieron 70 personas
- ◆ Evento de campamento en el Parque Estatal Golden Gate Canyon. Nueve familias asistieron a su primera experiencia de camping
- ◆ Dos eventos de ciclismo de montaña para jóvenes en asociación con Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance
- ◆ CRISP Summit Susana Rodríguez participó en un panel de discusión y codirigieron una mini sesión con Juan Ocampo.

Para completar un gran año, los guardaparques asistieron a la posada anual de San Lázaro y compartieron comida, regalos y juegos festivos. Esta fue una excelente manera de iniciar las fiestas y celebrar juntos en el espacio comunitario de San Lázaro.



Lefthand Outdoor Challenge

The Left Hand Outdoor Challenge (LHOC) teen program was established in 2012 to engage and mentor teens in the outdoors and inspire Boulder County's next outdoor leaders. LHOC participants commit to eight monthly outdoor challenges and six basecamp learning sessions curated by resource protection staff. Challenges and basecamps combine to create a series of meaningful outdoor experiences and learning opportunities that help participants build their outdoor skills, experience outdoor careers, and complete volunteer natural resource service work. Participants work together as a squad alongside park rangers, park deputies, program mentors, and outdoor professionals to explore, protect, and preserve our natural resources.

In 2023, 26 teens and five program mentors participated in eight challenges and six basecamps, completing 1,076 volunteers hours. 2023 Challenges and basecamps created opportunities for participants to discover their leadership abilities and highlight their skills as leaders for their peers in Youth Exploring Stewardship (YES) coalition partner programs.

2023 Challenge and Basecamp Highlights:

- ◆ Trail restoration project with City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks and Wildland Restoration Volunteers.
- ◆ Fire restoration and orienteering with Cal-Wood Education Center.
- ◆ Outdoor leadership training, winter survival skills sessions with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Wildland Restoration Volunteers.
- ◆ Search and rescue training with the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group.



Resource Protection 2023 Annual Report

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Member Since 2020

Resource Protection Purpose

As leaders in our field, Boulder County Park Rangers and Deputies play an integral role protecting open space lands and ensuring the safety of park users. We engage and educate the public and safeguard the human, natural, and cultural resources of Boulder County. Our work inspires an appreciation of conservation and environmental stewardship for future generations.

