

Study



Chesley, et al

# CITY OF BOULDER MOUNTAIN PARKS: PARKING FEE SYSTEM SURVEY 1994

The purpose of this survey was to provide information concerning park users reactions to the City of Boulder Mountain Parks Parking Fee System. The survey used was developed by several graduate students at CU, and was also the same survey administered in 1993. The survey was given by several Boulder Mountain Parks volunteers, as well as two of our parking fee booth attendants. The three areas of the park surveyed were Chautauqua (which is outside of the parking fee system), Gregory Canyon, and various places on Flagstaff Mountain including Panorama Point and the summit. We administered 192 surveys from August 28th to October 16th with approximately the same number from each location. The surveyors approached respondents that were in the area and did not attempt to make a random or systematic sampling. Women and men were contacted on an equal basis.

## Analysis and Results

The majority of the visitors to the park during the survey period were Boulder County residents (72%), yet only 48% of the visitors registered their vehicles in Boulder County. Most visitors became aware of the fee system through signs (61%) and a majority did see the signs that are posted in the park (71%). In addition, most found the signs to be "clear" (53%), while an equal percentage found them "totally clear" (22%) and "neutral" (21%). In regards to the cost of an daily and annual pass, the majority of visitors found this price to be "OK." Finally, most drove to the park (84%) and 36% stayed for 2 or more hours. The following tables show respondent answers to each survey question as a percentage of total responses.

1. Survey information gathered	Weekday	Weekend
	41%	59%

2. Time of day	Morning	Afternoon
	32%	68%

3. Location	Chautauqua	Gregory Canyon	Flagstaff
	35%	33%	32%

4. Do you live in Colorado?	No	Yes
	19%	81%

5. Do you live in Boulder county?	No	Yes
	28%	72%

6. Did you come here in a car?	No	Yes
	16%	84%

7. Is that car registered in Boulder County?	No	Yes
	52%	48%

8. How many people were in your vehicle?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	27%	46%	17%	8%	1%	1%

9. How long will you be staying in the Mountain Parks?	½ hour	½-1 hour	1-2 hours	2+ hours
	8%	20%	28%	45%

10. Are you aware that Flagstaff Mountain has a parking fee?	No	Yes
	30%	70%

11. Are you aware that Gregory Canyon has a parking fee?	No	Yes
	45%	55%

12. How did you become aware of the fee system?	Sign	Ranger	Friend	Media	Ticket
	61%	16%	14%	17%	4%

13. Did you see the signs about the fee system?	No	Yes
	29%	71%

14. Did you read the signs?	No	Yes
	19%	80%

15. Which of the following best describes the signs?	Totally clear	Clear	Neutral	Unclear	Totally Uncr.
	20%	53%	21%	7%	0%

16. Have you purchased a permit?	No	Yes
	83%	17%

17. Which of the following best describes the instructions on the permit?	Totally clear	Clear	Neutral	Unclear	Totally Uncr.
	12%	64%	24%	0%	0%

18. Is the fee system a good way to raise money to maintain the park system?	No	Yes
	12%	88%

19. Do you think the \$3 daily fee for non-Boulder County residents is...	Much too much	Too much	OK	Too little	Much too little
	4%	17%	75%	3%	1%

20. Do you think the \$15 annual fee for non-Boulder County residents is...	Much too much	Too much	OK	Too little	Much too little
	4%	14%	74%	4%	3%

21. Do you avoid Flagstaff or Gregory Canyon because of the fee?	No	Yes
	88%	12%

23. What activities do you plan to participate in today?	Driving	Climbing	Hiking	Walk Dog	Picnic	Social	Bird Watching
	32%	14%	88%	20%	9%	11%	6%

24. Are you a CU Boulder Student?	No	Yes
	81%	19%

25. What is your age group?	<18	18-24	25-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
	1%	24%	31%	18%	15%	8%	3%

26. What is your income?	<10k	11k-20k	21k-30k	31k-40k	41k-50k	50k+
	27%	16%	15%	11%	12%	19%

27. What is your sex?	Male	Female
	52%	48%

## Discussion

This survey was designed to ascertain public views and opinions regarding the parking fee system implemented by the City of Boulder in June 1993. Certain research objectives were identified by the survey designers and are pertinent to this discussion. Those included fee awareness, sign clarity and fee appropriateness. In addition, resident status and demographic information of the visitors surveyed revealed some interesting findings.

### *Fee awareness*

More respondents (61%) became aware of the parking fee system from signs than from any other means with park ranger (16%), friend (14%), and media (17%) having about the same impact. More people (70%) were aware of the parking fee system on Flagstaff Mountain than those aware of it in Gregory Canyon (55%). This is probably due to the higher volume of traffic on the mountain than in the canyon.

### *Sign clarity*

A significant number of people surveyed (71%) saw the signs about the fee system. This is important to note because 35% of the respondents were surveyed at Chautauqua which is outside the fee system. Of those who read the signs, fifty-three percent thought that they were clear and twenty percent thought they were totally clear. One of the respondents who thought the signs were totally clear commented that they were the "...most elaborate signs I've ever seen."

### *Fee appropriateness*

The majority of the people surveyed (88%) thought that the parking fee system was a good way to raise money to maintain the park system. As well, most of the respondents agreed that the \$3 daily fee for non-Boulder County residents was OK (75%), and only 21% thought that the fee was too much (17%) or much too much (4%). The results were similar with regards to the \$15 annual fee. Seventy-four percent thought that the annual fee was OK, and only 18% believed it to be too much (14%) or much too much (4%).

### *Resident status*

Although seventy-two percent of the respondents live in Boulder County, only forty-eight percent register their vehicles in the county. The discrepancy between the two may be accounted for by the number of CU students who visit the park (19%) and now reside in Boulder County, but do not pay property taxes. Part-time and new residents may also explain the difference in those who live in the county and those who do not register their vehicle in the county.

### *Demographic information*

It is important to mention a few of the characteristics pertaining to the respondents. Most of the people surveyed (81%) live in Colorado and came in a car (84%). The largest percentage of people were ages 25-30 (31%). Twenty-seven percent have an annual income level below \$10,000 and nineteen percent made \$50,000 or more with annual income levels between the two being fairly equal (from 11% to 16%). There was roughly about the same number of women (48%) and men (52%) surveyed.