

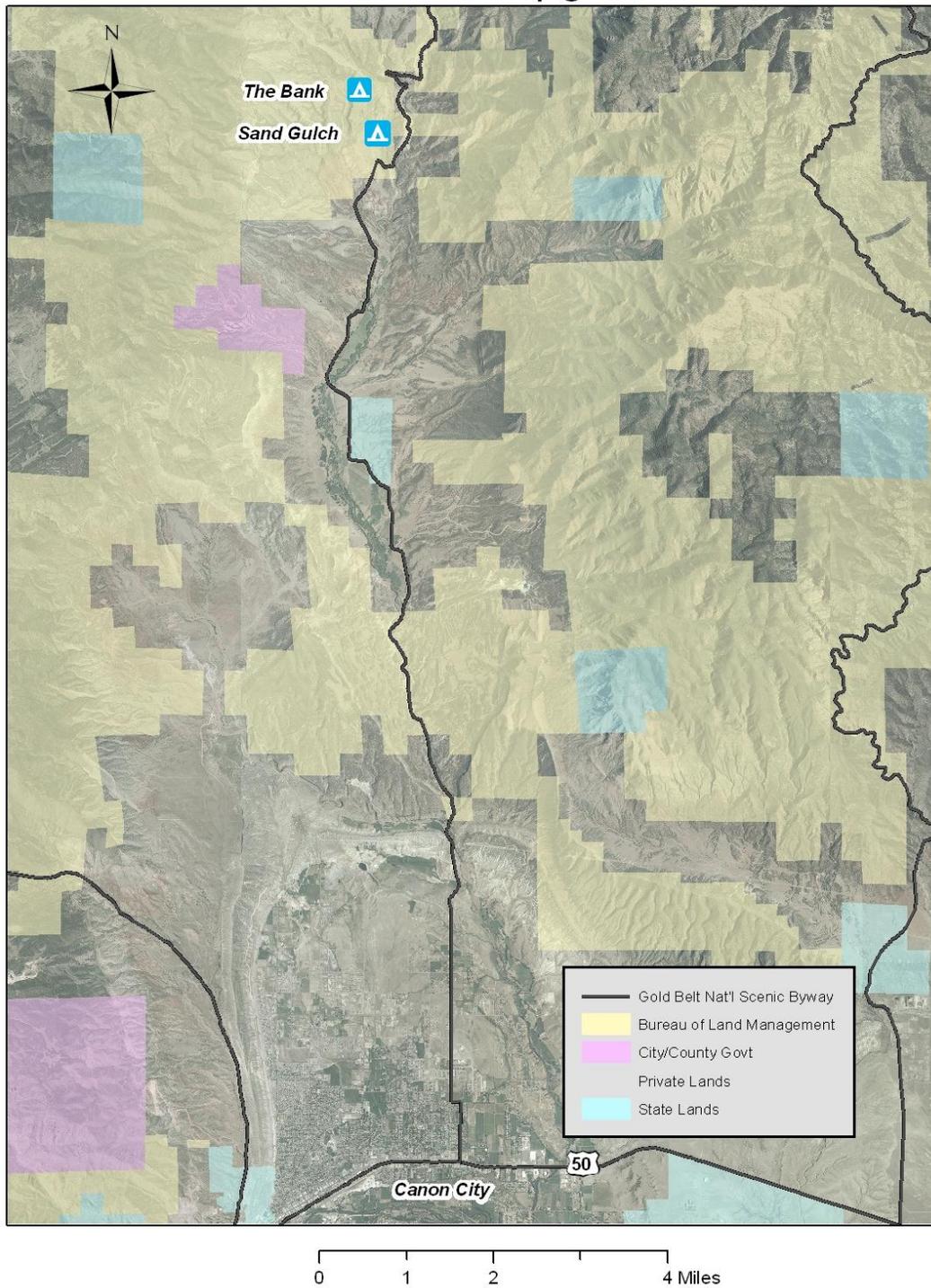


Shelf Road Recreation Area Campgrounds  
Business Plan, April 2009

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# Shelf Road Campgrounds



## **Shelf Road Campgrounds Business Plan**

Royal Gorge Field Office Fee Campgrounds (CO-06)  
Royal Gorge Field Office  
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719-269-8500

This business plan will describe the objectives of both Shelf Road Campgrounds; Sand Gulch and The Bank. It will describe the resources available and the customers paying fees to use the resources. Major features of the business both financially and environmentally will be described.

### **I. Area Description/Fee Site**

The Shelf Road Campgrounds are located in Congressional District 5, near the town of Cañon City, Colorado. Shelf Road Recreation Area is adjacent to the Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway.

Shelf Road Recreation Area includes two developed campgrounds; Sand Gulch and The Bank are located approximately one mile apart accessing a network of designated roads and trails. The campgrounds are reached via Fremont County Road 9 (known as Shelf Road) approximately 12 miles north of Cañon City, CO.

The current campground fees were instituted in 1995; there has never been an increase to address the increasing costs of operations, maintenance, and need for improvements to facilities. The proposed fee increase will be implemented in March 2010.

Spectacular limestone cliffs are the major characteristic of Shelf Road Recreation Area. These cliffs provide regionally and internationally significant sport rock climbing opportunities. Horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, and motorized recreation on the trail and road system are also popular activities.

In 2008, the Shelf Road Recreation Area received approximately 64,000 visits by the public – a three fold increase since 2005.

The Bank Campground area has 13 individual campsites and Sand Gulch Campground has 16 individualsites. Each campsite includes a tent pad, kitchen area with picnic table and campfire grate, and parking area to accommodate one or two vehicles. Each campground has one large group campsite, one vault toilet, visitor information kiosk, fee station, access road,

and hiking trails. An extensive trail network connects the campgrounds to the climbing cliffs.

The Shelf Road Recreation Area is managed by the Royal Gorge Field Office in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Field Institute and the Access Fund. These non-profit organizations contribute time, money, and expertise to the management and maintenance of the area.

The contact person for the Royal Gorge Field Office (RGFO) is Leah Quesenberry (719)269-8547.

## **II. Visitor Demographics**

Shelf Road Recreation Area is easily accessible from Colorado's Front Range cities of Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Boulder, and Fort Collins. It is an internationally recognized sport climbing area, which attracts visitors from all over the world (see Appendix for details).

### Visitor Profile

Surveys from 1991, 2000, and 2008 show the visitor profiles of respondents are predominantly male, age 25 and older. The majority of respondents travel to the area in groups of two adults without children.

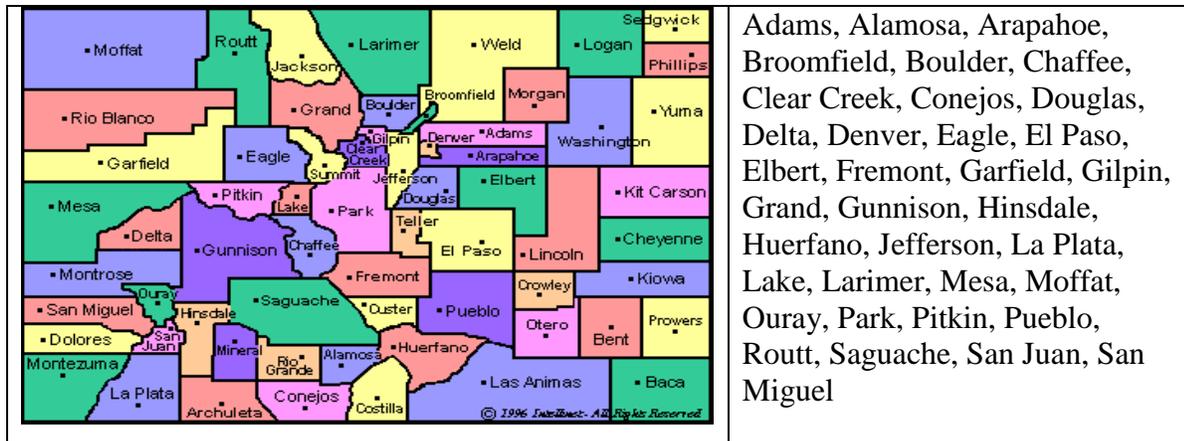
### Origin of Visitors

Users from Colorado accounted for 77.3% of the visitor days at both sites. The Colorado counties listed most often on the recreation use permit were Jefferson, Denver, Boulder, El Paso, Fremont, and Larimer. For The Bank Campground, these counties accounted for 69% of permits in 2006 and 64% of the permits in 2007. For Sand Gulch, these six counties accounted for 74% of permits in 2006 and 69% of the permits in 2007. Visitors came from 35 of the 64 counties in Colorado.

### Percentage of Colorado Visitor Days

<b>Campground and fiscal year</b>	<b>CO estimated visitors days</b>	<b>Total visitor days</b>	<b>% Colorado visitors</b>
Banks 2006/2007	3,794	4,910	77.3%
Sand Gulch 2006/2007	5,200	6,410	77.3%

Counties Visiting The Bank and Sand Gulch Campgrounds



Adams, Alamosa, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Conejos, Douglas, Delta, Denver, Eagle, El Paso, Elbert, Fremont, Garfield, Gilpin, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Jefferson, La Plata, Lake, Larimer, Mesa, Moffat, Ouray, Park, Pitkin, Pueblo, Routt, Saguache, San Juan, San Miguel

Visitors also came from several states and foreign countries. At The Bank Campground in 2006, users represented 27 states and one foreign country (Switzerland). In 2007, users represented 36 states and two Canadian provinces. At Sand Gulch Campground in 2006, users represented 31 states and three Canadian provinces. In 2007, users represented 28 states and five Canadian provinces.

### III. Recreation Use

#### Visitor Trends

Current trends indicate that the demand for climbing on public lands will increase. The completion of new equestrian trails has increased horseback riding in the area. Motorized trails are also showing increased use by OHVs. Local mountain bicyclists are also showing increased interest in the area.

#### Numbers of Visitors

Visitation use for Sand Gulch Campground averages about 4,900 visitors per year. The Bank Campground use has doubled over the last five years, increasing from 2,883 visits in 2003 to 6,121 visits in 2008. The heaviest use occurs in spring and fall.

Table 1.5-Estimated Visitor and Visitor Use Days

<b>Campground and fiscal year</b>	<b>Known visitors</b>	<b>Known Visitor Use Days</b>	<b>Estimated Visitors</b>	<b>Estimated Visitor Use Days</b>	<b>Estimated User Days per visitor</b>
<i>Banks 2006/2007</i>	3057	4583	3266	4910	1.5
<i>Sand Gulch 2006/2007</i>	3833	6057	4085	6410	1.6

### Visitor Activities

The purpose of the visit is self-reported by visitors on the Recreation Use Permit/Fee Envelope. Climbing was listed as the dominant activity at The Bank and Sand Gulch, but users participated in a variety of activities at this site. At The Bank Campground, climbing was reported as the primary purpose or listed with another activity by 84% of the users from October 2005 to September of 2007. At Sand Gulch Campground, climbing was reported or listed with another activity by 87% of the users.

BLM surveys conducted in 2000 and 2008 combined data from both campgrounds. In 2008, 87% of visitors reported climbing as their primary recreational activity compared to 98% in a survey conducted in 2000. Hiking, camping, and sightseeing were also reported as primary activities.

% Visitors Listing Climbing on Recreation Use Permit (Fee Envelope)

Activity	Banks Fiscal Year 2006	Banks Fiscal Year 2007	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2006	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2007
<i>Listed Climbing as Primary Purpose</i>	1745	1766	2326	2090
<i>Listed Climbing with Another Activity</i>	238	287	317	449
<i>Total</i>	1983	2053	2643	2539
<i>Total Estimated Visitor Use Days</i>	2298	2518	3452	2922
<i>Percentage of Visitor use days for climbing</i>	86%	82%	77%	87%

## **IV. Financial Analysis**

The current fees for camping are: \$4 per night for an individual campsite and \$8 per night for a large group campsite.

Fee revenue has increased about 14% since 2006 but has failed to keep pace with maintenance, operations, and infrastructure improvement needs which has increased by at least 25%.

Fee Revenue, 2006-2008

Campground	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
Sand Gulch	\$4,143	\$3,656	\$4,091
The Bank	\$3,026	\$3,457	\$4,083
TOTAL	\$7,169	\$7,113	\$8,174

Expenditures, 2006-2008

	<b>FY2006</b>	<b>FY2007</b>	<b>FY2008</b>
Fee	\$ 3,621	\$ 1,889	\$ 9,291
Non-Fee	\$148,343	\$11,443	\$10,500
TOTAL	\$151,964	\$13,332	\$19,791

Currently, non-fee revenue (annual maintenance, operations, capital construction) pays the majority of campground operations, maintenance, and improvement costs. Under the proposed fee increase, fee revenue would pay the majority of costs for campground operations, maintenance, and improvements. *Please see Attachment A: Fee Revenues/Expenditures Worksheet and Attachment AA: Non-Fee Revenue/Expenditure Worksheet for details.*

The two existing fee stations will be upgraded with new fee tubes and signs.

#### **V. Fee Calculation Process**

The fee process is determined by the the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2005. Nationally, we show 80% visitor satisfaction with the fee program. Campgrounds fall under Expanded Amenity Fee, requiring that a majority of amenities be provided to charge a recreation use fee. Sand Gulch and The Bank Campgrounds provide 7 of the 9 FLREA listed amenities.

Fees in the market area for similar settings and services were examined to determine the fair market value (FMV) for camping fees in the Shelf Road Recreation area. The majority of campgrounds on the Pike San Isabel National Forest charge between \$11 and \$17 for similar campsites. Arkansas Headwaters State Parks charges \$14 for similar campsites.

BLM Nevada has a campground in Red Rock National Conservation Area that is very similar to Shelf Road. The camping fee there is \$10 per night for an individual campsite and \$25 per night for a group campsite.

#### **VI. Rationale for New Fees or Fee Changes**

The current fees were instituted in 1995; there has never been an increase to address inflation and resulting increases in the costs of operations and maintenance, in addition to the need for improvements to facilities and infrastructure. The maintenance costs for the campground increased by more than 25% from 2006 to 2008. Use of these campgrounds has steadily increased and with that, the need for maintenance, improvements, security,

and visitor information has increased. The existing fee structure is also not aligned to the local market.

## **VII. Objectives for Use of Fee Receipts**

The objectives for use of fee receipts are to maintain and improve the campground and enhance the visitor experience. The priorities (in order) for fee receipts are:

- 1) Accomplishment of deferred maintenance projects (campground access roads, trails, fences, and parking areas).
- 2) Capital improvements such as the installation of shade ramadas, additional campsites, and additional vault toilets.
- 3) Replacement and maintenance of signs and visitor information.
- 4) Weed control.
- 5) Enhanced visitor services, safety, and security through frequent patrols by BLM recreation staff and RGFO Law Enforcement Officer.
- 6) Cleaning and maintenance campsites.
- 7) Cleaning, servicing, and maintenance of toilets.

## **VII. Social/Economic Impacts**

The majority of campground users come to participate in rock climbing. The majority of visitors have driven to the area from Colorado Front Range cities located from one to four hours away. Rock climbing requires a substantial monetary investment in equipment, and Shelf Road is a regionally significant destination for rock climbing. Based on this, BLM believes that the fee increase would not pose a hardship to the majority of visitors who can afford both the rock climbing equipment and the travel costs to reach the area.

According to the 2008 survey, visitor satisfaction with the fee was 87%. Ten percent felt that the fee charged was too low for the site. The fee increase may pose a hardship to some younger visitors and some local users with lower incomes. This could result in either a decrease of their use of the area or decrease in their compliance in paying the campground fee.

## **IX. Visitor Feedback Mechanisms**

These are the primary means for visitor feedback:

- 1) Visitor contacts – Recreation staff and the RGFO Law Enforcement Officer patrol the campgrounds and recreation area regularly during high use periods (spring, fall, and weekends). This provides opportunities for visitors to provide direct feedback to BLM staff.
- 2) Recreation Use Permits/Fee Envelopes – Visitors often provide constructive comments on the RUPs. These comments are noted by recreation staff.
- 3) Partners and Volunteers – RGFO coordinates regularly with Rocky Mountain Field Institute and The Access Fund. These organizations provide BLM with valuable feedback and suggestions. Also, they assist in communicating with the climbing community and organizing volunteers for various projects that benefit the Shelf Road Recreation Area.
- 4) Websites – RGFO uses websites ([www.mountainproject.com](http://www.mountainproject.com)) to monitor feedback that provides valuable insight into the visitor experiences at Shelf Road Recreation Area. Also, RGFO can post information to this website. See Public Participation section below.
- 5) Surveys – Visitors to Shelf Road have been surveyed twice in the last eight years by BLM. BLM will continue to conduct surveys in this area as funding permits.

## **X. Public Participation**

Visitors to Shelf Road will be made aware of the proposed fee changes by public announcements and signs posted at kiosks within the area. This business plan will be posted on the BLM website with an email link for comments.

Press releases will be sent to local and regional media outlets including newspapers and radio stations with the BLM website link to the business plan. This information will also be posted on the popular climbing website, Mountain Project ([www.mountainproject.com](http://www.mountainproject.com)).

In addition, BLM will contact key stakeholders including the Fremont County Board of Commissioners, organizations with Special Recreation Permits for the Shelf Road Recreation Area, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, The Access Fund, and Gold Belt Byway Scenic and Historic Byway Association.

*Refer to the Public Involvement Form for more details.*

## Appendix: Additional Data on Visitors and Visitor Use

### Surveys

A demographic profile of Shelf Road Climbing Area users was generated by several surveys that have been conducted in the area. Visitor satisfaction surveys were conducted in 2000 and 2008 in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). These followed a 1991 BLM visitor survey called "CUSTOMER" that was conducted with the assistance of the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Southeastern Forest Experiment station.

### Campground Permits (Recreation Use Permits)

In addition to the surveys, user demographics were collected from campgrounds permits from October of 2005 to September of 2007. This information is limited in its scope because many visitors are day users and are not required to obtain a recreation permit for camping.

Figure 1.1-Campground Permit

Form 1370-36  
(July 2004)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
**RECREATION FEE PERMIT ENVELOPE**  
(Reference 36 CFR 71)

FORM APPROVED  
OMB NO. 1004-0133  
Expires: June 30, 2007

**To Validate, Complete the Following:**  
(Checks Accepted - Please Make Payable To: USDI--Bureau of Land Management)  
**After completing, please detach permit stub and deposit this envelope in the box provided.**

1. Amount Enclosed	2. Number of Day(s) Paid	3. Date Permit Purchased	
4. Vehicle License No.	5. State	6. Home Zip Code	7. Assigned Campsite Number
8. Number in Group	9. Other Charges/Fees	10. Purpose of Visit	
11. Golden Age or Access Passport Number (If applicable--Holders pay half price; Not for group use)			

Permit No. 3463929

Table 1.2-Number of Times a County was listed on Recreation Permit

The Bank 2006	The Bank 2007	Sand Gulch 2006	Sand Gulch 2007
Larimer 21 wholes 6 halves Boulder 86 wholes 10 halves Jefferson 11 22 halves Denver 46 14 halves El Paso 21 wholes  Fremont 15 wholes	Larimer 10 wholes 8 halves Boulder 92 24 halves Jefferson 26 wholes 32 halves Denver 48 wholes 15 halves El Paso 24 wholes 2 halves Fremont 12 wholes 1 half	Larimer 18 wholes 9 halves Boulder 108 wholes 21 halves Jefferson 31 wholes 30 halves Denver 64 wholes 15 halves El Paso 38 wholes 2 halves Fremont 15	Larimer 21 wholes 10 halves Boulder 93 wholes 27 halves Jefferson 19 wholes 39 halves Denver 40 wholes 21 halves El Paso 36 wholes 2 halves Fremont 29 wholes 2 halves
Six counties listed 229 times	Six counties listed 242 times	Six counties listed 311 times	Six counties listed 286 times
365 permits	414 permits	473 permits	451 permits
12 not valid	7 not valid	2 not valid	5 not valid
21 unknown	30 unknown	48 unknown	31 unknown
332 valid permits	377 valid permits	423 valid permits	416 valid permits
229/332	242/377	311/423	286/416
69%	64%	74%	69%

County information for the origin of visitors was obtained from block 6 on the campground permits (Appendix A. Figure 1.1).

Zip codes were converted to county names. In cases where more than one county was listed per zip code, the county was credited a half.

Table 1.3-State of Origin of Visitors

Banks Fiscal Year 2006	Banks Fiscal Year 2007	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2006	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2007
AK	AK	AZ	AK
AR	AZ	CA	AR
AZ	BC	CO	AZ
CA	CA	CT	CA
CO	CO	DC	CO
District of Columbia	FL	FL	FL
FL	GA	GA	GA
IA	IA	IA	IL
IL	ID	IL	IN
IN	IL	KS	KS
KS	IN	MA	MA
MD	KS	MI	ME
MI	KY	MN	MO
MO	LA	MO	MT
MS	MA	MS	NC
ND	MN	NC	NM
NE	MO	NE	NY
NM	MS	NH	OH
NY	MT	NM	OK
OK	NC	NY	OR
OR	NE	OH	PA
PA	NH	OR	SC
TX	NM	PA	TN
UT	NV	SD	TX
VA	OH	TX	UT
VT	OK	UT	VA
WA	OR	VA	WA
Switzerland	PA	VT	WY
	SD	WA	Alberta
	TN	WI	BC
	TX	WY	QC
	UT	BC	VIC
	WA	ON	ON
	WI	QC	
	WV		
	WY		
	Ontario, Quebec		

Table 1.4-Number of Vehicles

Note: The numbers reported in Table 1.4 are the numbers displayed on the traffic counter divided by two. This should represent a vehicle going into the site and a vehicle leaving the site.

Sand Gulch						
Fiscal Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
October	459	665	491	467	633	526
November	974	332	168	469	425	438
December	188	224	371	105	140	
January	285	192	228	320	98	182
February	214	201	238	232	323	256
March	566	513	330	596	586	363
April	543	297	490	609	395	701
May	868	700	654	744	667	730
June	558	445	535	482	489	450
July	279	290	333	291	344	230
August	590	335	165	320	235	241
September	436	438	435	426	450	483
<b>Total</b>	<b>5960</b>	<b>4632</b>	<b>4438</b>	<b>5061</b>	<b>4785</b>	<b>4600</b>

The Bank						
Fiscal Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
October	87	283	363	398	633	746
November	109	308	77	357	618	632
December	98	31	199	164	259	
January	312	170	159	321	130	170
February	258	168	232	290	490	280
March	351	357	468	448	781	694
April	448	246	467	548	535	625
May	321	375	637	699	763	777
June	248	341	524	476	587	571
July	251	165	337	355	445	919
August	226	198	284	369	429	501
September	174	312	536	514	520	707
<b>Total</b>	<b>2883</b>	<b>2954</b>	<b>4283</b>	<b>4939</b>	<b>6190</b>	<b>6121</b>

Recreation Use Data Notes:

The traffic counter data used for this report was collected from October of 2003 to September of 2008. Traffic counters are located at the entrances of The Bank and Sand Gulch campgrounds. It is important to note that day users also enter the campgrounds to access the trail system leading to the climbing cliffs. This explains the differences between traffic counts and the number of camping permits issued.

The campground permits/fee envelopes also provide information on the number of visitors and the length of stay. It is understood that error exists in this data because some visitor don't pay the fees and some permits have

incomplete information. When permits were incomplete, estimates were made for the length of stay (1 day) and the number in the group (2). These estimates are likely to be on the low side.

The estimated visitor use was calculated by summing the numbers reported in block 8 of the campground permit. The estimated visitor days were calculated by multiplying Block 2 and Block 8.

Figure 1-3 Estimated Visitor User Days from Permits

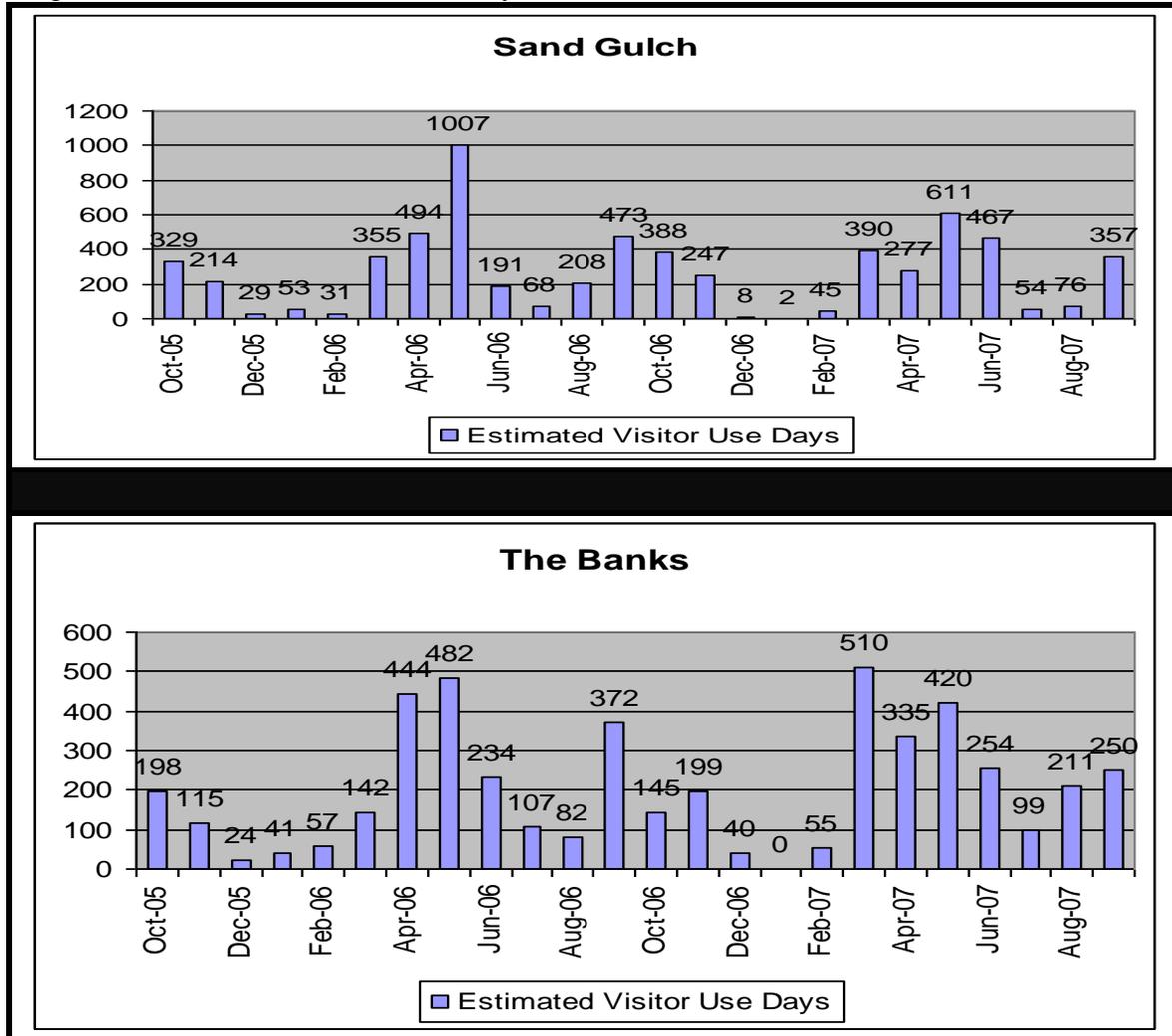


Table 1.7-Activities Listed on Campground Permit

Banks Fiscal Year 2006 Activities	Banks Fiscal Year 2007 Activities	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2006 Activities	Sand Gulch Fiscal Year 2007 Activities
backpack/climb/raft camp camp/climb camp/hike camping climb climb/bike climb/camp climb/fish climb/fun climb/hike climb/relax climb/run dirtbikes/climb fun hang out holiday hunting Mother having baby pleasure recreation relax scout troop sleep study microbial evolution vacation visit unknown	business camp camp/climb climb climb, hike, nature climb/atv climb/camp climb/fun climb/relax climb/ride climb/run fun fun/camp/climb/bike leisure playtime recreation recreation-camping, hiking scout trip unknown	bike/climb/raft bird watching camp camp/atv camp/climb clamber climb climb, kids party climb/atv riding climb/bike climb/camp climb/environmental ed climb/fun climb/hike climb/hike/bike fun geology trip hike/climb ice breaker painting/climb recreation recreation/climb relaxation rock scampering sightseeing unknown vacation visit	atv bike/camp camp camp/climb camp/hike church group climb climb/atv climb/bike climb/camp climb/fun climb/hike fun horseback riding love colorado outside time pleasure rafting recreation recreation/climb relax relax/climb road maintenance scenic scout for hunting therapy unknown vacation vacation/climb