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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Restrooms:

Having some type of toilet facility, pit toilet, port-a-potty, whatever is cost-effective, at each trailhead makes a lot of sense. But the facility must be kept clean, and have toilet paper, or people will not use them, so they would do little good.

Parking fees and demand:

Parking fees should be set so all or almost all the parking spots are used. Having fees set so high that demand is less than supply just wastes the money, effort, and disturbance in building the parking spots. Fees should vary based on demand. Having no fees when overuse is not an issue also makes sense.

Equal access:

Reservations and fees should apply to everyone equally, and be available to everyone equally. This is, for the most part, federal land. If Breckenridge and Summit county residents subsidize the parking or shuttle with taxes, then reduced fees for them makes some sense, but only to the extent that they subsidize the system, and in proportion to that subsidy. Requirements for reservations should apply to all equally. While Breckenridge and Summit county owns some of the land involved, so does Colorado Springs Utilities. So Colorado Springs residents are subsidizing the trail access through their rate fees. So if Breckenridge and Summit county residents get reduced fees or preferential access, so too should Colorado Springs residents.

"Options for free, unrestricted access during peak season" should apply equally to everyone. not just Summit county residents. This is access to federal lands, which belong to everyone, not to the people that live nearby.

Flexibility in reservation timing:

For reservations, having some reservable in advance and keeping some that are reservable only one or two days out provides for some flexibility. People who are traveling to the area on a specific date need the certainty that they have a reservation for the date they will be there. So having some spots available in advance is good for those people. But saving some spots to reserve until just a day or two out gives options to people with flexible schedules. Importantly, it also lets people plan based on the weather forecast. One or two days ahead, the weather forecasts are fairly accurate, so, if the system holds some spots until one or two days out, people can plan based on weather. How many to hold out could be something to adjust based on experience. If the system starts with half of the spots reservable in advance and half not reservable until one or two days out, say, and you find that spots aren't being taken, even on good weather days, the proportions could be adjusted.

Parking counters:

A parking counter to let people know if parking is available might be useful, but only if it is accurate. I have seen a city with counters, but the counters show negative numbers of parking spots available, so clearly are wrong, and wrong in a way that spots are available but the counter says they are not. With the same system, I have been by a parking lot where the counter said 13 spots were open, when in fact 18 spots were open. Once people realize the counter is wrong, they will drive up regardless of what the counter says, and then the counter becomes a complete waste of money and effort.

Add parking:

Formalizing and expanding the parking areas is a good idea. Allowing the addition of more parking in the future if it is needed would also be good, not just for Spruce Creek, but for other areas as well.

Trail reroutes:

Connecting the Quandary trail to the Quandary trailhead makes sense.
Building new trails or rerouting trails to get trail users off roads would be good.
Trail connections are also a good idea.

Interpretive signage:

In general, interpretive signage should be at the trailhead, not set along trails, unless the information is specific to a certain spot on the trail. Large interpretive signs on trails just feel intrusive, not informative, unless they really are about that specific site, like a mine ruin.

Overnight parking:

I cannot find anything that addresses overnight parking. Overnight parking, especially for Wheeler trail, is essential. Francie's cabin is obviously for overnight use. Wheeler National Recreation Trail is a long trail in itself. More importantly, it, and other trails in the area, connect to the Colorado Trail, that many people backpack. Backpackers need overnight parking. The system needs some way to accommodate overnight parking, possibly for multiple nights, at the trailheads that connect to the Colorado Trail.

Explicitly allow sleeping in vehicles overnight:

Please explicitly allow people to sleep in their vehicles overnight. Some people want an early start, though probably Quandary less than other 14ers, and just want to sleep in their car at the trailhead. People doing a long hike on Wheeler or the Colorado Trail, out and back or shuttle back to their car, could want an early start, facilitated by sleeping in their car at the trailhead. While technically camping, sleeping in a vehicle at a trailhead with toilet facilities has no additional impact. The parking spot is there anyway. A restroom of some sort on-site handles the human waste issue. It expands "camping" availability at no additional cost or impact. In fact, an overnight parking fee, in parking lots with reservation fees anyway, would make sense and generate more revenue. The rules would need to be explicit, sleep in the vehicle, not on the ground next to your vehicle, no tents, no fires, but it would be a good option to allow.

Thanks for working on this.