



## Trail Use & Economic Impact Study Completed

*Study Estimates 31K To 43.5K Trail Related Visitors Spend From \$17.3M To \$24.1M*

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-May 13, 2019**-The [City of Steamboat Springs Trail Use and Economic Impact Study](#) will be discussed during the City Council meeting tomorrow and more in-depth on Wednesday morning at a special 2A Trails Committee session. Both meetings are open to the public.

“As we’ve seen, recreation assets have long been a priority for the Steamboat Springs community,” said Assistant to the City Manager Winnie DelliQuadri. “With this data combined with an update in 5 to 6 years as 2A projects come to completion, we hope to understand any variations over time.”



This study, conducted by RPI Consulting, collected primary data and assimilated the best economic and visitation information available to estimate the quantity and location of trail use on Steamboat Springs trails, the type of users [full-time (FT) residents, part-time (PT) residents and visitors (V)], and to understand how people are using the trails and what they think about them.

Undertaken during the summer of 2018, the project included use of TrafX trail counters as well as intercept surveys at trailheads. In all 730 in-person trail user intercept surveys were collected from mid-June through late September, 2018 on Steamboat Springs’ three most popular trails systems: Emerald Mountain, Spring Creek and Buffalo Pass. In addition, historic trail counter data was used to establish trends and level of use within the trails system.

The study provides significant data regarding trail use and economic impact. Overall, survey respondents showed high levels of satisfaction with the trails although results did register some level of concern with other trail users, bike safety along with speed and control, and dogs specifically off-leash. Some of the key observations include:

- Overall, respondents were nearly evenly split between bikers and those on foot, although there were slightly more biker respondents among FT residents and visitors and more hiker respondents among PT residents.
- Annual Buffalo Pass trail count is approximately 18% of overall estimated use. The remainder is split between Emerald Mountain and Spring Creek, at about 40% each.
- Trail counter data indicate that more use occurs on moderate trails compared to difficult trails and that there is higher use on sections that are closer to the trailhead compared with those further out.
- Typical outings are between 1 and 3 hours. A larger share of PT residents and visitors choose even longer outings compared to FT residents.
- 23% surveyed were overnight visitors, over half of whom were staying in paid overnight accommodations.
- The average visitor was a party of 3.4 people, staying four nights and spending \$1,883 on the trip.
- The study estimates that between 31,300 and 43,500 trail related visitors spend from \$17.3 million to \$24.1 million per season in aggregate across all sectors during the trail season.
- Accounting for multipliers, the total economic impact from trail related overnight visits is between \$16.2 million and \$36.5 million in total output, supporting between 300-400 jobs.

RPI Consulting will present to Council on Tuesday, May 14, and then meet with the 2A Trails Committee the next day, 5/15 at 11 AM, for a deeper dive into the data. The study can also be found at [steamboatsprings.net/trails](http://steamboatsprings.net/trails).

-WeServeTheCity-

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