



Categorical Exclusion Documentation Form (CE Form)

Project: Pilot Timed-Entry Permit System 2023

PEPC Project Number: 112708

Description of Action (Project Description):

Rocky Mountain National Park (ROMO) is managing for significant increases in visitation. Visitation to ROMO has grown dramatically in recent years, increasing from fewer than 3 million visits in 2010 to a peak of 4.6 million visits per year in 2019, making ROMO the third most visited national park in the country that year. Visitors experience a high level of congestion in many areas of the park from late May through October. Rapid growth in day use visitation has impacted natural and cultural resources, diminished the quality of the visitor experience, increased visitor and staff safety concerns, and created a heavy strain on the park's facilities and staff ability to perform daily operations.

To help address these issues, the park piloted temporary timed-entry permit systems (TEPS) in 2020, 2021, and 2022 as part of a public use limitation to maintain public health and safety (see PEPC 96659 for 2020/2021; PEPC 106478 for 2022). ROMO will pilot TEPS again in 2023 as a temporary day use visitor management strategy while the long-range Day Use Visitor Access Strategy is being completed. Each iteration of TEPS had adjustments to the system, including targeted parking capacity percentages, area-specific management of the Bear Lake Road Corridor, and changes to the percentages of permit release time and dates.

All the TEPS pilots provided for advanced daily reservations for private vehicles. Common to all temporary pilots, reservations are made through recreation.gov, cost \$2 per day, and are released one month in advance, with at least 10% of reservations being held for sale one or two days before the visitation date (the number of reservations released the night before has increased each year, see below for details on the percentage). The booking system is for arrivals, in blocks of two hours. There is no length-of-stay requirement; visitors may leave the park at any time. Park entrance passes are required in addition to a reservation.

Traffic and parking data from previous years inform park management of temporary TEPS pilots. The park continues to experiment with temporary pilot solutions to test their ability to protect resources and improve the overall visitor experience while taking into consideration the existing operational capacity and staffing. Below is an overview of Pilot TEPS (2020-2022):

- TEPS 1 (2020) targeted approximately 60% parking capacity or estimated 4,800 vehicles/13,500 visitors per day. TEPS 1 required one parkwide permit from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. from June 4 to October 13, 2020. The park made 10% of reservations available two days before.
- TEPS 2 (2021) targeted approximately 75 to 85% parking capacity or 6,250 vehicles/17,500 visitors per day. TEPS 2 utilized two permit systems: one for the Bear Lake Road Corridor from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. and one for rest of park (excluding the Bear Lake Road Corridor) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This system was implemented May 28 through October 11, 2021. The park made 25% of reservations available the day before.
- TEPS 3 (2022) targeted approximately 90% of parking and transit capacity or 7,200 vehicles/20,000 visitors per day. TEPS 3 continued to utilize two permits: one for the Bear Lake Road Corridor (from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and a rest of park permit system (excluding the Bear Lake Road Corridor, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). This system was implemented May 27 through October 10, 2022. The Hiker Shuttle and Park and Ride Shuttle were fully operational. All visitors were still required to have a timed-entry permit and park pass. The park made 30% of reservations available the day before.

The park will pilot a number of modifications during TEPS 4 (2023). TEPS 4 provides the same 90% of parking and transit capacity as TEPS 3. The rest of park permit timeframe will be from 9 a.m. and end one hour earlier at 2 p.m.; the Bear Lake Road Corridor permit times will remain the same (5 a.m. to 6 p.m.). TEPS 4 will also increase the number of reservations released for purchase the night before to 40% (from 30% in 2022). The park is planning to extend the end of the reservation season based on visitation data collected in October 2022. Timed-entry permits would be required from May 26 to October 22, 2023, an additional twelve days over previous pilots.

Reservations will continue to be available at Recreation.gov, cost \$2, and be released one month in advance. The park will implement solutions to improve visitors' ability to purchase reservations the day-of at the park and/or in the local area if there are reservations available. Ideas include offering public access computers and printers at visitor centers when reservations are available, although this is dependent on NPS access policies and improving Wi-Fi connectivity. In addition, the park continues to work with Recreation.gov to improve their check-out procedure. The park is adjusting the re-entry policy for TEPS reservation holders. This policy will address issues with visitors checking in during their reservation window only to leave immediately after, returning at a more personally preferred time, thus defeating the purpose of the timed-entry system that is piloted to reduce congestion at peak times. This policy will only apply to Bear Lake Road Corridor permits, and the park may experiment with different re-entry times.

This year, park staff will pilot a robust monitoring program to test the efficacy of temporary pilot visitor use management strategies in meeting park goals and desired conditions. This program builds upon ongoing methods of data collection but implements more specific and long-term methods to monitor conditions.

Park staff, park residents (including private in-holders) and authorized guests, tribal members (non-recreational, traditional use), wilderness and front country campers with a reservation are exempt from the TEPS. Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA), Special Use Permits (SUP), Concessioners and Commercial Tours do not need timed-entry permits for their trips into the park; their permitted use is accounted for in the overall reservation system and constitutes less than 3% of park visitation. Park staff, at their discretion, may issue waivers to park visitors who experience bona fide technology barriers or challenges that prevent them from utilizing TEPS.

Piloting TEPS is intended to inform a long-term Day Use Visitor Access Strategy that follows the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council Framework. The park engaged the public and various stakeholders in this long-term planning process in 2021, holding virtual meetings and an open comment period as part of this pre-NEPA project (see PEPC 100042). ROMO will engage the public, tribes, and stakeholders on various day use visitor management strategies during Winter 2022/23. This process will include opportunities for the public to attend in-person and virtual meetings on long-term visitor use management and to comment on visitor use management strategies through PEPC. Pilots are intended to experiment and inform the long-term planning process and to test and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

Project Locations:

Location 1

County:	Boulder	State:	CO
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Location 2

County:	Grand	State:	CO
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Location 3

County:	Larimer	State:	CO
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There are no required mitigations identified.

CE Citation: 3.3.D.2 Minor changes in amounts or types of visitor use for the purpose of ensuring visitor safety or resource protection in accordance with existing regulations.

CE Justification:

Implementation of temporary pilot managed access through a timed-entry permit is intended to test the ability of such a system to ensure visitor safety and resource protection and is in accordance with existing regulations. TEPS 4 targets 90% of parking and transit capacity, which equates to around 20,000 visitors and 7,200 vehicles per day. TEPS only requires a reservation for the majority of the park for 5 hours during the day (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) providing the opportunity to access the park without a reservation for 19 hours a day. Visitors also have the option to access the park without a reservation by taking the Bustang from Denver, CO to the park. As a result, and based on previous pilots and modeling, the changes in the amounts or types of visitor use from TEPS will be minor.

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Signature

Superintendent: 

Darla Sidles

Date: 12.15.22

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Explanation
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	There is no evidence to indicate that temporarily piloting managed access to the park through a timed-entry permit system would have significant impact on public health or safety.
B. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas?	No	The temporary pilot managed access system through a timed-entry permit system is intended to assess if such a system can help the park meet their Day Use Visitor Access Strategy (DUVAS) goals: to protect park resources, offer varied opportunities for high quality visitor experiences, enhance visitor and staff safety, and coincide with the park's operational capacity. As documented in the ESF, there is no evidence to indicate a potential for significant impacts on natural or cultural resources.
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	Managed access of visitor use of parks and recreation sites is a common activity with well-known effects, as demonstrated in the attached ESF. Therefore, there is no evidence to indicate a potential for significant scientific controversy over effects resulting from a temporary pilot managed access system. Additionally, there are no unresolved conflicts over available resources. This extraordinary circumstance applies to the use or consumption of resources in a way that prohibits another use of the same resource. Temporary managed access pilots do not consume NPS resources. The impacts from these actions are intended to benefit resources so they remain present for others to enjoy or appreciate.
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	Managed access of visitor use of parks and recreation sites is a common activity with well-known and negligible environmental effects, as demonstrated in the attached ESF. Therefore, a temporary pilot managed access system does not have the potential for effects or risks that are unique, unknown, or potentially significant.
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	As demonstrated herein and in the attached ESF, the temporary pilot of managed access to the park through a timed-entry permit system does not have the potential for significant effects and therefore does not set any precedent that would lead to future actions with significant environmental impacts.
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	The temporary pilot of managed access to the park through a timed-entry permit system does not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant effects, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects, because most park projects are routine and/or limited in scope, duration, and geography.
G. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as determined by either the bureau or office?	No	Managed access of visitor use of parks and recreation sites is a common activity with well-known and negligible effects, as demonstrated in the attached ESF. Therefore, the temporary pilot managed access to the park through a timed-entry permit system does not have the potential for

		significant impacts on cultural resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
H. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?	No	Managed access of visitor use of parks and recreation sites is a common activity with negligible environmental effects, as demonstrated in the attached ESF. Therefore, a temporary pilot managed access system does not have the potential for significant impacts on species listed or proposed for listing on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species or on designated Critical Habitats.
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	All actions will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and therefore would not violate any law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	The timed-entry permit system has been designed to provide for fair and equitable access to the park. As demonstrated in the attached ESF, the IDT: considered health and safety effects of TEPS and did not identify any pollution or other environmental hazards central to EO12898 that could adversely affect the health of any individuals, including low-income or minority populations; determined TEPS would not result in any change to current conditions of other aspects of the environment or would have beneficial environmental impacts compared to current conditions; considered the potential for TEPS to create socioeconomic barriers for visitors who wish to access the park, including those from low income and minority populations, which are mitigated by the potential for park rangers to issue waivers from TEPS, as guided by the park's exemption protocol. This protocol reduces the potential that such a barrier would have disproportionate or high adverse effects on low income and minority populations. As a result, because the TEPS system would not have any adverse health or other environmental effects, socioeconomic barriers to access are mitigated by the park's exemption protocol, and there is ample opportunity to access the park without a reservation, there is no potential for any disproportionately high or adverse health or environmental impacts to low income and minority populations that are central to EO 12898.
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	Tribal members (non-recreational, traditional use) are exempt from TEPS; therefore, tribal access to and ceremonial use of park lands will not be limited by or impacted by the temporary pilot of managed access to the park.
L. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?	No	Managed access of visitor use of parks and recreation sites is a common activity with negligible environmental effects, as demonstrated in the attached ESF, and will not increase the spread and introduction of nonnative species when compared to the existing baseline levels. Therefore, there would be no change in the potential for the

	introduction, continued existence or spread of these species from a temporary pilot managed access system.
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ASSESSMENT OF ACTIONS HAVING AN EFFECT ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES

A. DESCRIPTION OF UNDERTAKING

1. **Park:** Rocky Mountain National Park

2. Project Description:

Project Name: Pilot Timed-Entry Permit System 2023

Prepared by: Cheria Yost **Date Prepared:** **Telephone:** 970-586-1320

PEPC Project Number: 112708

Locations:

County, State: Boulder, CO

County, State: Grand, CO

County, State: Larimer, CO

Describe project:

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Area of potential effects (as defined in 36 CFR 800.16[d])

The undertaking is a managed access system, TEPS, which does not involve activities in the park that could adversely affect historic resources. TEPS focuses on managed access to enter the park, either by vehicle or shuttle bus. Visitors may continue to choose their destination and activities within open areas of the park. Tribal members are not required to have a permit to enter during TEPS periods for non-recreational and traditional use.

3. Has the area of potential effects been surveyed to identify historic properties?

No
 Yes

Source or reference:

4. Potentially Affected Resource(s):

Archeological Resources Present: No

Historical Structures/Resources Present: No

Cultural Landscapes Present: No

Ethnographic Resources Present: No

5. The proposed action will: (check as many as apply)

- Destroy, remove, or alter features/elements from a historic structure
- Replace historic features/elements in kind
- Add non-historic features/elements to a historic structure
- Alter or remove features/elements of a historic setting or environment (inc. terrain)
- Add non-historic features/elements (inc. visual, audible, or atmospheric) to a historic setting or cultural landscape
- Disturb, destroy, or make archeological resources inaccessible
- Disturb, destroy, or make ethnographic resources inaccessible
- Potentially affect presently unidentified cultural resources
- Begin or contribute to deterioration of historic features, terrain, setting, landscape elements, or archeological or ethnographic resources
- Involve a real property transaction (exchange, sale, or lease of land or structures)
- Other (please specify): _____

6. Supporting Study Data:

(Attach if feasible; if action is in a plan, EA or EIS, give name and project or page number.)

B. REVIEWS BY CULTURAL RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

The park 106 coordinator requested review by the park's cultural resource specialist/advisors as indicated by check-off boxes or as follows:

No Reviews From: Curator, Archeologist, Historical Architect, Historian, 106 Advisor, Other Advisor, Anthropologist, Historical Landscape Architect

C. PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR'S REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Effect:

- No Potential to Cause Effects
- No Historic Properties Affected

_____ No Adverse Effect
_____ Adverse Effect

2. Documentation Method:

A. Standard 36 CFR Part 800 Consultation

Further consultation under 36 CFR Part 800 is needed.

B. Streamlined Review Under the 2008 Servicewide Programmatic Agreement (PA)

The above action meets all conditions for a streamlined review under section III of the 2008 Servicewide PA for Section 106 compliance.

Applicable Streamlined Review Criteria

(Specify 1-16 of the list of streamlined review criteria.)

C. Undertaking Related to Park Specific or Another Agreement

The proposed undertaking is covered for Section 106 purposes under another document such as a park, region or statewide agreement established in accord with 36 CFR 800.7 or 36 CFR 800.14.

D. Combined NEPA/NHPA Process

Process and documentation required for the preparation of an EA/FONSI or an EIS/ROD to comply with Section 106 is in accord with 36 CFR 800.8.c.

E. Memo to Project File

3. Consultation Information

SHPO Required: No

SHPO Sent:

SHPO Received:

THPO Required:

THPO Sent:

THPO Received:

SHPO/THPO Notes:

Advisory Council Participating: No

Advisory Council Notes:

N/A

4. Stipulations and Conditions:

N/A

5. Mitigations/Treatment Measures: Measures to prevent or minimize loss or impairment of historic/prehistoric properties: (Remember that setting, location, and use may be relevant.)

No Assessment of Effect mitigations identified.

6. Assessment of Effect Notes:

The undertaking is not ground disturbing. TEPS will result in minor changes in amounts and times of vehicle-based visitor entry into the park.

D. RECOMMENDED BY PARK SECTION 106 COORDINATOR:

Compliance Specialist:

NHPA Specialist

Cheria Yost

Cheria Yost

Date: 12/15/22

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

The proposed work conforms to the NPS *Management Policies* and *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, and I have reviewed and approve the recommendations, stipulations, or conditions noted in Section C of this form.

Signature

Superintendent:

Darla Sidles

Darla Sidles

Date: 12.15.22



ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Pilot Timed-Entry Permit System 2023
PEPC Project Number: 112708
PMIS Number:
Project Type: Other Administrative Activities (ADM)
Project Location:
County, State: Boulder, Colorado
County, State: Grand, Colorado
County, State: Larimer, Colorado
Project Leader: John Hannon

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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C. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts

Air Air Quality <i>Air Quality</i>	Potential	Issue: Vehicle emissions can degrade local air quality. Impact: The reduced number of vehicles entering the park could temporarily improve air quality for approximately 5 months through reduced vehicle emissions. Traffic congestion at entrance stations may occur in intervals throughout the day, as it did prior to the TEPS 4 pilot.
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species <i>Exotic Plants</i>	Potential	Issue: Visitors help transport exotic plants on their tires, clothing, and shoes. Impact: The park continues to monitor the prevalence of exotic plants in the park and treat them according to the Exotic Plant Management Plan. Compared to the baseline prevalence of exotics at the most popular destinations, TEPS will not have an effect because the prevalence of exotic plants is very dependent on the type of species and the mechanism for spread.
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat	None	
Biological Vegetation <i>Alpine Tundra Vegetation</i>	Potential	Issue: Human feet and illegally off-road vehicles trample tundra plants and compact soil, which takes years to recover. Impact: Loss of alpine tundra, especially adjacent to Trail Ridge Road. With fewer people at one time during the pilot, there will likely be less roadside parking on vegetation, since visitors will be more likely to find spaces available in paved parking areas.
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species <i>Wildlife Protection</i>	Potential	Issue: When wildlife are present, visitors congregate. Some visitors approach the wildlife, changing their movement patterns. Impact: TEPS will temporarily reduce the number of vehicle-based visitors entering the park at one time, which may help reduce visitor congregation along roadsides for approximately 5 months. Visitors with a permit can chose their destinations and activities, including congregating to watch wildlife. With fewer number of visitors, the park may be able to use education and enforcement as tactics to protect wildlife.
Cultural Archeological Resources <i>Archeological Resources</i>	Potential	Issue: Damage to cultural resources sites resulting in the loss of archeological record. Impact: Under TEPS, it is anticipated that there would be fewer people at one time on trails and at sites for approximately 5 months. Regardless of the number of people, defacement or looting of cultural resource sites is possible. There is no anticipated change to archeological sites from the TEPS.
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	None	
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	None	
Cultural Museum Collections	None	

Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	None	
Geological Geologic Features	None	
Geological Geologic Processes	None	
Lightscares Lightscares	None	
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Emergency Incidents</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Visitors with a permit may opt to recreate in the park during adverse conditions, such as thunderstorms, rather than come back another day.</p> <p>Impact: If education, enforcement, and emergency response do not align with visitation, people may be more likely to get injured or killed. The park uses all channels to provide safety messages to park visitors and help them prepare for and adjust their trip according to current conditions.</p>
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Emergency Responses</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: The ability for law enforcement staff and emergency response technicians to respond to visitor accidents and injuries due to traffic and vehicle congestion.</p> <p>Impact: TEPS should better distribute visitation throughout the day, reducing traffic and vehicle congestion, which may temporarily provide emergency response units an enhanced ability to respond to emergencies and access trailheads for approximately 5 months.</p>
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Human (Employee) Safety</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Visitor conflicts occur over limited parking during peak periods. Visitors frustrated by busy conditions and the need for a permit sometimes act aggressively toward park staff at entrance stations, at parking lots, and at visitor centers.</p> <p>Impact: By temporarily managing access across the day, the number of parking spots available during the pilot should better align with demand, helping park staff and volunteers manage the busiest parking lots at Alpine Visitor Center, Bear Lake, and Wild Basin. According to observational data from park staff and volunteers, TEPS reduced the number of incidents related to visitors arguing over parking spots that escalated to fights needing law enforcement intervention.</p>
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Human Safety</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Lack of parking leads to roadside walking.</p> <p>Impact: Fewer vehicles at one time in the park should temporarily reduce or eliminate occurrences of roadside parking during the pilot as visitors have more opportunities to secure a designated parking spot. This should have beneficial impacts on visitor safety by reducing or eliminating occurrences of visitors walking in or along lanes of traffic to access their intended destination.</p>
Other Human Health and Safety <i>Park Operations</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Increasing visitation has made it challenging for park staff to maintain facilities and keep up with basic tasks such as custodial and interpretive programs.</p> <p>Impact: TEPS is aimed to distribute visitation across the day, during the busiest months, which allows the park to better plan staffing needs. TEPS should temporarily help the park align its operational capacity during the pilot.</p>

Paleontological Paleontological Resources	None	
Socioeconomic Land Use Gateway Communities	Potential	<p>Issue: The park and gateway communities are tied geographically and economically. A reduction in the number of vehicles in the park at one time may affect local economies in both negative and positive ways. Some local residents want unrestricted access into the park.</p> <p>Impact: Gateway communities may have surges of congestion when the park is limiting public use. The Town of Estes Park and Grand Lake reported higher tax revenues during all three previous years of the pilots. Estes Park and Lyons communities have reported a noticeable improvement in concentrated traffic congestion. It is unknown if this is related to TEPS directly. A permit system may limit the number of people that visit the local community, if they cannot get a permit. On the other hand, people that came to enter the park but did not get a permit (or arrived earlier than their entry time) may stay and spend in the local community. Prior to implementing TEPS 1 in 2020, the park received letters of support from gateway communities, town officials/managers, congressional members, and the three counties. This support continues into TEPS 4.</p>
Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc. <i>Low Income Populations and Under-represented Communities</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: The cost of transportation to the park and the regular entrance fee may affect visitation by low-income populations and there is no change to these proposed in TEPS. However, obtaining a TEPS permit may be an additional, temporary barrier for low-income and under-represented communities for approximately 5 months. People that do not plan ahead or are not aware of the timed-entry permit are also temporarily affected during the pilot. Potential visitors may not have ready access to internet connections, computers, and smart phones to make the reservation. Because the permits sell out quickly, potential visitors may be unavailable to make permits at the release times, missing opportunities to schedule. Large groups wanting to enter the park together in separate vehicles may not be able to get permits at the same time.</p> <p>Impact: The socioeconomic impacts of TEPS are not fully understood at this time, and the park continues to receive and consider comments from visitors and potential visitors. When visitors need help upon arrival, the park provides on-site assistance to visitors with technology challenges by staffing rangers in various locations such as visitor centers. For TEPS 4, the park will implement solutions to improve visitors' ability to purchase a reservation the day-of at the park and/or in the local area if there are reservations available. Ideas include offering public access computers and printers at visitor centers when reservations are available, although this is dependent on NPS access policies and improving Wi-Fi connectivity. In addition, the park continues to work with Recreation.gov to improve and streamline their check-out procedure. Park staff, at their discretion, may issue waivers to park visitors who experience bona fide technology barriers or challenges that prevent them from utilizing TEPS. In addition, • TEPS allows access based on 90% of parking and transit capacity; • TEPS only requires a reservation for approximately 5 months resulting in no change to access for more than 7 months; • TEPS only requires reservations for 5 hours during the day (9 a.m to 2 p.m.) providing the opportunity to access the majority of the park without a reservation for 19 hours a day; • Visitors have the option to access the park without a reservation by taking the Bustang from Denver, CO to the park. As a result, because the TEPS system would not have any adverse health effects or environmental impacts, other temporary barriers to</p>

		access are mitigated by the park's exemption protocol, and there is ample opportunity to access the park without a reservation both during the pilot and at other times of year, there is no potential for any significant, disproportionately high, or adverse health or environmental impacts to low income and minority populations that are central to EO 12898.
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic <i>Socioeconomic</i>	Potential	Issue: Economic impacts on local and regional commercial operators. Impact: Commercial operators are exempt from the temporary requirement to obtain a permit during the pilot, so there are no anticipated impacts on opportunities for commercial operators to conduct their business in the park.
Soundscapes Soundscapes <i>Natural Sounds</i>	Potential	Issue: Vehicle-based visitors add noise along busy road corridors. Impact: Fewer vehicles at one time will temporarily have a positive impact by reducing noise levels in the park for approximately 5 months.
Viewsheds Viewsheds <i>Scenic Views from Trail Ridge Road and Other Road Corridors</i>	Potential	Issue: Cars lined up along Trail Ridge Road and other road corridors affect the quality of scenic viewsheds by introducing a "traffic jam" to the scenic viewshed. Impact: Fewer vehicles at one time will have a temporary positive impact on natural and cultural viewsheds for approximately 5 months, especially "long views" associated with Trail Ridge Road.
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources <i>Access to Recreational Opportunities</i>	Potential	Issue: Ability of potential visitors to recreate in the park during TEPS. Impact: The number of visitors turned away because they were unaware of the permit requirement is unknown but is predicted to lessen over time; through continued outreach and communication, more potential visitors would be aware of the permit requirement. TEPS temporarily affects spontaneity during the pilot, however, visitors are able to recreate in most of the park without a permit before 9 a.m. and after 2 p.m., as well as the non-TEPS period, for approximately 7 months out of the year. Once inside the park, visitors will be able to go to all open areas, and they are able to choose their activities. To mitigate impacts on the more spontaneous visitors, TEPS 4 is designed to set-aside 40 percent of permits for last-minute bookings (day-before). It is unknown what percentage of potential park visitors may be unable to visit the park during their desired time/date due to timing constraints or other factors and therefore forego a visit to the park altogether.
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources <i>Demand</i>	Potential	Issue: Over 4 million people visited Rocky Mountain National Park in 2021, evidence to its high demand. TEPS will redistribute the number of vehicles entering the park during the busiest months and busiest hours of the day. Impact: TEPS temporarily changes the availability of vehicle park entry during TEPS entry windows for approximately 5 months. There is no reduction to concession contracts or commercial use authorizations or special use permits. Once inside the park, visitors will be able to go to all open areas, and they are able to choose their activities. Visitors may temporarily have to visit the park earlier or later in the day than they had originally intended, or earlier or later in the season, but the system is not anticipated to displace visitors altogether and therefore recreational demand, access and opportunities should not be significantly diminished.

Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use and Experience <i>Visitor Experience</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: TEPS will help reduce overcrowded parking lots and shuttle capacity in the park between 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the Bear Lake Road Corridor and 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the rest of park, while also distributing entries over the day.</p> <p>Impact: TEPS should temporarily distribute the daily peak of visitation during the 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. time period when the park has traditionally experienced highest levels of visitation. During this pilot, less congestion in most areas of the park should improve the visitor experience by returning a sense of solitude to wilderness areas, the ability to see wildlife from roads, and the ability to find a parking space. For approximately 5 months, TEPS is intended to provide mechanisms that still accommodate overall visitor use demand and experience expectations.</p>
Water Floodplains	None	
Water Water Quality or Quantity	None	
Water Wetlands	None	
Wilderness Wilderness	None	

D. ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS:

Question	Answer	Notes



Other Compliance/Consultations Form

Park Name: Rocky Mountain National Park
PEPC Project Number: 112708
Project Title: Pilot Timed-Entry Permit System 2023
Project Type: Other Administrative Activities : Visitor Use Management
Project Location:
 County, State: Boulder, CO
 County, State: Grand, CO
 County, State: Larimer, CO
Project Leader: John Hannon

ESA

Any Federal Species in the project Area? No
If species in area: No Effect
Was Biological Assessment prepared?
If Biological Assessment prepared, concurred?
Formal Consultation required? No
Formal Consultation Notes:
 TEPS is one strategy to manage visitor day use and aims to protect park resources by better distributing the number of visitors during the highest use times and for approximately 5 months. TEPS is a parkwide strategy, and while species and habitat do exist within the park, the TEPS has no significant impact on T&E wildlife species including lynx, Mexican spotted owl, or downstream species. Preble's meadow jumping mouse, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Colorado butterfly plant, Ute ladies'-tresses orchid = not present, Rocky Mountain National Park is outside elevation range for these species.

Formal Consultation Concluded:
Any State listed Species in the Project Area? No
Consultation Information: TEPS is one strategy to manage visitor day use and aims to protect park resources by better distributing the number of visitors during the highest use times for approximately 5 months. TEPS is a parkwide strategy, and while species and habitat do exist within the park, the TEPS has no significant impact on species of management concern. The TEPS should protect rare plants by distributing foot traffic.
General Notes:

Data Entered By: Desiree Fiske **Date:** Oct 24, 2022

ESA Mitigations

No ESA mitigations are associated with this project.

Floodplains/Wetlands/§404 Permits

Question	Yes	No	Details
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A.1. Is project in 100- or 500-year floodplain or flash flood hazard area?	No	Not in floodplain or flash flood hazard area.
A.2. Is Project in wetlands as defined by NPS/DOI?	No	Not in wetland as defined by NPS/DOI.
B. COE Section 404 permit needed?	No	No placement of fill in waters of the United States.
C. State 401 certification?	No	
D. State Section 401 Permit?	No	Issue Date: Expiration Date:
E. Tribal Water Quality Permit?	No	
F. CZM Consistency determination needed?		N/A
G. Erosion & Sediment Control Plan Required?	No	
H. Any other permits required?	No	Permit Information:
Other Information:		This is a visitor management project and has no on the ground activities that could negatively affect water quality and quantity or wetlands.

Data Entered By: Desiree Fiske

Date: Oct 24, 2022

FloodPlains & Wetlands Mitigations

No FloodPlains & Wetlands mitigations are associated with this project.

Wilderness

Question	Yes	No	
A. Does this project occur in or adjacent to Designated, Recommended, Proposed, Study, Eligible, or Potential Wilderness?		No	
B. Is the only place to conduct this project in wilderness?			
C. Is the project necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness?			
D. Would the project or any of its alternatives adversely affect (directly or indirectly) Designated, Recommended, Proposed, Study, Eligible, or Potential Wilderness? (If Yes, Minimum Requirements Analysis required)		No	
E. Does the project or any of its alternatives involve the use of any of the Wilderness Act Section 4(c) prohibited uses:		No	

commercial enterprise, permanent road, temporary road, motor vehicles, motorized equipment, motorboats, landing of aircraft, mechanical transport, structure, or installation? (If Yes, Minimum Requirements Analysis required)			
If the answer to D or E above is "Yes" then a Minimum Requirements Analysis is required. Describe the status of this analysis in the column to the right.			Initiation Date: Completed Date: Approved Date:
Other Information: Timed-entry permits are based on vehicle and transit capacity, however, data collection on visitor use and resource impacts occur in wilderness. The park has collected trail count data at selected trails for limited durations, and these data are not fully analyzed yet in relation to TEPS. Pilot research and monitoring programs in 2023 include analysis of people per viewshed, encounter rates, and areas of bare ground/trampling. These programs are being developed at the time of this CE, and data analyses will occur over upcoming years.			

Data Entered By: Desiree Fiske

Date: Nov 8, 2022

Other Permits/Laws *Questions A & B are no longer used.*

Question	Yes	No
C. Wild and scenic river concerns exist?		No
D. National Trails concerns exist?		No
E. Air Quality consult with State needed?		No
F. Consistent with Architectural Barriers, Rehabilitation, and Americans with Disabilities Acts or not Applicable? (If N/A check Yes)	Yes	
G. Other:		

Other Information:

Data Entered By: Desiree Fiske

Date: Oct 24, 2022



Mitigations List Form

Date: December 15, 2022

Park: Rocky Mountain National Park

Project: Pilot Timed-Entry Permit System 2023

PEPC Project Number: 112708

Project Description:

Rocky Mountain National Park (ROMO) is managing for significant increases in visitation. Visitation to ROMO has grown dramatically in recent years, increasing from fewer than 3 million visits in 2010 to a peak of 4.6 million visits per year in 2019, making ROMO the third most visited national park in the country that year. Visitors experience a high level of congestion in many areas of the park from late May through October. Rapid growth in day use visitation has impacted natural and cultural resources, diminished the quality of the visitor experience, increased visitor and staff safety concerns, and created a heavy strain on the park's facilities and staff ability to perform daily operations.

To help address these issues, the park piloted temporary timed-entry permit systems (TEPS) in 2020, 2021, and 2022 as part of a public use limitation to maintain public health and safety (see PEPC 96659 for 2020/2021; PEPC 106478 for 2022). ROMO will pilot TEPS again in 2023 as a temporary day use visitor management strategy while the long-range Day Use Visitor Access Strategy is being completed. Each iteration of TEPS had adjustments to the system, including targeted parking capacity percentages, area-specific management of the Bear Lake Road Corridor, and changes to the percentages of permit release time and dates.

All the TEPS pilots provided for advanced daily reservations for private vehicles. Common to all temporary pilots, reservations are made through recreation.gov, cost \$2 per day, and are released one month in advance, with at least 10% of reservations being held for sale one or two days before the visitation date (the number of reservations released the night before has increased each year, see below for details on the percentage). The booking system is for arrivals, in blocks of two hours. There is no length-of-stay requirement; visitors may leave the park at any time. Park entrance passes are required in addition to a reservation.

Traffic and parking data from previous years inform park management of temporary TEPS pilots. The park continues to experiment with temporary pilot solutions to test their ability to protect resources and improve the overall visitor experience while taking into consideration the existing operational capacity and staffing. Below is an overview of Pilot TEPS (2020-2022):

- TEPS 1 (2020) targeted approximately 60% parking capacity or estimated 4,800 vehicles/13,500 visitors per day. TEPS 1 required one parkwide permit from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. from June 4 to October 13, 2020. The park made 10% of reservations available two days before.
- TEPS 2 (2021) targeted approximately 75 to 85% parking capacity or 6,250 vehicles/17,500 visitors per day. TEPS 2 utilized two permit systems: one for the Bear Lake Road Corridor from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. and one for rest of park (excluding the Bear Lake Road Corridor) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This system was implemented May 28 through October 11, 2021. The park made 25% of reservations available the day before.
- TEPS 3 (2022) targeted approximately 90% of parking and transit capacity or 7,200 vehicles/20,000 visitors per day. TEPS 3 continued to utilize two permits: one for the Bear Lake Road Corridor (from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and a rest of park permit

system (excluding the Bear Lake Road Corridor, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). This system was implemented May 27 through October 10, 2022. The Hiker Shuttle and Park and Ride Shuttle were fully operational. All visitors were still required to have a timed-entry permit and park pass. The park made 30% of reservations available the day before.

The park will pilot a number of modifications during TEPS 4 (2023). TEPS 4 provides the same 90% of parking and transit capacity as TEPS 3. The rest of park permit timeframe will be from 9 a.m. and end one hour earlier at 2 p.m.; the Bear Lake Road Corridor permit times will remain the same (5 a.m. to 6 p.m.). TEPS 4 will also increase the number of reservations released for purchase the night before to 40% (from 30% in 2022). The park is planning to extend the end of the reservation season based on visitation data collected in October 2022. Timed-entry permits would be required from May 26 to October 22, 2023, an additional twelve days over previous pilots.

Reservations will continue to be available at Recreation.gov, cost \$2, and be released one month in advance. The park will implement solutions to improve visitors' ability to purchase reservations the day-of at the park and/or in the local area if there are reservations available. Ideas include offering public access computers and printers at visitor centers when reservations are available, although this is dependent on NPS access policies and improving Wi-Fi connectivity. In addition, the park continues to work with Recreation.gov to improve their check-out procedure. The park is adjusting the re-entry policy for TEPS reservation holders. This policy will address issues with visitors checking in during their reservation window only to leave immediately after, returning at a more personally preferred time, thus defeating the purpose of the timed-entry system that is piloted to reduce congestion at peak times. This policy will only apply to Bear Lake Road Corridor permits, and the park may experiment with different re-entry times.

This year, park staff will pilot a robust monitoring program to test the efficacy of temporary pilot visitor use management strategies in meeting park goals and desired conditions. This program builds upon ongoing methods of data collection but implements more specific and long-term methods to monitor conditions.

Park staff, park residents (including private in-holders) and authorized guests, tribal members (non-recreational, traditional use), wilderness and front country campers with a reservation are exempt from the TEPS. Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA), Special Use Permits (SUP), Concessioners and Commercial Tours do not need timed-entry permits for their trips into the park; their permitted use is accounted for in the overall reservation system and constitutes less than 3% of park visitation. Park staff, at their discretion, may issue waivers to park visitors who experience bona fide technology barriers or challenges that prevent them from utilizing TEPS.

Piloting TEPS is intended to inform a long-term Day Use Visitor Access Strategy that follows the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council Framework. The park engaged the public and various stakeholders in this long-term planning process in 2021, holding virtual meetings and an open comment period as part of this pre-NEPA project (see PEPC 100042). ROMO will engage the public, tribes, and stakeholders on various day use visitor management strategies during Winter 2022/23. This process will include opportunities for the public to attend in-person and virtual meetings on long-term visitor use management and to comment on visitor use management strategies through PEPC. Pilots are intended to experiment and inform the long-term planning process and to test and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

Project Locations:

Location 1

County: Boulder **State:** CO
District: **Section:**
Geo. Marker: **Other:**
Tract ID:
Funding
Source(s):
PMIS
Number(s):

Location 2

County: Grand **State:** CO

District:
Geo. Marker:
Tract ID:
Funding
Source(s):
PMIS
Number(s):

Section:
Other:

Location 3

County: Larimer
District:
Geo. Marker:
Tract ID:
Funding
Source(s):
PMIS
Number(s):

State: CO
Section:
Other:

There are no required mitigations identified.

Recommendations for Conditions or Stipulations:
None