

Check Out Colorado State Parks 2023

Check Out Colorado State Parks provides a unique park pass and adventure backpack filled with field and exploration guides to library visitors of all ages. Started in 2016, this program is the result of a partnership between the Colorado State Library, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and local libraries. The goals of this program are to provide access to and engagement with state parks, encourage nature exploration, and expand awareness of the variety of items available at our libraries.

In 2023, 260 borrowers completed a survey about their experience with the Check Out Colorado State Parks program. Their responses, as well as library reported statistics, tell the story of our much beloved program in the last year.

There were approximately 9,566 backpack checkouts in 2023. That's more than 183 per week!

Patrons' activities while at the park:

- 69% reported participating in trail and/or road activities.
- 32% reported participating in water-based activities.
- 8% reported fishing
- 34% reported participating in wildlife-related activities

Based on their experience with Check Out Colorado State Parks, patrons are likely to:

Recommend a visit to a state park (99%).

Buy an annual pass to state parks (73%).

Buy a day pass to visit a state park (71%).

Patrons learned about nature, state parks, and libraries.

85% of patrons agreed to the statement, "This park experience helped me/us learn more about nature."

96% of patrons agreed to the statement, "The Check Out Colorado State Parks program changed my view about what libraries have to offer."

Stories from patrons and libraries:

"Communing with nature, socializing with members of the community and visiting park amenities made for a great day."

“We loved every minute we spent at the parks. We very much look forward to going back again! Thank you for making this possible! Our fun adventures might not have happened without the opportunity to check out this pass.”

“One new family was thrilled to see the circulating kits the library has to offer at no charge to them. They did not know libraries had extraordinary items such as this for families to use. Plus, they are able to check out a State Park pass and use it with other kits we have such as animal tracks or birdwatching, which adds even more impact.”

“We had a couple who have been patrons of our library for many years check out a State Parks backpack for the first time. They were eager to give it a try. When they returned the backpack to us at the end of the week they did so with big smiles, telling us how delighted they were with the experience. This program helped long-time residents see the area they have lived in for many years from a fresh perspective. It helped them to fall in love with the region all over again.”

Final Notes

There have been approximately 53,034 checkouts since the start of the program.

The author of this report is Sara Wicen, research assistant at Library Research Service. Questions can be sent to lrs@lrs.org. The document ID is ED3/110.10/No. 369.

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Learn more by visiting [Colorado Department of Education's Check Out Colorado State Parks Webpage](#) or [Colorado Parks and Wildlife's library backpack webpage](#).