

ARAPAHO-ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FORESTS

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES STUDY

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Transportation, is currently conducting a multi-year study to improve conditions at three popular recreation sites within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests. The objectives of this project are to:

. Protect Forest Resources

Restore, protect, and enhance sensitive forest resources in recreational areas, limiting visitor use to Wilderness capacity derived from study data and USFS management judgment.

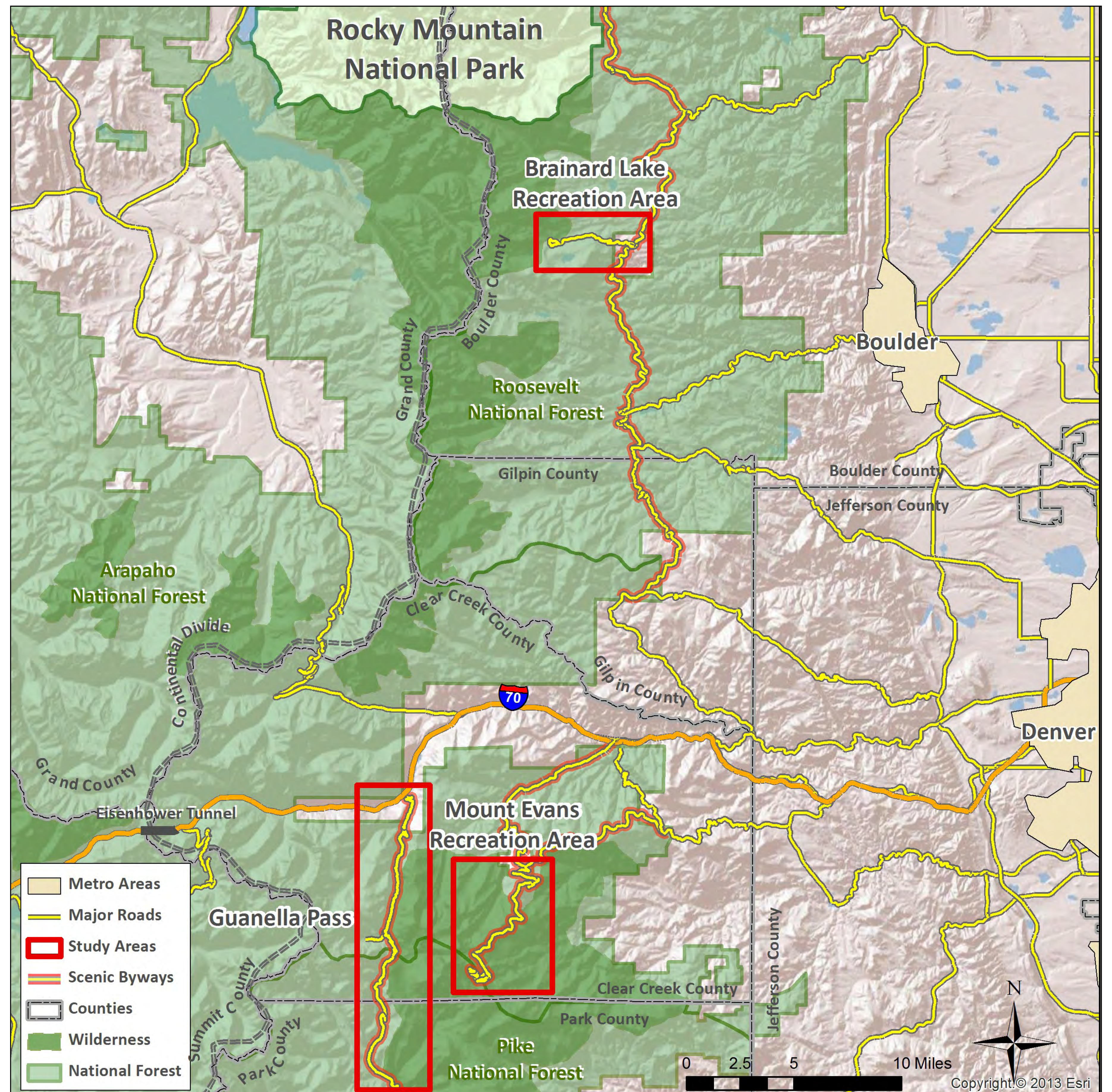
. Improve the Transportation System

Reduce safety risks, traffic congestion, and parking shortages through effective use of alternative transportation systems and visitor use management.

. Preserve the Quality of Visitors' Experiences

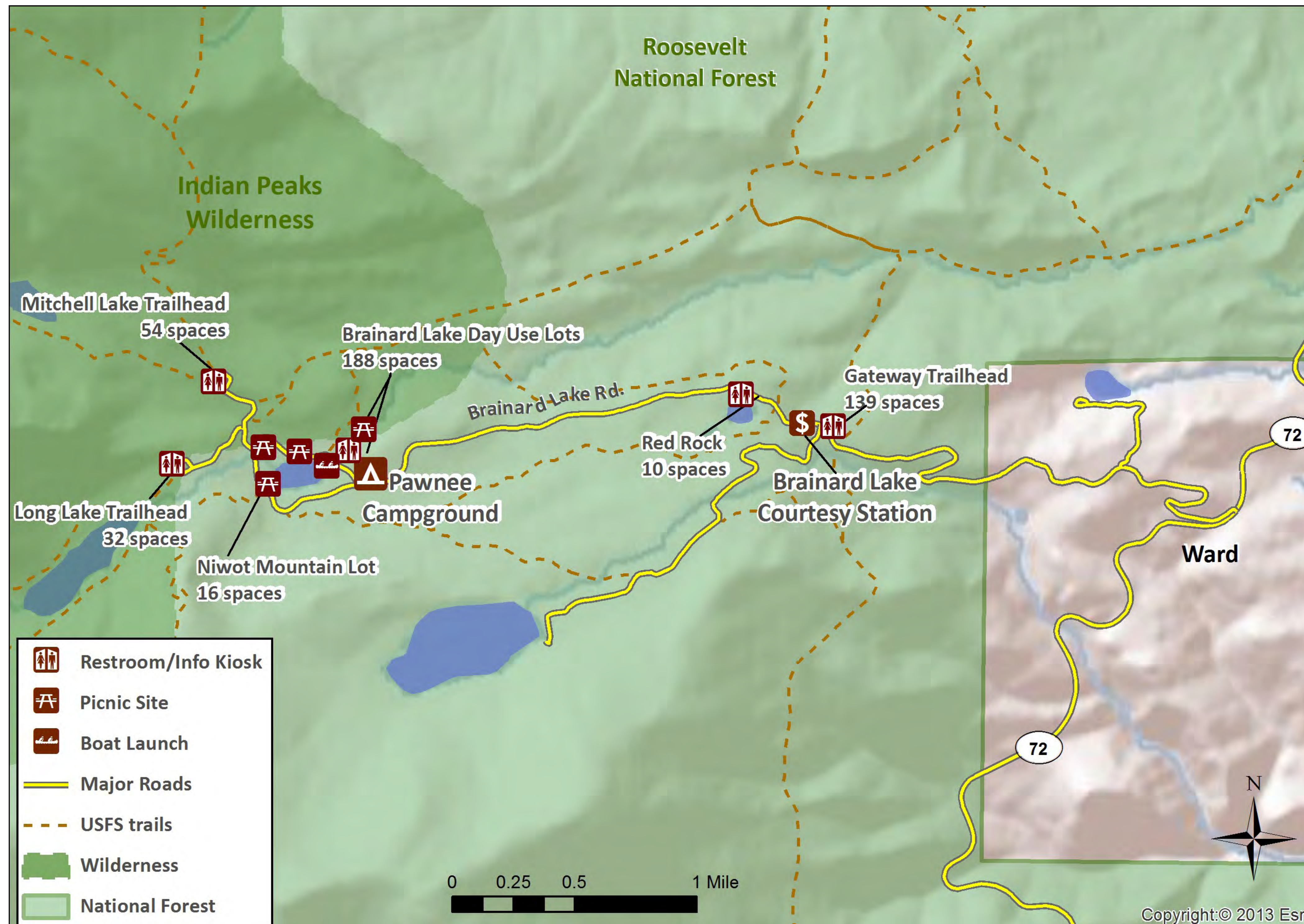
Improve visitor information availability to help visitors make trip planning decisions and have outstanding opportunities to experience Wilderness resources.

The goal of this workshop is to identify publicly-acceptable, site-appropriate, financially feasible short- and long-term transportation solutions to inform USFS investments in these three sites.



BRAINARD LAKE

The Brainard Lake Recreation Area (BLRA) provides opportunities for hiking, fishing, picnicking, camping, viewing scenery, birding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The majority of BLRA summer visitors are destined for hiking trails in the Indian Peaks Wilderness (IPW) via parking lots at the Mitchell Lake and Long Lake Trailheads. While visitor use is highest in the summer, a significant amount of recreational use occurs in the winter, and the Gateway Trailhead Parking Lot is open year-round.



GOALS

- . Maintain the undeveloped character of the portion of the BLRA away from roads and trails, and manage all trails for non-motorized use
- . Provide for year-round recreational use in the BLRA while also taking actions to protect and enhance the values of the adjacent IPW
- . Disperse existing recreational use into areas east of Brainard Lake and away from the IPW
- . Improve non-motorized recreational opportunities by considering connecting and loop trails for four-season multiple use that direct users away from Brainard Lake and IPW

BRAINARD LAKE ISSUES

The desired conditions for the Indian Peaks Wilderness (IPW) are threatened by intensive and increasing visitation. The small lots at the IPW trailheads help reduce crowding, but limit convenient access to the IPW. Designated parking at trailheads accessing the IPW fill quickly during peak season.

- . Underuse of the Gateway Trailhead Lot due to distance from IPW



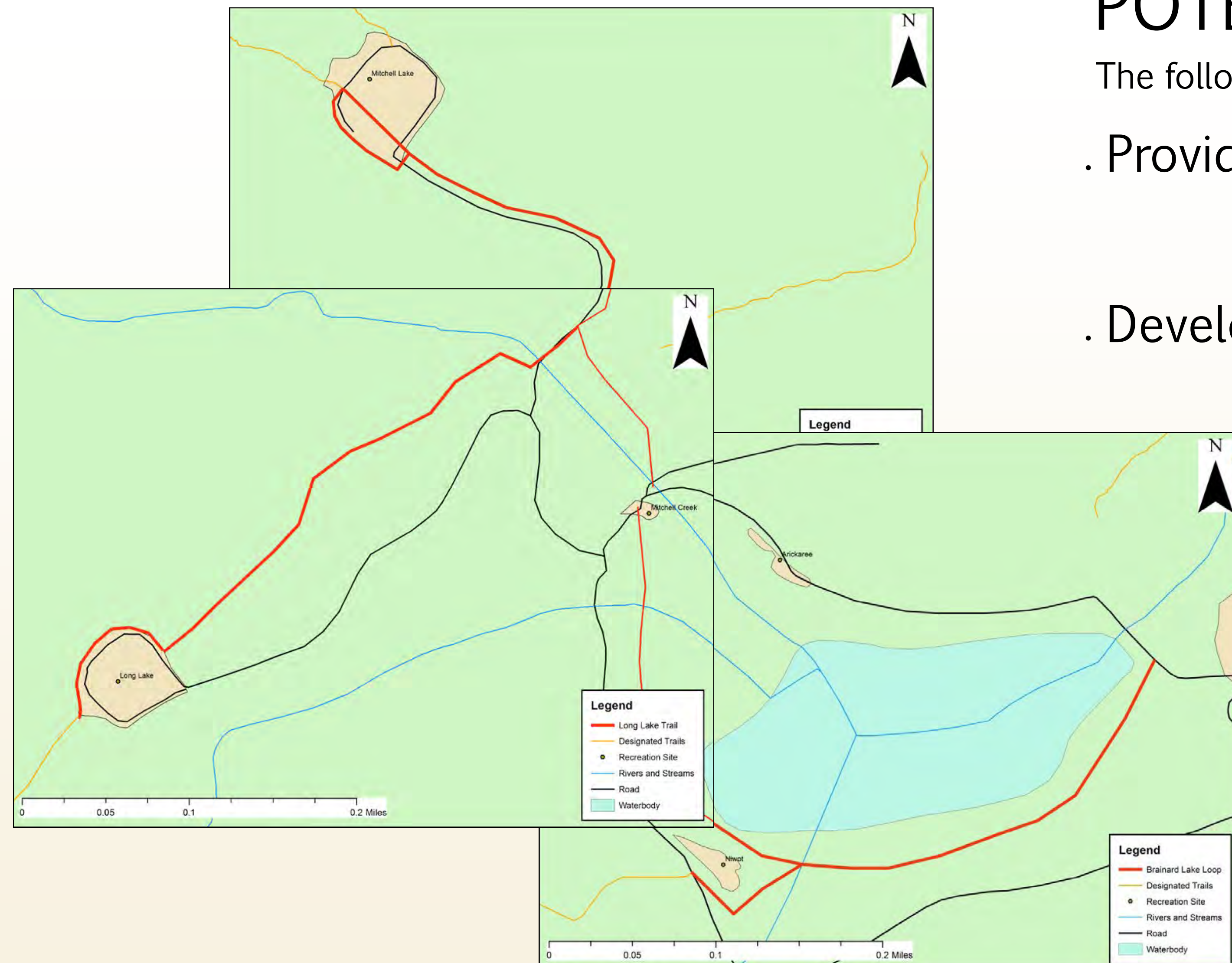
- . Lack of safe, enjoyable pedestrian connections from parking to IPW trailheads



- . Lack of wayfinding and pedestrian connections to popular destinations



Mitchell Creek Picnic Area to Mitchell Lake and Long Lake Trailheads
narrow natural surface pedestrian trails, moderate slope

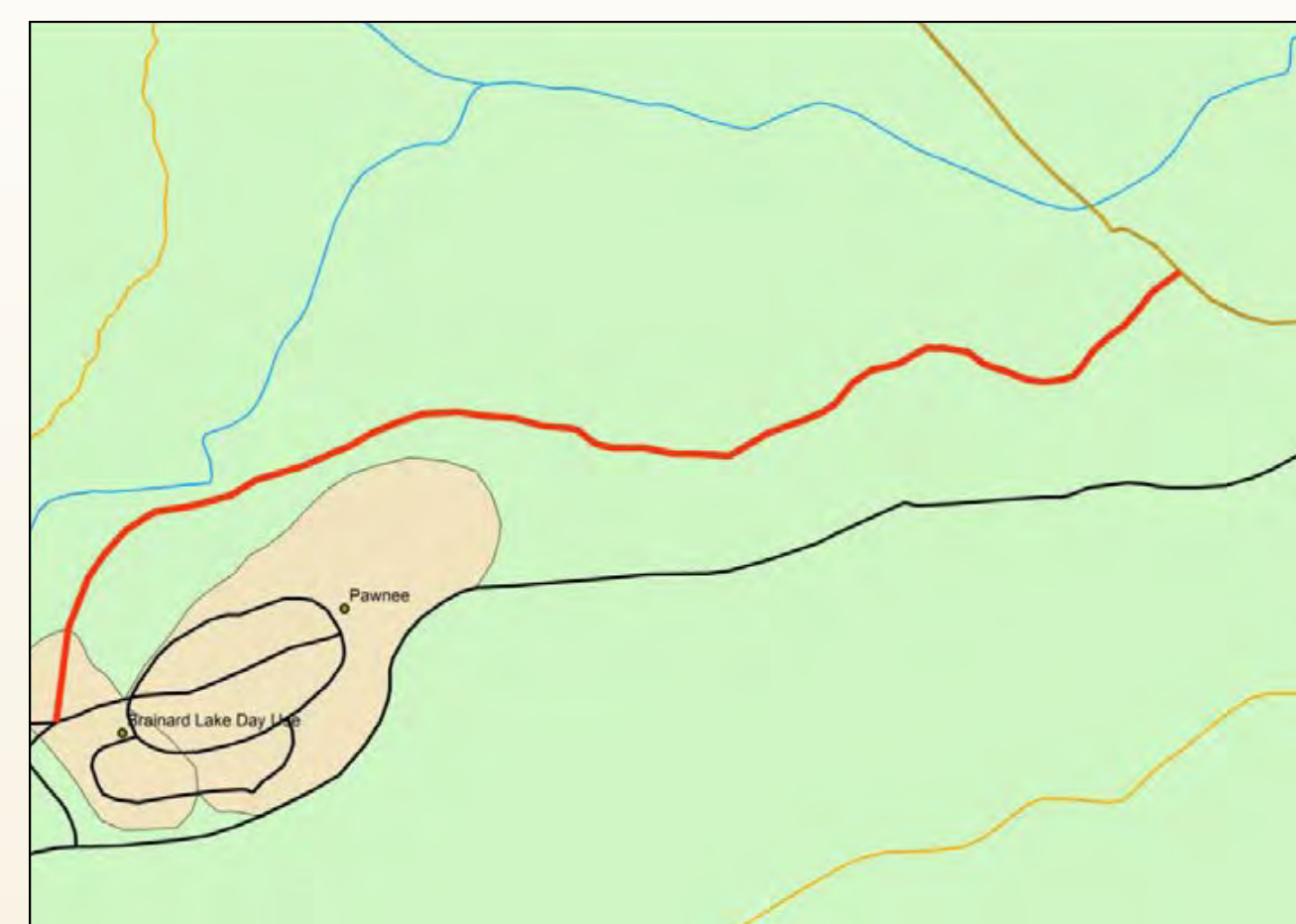


Full Access Loop around Brainard Lake
multidirectional ADA-compliant multi-use path

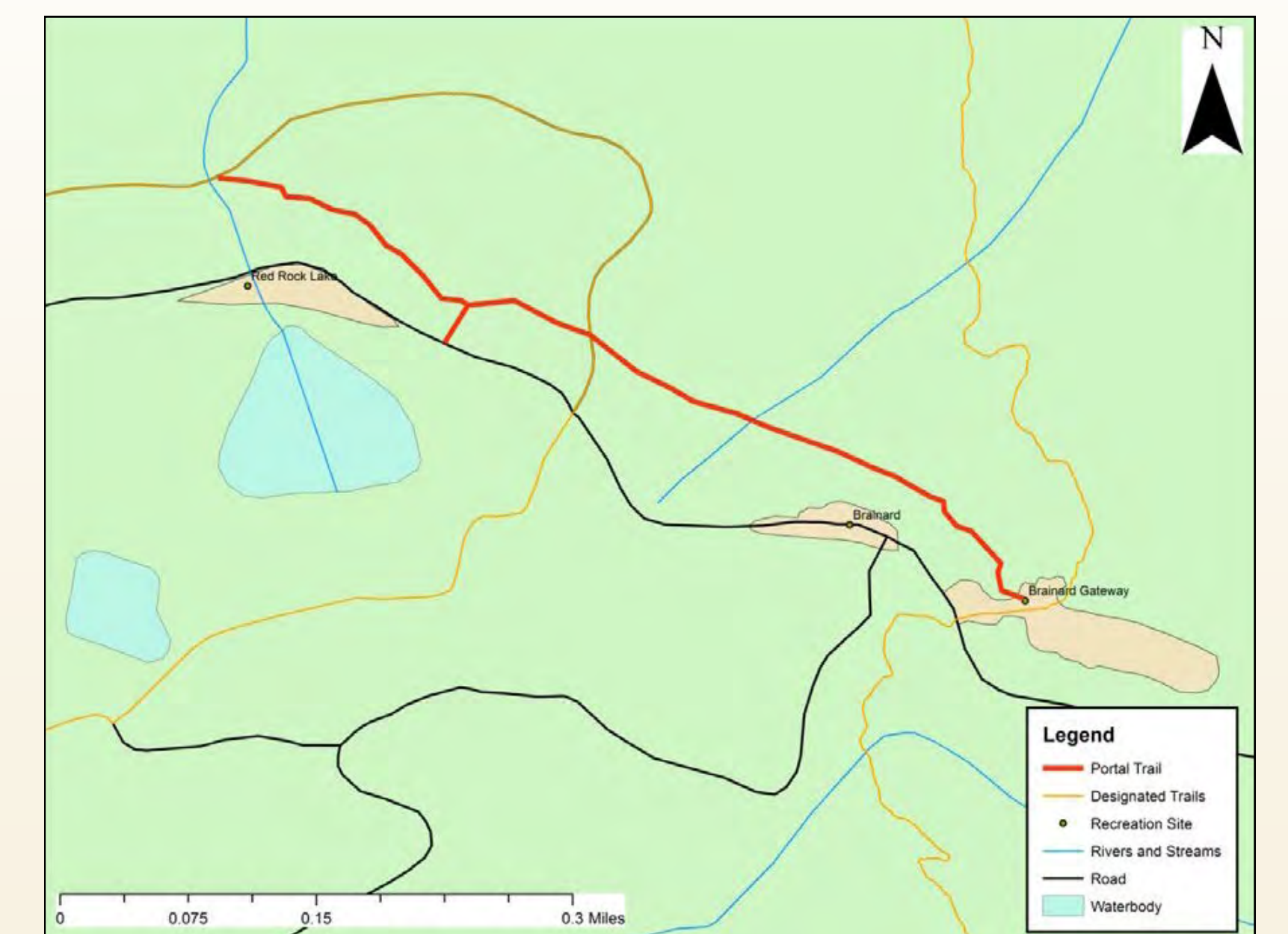
POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The following is an initial list of strategies that could be implemented in various combinations:

- . Provide internal shuttle service from Gateway Lot to IPW trailheads
- . Develop a combination of new trails depicted left and below



Gateway Parking Lot to Brainard Lake via Walldrop Trail
multidirectional hardened multi-use path, low slope

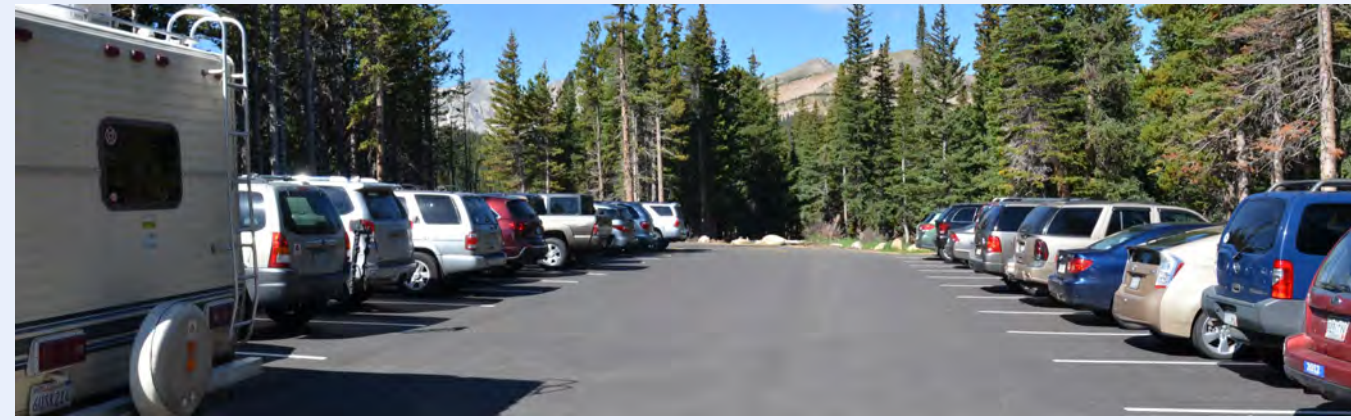


BRAINARD LAKE

ISSUES (cont.)



. Congestion and delays at the entrance station



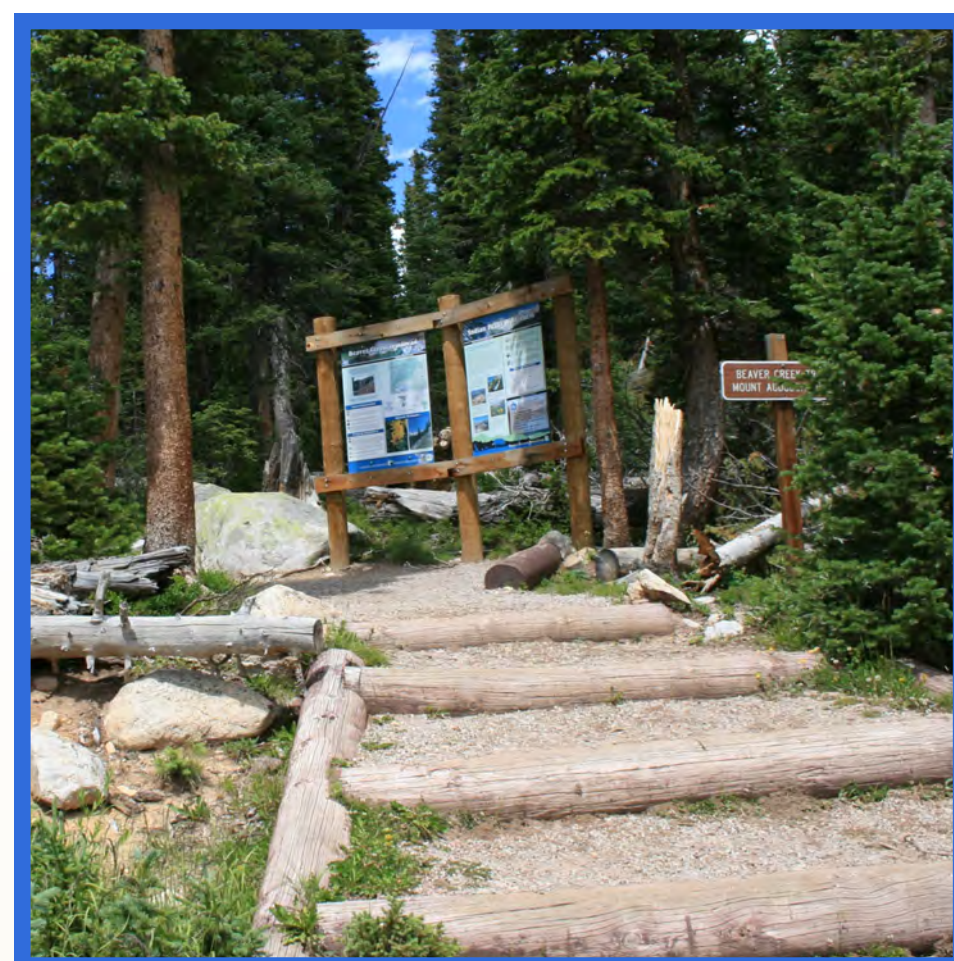
. Parking shortages



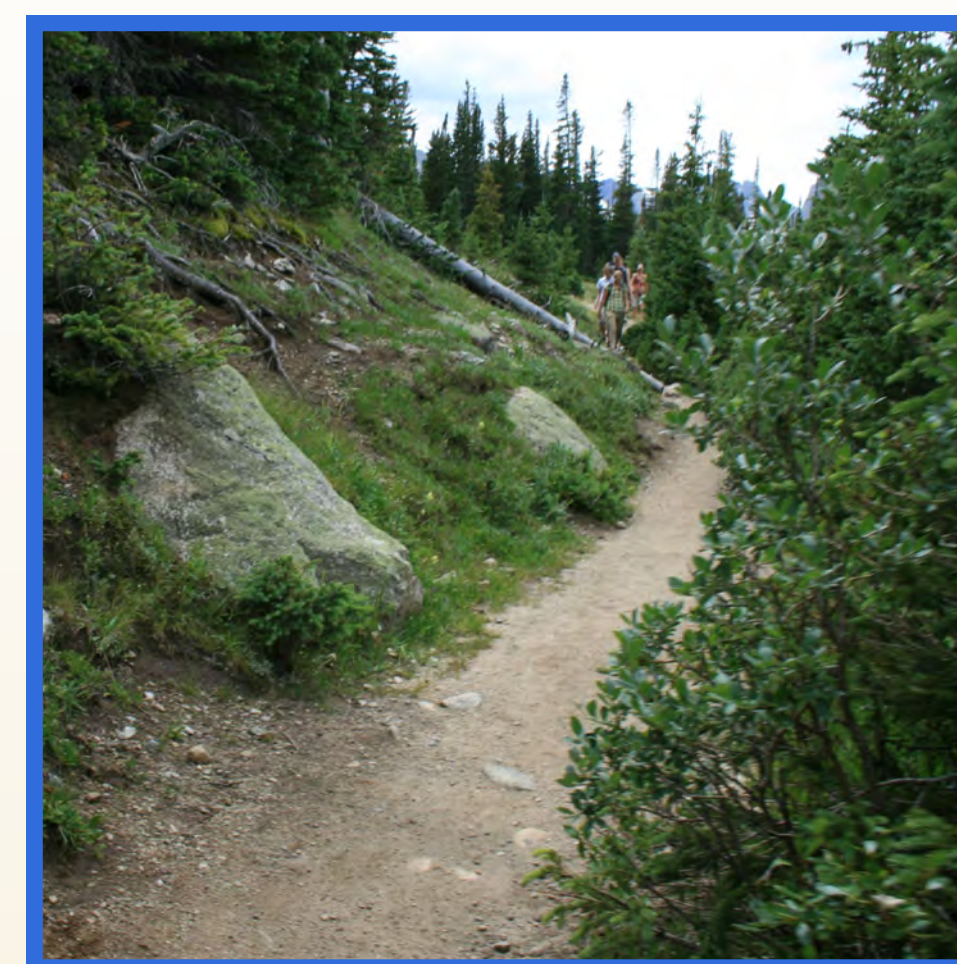
. Unendorsed parking along the roadside that causes resource, safety, and scenic quality issues; and requires parking staff

There is a lack of advanced traveler information to help visitors to the Brainard Lake Recreation Area plan their trip to avoid congested times and locations. At peak periods, parking demand frequently exceeds parking supply.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES (cont.)



. More wayfinding and activity information at entrance station or kiosks



. Encourage visitor access to new non-Wilderness trails



. Permit/reservation system for Wilderness use



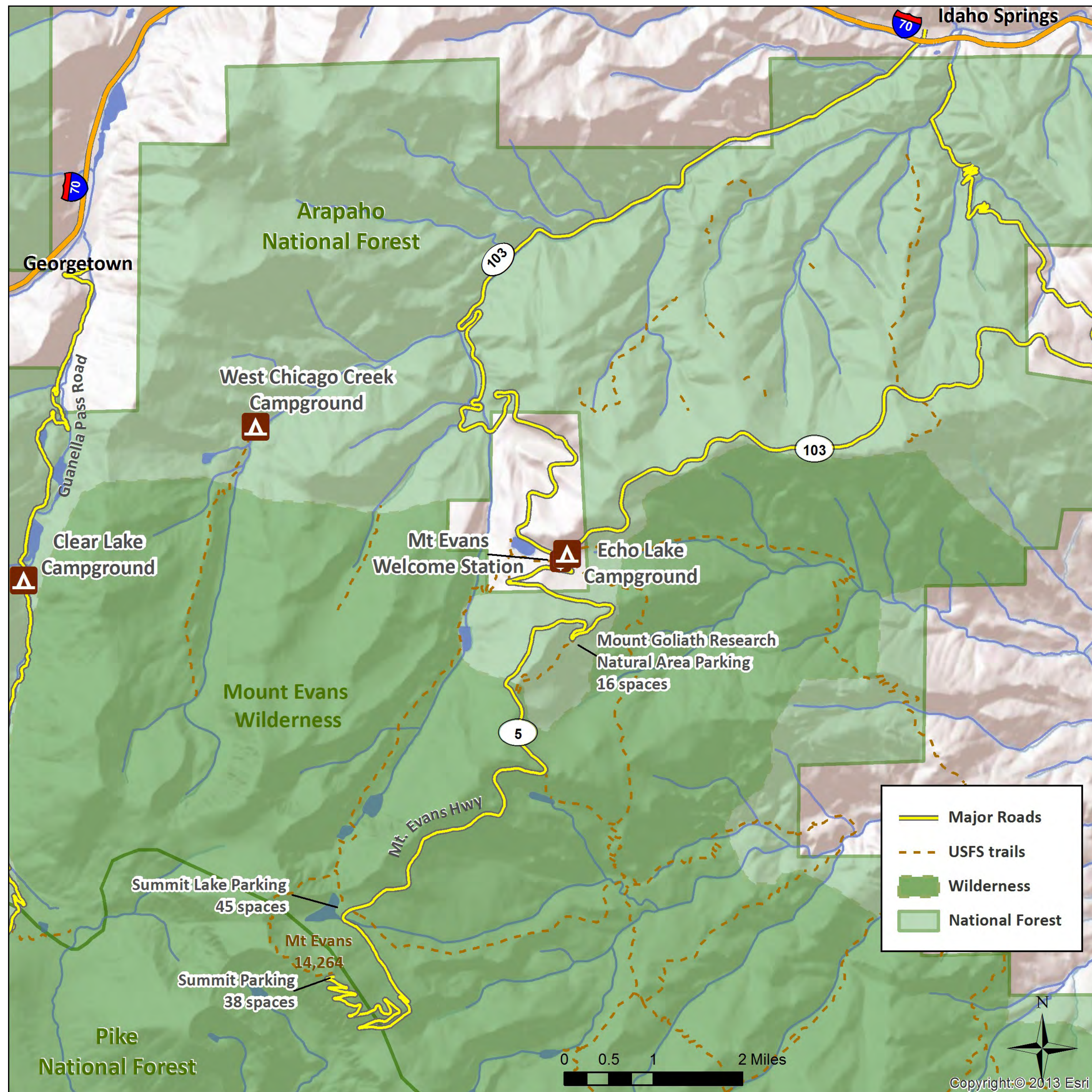
. Variable message signs, online/mobile trip planning



. Variable entrance fee based on congestion

MOUNT EVANS

The Mount Evans Road, part of the Mount Evans Scenic Byway, is the highest paved road in North America, winding 14 miles from the welcome station to the summit parking lot at 14,130 feet. It provides seasonal access to the Mount Evans Recreation Area, where visitor use is concentrated along the Byway itself.



GOALS

- . Provide opportunities for recreational use of the area while protecting the alpine ecosystems and the integrity of the Wilderness area
- . Provide for recreational and educational use of the Mount Evans corridor, emphasizing viewing scenery and wildlife, environmental education, and interpretation
- . Concentrate most use of the area within the Byway corridor
- . Reduce traffic congestion, improve safety, and provide interpretive services on the Byway through the use of shuttles or similar strategies
- . Identify limits of acceptable change to the environment and manage the area to stay within these limits
- . Accommodate recreational use along the trail corridors in which upper limits of use are based on environmental effects with less emphasis on social factors

MOUNT EVANS ISSUES

There is a lack of advanced traveler information to help visitors to the Mount Evans Recreation Area plan their trip to avoid congested times and locations. At peak periods, parking demand at lots and scenic pull-outs frequently exceeds parking supply.

. Congestion and delays at the entrance station



. Parking shortages



. Unendorsed parking along the roadside that causes resource, safety, and scenic quality issues; and requires parking staff



POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The following is an initial list of strategies that could be implemented in various combinations:

. Limit vehicle entry using optional or mandatory... ..from/to:

▫ Hiking trails

▫ Shuttle

▫ Tramway or cog rail



▫ Idaho Springs

▫ Welcome Station / Echo Lake Campground

▫ Mount Goliath Research Area Parking Lot

▫ Summit Lake Parking Lot

▫ Mount Evans Summit Parking Lot



MOUNT EVANS

ISSUES (cont.)



- . Safety concerns on a steep, narrow, shoulder-less roadway with outstanding views



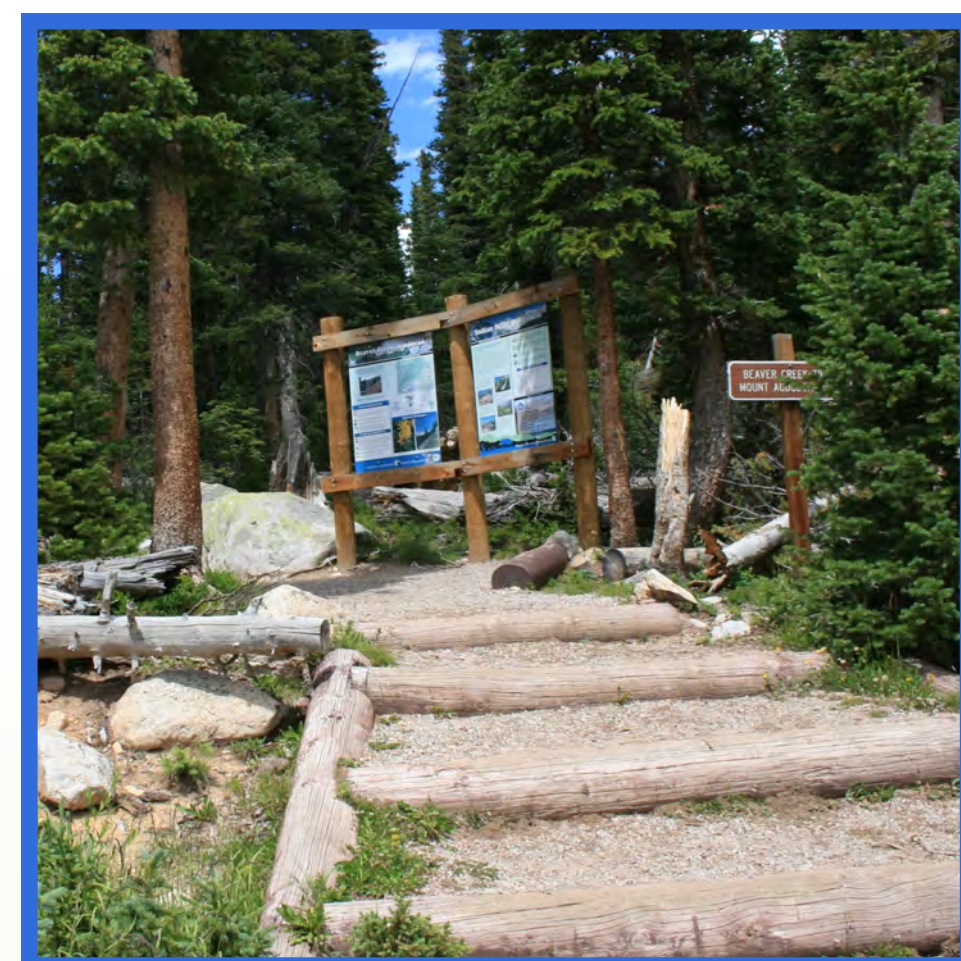
- . Safety hazards between cyclists and motorists



- . Crowding at the Mount Evans summit

The desired conditions for the Mount Evans Wilderness are threatened by intensive and increasing visitation. In addition, deteriorating roadway conditions of the Mount Evans Scenic Byway cause concerns about driver safety and cost of maintenance.

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES (cont.)



- . More wayfinding and activity information at entrance station or kiosks



- . Increase parking capacity



- . Permit/reservation system for Wilderness use



- . Variable message signs, online/mobile trip planning



- . Variable entrance fee based on congestion

GUANELLA PASS



The Guanella Pass (GP) Scenic Byway provides opportunities for scenic driving, year-round access to backcountry recreational opportunities, and a number of recreation sites and facilities situated along the road, including developed campgrounds, picnic areas, trailhead parking, and vista points. The vast majority of GP summer visitors are destined for the Mount Bierstadt Trail, one of the most popular hiking trails in the region. Rapid population growth occurring along Colorado's Front Range has contributed to substantially increased traffic volumes accessing GP, and is expected to continue over the next two decades.



GOALS

- . Protect the environmental resources as the primary management goal
- . Steer recreational use away from Wilderness and sensitive tundra areas onto designated interpretive trails through design characteristics
- . Emphasize a summit experience that highlights the value of Wilderness and the sensitivity of subalpine and alpine ecosystems
- . Manage the number of users in the GP summit area not to exceed carrying capacities



GUANELLA PASS

ISSUES

There is a lack of advanced traveler information to help visitors to Guanella Pass plan their trip to avoid congested times and locations. At peak periods, parking demand frequently exceeds parking supply.

The summit area provides access to the Mount Evans Wilderness, the desired conditions for which are threatened by intensive and increasing visitation, as well as off-trail hiking.

. Congestion and delays in Georgetown



. Parking shortages



. Unendorsed parking along the roadside that causes resource, safety, and scenic quality issues



. Crowding on the Mount Bierstadt trail and summit



. Shuttle system

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The following is an initial list of strategies that could be implemented in various combinations:



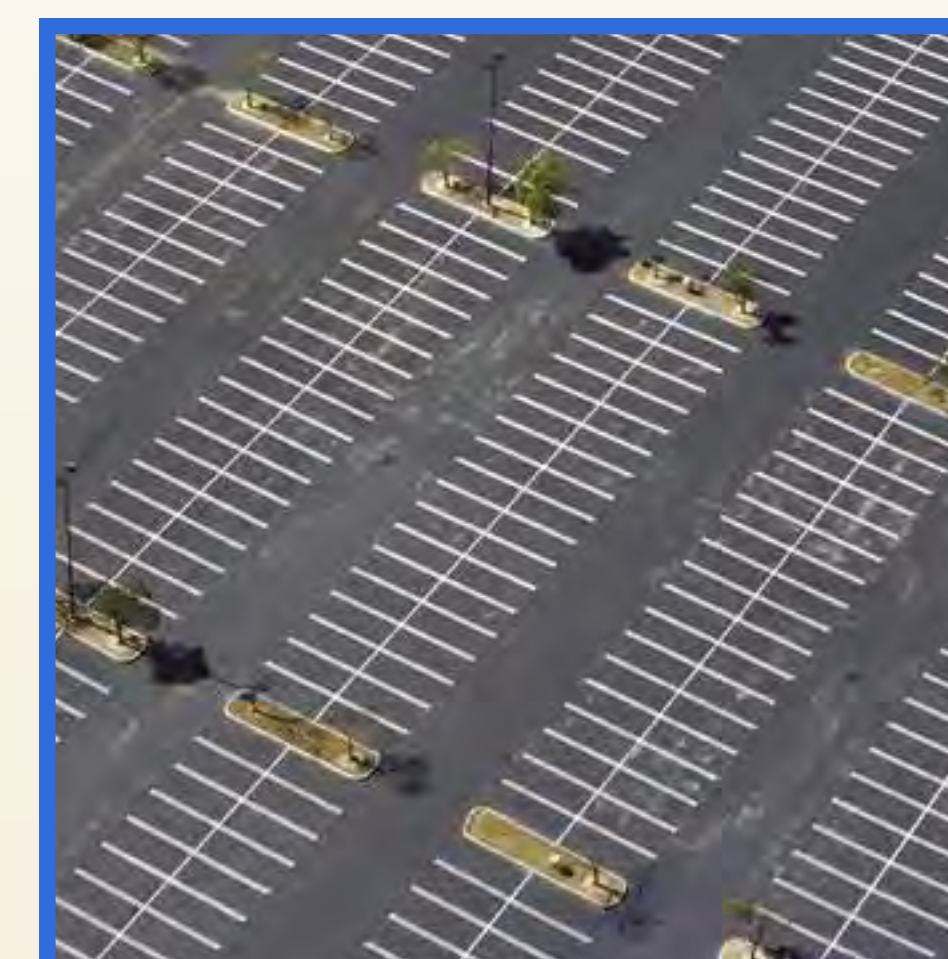
. Permit/reservation system for Mount Bierstadt trail



. Eliminate roadside parking



. Variable message signs, online/mobile trip planning



. Increase parking capacity and management for non-hikers