



Categorical Exclusion Documentation Form (CE Form)

Project: Public Use Limitation: Maintenance of Public Health and Safety

PEPC Project Number: 96659

Description of Action (Project Description):

Coronavirus, the virus responsible for the disease COVID-19, has caused a public health emergency as declared by Larimer County, the State of Colorado, and the United States Government. The National Park Service (NPS), in consultation with local, county, and state public health officials and in light of guidance provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and in order to maintain public health and safety, hereby establish certain public use limits, restrictions, or closures that are warranted to reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 at the individual and population level by limiting social interactions and preventing inadvertent exposures. It has been determined that less restrictive measures will not suffice. These restrictions will safely manage the pace and flow of visitor use, reduce crowding, and provide an improved visitor experience commensurate with the park's safe operational capacity.

By order of the Superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park and under authority of Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.5(a)(1) and Section 1.5(a)(2) the following measures are in place as of June 12, 2020 within Rocky Mountain National Park:

All persons (except employees on duty, park residents, and authorized guests of park residents) entering Rocky Mountain National Park must have a valid Rocky Mountain National Park Timed Entry Permit, between the hours of 0600-1700; a campground reservation; or a wilderness camping permit. Visitors must have camping permits in advance of entry to Rocky Mountain National Park. There will be no same day sales of campsites at the park's campgrounds.

- The Public Use Limit for day use vehicles has been established at 4800 vehicles per day, which generally reflects 13,500 visitors, or approximately 60% of the park's maximum parking capacity.
- Reservations for the timed entry permit are on sale through www.recreation.gov for reservations between June 4 through July 31. Beginning on July 1, time entry permits will be available for the month of August, and for any remaining days that have not been booked for July. On August 1, timed entry permits will be available for the month of September and any remaining days that have not been booked for August. On September 1, time entry permits will be available for the month of October and any remaining days in September that have not been booked.
- Upon entry, each vehicle must display a timed entry permit on the vehicle's dashboard from June 12, 2020 through October 31, 2020.
- A Commuter permit is available for residents of Boulder, Grand, and Larimer counties who live within 50 miles of a park entrance stations and commute through the park. This permit is for non-stop, non-recreational travel through the park. No recreational use is permitted in Rocky Mountain National Park when using this permit.
- The interior livery concessioner within Rocky Mountain National Park will not be operating during this time, but may be opened at a later date in the summer.
- The park's shuttle bus system is operating this year on in-park route; Bear Lake and Moraine Park Routes. The shuttle bus schedule can be found on the park's website. Shuttles will be limited to 20% of capacity, which is approximately 15 riders per shuttle.

These measures are being established to maintain public health and safety. Rocky Mountain National Park will be monitored by NPS staff to ensure compliance with these limits and/or restrictions. This designation will remain in place until rescinded.

Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	The measures are taken to support public health recommendations for physical distancing, hygiene, and 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 use limitation will not adversely affect the park's natural, aesthetic or cultural values.
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	Limiting public use, temporarily for the duration of the pandemic, will not result in controversial environmental effects.
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	This is in response to a global pandemic, and the Superintendent will lift the public use limitation when local and state health departments provide guidance to do so. This is not connected to future actions.
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	
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	The use limitation will not adversely affect the park's natural, aesthetic or cultural values.
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	The use limitation will not adversely affect the park's natural, aesthetic or cultural values.
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	The public use limitation, specifically the timed entry permit, does affect low income populations, but not disproportionately. Low income populations may not have ready access to internet connections, computers, and smart phones to make the reservation. People that do not plan ahead or are not aware of the timed entry permit are also affected, as are other populations who experience technology barriers, such as older visitors. The park provides on site assistance to visitors with these challenges by staffing rangers in various locations near the park entrances.
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or	No	Indian religious practitioners would be allowed to access the park during the public use limitation.

adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)?		
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	The use limitation will not adversely affect the park's natural, aesthetic or cultural values.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Public Use Limitation: Maintenance of Public Health and Safety
PEPC Project Number: 96659
PMIS Number:
Project Type: Other Administrative Activities (ADM)
Project Location:
County, State: Boulder, Colorado
County, State: Larimer, Colorado
County, State: Grand, Colorado
Project Leader: Darla Sidles

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Coronavirus, the virus responsible for the disease COVID-19, has caused a public health emergency as declared by Larimer County, the State of Colorado, and the United States Government. The National Park Service (NPS), in consultation with local, county, and state public health officials and in light of guidance provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and in order to maintain public health and safety, hereby establish certain public use limits, restrictions, or closures that are warranted to reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 at the individual and population level by limiting social interactions and preventing inadvertent exposures. It has been determined that less restrictive measures will not suffice. These restrictions will safely manage the pace and flow of visitor use, reduce crowding, and provide an improved visitor experience commensurate with the park's safe operational capacity.

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- The Public Use Limit for day use vehicles has been established at 4800 vehicles per day, which generally reflects 13,500 visitors, or approximately 60% of the park's maximum parking capacity.
- Reservations for the timed entry permit are on sale through www.recreation.gov for reservations between June 4 through July 31. Beginning on July 1, time entry permits will be available for the month of August, and for any remaining days that have not been booked for July. On August 1, timed entry permits will be available for the month of September and any remaining days that have not been booked for August. On September 1, time entry permits will be available for the month of October and any remaining days in September that have not been booked.
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- The interior livery concessioner within Rocky Mountain National Park will not be operating during this time, but may be opened at a later

date in the summer. • The park's shuttle bus system is operating this year on in-park route; Bear Lake and Moraine Park Routes. The shuttle bus schedule can be found on the park's website. Shuttles will be limited to 20% of capacity, which is approximately 15 riders per shuttle.

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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 between 6 am and 5 pm could improve air quality through reduced vehicle emissions. Other positive impacts may include reduced burning in the campgrounds with an improvement to local air quality. Traffic backing up at entrance stations may occur in intervals throughout the day, as it did prior to this public use limitation.
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species <i>non native and exotic plants</i>		Issue: Visitors and vehicles and animals (horses) spread invasive plants through boot and tire treads and waste. Impact: Fewer people and vehicles may reduce the visitor-transmission of exotic plants along road and trail corridors; it is unknown if there will be visible improvement. The interior livery trails are heavily populated with exotic plants; and spread may be reduced near these areas. The exterior liveries are operating as usual, so exotic plants will continue to spread on the trails that the exterior liveries use.
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat <i>lynx, ptarmigan, wolverine, Mexican spotted owl, downstream species</i>	Potential	Issue: Fewer people entering the park may affect wildlife species in positive ways. Impact: While the park was in full closure, the park staff saw wildlife return to normally congested areas, but it is unknown how much difference the reduction in visitors will have on migration patterns. There is anecdotal evidence of more wildlife near the roads and frontcountry, and there may be less feeding of wildlife due to less people. Similarly, negative human-bear interactions (especially food rewards at campgrounds) may be lower due to less people.
Biological Vegetation <i>alpine tundra vegetation</i>	Potential	Issue: Human feet trample tundra plants and compact soil, which takes years to recover. Impact: With fewer people, there should be less trampling of plants and soils in the alpine and montane ecosystems. There will likely be less roadside parking, since there will be more spaces available in paved parking areas.
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species	None	

Cultural Archeological Resources	None	
Cultural Cultural Landscapes		
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>human safety</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: Coronavirus, the virus responsible for the disease COVID-19, has caused a public health emergency as declared by Larimer County, the State of Colorado, and the United States Government.</p> <p>Impact: The public health limitation will manage access to the park to encourage physical distancing and prevent overcrowding in many areas of the park. Because visitors can access all open areas of the park, this measure may not reduce crowding, gathering, or congestion on trails at the park's most popular locations, such as Bear Lake.</p>
Socioeconomic Land Use <i>gateway communities</i>	Potential	<p>Issue: The park and gateway communities are tied geographically and economically. A reduction in the number of vehicles in the park may affect local economies in both negative and positive ways. Local residents are concerned about having access to the park and changing visitation patterns; some seek special privileges.</p> <p>Impact: Gateway communities may not hire as many people to support tourism industries and may experience changing travel patterns. Some measure of this change relates to the global pandemic affecting how and where people travel, while some of it relates to the public use limitation. Gateway communities may have surges of congestion from 6 am to 5 pm, the period when the park is limiting public use. Prior to implementing the public use limitation, the park received letters of support from gateway communities, town officials/managers; and senators; and congressmen; and the three counties.</p>
Socioeconomic Minority and low- income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.	Potential	<p>Issue: The public use limitation may be an additional barrier for under-represented and low-income communities. Low income populations may not have ready access to internet connections, computers, and smart phones to make the reservation. Elderly visitors may experience technology challenges of working through the timed entry permit system.</p>

<i>low income populations</i>		Impact: The public use limitation, specifically the timed entry permit, does affect low income populations, but not disproportionately. People that do not plan ahead or are not aware of the timed entry permit are also affected, as are other populations who experience technology barriers, such as older visitors. The park provides on site assistance to visitors with these challenges by staffing rangers in various locations near the park entrances.
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	None	
Soundscapes Soundscapes <i>natural sounds</i>	Potential	Issue: Less vehicle traffic will lead to quieter roadsides. Impact: Quieter roadsides will improve the ability to experience natural sounds.
Viewsheds Viewsheds	None	
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources <i>demand</i>	Potential	Issue: Rocky Mountain National Park is the 3rd busiest national park, evidence to its high demand. This public use limitation will restrict the number of vehicles entering the park. Impact: This public use limitation changes the availability of vehicle park entry and shuttle buses. Interior liveries (those with stables inside the park) will not operate, but exterior liveries (those with stables outside the park that enter the park via trails) will operate. There is no reduction to concession contracts or commercial use authorizations. Once inside the park, visitors will be able to go to all open areas, and they are able to chose their activities.
Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use and Experience <i>visitor experience</i>	Potential	Issue: The public use limitation will reduce the overall number of visitors in the park between 6 am and 5 pm, while also temporally spacing entries over the day. This will prevent mid day surges that overwhelm points of entry, parking lots, and trails. Impact: 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. Some areas of the park, like the Bear Lake corridor, will continue to be congested.
Water Floodplains	None	
Water Water Quality or Quantity	None	
Water Wetlands	None	
Wilderness Wilderness <i>solitude</i>	Potential	Issue: Less visitors entering in the park equates to less visitors entering the wilderness of the park. Impact: Wilderness hikers are likely to see less people on the trail. While the park is unsure if there will be a reduction in hiker distribution compared to other years, the opportunity to experience solitude should improve for park visitors. Wilderness camping remains a permitted activity.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Rocky Mountain National Park
Estes Park, Colorado 80517



In Reply Refer To:

Public Use Limitation

Maintenance of Public Health and Safety

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Superintendent, Rocky Mountain National Park

30 June 2020

Date