

# DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## WILD HORSE STATE RECREATION AREA

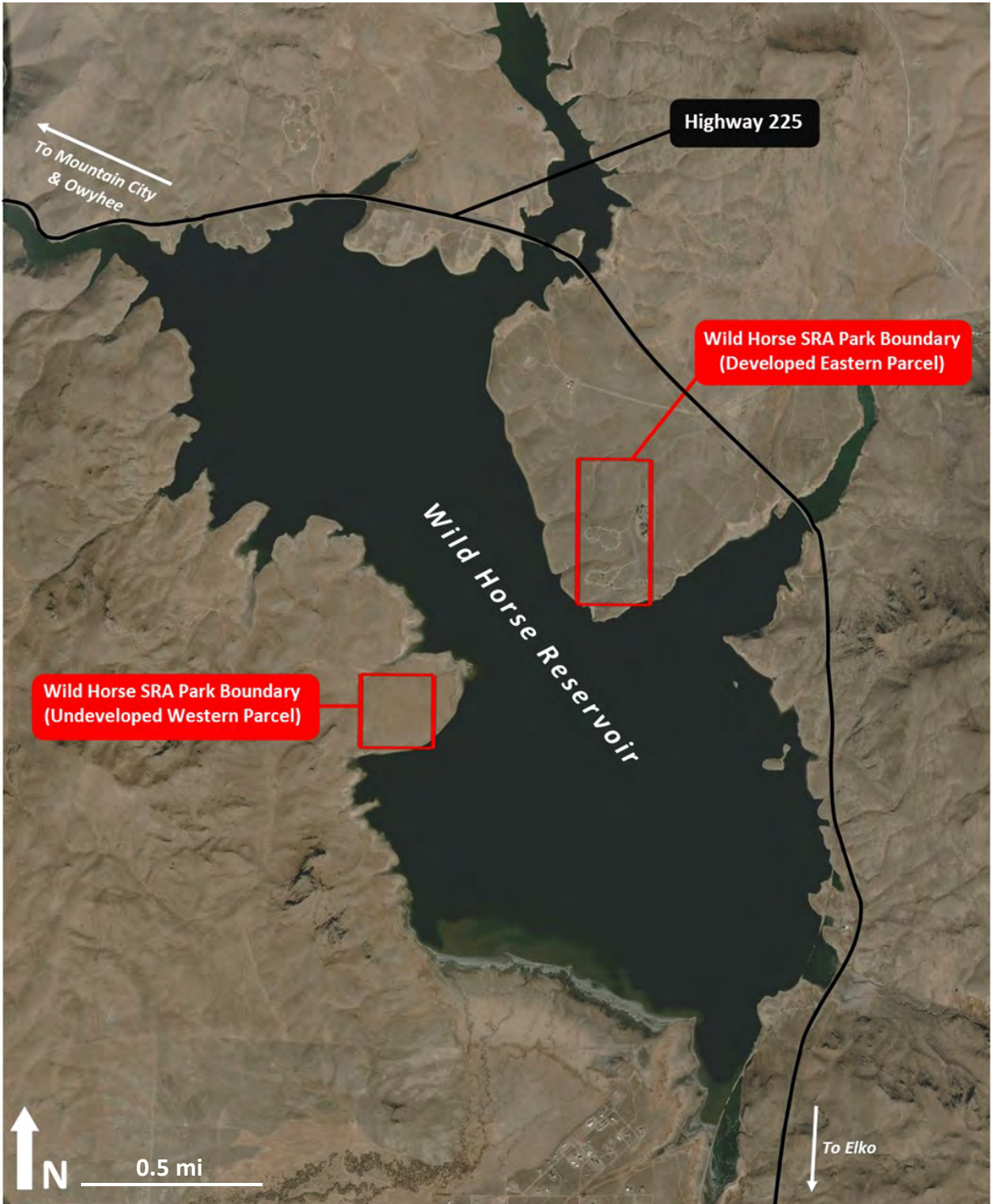
Draft - January 2025



DRAFT

NEVADA DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

# Park Map



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## Common Acronyms

Below is a list of acronyms that are used throughout this document.

NDSP – Nevada Division of State Parks

WHSRA – Wild Horse State Recreation Area

SRA – State Recreation Area

NDOW – Nevada Department of Wildlife

SPTDVIR – Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation

BIA – Bureau of Indian Affairs

USFS – United States Forest Service

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

NOS – Nevada Outdoor School

NDOT – Nevada Department of Transportation

UNR – University of Nevada, Reno

NEAP – Nevada Economic Assessment Project

SPWD – State Public Works Division

FCA – Facility Condition Assessment

R&PP – Recreation and Public Purpose



## Acknowledgments

***This section to be completed***

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## Agency Background and Mission Statement

### Agency Background

The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) is a division of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). NDSP was founded during the 1963 session of the Nevada Legislature, when a bill was passed to form a new state park agency within DCNR. Today, NDSP manages 27 park units designated as State Parks, State Recreation Areas, State Historic Parks, and State Historic Sites. The Division is headquartered in Carson City with four management regions statewide: the Eastern Region (Panaca office) the Southern Region (Las Vegas Office), the Tahoe Region (Spooner Lake office), and the Western Region (Fallon office).

### Mission Statement

The Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) is committed to planning, operating, and maintaining a coordinated system of parks, historic sites, and recreation areas for the use and enjoyment of residents and visitors while preserving areas of scenic, historic, and cultural significance. NDSP is a forward-thinking agency that inspires people to get outside.

The objectives of NDSP provide a framework in which the Division accomplishes its mission. These objectives are:

- To manage, protect, operate, and maintain existing and future units of the Nevada State Park system.
- To acquire, plan for, and develop a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific, and historical importance.
- To interpret and provide education on the natural, cultural, and recreational resources found within the State Park system.
- To provide recreational and cultural destinations that are of economic benefit to nearby communities.



## Project Overview and Background

### Project Purpose and Need

In 1992, a Development Plan was developed for Wild Horse State Recreation Area (WHSRA) to guide future development of the park. With it having been more than 30 years since the plan was last updated, NDSP identified the need to update this plan to reflect current conditions. The goal of this project is to produce a streamlined, practical plan that is adaptable and provides a vision for the future of WHSRA.

With a current plan in place, NDSP can pursue funding sources that require proposed projects to be identified in a finalized, active planning document for our agency. The updated Development Plan will also provide an understanding of current and projected park needs and a strategy and guidelines for phasing and implementing projects to allow a cohesive approach to the park development. This will allow NDSP to provide visitors with more diverse options for recreation, including improved accessibility, new and upgraded facilities, and an overall more enjoyable experience at the park.



*View of Wild Horse Reservoir*

## Overview Of Wild Horse State Recreation Area and Park History

Located approximately 70 miles north of Elko and 12 miles south of Mountain City, Nevada, WHSRA became part of the Nevada State Park system in 1979. The park covers 119.65 acres, overlooking Wild Horse Reservoir. The park encompasses two separate tracts of land – a 79.72-acre parcel on the east side of the reservoir, and a 39.93-acre parcel on the west side. All development is located within the 79.72-acre tract on the east side of the reservoir. There is limited access to a 39.93-acre parcel west of the reservoir, with only unimproved dirt roads leading to the area. As such, the parcel is entirely undeveloped. Access to the developed portion of the park is from State Route 225. The park boundary is located approximately ¼-mile west of the highway.



*Wild Horse Reservoir, circa 1930s*

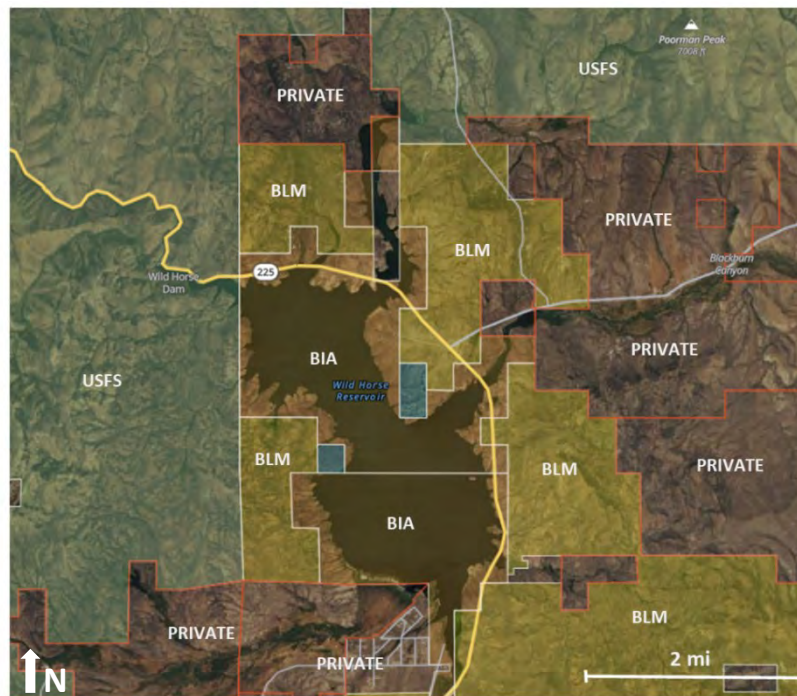
Wild Horse Reservoir was constructed in 1937 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, with water storage beginning in March 1938. The reservoir impounds water from the East Fork of the Owyhee River (sometimes simply referred to as the Owyhee River) for irrigation use on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation to the north. A new dam was constructed in 1969 which more than doubled the size of the reservoir. When at capacity, the reservoir has a maximum surface area of 2,830 acres and holds 73,500 acre-feet of water. Before the construction of the reservoir, the area was known as the Owyhee Meadows and had long been inhabited by the Western Shoshone people. The meadows were also the site of a waystation on the Elko-Idaho Toll Road as early as 1869. Supposedly large bands of wild horses once roamed the Owyhee Meadows and are the namesake of the reservoir.

In the 1976 general election Nevada voters approved a proposal to issue general obligation bonds of the State of Nevada for *“the acquisition of habitat for fish and game, among other purposes.”* Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 13 in February 1979 allocated certain proceeds of the 1976 bond issue for the purchase of land near Wild Horse Reservoir, and later that year, Assembly Bill #809 authorized the Division of State Parks to *“administer, develop, operate, and maintain lands known as Wild Horse State Recreation Area,”* thus formally establishing the park.

Much of the initial development of the park’s infrastructure began in 1981. Today the park features an assortment of outdoor recreation amenities, including a 34-site campground, three camping cabins, a boat launch, a day-use area, hiking/walking trails, and a visitor center/ranger station and camp store.



## Lands Adjacent to Wild Horse State Recreation Area

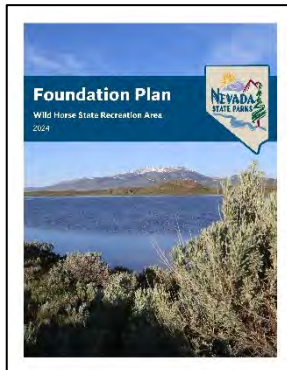


Lands to the northwest, southeast, south, and west of the developed park are owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and managed by the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. The reservoir is also owned by the BIA and leased to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. A 300'-wide easement extending to the 5,000 acre-foot minimum pool elevation provides NDSP access to the reservoir for the boat launch. Lands to the north and northeast of the developed park are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The map above shows the ownership of lands surrounding Wild Horse Reservoir in 2024.

### A Note on The Parcel on the West Side of the Reservoir

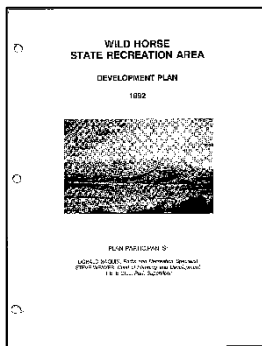
As shown on the park map at the start of this document and discussed earlier in the “Overview of Wild Horse State Recreation Area” section, WHSRA is comprised of two separate parcels. Access to the 39.93-acre parcel on the west side of the reservoir is extremely limited, with only unimproved dirt roads leading to the parcel, and depending on the water level of the reservoir, the only viable roads traverse private property. As such, NDSP views the development of this parcel as not currently possible. As a result, this plan focuses solely on the 79.72-acre parcel on the east side of the reservoir. If conditions change in the future and NDSP is able to ensure access to the western parcel, this plan will be updated with development recommendations for that land.

# Previous Studies and Planning Efforts



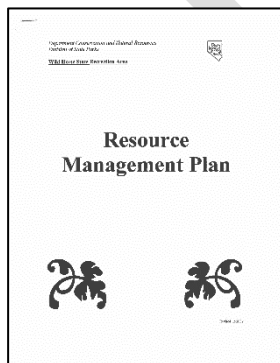
## 2024 Foundation Plan

A Foundation Plan was developed for WHSRA from 2023-2024. Heavily influenced by the “Foundation Documents” used by the National Park Service, the Foundation Plan identifies elements critical to planning and management of WHSRA, including the site’s purpose, the site’s significance, its primary resources, principal interpretive opportunities, and key issues that the park is facing. The information in this document was used to help influence and guide the development of this Development Plan.



## 1992 Development Plan

The original WHSRA development plan was developed in 1992. Several notable recommendations included in this plan came to fruition between 1992-2023, including installation of a fish cleaning station, paving of the boat ramp, and beach area improvements. The 1992 plan also included a thorough assessment of WHSRA’s natural and cultural resources and recommended exploring options to expand the size of the park, specifically via an R&PP application with the Bureau of Land Management. The 1992 also includes detailed analysis of the site’s soils, slopes, drainages, and other characteristics.



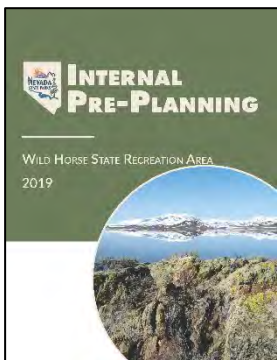
## 2002 Resource Management Plan

This document was developed with the intention of identifying all resources present within the boundaries of WHSRA. The document also examines if any of the park’s resources were facing threats, or could be improved in some way, then makes recommendations for doing so if applicable.



## **2024 Facility Condition Assessment Report (Completed by State Public Works Division)**

The State Public Works Division’s (SPWD) Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) program periodically inspects and assesses all state-owned buildings within Nevada State Parks. The FCA Report documents overall site condition and infrastructures for the site and identifies needed projects and assigns each a priority level.



## **2019 Internal Pre-Planning Staff Survey**

In 2019, NDSP undertook an agency-wide pre-planning effort to determine baseline information intended to support planning needs throughout the system. This document provides a summary of the data compiled from that exercise. Since many things have changed since this survey was conducted in 2019, including all new staff at WHSRA, the NDSP planning team posed the same questions from the initial survey to current WHSRA staff during the project kick-off phase in 2023.



## The Planning Process

### Project Start-Up

#### *July-October 2023*

A core planning team of NDSP Division office planning staff and WHSRA leadership and staff members assembled for a virtual kick-off meeting in July 2023. The kick-off meeting focused on what the planning process would entail, established a tentative timeline for the project.

Core planning team tasks from July – October included a stakeholder analysis process, and detailed planning for public outreach efforts slated for October and November. NDSP Division office staff also began developing a foundation plan for WHSRA that would serve as a precursor to the updated development plan. The planning team also conducted an existing condition analysis of facilities at WHSRA.

### Public Outreach and Engagement

#### *October-November 2023*

Following the initial internal visioning and fact-finding efforts, NDSP conducted public outreach and engagement efforts to gather what park users desire for the future of WHSRA. Public outreach at this point in the project consisted of three primary components; a “planning open house” event at WHSRA, a public workshop in Elko, and an ArcGIS StoryMap and accompanying survey that was available online.

#### **Planning Open House at WHSRA – October 8, 2023**

On Sunday, October 8, NDSP held a “planning open house” event at the park. The rationale for holding an event at the park was to provide an opportunity for the public to come out to the park in-person, see the locations for potential improvement projects, and talk directly with NDSP staff. It also provided a more convenient opportunity for those that live near Wild Horse Reservoir in communities such as Wild Horse Estates, Mountain City, and Owyhee to attend an in-person planning workshop. 32 people attended this event and provided input on what they would like the future of the park to look like.



*For the planning open house at WHSRA, interactive materials were posted on tables throughout the day-use area.*



*Park visitors participating in the planning open house event.*

## Public Input Workshop in Elko – October 9, 2023

NDSP also hosted a public input workshop the following evening at the Elko County Library in Elko. The public was invited to stop by anytime between 4:00pm-6:30pm and provide their input. Unfortunately, turnout for this event was lighter than NDSP had hoped for, with only 14 people attending. Despite the small turnout, the event was still productive, with many participants of the event stating they visit WHSRA multiple times annually.



*For the public input workshop at the Elko County Library, interactive materials were posted throughout the meeting space.*

## Data From In-Person Workshops

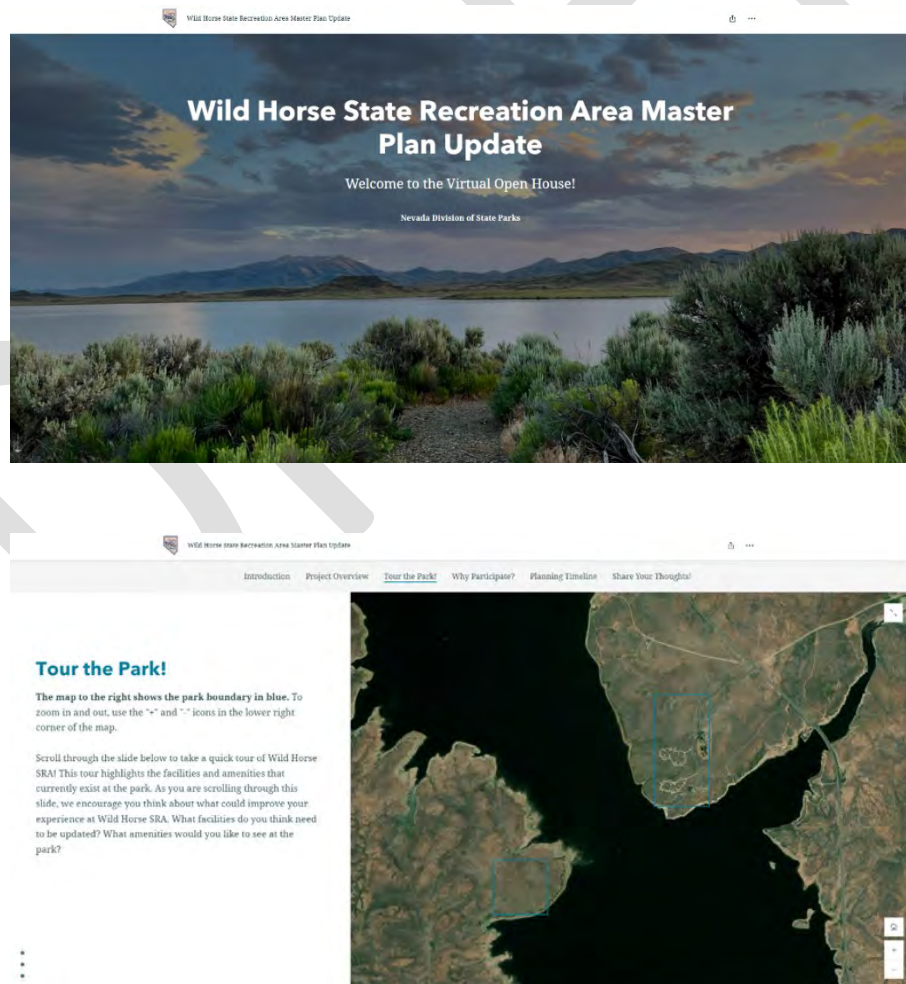
As mentioned above, the two workshops were attended by a total of 46 people (32 on October 8, and 14 on October 9). At both events, the public input activities were the same. Eight separate 36”x 48” posters were arranged throughout the space, each asking different questions or presenting different topics. Six of the posters featured different options to select from, while two allowed participants to write in their own responses. Participants were each given sheets of colored dot stickers with instructions to place a dot on the statement or the potential development option that they liked or best described their opinion. Based on the number of responses received, it seems some couples or families elected to use just one sticker for their entire group, rather than each responding individually. As an example of this, while a total of 46 people attended the workshops, there were only 32 individual responses to the question “How often do you visit Wild Horse SRA?”

The three most common recreation activities that in-person respondents stated they participated in at WHSRA, or while staying at WHSRA, were “*Fishing*” (65%), *OHV Riding* (56%), and *Boating (motorized)*” (41%). 75% of participants stated they visit WHSRA at least two times

per year, while 37% stated they visit at least six times per year. The most desired “visitor amenities” among respondents were “Playground” (69%), “Camp Store in Visitor Center” (43%), and “Yard Games in the Day-Use Area” (41%). For “Camping Opportunities”, “Shower Facilities in Campground Loop #1” (52%), “Utility Hookups” (37%), and Group Camping Area” (35%) were the most desired additions. For a detailed summary of all responses and comments collected from the in-person workshops, please see Appendix B.

## ArcGIS StoryMap and Survey – Available Online from October 18 - November 17, 2023

To gather input from people who care about WHSRA but live outside of the greater Elko area, NDSP launched an ArcGIS StoryMap with an embedded Survey123 survey on October 18. The StoryMap provided a virtual tour of the park, outlined the purpose of the project, and provided an overview of the planning process for WHSRA. The StoryMap was viewed 450-plus times, with 52 people completing the survey during the 30-day period it was available (October 18-November 17).



Images of the ArcGIS StoryMap

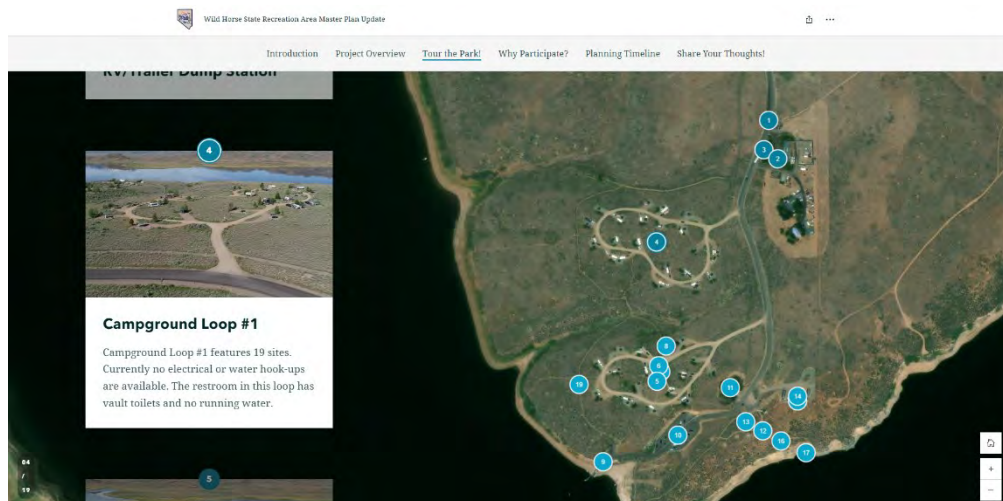


Image of the ArcGIS StoryMap

## Data from ArcGIS StoryMap Survey

The StoryMap survey was designed to ask the same general questions as the interactive materials provided during the in-person workshop. The three most common recreation activities that in-person respondents stated they participated in at WHSRA, or while staying at WHSRA, were “Fishing” (86%), “RV/Trailer Camping” (51%), and “Ice Fishing” (44%). OHV riding and motorized boating remained popular among StoryMap respondents as well, with 30% and 38% of respondents stating they participated in these activities. As was the case with the in-person workshops, a high number of StoryMap respondents stated they visit the park multiple times annually, with 76% stating they visit the park at least twice per year. Notably, 21% of respondents stated they visit the park 11+ times per year.

For most desired visitor amenities, the top responses were “Increased Shade (shade, picnic pavilions)” (67%), “Frost-free Fish Cleaning Station” (36%), and “Equipment Rentals (kayaks, bikes, fishing equipment)” (32%). Although they did not garner a much support as during the in-person workshops, “Camp Store” and “Playground” still garnered decent support, with 25% and 23% of respondents stating they would like to see these amenities at WHSRA. For “Potential Camping Opportunities”, “Utility Hookups” (63%), “shower facilities in Campground Loop #1” (51%), and “Additional Camping Cabins” (50%), were the most desired additions. For a detailed summary of all responses and comments collected from the StoryMap survey, please see Appendix C.

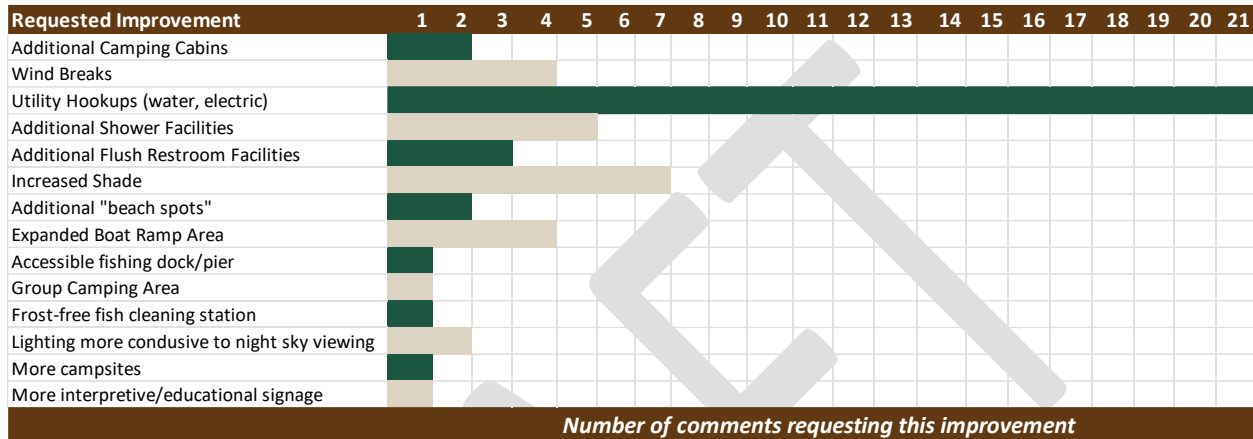
## NEAP Survey Data

Since 2022, NDSP has been conducting visitor surveys at all park units. These surveys were developed in coordination with the Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP) of the University of Nevada, Reno Extension. In addition to the outreach efforts specific to this project, NDSP also analyzed and considered comments and data from the NEAP surveys as well. These



surveys are conducted by NDSP staff contacting park visitors while at the park. The visitor is then provided with a link at which to complete the survey at a later time – the link to this survey is also emailed to the visitor.

The NEAP survey asks respondents to answer the question “*What could be done to improve your visit to Wild Horse State Recreation Area?*” Below is an analysis of specific improvement/development projects that were mentioned in responses to this question.



The survey also asks respondents how likely they would be to use four specific potential amenities that were identified as “planning priorities” by WHSRA staff when the NEAP survey was developed in 2021. The chart below shows respondents’ answers to how likely they would be to utilize these four potential amenities.

WHSRA Planning Priorities	Extremely unlikely to use (%)	Somewhat unlikely to use (%)	Neither likely nor unlikely to use (%)	Somewhat likely (%)	Extremely likely (%)	Don't know (%)	Total responses (#)
Additional camping cabins	26%	5%	15%	19%	20%	14%	93
Shaded picnic tables and BBQ grills in the day-use area	16%	9%	16%	18%	29%	13%	90
Group camping area	20%	11%	21%	16%	23%	10%	92
Electrical hookups at campsites	12%	2%	9%	20%	54%	3%	93

## Stakeholder Outreach

### November-December 2023

As mentioned under “Project Start-Up,” NDSP staff completed a stakeholder analysis process at the start of the planning process to identify any individuals, agencies, or entities that would be disproportionately impacted by the updating of the WHSRA Development Plan. A

stakeholder/partner questionnaire and fact sheet developed by NDSP was emailed to identified stakeholders on November 30, 2023. Ultimately three agencies/organizations returned completed questionnaire forms - Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Nevada Outdoor School (NOS), and the United States Forest Service (USFS).

## **Conceptual Planning and Plan Development**

### ***January-December 2024***

Following the public and stakeholder outreach efforts, NDSP staff processed and analyzed the data collected from these efforts. This information, coupled with existing conditions at WHSRA and detailed input from WHSRA staff served as the foundation for conceptual planning. The Core Planning Team began by documenting existing conditions at the park and developing a vision for the future of WHSRA based on vision, goals, objectives, and desired conditions. The Core Planning Team met frequently throughout the next several months to address options and issues as they arose over the course of the development of the plan. An internal review of the plan was conducted in December 2024 by NDSP staff.



## Existing Conditions

### Current Use

Use of the park is largely centered upon fishing and boating at Wild Horse Reservoir, camping, and exploring the surrounding public lands. NEAP survey data from 2022-2023 found that the primary recreation activity for 54% of visitors was “fishing.” 41% of WHSRA survey respondents said “camping”, 11.1% said “boating (motorized)” and 11.1% said “general visit.”

NEAP survey data also revealed that 67% of WHSRA visitors were Nevada residents, with 87% of all visitors living more than 50 miles away from the park. WHSRA also has a notably high percentage of visitors who visit the park multiple times per year – NEAP survey data revealed that 59% of WHSRA visitors visited the park at least twice over the previous 12 months, with 35% visiting three-plus times.

### Camping

Campers are one of the primary user groups to WHSRA. 2022-2023 NEAP survey data found that 78% of visitors to WHSRA stayed in the park overnight in a campsite or cabin. WHSRA currently features 35 campsites spread throughout two separate loops, simply referred to as “Loop #1” (closer to the park entrance) and “Loop #2” (closer to the boat launch). Loop #1 features 20 sites, six of which are pull-through sites, while the remaining 14 are back-in. Loop #2 features 15 sites, with seven pull-through sites and eight back-in sites. Loop #2 also features flush restroom and shower facilities, a fish cleaning station, and a small amphitheater area. Loop #1 only features a vault-style restroom



# Wild Horse SRA Existing Conditions



facility. One site in Loop #2 features electrical hookups (this site is intended for a camp host), while the remaining 33 campsites in the park do not.

In addition to the 34 campsites, three “camping cabins” were installed in the park in 2019. The cabins feature modest amenities, and flush restrooms but no showers.



## Access to Recreation Opportunities on Wild Horse Reservoir

While not in the park proper, Wild Horse Reservoir is unquestionably the major draw that brings most visitors to WHSRA. WHSRA offers the only developed boat launch facility on the reservoir, which consists of a single-lane ramp. The quality of the Wild Horse fishery is well-known throughout the Western United States. Wild Horse Reservoir is famous for producing trophy-sized trout. The reservoir also provides angling opportunities for warm-water species, such as black bass, wipers, channel catfish, and yellow perch. In winter, the reservoir is a popular location for ice fishing.



## Day-Use

The park’s day-use amenities are centered on an oval grass area measuring roughly 200’ x 125’ at its widest points. The area features a few picnic tables southeast of the main lawn. A number of trees have been planted in the lawn area in recent years, and a tether ball pole has been installed in the northeast corner of the lawn.



## Trails

While hiking and bicycling may not be the primary reason many visitors come to WHSRA, 2022-2023 NEAP surveys revealed that 76% of WHSRA survey respondents used the park's trails at some point during their visit, with another 7% answering that they did not use the trails but wanted to.

Currently roughly 1.25-miles of designated trails exist in the park. The WHSRA trail system primarily consists of a main loop trail that leads throughout much of the park, with branches leading to locations such as the small beach area on the south end of the park. The trails are what would generally be considered "easy" in terms of difficulty. The walking surface is generally loose gravel.



## Visitor Center/Camp Store/Ranger Station

This 3,400 square-foot structure was constructed in 1982. It houses the park's visitor center space, offices for park staff, and a two-bay maintenance shop. In late 2023 WHSRA renovated the visitor center space to serve more as a "camp store," selling an assortment of souvenirs and necessities for camping and enjoying the park.



## Staff Facilities

Currently the park features two residences for permanent staff, both being 2,304 square-foot structures built in 1982. The greater residence complex also features garages and utility sheds for WHSRA staff's personal use.

WHSRA also features a 448-square-foot seasonal housing unit split into two 224 square-foot studio spaces. Each studio includes its own bathroom. This facility is intended to serve as a living quarters for WHSRA seasonal staff due to the park's remote location. When not occupied by seasonal staff, these units may also be occupied by NDSP staff from other parks or the Division office who are working temporarily at WHSRA. The seasonal housing complex also includes a 64 square-foot shed that serves as a laundry facility for seasonal staff.



# Visitation

## Park Visitation Statistics

Average annual visitation to WHSRA for the 25-year period from 1998-2023 was 20,478. Visitation fluctuated significantly during this period, with a peak of 34,714 in 2020, and a low of 12,616 in 2015. Since 2019, park visitation has trended upwards significantly, averaging 27,476 visitors annually during this five-year stretch, while average annual visitation for previous 20 years was only 18,319. Over the past 25 years, June, July, and October have generally been the three highest visitation months each year, with peak visitation usually occurring in June or July. Park visitation is largely impacted by water levels and fishing conditions on Wild Horse Reservoir.

Year	Total Visitation	Contributing Factors	Highest Visitation Month
1998	20,530		August
1999	21,023		September
2000	28,724		June
2001	25,253		June
2002	21,379		June
2003	18,787		June
2004	17,729		June
2005	15,080	Unusually wet & cold winter	July
2006	18,219		June
2007	15,232	Poor fishing & fish kill over the summer	June
2008	13,524	Poor weather and poor fishing conditions	July
2009	17,425		July
2010	16,182		July
2011	18,834		July
2012	19,410		July
2013	19,549		June
2014	15,438	Poor weather for much of the summer	October
2015	12,616	Poor weather for much of the summer	October
2016	14,311	Better summer weather than previous years	July

2017	18,267		July
2018	19,408	Excellent fishing in early summer and early fall	June
2019	24,892	Excellent fishing all summer	July
2020	34,714	Excellent fishing and COVID-19 pandemic prompting more people to recreate outdoors	July
2021	33,364	Increase in winter visitation, thanks in part to new camping cabins	July
2022	27,623	Low water levels	July
2023	24,860	Poor weather in spring and late summer. Mormon cricket infestation in early summer.	June

**Campground Occupancy from January 2022 – August 2024**

Campsite Number	Site Occupancy % from January 2022- August 2024
1	17.2%
2	14%
3	13%
4	13%
5	10%
6	26%
7	31%
8	32%
9	8%
10	15%
11	26%
12	8%
13	15%
14	10%



15	16%
16	10%
17	9%
18	24%
19	10%
20	36%
21	17%
22	51%
23	32%
24	22%
25	42%
26	36%
27	19%
28	28%
29	28%
30	30%
31	33%
32	27%
33	22%
34	23%

Campground Loop	Occupancy % from January 2022-August 2024
Loop 1 (Sites 1-19)	16%
Loop 2 (Sites 20-34)	30%

## Cabin Occupancy

The launch of NDSP’s reservation system, *reservenevada.com*, in November 2023 has resulted in a significant increase in use of WHSRA’s three camping cabins. From November 2023-October 2024, the three cabins together had a 49% occupancy rate.

## Access

The only formal entrance into the park is via a paved two-lane road departing west from Highway 225. This road travels through BLM property for approximately ¼-mile before reaching the park boundary. Within the park proper, there are roughly .75-miles of paved roads, and an additional .80-miles of unpaved routes (primarily the campground loop roads). Small public parking areas exist at the visitor center/ranger station and the day-use area, while a larger parking area serves the boat launch.



*Overview image of Wild Horse SRA. Campground Loop #2 is in the foreground.*

# Natural and Cultural Resources

## Vegetation

Vegetation within WHSRA is dominated by sagebrush-grassland communities. This community type generally consists of dense to open stands of large shrubs (2'-6' in height) intermixed with perennial and annual grasses and forbs. Great Basin sagebrush is the dominant shrub species. Other prevalent shrubs include low sagebrush, rabbitbrush, hopsage, antelope bitterbrush, snowberry, and desert gooseberry. Grasses include bluebunch wheatgrass, Sandberg's bluegrass, and Idaho fescue. The park also features an impressive diversity of wildflowers – for a full inventory of wildflower species documented in the park in 2023, please see Appendix E of the 2024 WHSRA Foundation Plan. For an inventory of plant species that exist in WHSRA and the surrounding area, see Appendix D of the 2024 WHSRA Foundation Plan.

In addition to the native vegetation identified above, a small number of trees and shrubs have been introduced over the years, the most prominent being Quaking Aspen trees, which are found throughout both campground loops and in the immediate areas surrounding the visitor center and staff residences.



*An assortment of grasses and perennial wildflowers in one of the drainages within WHSRA.*

## Geology

WHSRA lies near the northern margin of the basin and range physiographic province in northeastern Nevada. The basin and range province is characterized by north-trending, block-faulted mountain ranges and intervening basins filled with alluvium derived from the mountains. The mountain ranges are composed of a variety of geologic units, including metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rocks.

An interactive geologic web map hosted by the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology shows two rock units covering WHSRA and the immediately adjacent lands – “older alluvium” and “Jarbridge Rhyolite.” The older alluvium is described as “boulder gravel and sand deposits on high-level stream terraces.” The Jarbridge Rhyolite unit consists of “light-brown to gray phenocryst-rich ferroaugite rhyolite and minor tuff, occurring mostly as flows and some domes.”



*Rock outcroppings along the Beach Trail.*

Significant rock outcroppings can be found on south end of WHSRA's 80-acre parcel, along the reservoir's shoreline. A concentration of rock outcroppings exists on BIA land just south of and east of WHSRA as well.

## Soils

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's 1997 document *Soil Survey of Elko County, Nevada: Central Park, Volume 1*, WHSRA is covered by two different soil types. The 80-acre developed parcel is covered by the Donna soil type. This soil type is a gravelly loam found on 2-8% slopes. It is generally found on summits of fan piedmont remnants. The parent material is mixed alluvium influenced by loess and volcanic ash. These soils are found at elevations of 6,200' to 6,400'. Donna soils are soft and very friable to a depth of 10 inches. The soil then turns to hard clay from 10 to 23 inches. Beneath this layer is indurated hardpan which is extremely hard to a depth of 33 inches. From 33 to 60 inches, the texture is stratified gravelly and sandy loam to gravelly sand. This layer is slightly hard and friable. It should be noted that Donna soils can be restrictive to development, and with its high clay content, percolation can be difficult.

The 40-acre parcel on the west side of the reservoir is covered by Cleavage-Tweener-Lerrow soil association. This association is found on hills with slopes of 4-15% and very gravelly loam.

## Wildlife

For a full inventory of wildlife species that may be found in the Wild Horse area, please see Appendix C of the 2024 WHSRA Foundation Plan. Due to the relatively small size of WHSRA, many wildlife species found within the greater area do not actually exist within the park's boundaries or may only pass through the park proper on rare occasion. As such, the included list of wildlife species is reflective of the mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish that inhabit the general area.



*Greater Sage Grouse outside of the WHSRA ranger station/visitor center.*

## Cultural Resources

WHSRA does not feature any significant historical trails, structures, artifacts, or other elements. WHSRA does possess an assortment of historic agricultural equipment, which is displayed in the immediate area surrounding the visitor center/ranger station. A historic tractor displayed on the west side of the road has become something of an identifiable feature of WHSRA, and even appears on WHSRA merchandise. While these items can be used to help tell the story of the area's ranching history, it should be noted none of these items came from WHSRA proper and in many cases their origin/history is not clear.



*Historic agriculture equipment displayed outside of the WHSRA ranger station/visitor center.*

## Environmental Conditions, Terrain, and Topography

- The park generally slopes downhill from north to south, with areas ranging from level to moderately sloping. The highest elevation in the park is 6,270 in the northeastern corner. Low elevation is 6,220 at the boat launch area in the southwest corner of the park. Steep slopes are present in isolated area on the south and west sides of the park.
- The park is intersected by three primary washes/ravines running east to west, and one wash/ravine that runs north to south from the northern end of the park.
- With the developed park parcel only covering ~80 acres, there is not a great amount of unused open space.



*Looking northwest across the park.*

## Issues and Challenges

The following issues and challenges are identified in WHSRA's Foundation Plan. These issues must be factored into plans for the long-term management and development of the park.

### Limited Shoreline Access on State Park Land

While the developed portion of the park covers ~80 acres, shoreline access on State Park land is limited to the southern tip of the park. To gain access to the shoreline on the west side of the park, park users must exit the park and proceed through land owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and managed by the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. This creates some confusion for park users as there is a separate day-use fee associated with using BIA lands. Additionally, this lack of shoreline access limits what NDSP can do as far as creating new opportunities for water-based recreation.



*View of small beach area on the south end of the park. Note that this photo was taken when the reservoir was close to capacity.*

### Access

Access to the park's ~80-acre developed parcel is through tracts of Bureau of Land Management-owned lands after exiting State Route 225. This puts the park in a precarious position where most of the entry to the park is not State Park land, and NDSP has no control over development that may or may not occur along the route. Additionally, while the park includes an additional ~40-acre parcel on the west side of the reservoir, there is no proper access to this parcel via formal roads. Existing dirt roads that lead to the west side of the reservoir run through privately owned tracts of land.

### REMOTENESS OF THE SITE

Despite being located directly off State Route 225, the park lies in a sparsely inhabited, remote area. This can mean significant response times for emergency services such as medical aid and fire. Additionally, cell phone service is very limited in the park, potentially complicating park visitor's ability to obtain help in an emergency. The remoteness of the site also necessitates that housing must be provided for all permanent positions. If the park were to expand in the future and additional permanent positions were needed (such as a Park Maintenance Specialist or an additional Park Ranger), additional housing units would have to be constructed.

## Weather and Climate

Wild Horse SRA is located in one of the coldest areas of Nevada, with temperatures regularly plunging to -20 F in the winter, and overnight low temperatures averaging in the 30s every month of the year. While this provides excellent opportunities for winter recreation activities such as ice fishing, it also carries the potential to create life-threatening conditions for visitors. Summer temperatures are generally comfortable, but high winds and afternoon thunderstorms are common. High winds are common throughout the year, with no general prevailing wind direction. This complicates NDSP's ability to construct windbreaks that could provide park users with some relief from frequent winds.



*View of an iced-over and snow-covered Wild Horse Reservoir in winter.*

## Staffing

With WHSRA historically being a lower visitation park within the NDSP system and with the park having a smaller footprint, staffing is limited to a Park Supervisor, Park Ranger, and varying level of funding for seasonal staff (often enough for one position). Ultimately, staff availability limits the number of improvements that can realistically be implemented at a park, as new amenities such as cabins, restrooms, and camping areas all must be cleaned and maintained.

## Water Level Fluctuations and Water Conditions

Since the legal purpose of Wild Horse Reservoir is first and foremost to store water for irrigation use downstream on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, the reservoir can experience significant changes in water levels, impacting recreation opportunities. Additionally, Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) can be common in late summer. While not within WHSRA proper, since most visitors come to the park to recreate on/at the reservoir, negative developments such as these can radically impact park visitation and the visitor experience.



## Vision and Goals

Following the existing conditions analysis, and public and stakeholder outreach, a vision for the future of WHSRA was developed that consists of the following seven elements, supported by a corresponding goal. Although numbered for reference, please note that the sequence of vision elements and goals does not indicate level of priority or significance.

### 1. Quality Facilities

**Goal: Provide quality facilities that meet the needs and expectations of the public, NDSP staff, and partner organizations/agencies.**

### 2. Diversity Of Uses and Experiences

**Goal: Currently the recreation opportunities at the park are almost exclusively focused on camping and fishing. While these activities will always be fundamental to WHSRA, there is a desire to offer a more diverse range of recreation opportunities within the park, while remaining true to the purpose of the park.**

### 3. A Unique Destination

**Goal: While WHSRA is already a unique destination as it currently is, offering the only improved boat launch and developed campgrounds on Wild Horse Reservoir, NDSP desires to increase this attribute by providing new experiences that complement existing uses of the park.**



## 4. Remoteness with Comforts

**Goal:** WHSRA seeks to strike a balance by providing facilities that provide a level of comfort that many park users and campers have come to expect, but preserving the remote, natural feel that many park users cherish about the park as it is.

## 5. Accessibility

**Goal:** Improve accessibility throughout WHSRA by enhancing/renovating existing facilities and constructing new amenities with accessibility in mind.

## 6. Partnerships

**Goal:** Support and collaborate with partner agencies and resource management/land management organizations to enhance the visitor experience at WHSRA.

## 7. Preservation of Resources

**Goal:** Develop and implement recreational opportunities that balance the preservation of resources with public access and enjoyment.



## Recommendations and Proposed Projects

### Expansion of the Existing Park

In June 2024, NDSP decided to initiate the process of filing a “Recreation and Public Purpose” (R&PP) application with the BLM for roughly 60 acres of land adjacent to WHSRA. This additional land would provide NDSP with greater options for future park improvements and



*Map showing the current boundaries of WHSRA (red), the boat launch easement from BIA (yellow), and the BLM land for which NDSP has submitted an R&PP application (blue).*

amenities, without making the park feel cramped or overdeveloped. While public outreach for the plan update revealed a desire for new amenities, many respondents also expressed concern over future park improvements potentially leading to the park feeling overdeveloped and lacking open space.

## **About the ~60-Acre R&PP Land**

The R&PP land is contiguous to roughly half of WHSRA’s eastern boundary. The R&PP land is slightly offset to the northeast from the WHSRA property boundary. One primary drainage running northwest to southeast intersects the property. Beyond this, the land is largely flat and suitable for development. The land gradually slopes downhill from north to south. Natural resources of the property are the same as those found within the existing park. While generally not as close to the reservoir as the existing park, good views of the reservoir and the surrounding mountains can nevertheless be found throughout the property.

NDSP anticipates the R&PP review process will take at least two years. Since it will likely be at least a couple years before NDSP has a determination from the BLM on the application, this plan presents two alternative development plans – Alternate 1 considers just the existing park, while Alternate 2 envisions the future of the park with this ~60-acre parcel included.



*View from the northeast end of the R&PP land, looking southwest.*



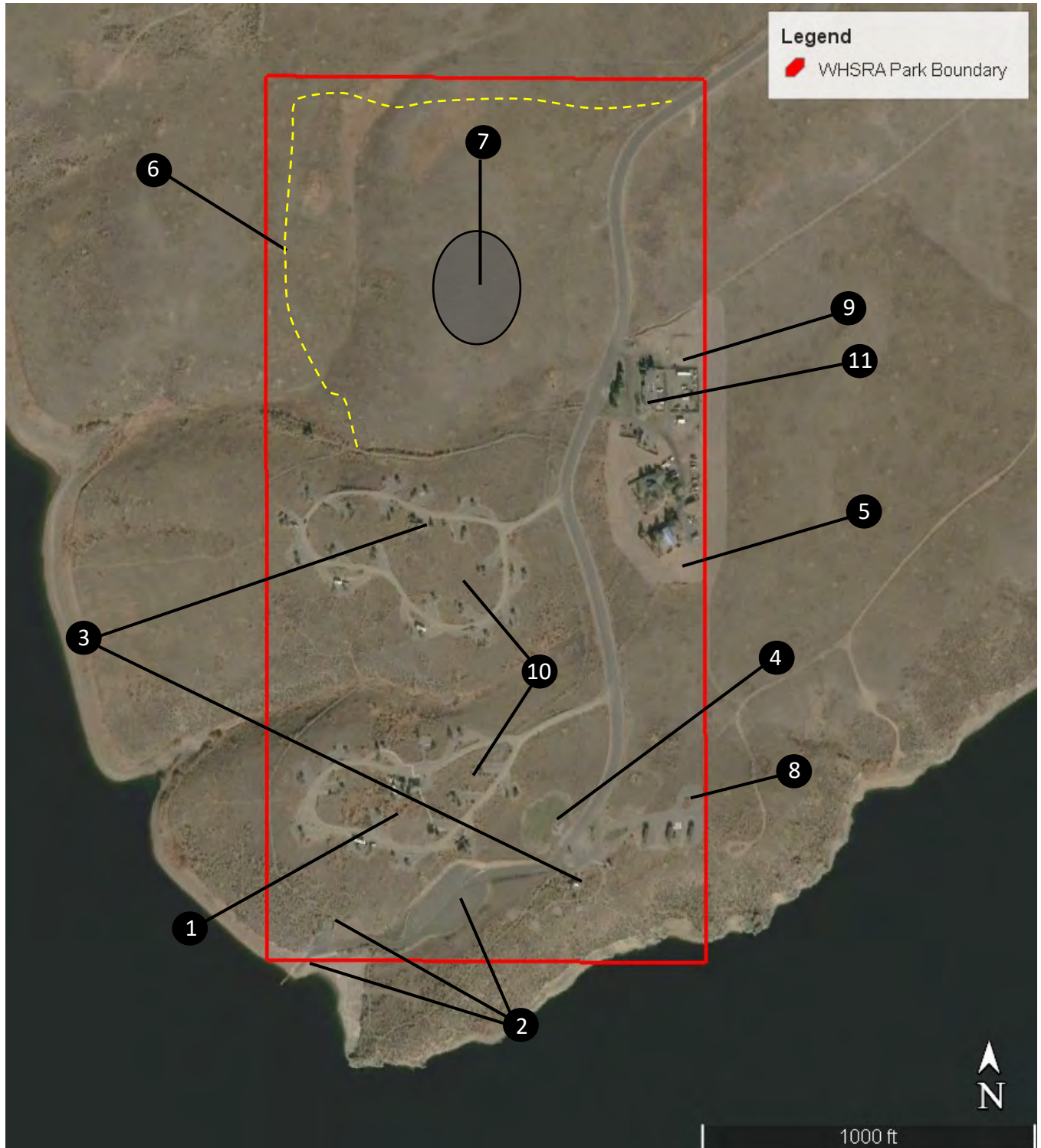
*View from the southeast end of the R&PP land, looking southwest.*



*View from roughly the center of the R&PP land, looking northeast.*

# Alternative 1 Proposed Projects

Alternative 1 considers a future where the park boundaries remain unchanged. Please note that although projects are numbered for reference, these numbers do not indicate level of priority.



# 1

## **Addition of Utility Hookups in Campground Loop #2**

Across in-person workshop participants, ArcGIS StoryMap survey respondents, and NEAP survey respondents, one of the most requested improvements was the addition of utility hookups in the campground. It is recommended that electric and frost-free water hookups are added to Loop #2 first, then the need and demand for hookups in Loop #1 can be evaluated going forward. NDSP recognizes that many campers desire less-developed facilities, so it may be most appropriate to leave loop #1 as a less developed option.

# 2

## **Expansion of Boat Launch Area and Boat Launch Parking Area**

An issue of critical concern raised by WHSRA staff, park visitors, and stakeholders was the general lack of space at the existing boat launch. Designed in the 1980s, the facility was simply not built to accommodate the number of boaters now using the facility, nor the larger vehicles that are commonplace today. This plan proposes the following improvements to the boat launch area:

- Expansion of the boat ramp's back-up/ turnaround area for vehicles.
- Widening of the boat ramp to two lanes so that two vehicles may launch at the same time.
- Installation of a new boat dock that allows multiple vessels to dock at once. Consideration should be given to dock systems to include space for an accessible fishing pier (like the dock system at Spring Valley State Park).
- Expansion of the boat launch parking area to accommodate more trucks and boat trailers. This should include designated parking for emergency vehicles.



*View of the current boat launch facility and parking area.*

**3****Replacement of Existing Restrooms in Campground Loop #1 and Day-Use Area**

Both of these vault restrooms were constructed in 1982 and have exceeded their functional lifespan. Both structures should be demolished and replaced with new two-stall flush restrooms, each with one shower unit as well. Adding a shower to the day-use area restroom is intended to serve users of the three existing camping cabins, which do not feature showers. SPWD's 2024 FCA Report identifies both structures as in critical need of replacement.



*Exterior view of the Day-Use Restroom. Constructed in 1982, this facility is in dire need of replacement.*

**4****Day-Use Area Improvements (Playground, Lawn Game Installations, Covered Picnic Area, Improved Irrigation)**

NDSP views the park's day-use area as a space with great potential to expand the recreation opportunities that exist at WHSRA. Proposed improvements to the day-use area consist of four primary projects:

- Addition of a shade pavilion over the picnic tables. With the tables sitting directly in the sun essentially all day, with no natural shade, their use is limited.
- Addition of a playground adjacent to the northeast corner of the day-use lawn. It is recommended that the design/aesthetic of the campground compliment the natural setting of the surrounding area and should not stand out.

- Addition of “permanent” lawn game installations in the lawn area near the pavilion.
- Improved irrigation throughout the day-use area to better maintain the lawn and support new trees and vegetation that could be planted

Included below is a photograph of the day-use area in its current condition, along with a rendering showing how the area could look with the projects proposed in this plan.

### **Day-Use Area – Current Conditions**



*View of the day-use area in July 2024.*



## Day-Use Area – Proposed Improvement Concept



*Rendering of what the day-use area could look like with the proposed additions (picnic pavilion, playground, lawn game installations, shade trees. Please note that while this rendering represents the planned improvements for this area, it is only a visualization and may not represent the final product.*

**5**

### **Addition of Third Staff Housing Unit (for a Park Maintenance Specialist Position)**

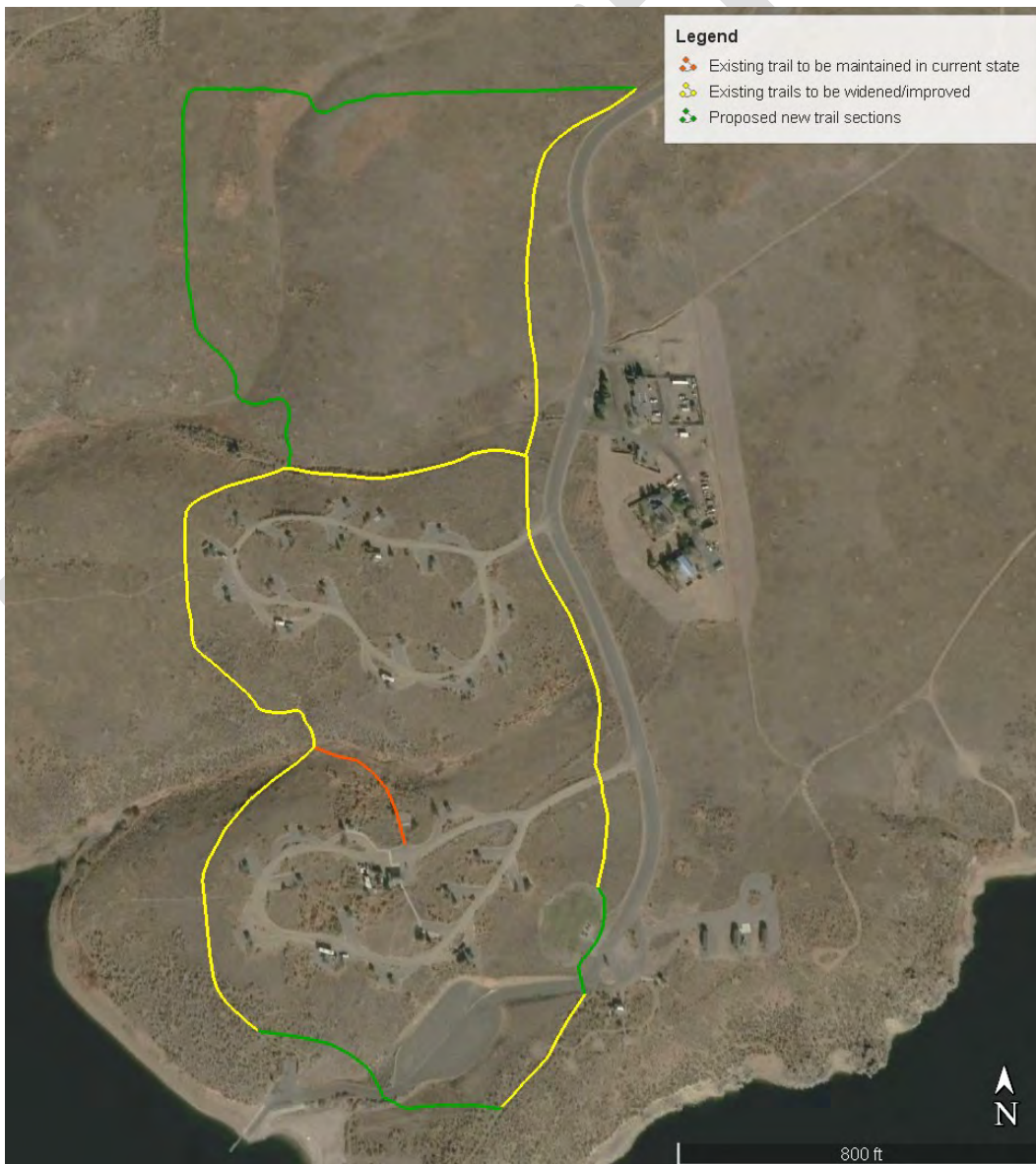
As more amenities are added to WHSRA, the need for additional park staff will become more and more pronounced. WHSRA staff states that a Park Maintenance Specialist position is badly needed. Due to the remote location of the park, housing for all permanent staff is an absolute must, meaning a third housing unit will have to be added. This plan recommends adding the third residence just south of the two existing residences. This residence should be a duplex to offer additional staff housing capacity and flexibility in the event the need for permanent staff at WHSRA increases further as new amenities are added to the park.

6

## Expansion of Non-Motorized Trail System and Widening of Existing Trails

This plan proposes widening and expanding WHSRA’s existing ~1.25-mile trail system. The main Wild Horse Loop trail should be widened to 8’-10’ and resurfaced with a compacted natural material such as decomposed granite to allow for greater accessibility. Approximately ½-mile of new trail should be constructed, expanding the trail system to the north end of the park. Exact alignment of the new trail section to be determined.

The map below shows the proposed trail network. Yellow indicates existing trails to be widened/improved. Orange sections denote existing trail segments that will be maintained in their current or similar state. Green sections are proposed new trail sections.



## 7

### Addition of a New Group Camping Area

A group camping area has long been a desired addition to WHSRA and was originally proposed in the 1992 WHSRA Development Plan. This plan proposes a new group camping area designed to accommodate groups of 25 people be constructed in the northern section of the park. This area should include the following components:

- Shade pavilion large enough to cover four picnic tables.
- Four stall restroom facility (two restrooms, two restroom/shower spaces)
- Flat, open area for tents
- Lawn area
- Sufficient parking for 8-10 vehicles (including RV's and travel trailers).
- 3-4 utility hookup pedestals (water and electricity).

The potential site plan below shows how the group camping area could be laid out. Note that this is only a potential design. Preserving the viewshed to southwest of Wild Horse Reservoir and the surrounding should be a priority in any design.



*View looking southwest from the site of the proposed group camping area.*

# Group Camping Area – Concept Site Plan



## **8** Addition of Two New Camping Cabins (with Showers and Kitchens)

Since the installation of WHSRA's three camping cabins, they have been a popular amenity and have been booked roughly 43% of the time since November 2023 (when NDSP's online reservation system was launched). Occupancy has been as high as 84% (June 2024). The existing three cabins all feature restrooms with sinks and flush toilets, but no shower/bath features. WHSRA staff states that many cabin users express a desire for shower/bath facilities inside their cabin. This plan proposes the addition of two additional cabins that both feature kitchen spaces, along with showers inside their restrooms. The two new cabins should be placed within the same general area as the existing cabins.



*Offering comfortable accommodations regardless of weather conditions, WHSRA's camping cabins have been a popular addition to the park.*

## **9** Construction of a New Maintenance Building

The current maintenance shop is connected to the park office/visitor center/camp store space. There is a desperate need for more space from a park operations standpoint. NDSP views the best solution to this is to construct a new stand-alone maintenance shop to the northeast of the current building. This would allow WHSRA staff to use the existing maintenance shop area for other purposes.

**10****General Campground Improvements (paving roads and sites, BBQ grills, increased shade)**

Several smaller improvements are recommended for the existing campgrounds to both improve the experience of campers and better enable WHSRA staff to maintain these facilities and keep them open throughout the year. These improvements consist of:

- Pave roads and sites in Campground Loop #2
- Add BBQ grills to each site in both campground loops.
- Increase shade in the campground by continuing to strategically plant trees native to the area and/or well-suited to the harsh climate of the northern Great Basin.

It should be noted that wind breaks were widely requested by respondents to the ArcGIS StoryMap survey. WHSRA staff is currently studying wind direction at WHSRA via a digital weather meter. Wind breaks may be added to campsites in the future if prevailing wind directions are identified and the required locations of the wind breaks would not disturb scenic views.



*Paving site pull-outs and the loop road in Campground Loop #2 will allow WHSRA staff to more efficiently remove snow in the winter, helping ensure the facility is open year-round.*

## 11

## Visitor Center/Ranger Station/Camp Store Improvements

The current visitor center/office interior layout is not conducive to the building's current use and needs reconfiguring, particularly with the establishment of the new camp store. It is recommended that the interior floorplan of the building be revised to provide a better experience for WHSRA staff and visitors. Elements of this could include:

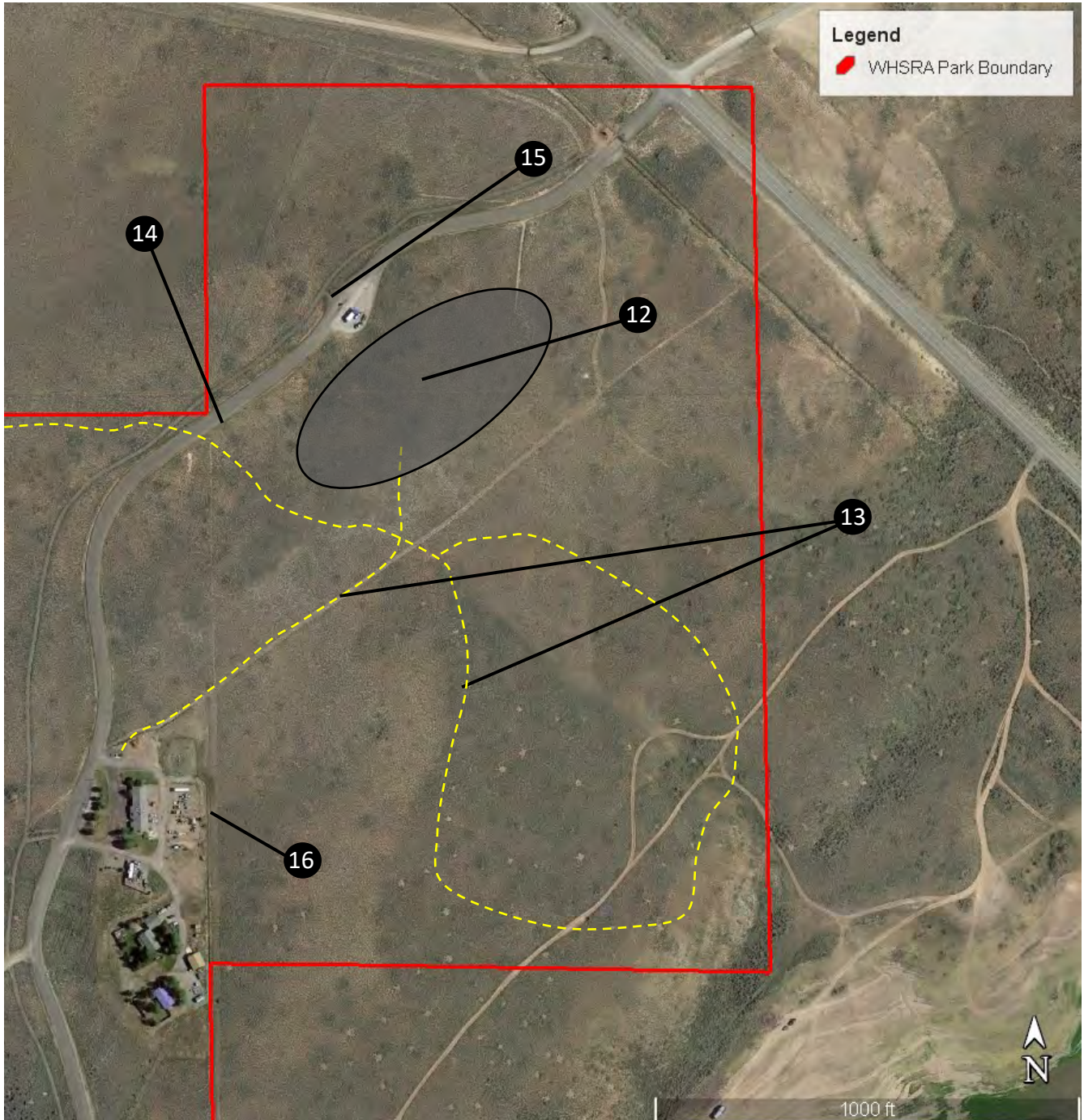
- Reconfigure the main entrance to the building. The current entry through a small, narrow vestibule is not welcoming, and potentially brings accessibility concerns.
- Construct a desk/workspace area in the camp store area to allow WHSRA staff to more efficiently tend to the store while completing office duties.
- Pave the second bay in the maintenance shop (currently a dirt/gravel mix).
- Install central air and heating in main building.
- Remove the wood furnace in the maintenance shop area and replace with an efficient heating system.
- Install new insulated garage doors for bays that are electrically operated. Current bay doors are manually operated and uninsulated.
- Add new interpretive signage highlighting some of the historic agriculture equipment displayed outside of the building.



*Exterior view of the visitor center/ranger station.*

## ALTERNATIVE 2 PROPOSED PROJECTS

As stated earlier, Alternative 2 envisions WHSRA with the addition of the ~60 acres for which NDSP has submitted an R&PP application. If the R&PP application is approved as submitted, this is the plan NDSP will follow for WHSRA. With the exception of Project #9, "Construction of New Maintenance Building," all proposed projects located within the existing park in Alternate 1 remain unchanged in Alternate 2.





## 12 Development of a New OHV Campground on R&PP Land

Directly across Highway 225 from the park entrance road is Gold Creek Road. Gold Creek Road provides access to miles upon miles of backcountry roads and OHV trails traversing thousands upon thousands of acres of public land. As such, OHV use and backcountry exploration are a major interest of many WHSRA visitors, and many bring OHV's when camping in the park. The current campground loops were not built to accommodate the larger OHV trailers that many users now bring into the park. To accommodate this existing use, it is proposed that a 16-site (max) campground designed with OHV-use in mind be constructed on the R&PP land. This campground should include a flush restroom and shower facility (six stalls – four restrooms, two showers), along with water and electric utility hookups at each campsite. The campground should be designed to be uniform with the existing park facilities.

As part of the construction of the new campground, a natural surface "OHV only" road should be built leading from the campground to Highway 225 and Gold Creek Road. This new road should parallel the existing park access road and will be built for the purpose of providing OHV's safe access to and from the new campground.

## 13 Construction of Non-Motorized Trails on R&PP Land

The R&PP land offers mostly flat terrain and excellent views of Wild Horse Reservoir, making it desirable to expand the park's multi-use trail system onto this property. Two primary trails are recommended – a ~.25-mile connector trail, connecting the new OHV campground to the visitor center/park office, and a 0.85-mile loop trail going to the southern end of the R&PP land. The connector trail should be 10' wide and surfaced with a natural material such as decomposed granite. The loop trail should be a natural surfaced hiking trail to offer a different experience than the 10'-wide multi-use trail that will loop the existing park. The new loop trail should also feature interpretive signage highlighting flora found along the trail, wildlife that inhabit the region, and the general history of the area. Exact alignment of new trails to be determined.



*Area of the R&PP land where new non-motorized trails could be constructed.*

## **14 Construction of a Trailhead Parking Area**

With the addition of new trails on the R&PP land, there is a need for a small amount of additional vehicle parking for those wishing to hike the new trails. The construction of a small trailhead parking area (sufficient for 3-4 vehicles) is recommended to provide better access to the new proposed trails and provide park users with a designated area to safely park off the main road. Beyond the designated parking area, this trailhead should include signage with information about the trail. This parking area could be located along the access road to the new OHV campground.

## **15 Relocation of Self-Pay Fee Station/Welcome Station**

With new park facilities located closer to Highway 225 under this plan, it is recommended that the self-pay fee station/entry station will be relocated at or just before the turn to the new OHV campground. This area should include a pull-out space sufficient for at least two vehicles with trailers that will feature park information and orientation signage. A shaded information kiosk should be constructed next to the relocated self-pay devices.

## **16 Construction of New Maintenance Building**

Alternative 1 calls for a new stand-alone maintenance building to be constructed just north of the existing maintenance yard. While this would be an acceptable location, WHSRA staff believes that the ideal location for this facility would be due east of the existing ranger station/visitor center/maintenance shop, just inside the boundary of the R&PP land. If NDSP's R&PP application is approved, the new maintenance building will be constructed at this location.



## Plan Implementation

Three phases have been identified to implement projects at WHSRA – planning, design, and implementation. This document thoroughly addresses phase 1 (planning), guiding phases 2 and 3 moving forward.

### Phase 1: Planning (Steps 1-4)

This document identifies and outlines the first four steps in the plan implementation process. These steps are:

#### Step 1: Existing Conditions Analysis

#### Step 2: Public Outreach and Engagement

#### Step 3: Vision and Goals

#### Step 4: Recommendations and Proposed Projects

### Phase 2: Design (Steps 5-7)

#### Step 5: Identify Priority Projects/Areas

NDSP will work to identify priority projects within the projects proposed in this plan. Factors that should be considered when determining project priority include:

- Improvements to facilities needed to comply with regulations.
- Improvements to facilities to meet user demands or needs.
- Projects that will improve safety.
- Projects that address park managerial/operational needs.
- Availability of potential funding.

- Infrastructure improvements that need to be constructed first to allow for additional amenities or facilities to be developed in the future.
  - For example, an access road to the site of the proposed group camping area would need to be constructed, then water and electric lines would need to be run to the area.

It should be noted of course that funding may make some projects more viable than others, so NDSP will seek to capitalize on funding opportunities for projects as they arise. The establishment of priority projects should not be viewed in a rigid context that requires project #1 must be completed before #2, and so on. NDSP will be adaptable and strive to complete projects identified in this plan and will embrace funding opportunities as they arise.

### **Step 6: Programming and Design Documentation**

Following the establishment of priority projects, NDSP should continue to work with partners/stakeholders and the public to help develop programming and design documentation. In this context, “programming” entails determining capacity, specific amenities, and infrastructure to be included in the design of a project. Examples of this could include determining if the number of campsites initially proposed for a project is still viable, identifying how many benches and interpretive signs should go along a trail, and determining how many parking spaces should be accounted for at a new trailhead. It is imperative that programmed elements meet current needs and projected short-to-mid-term future demands, while allowing the ability to grow and adapt over time if needed and appropriate.

### **Step 7: Regulatory Compliance**

Regulatory compliance includes following local, county, state, and federal mandates when designing and implementing projects. For projects funded in part with federal grants, this will also include complying with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requirements. It is recommended that NDSP consult with regulatory agencies early and often to determine project needs to ensure that compliance requirements are met.

## **Phase 3: Implementation (Steps 8-10)**

### **Step 8: Funding**

Individual projects are of course subject to funding availability. Having a plan ready, with designs and construction documents in hand for areas within WHSRA, allows for quick turn-around when funding becomes available. Creative funding sources should also be explored including cost sharing, leveraging resources, and partnerships with local, county, state and

federal agencies and entities, as well as related interest groups and non-profit organizations. Phasing of projects through identified priority projects will help to capitalize on small and large pots of funding.

### **Step 9: Construction**

Construction takes place when steps 1-8 are completed.

### **Step 10: Monitoring And Adaptive Management**

Following the construction of new or improved amenities and facilities, it is recommended that a monitoring framework be followed to gauge use and park operational needs. Monitoring the use of completed projects will enable NDSP to pursue an adaptive management model, in which priority needs are identified and revised based on what is happening in real-time at WHSRA. Projects should be implemented, monitored, evaluated, and revised as needed to fit user and park management demands and needs.



*Sunset at Wild Horse SRA.*



## Appendices

### Appendix A: Public Workshop Materials

The images in Appendix A shows the posters that were part of the in-person workshops at WHSRA and in Elko in October 2023. At both events, the public input activities were the same. Eight separate 36"x48" posters were arranged throughout the space, each asking different questions or presenting different topics. Six of the posters featured different options to select from, while two allowed participants to write in their own responses. Participants were each given sheets of colored dot stickers with instructions to place a dot on the statement or the potential development option that they liked or best described their opinion.

# How often do you visit Wild Horse SRA?



Please select the option that best describes how often you visit the park.

**I HAVE NOT VISITED  
WILD HORSE SRA  
BEFORE**

**MAYBE ONCE A YEAR**

**2-5 TIMES PER YEAR**

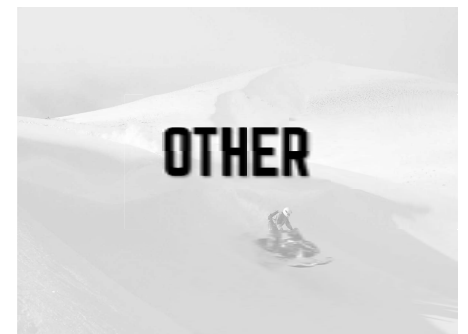
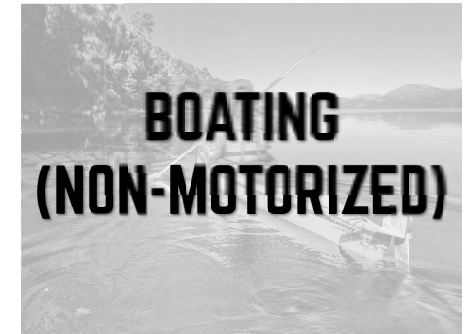
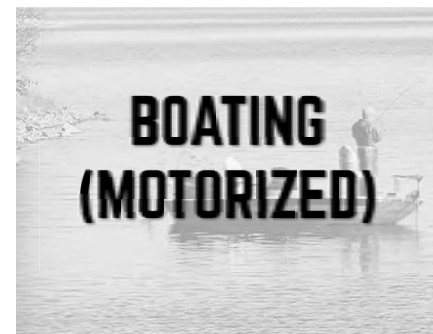
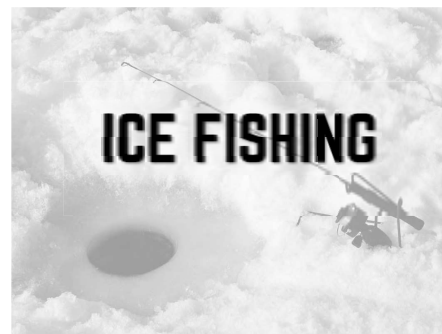
**6-10 TIMES PER YEAR**

**11+ TIMES PER YEAR**

# What do you like to do at Wild Horse SRA?



What recreational activities do you enjoy at Wild Horse SRA? If you camped at Wild Horse SRA and participated in any of these activities outside the park (for example, you camped at Wild Horse and went OHV riding outside the park), please include that as well.





# What do you like about Wild Horse SRA?



What makes Wild Horse SRA special? What do you enjoy about the site as it is? What makes it important to you?

# VISITOR AMENITIES - WILD HORSE SRA



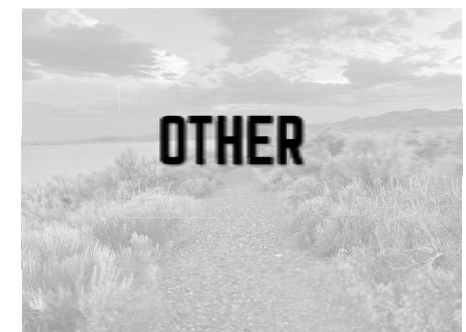
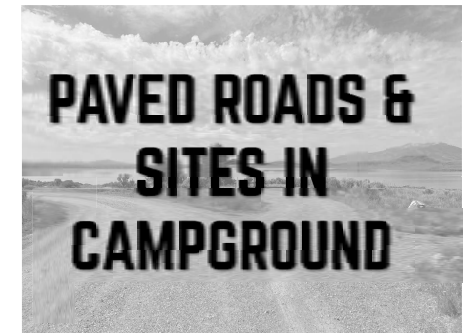
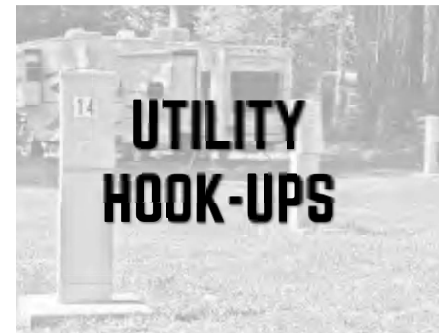
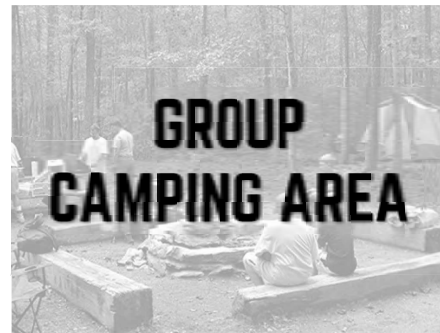
Which of these amenities would you to see at Wild Horse SRA? Select all that apply.



# CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES - WILD HORSE SRA



Which of these camping opportunities would you to see at Wild Horse SRA? Select all that apply.



# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES - LOW HANGING FRUIT IDEAS



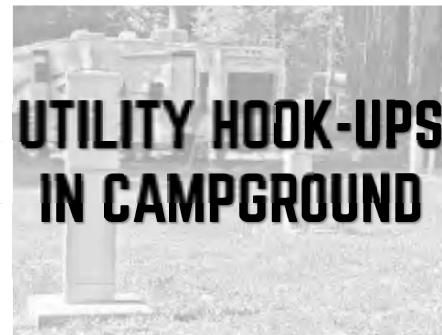
Which of these potential development opportunities would you like to see first at Wild Horse SRA?



# DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES - BIG IDEAS



Which of these potential development opportunities would you most like to see at Wild Horse SRA?



# SITE CHARACTERISTICS - WILD HORSE SRA



Which of characteristics/qualities do you value most in a state park/recreation area in general?  
Please select the three qualities you most value in a site.

**MORE  
"DEVELOPED"**

(showers, flush  
restrooms, utility  
hook-ups, etc.)

**FISHING  
ACCESS**

**DIVERSE  
RECREATION  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**MORE  
"PRIMITIVE"**  
(amenities at the site  
are limited or more  
basic)

**ACCESSIBILITY**

**EDUCATION &  
LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**PROGRAMS &  
EVENTS**

**SCENIC  
VIEWS**

**SPACE/  
SECLUSION**

**SILENCE/  
NATURAL  
SOUNDSCAPE**

# What would you most like to see at Wild Horse SRA?



If you could build/add anything at all to Wild Horse SRA, what would you most like to see at the park?



# Wild Horse SRA Public Workshop Data

Data collected from public workshops on  
October 8 & October 9, 2023





## Overview

As of part of the Wild Horse State Recreation Area Master Plan update project, Nevada State Parks staff held two planning/public input workshops in the Elko-area on Sunday, October 8, and Monday, October 9.

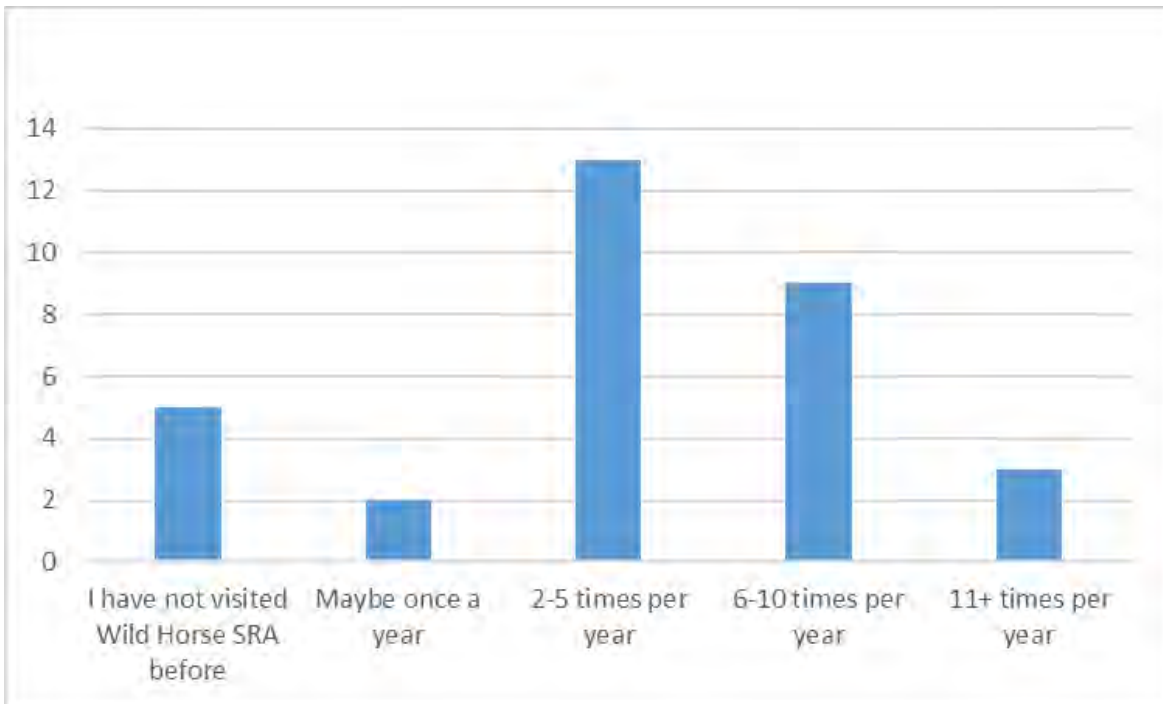
The October 8 workshop was held at Wild Horse State Recreation Area from 11:00am-2:00pm and advertised as a “Planning Open House/Family Fun Day.” A total of 32 people participated in this event. The October 9 workshop took place at the Elko Public Library in Elko from 4:00pm-6:30pm. Unfortunately turnout was lighter than hoped for, with 14 people participating.

At both events, the public input activities were the same. Eight separate 36”x48” posters were arranged throughout the space, each asking different questions or presenting different topics. Six of the posters featured different options to select from, while two allowed participants to write in their own responses. Participants were each given sheets of colored dot stickers with instructions to place a dot on the statement or the potential development option that they liked or best described their opinion.

The two workshops were attended by a total of 46 people (32 on October 8, 14 October 9). However, based on the number of responses received, it seems some couples or families elected to use just one sticker for their entire group, rather than each responding individually. As an example of this, while a total of 46 people attended the workshops, there were only 32 individual responses to the question “How often do you visit Wild Horse SRA?”

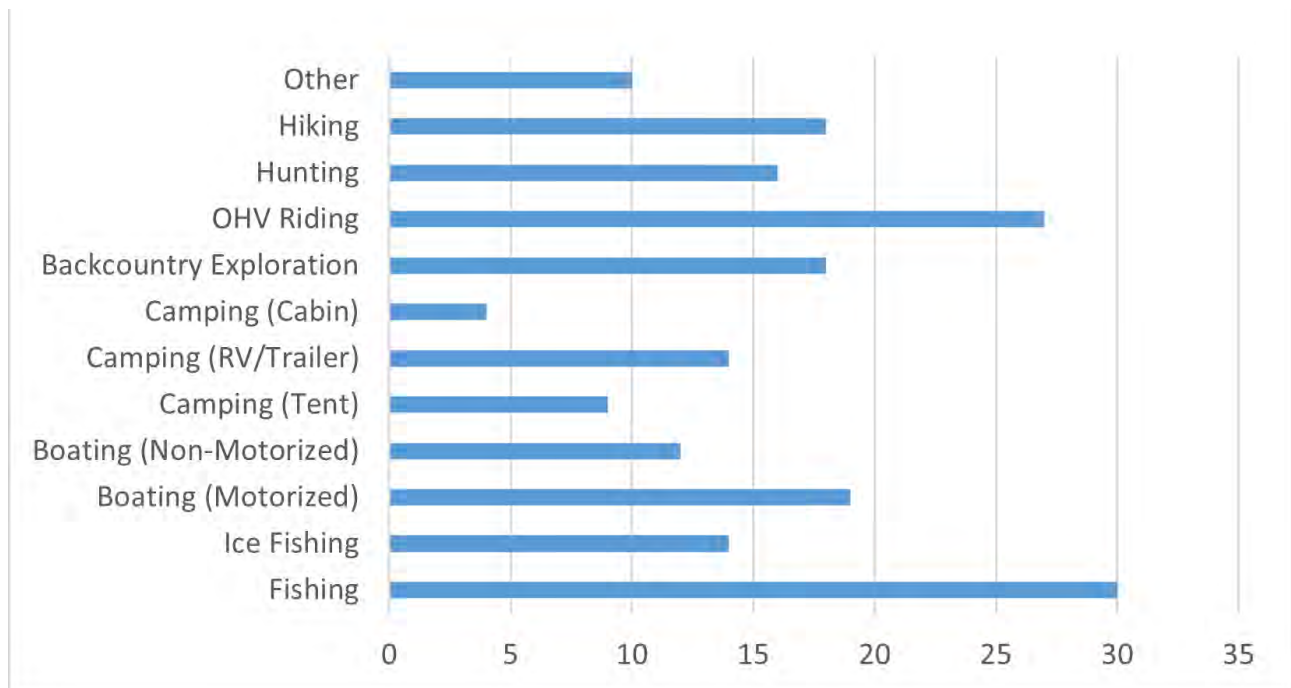
## Poster Title: *How often do you visit Wild Horse SRA?*

**Instructions:** *Select the option that best describes how often you visit the park.*



## Poster Title: *What do you like to do at Wild Horse SRA?*

**Instructions:** *What recreational activities do you enjoy at Wild Horse SRA? If you camped at Wild Horse SRA and participated in any of these activities outside the park (for example, you camped at Wild Horse and went OHV riding outside the park), please include that as well.*



## Poster Title: *What do you like about Wild Horse SRA?*

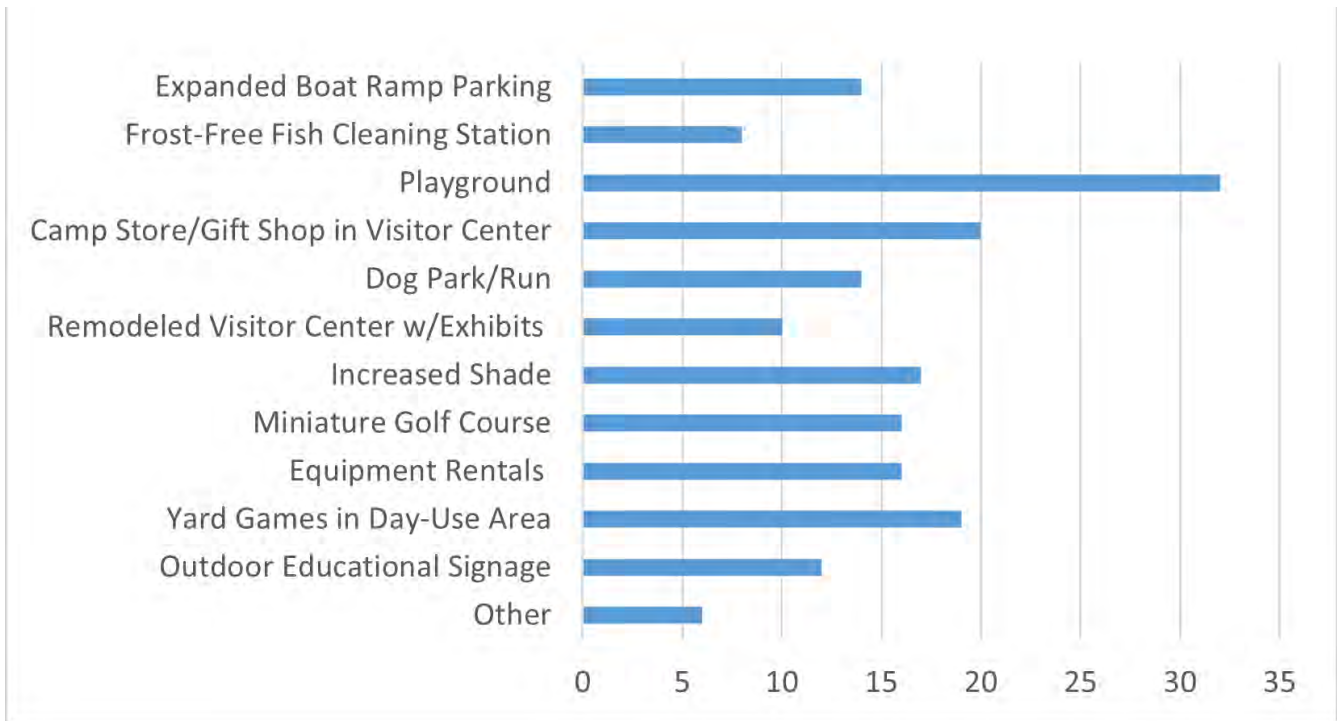
**Prompt:** *What makes Wild Horse SRA special? What do you enjoy about site as it is? What makes it important to you?*

**Below are all comments written by participants:**

- *"It's a fantastic location to base and enjoy Elko County at its most beautiful."*
- *"Fun to explore."*
- *"Great place to spend with family & friends!"*
- *"Great fishing"*
- *"Scenery and getting away from town"*
- *"Sunsets, fishing, scenery"*
- *"Relation w/rangers (cust. service)"*
- *"Facilities (excellent)"*
- *"Camp site locations (separated"*
- *"Central location in N. Nevada"*
- *"Large campsites!"*
- *"Great people and Wild Horse pride"*
- *"Family memories"*
- *"Second that" (in reference to the above comment)*
- *"Facilities & scenery"*
- *"La Limpizza"*
- *"Well kept facility & great fishing"*
- *"fishing"*
- *"Riding quads"*
- *"Great fishing & hunting with the kids"*

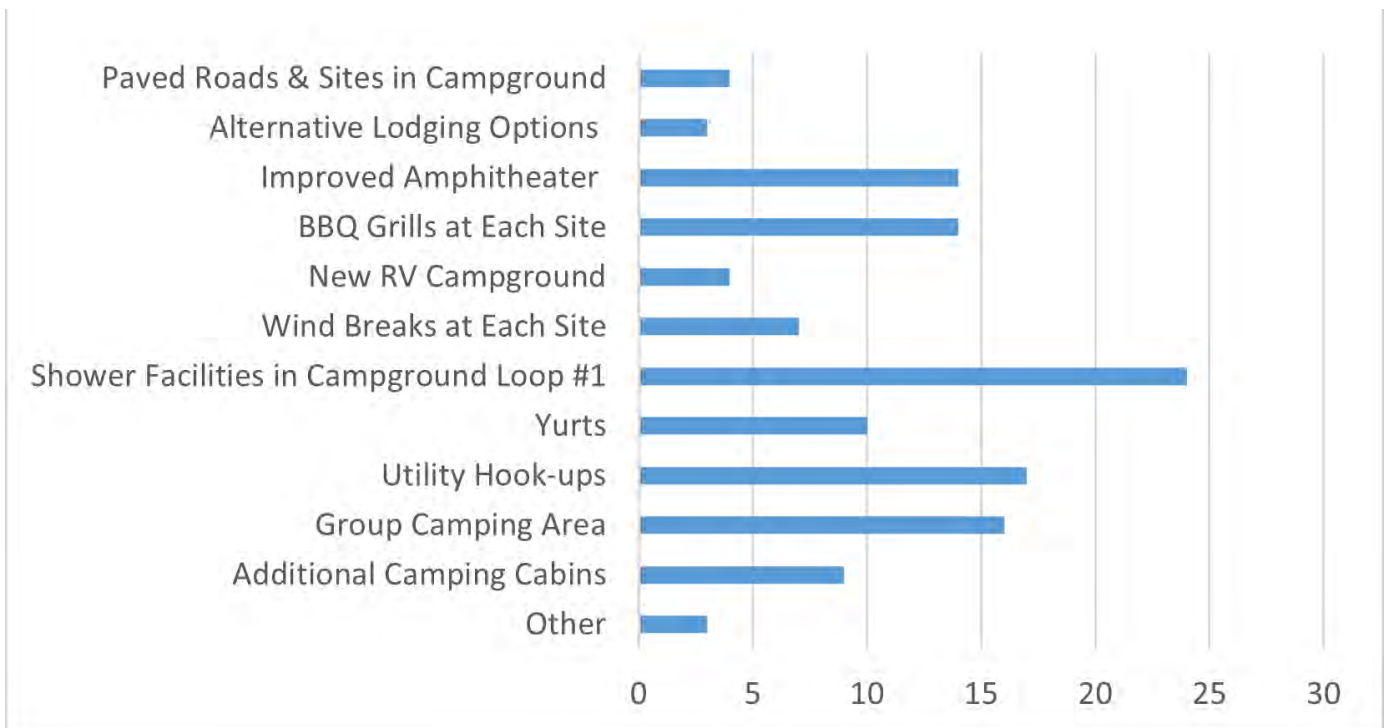
## Poster Title: *Visitor Amenities - Wild Horse SRA*

**Instructions:** Which of these amenities would you like to see at Wild Horse SRA? Select all that apply.



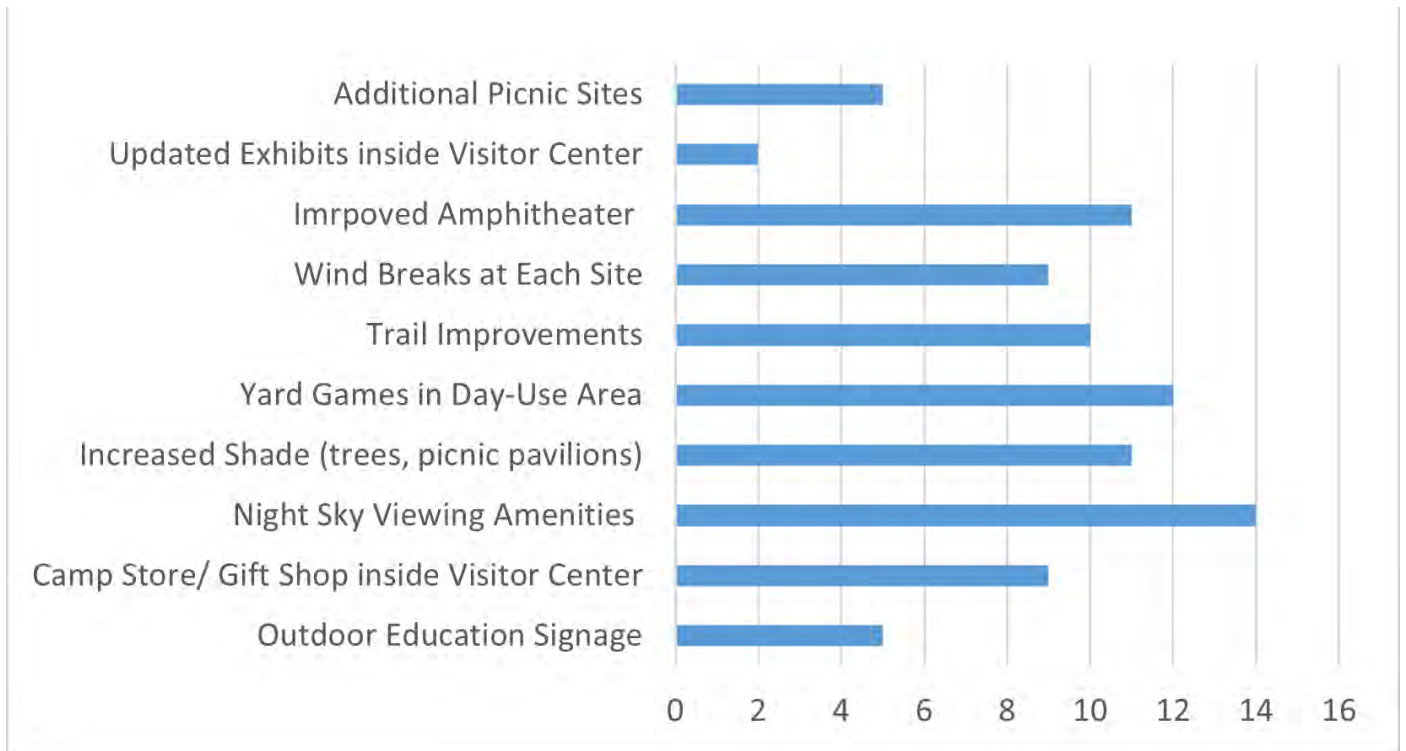
## Poster Title: *Camping Opportunities - Wild Horse SRA*

**Instructions:** Which of these camping opportunities would you like to see at Wild Horse SRA? Select all that apply.



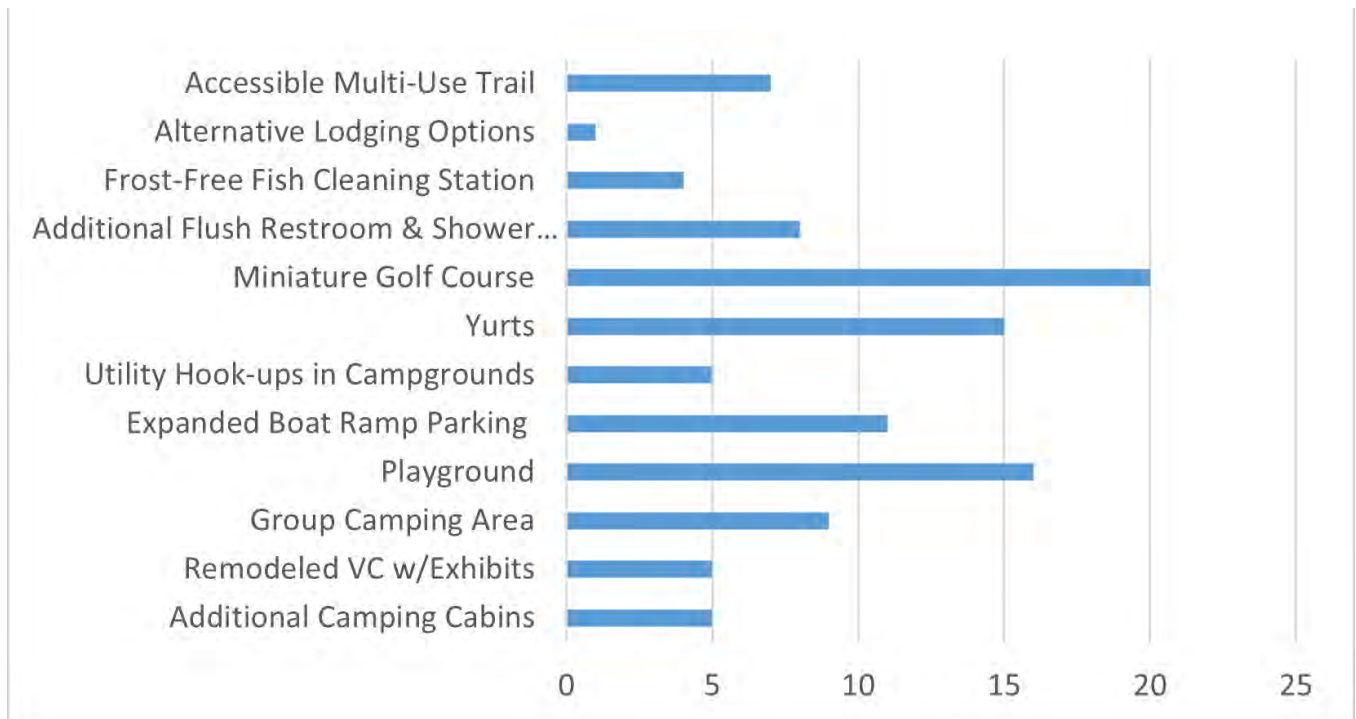
## Poster Title: *Development Opportunities - Low Hanging Fruit Ideas*

**Instructions:** Which of these potential development opportunities would you like to see first at Wild Horse SRA? Please select up to three.



## Poster Title: *Development Opportunities - Big Ideas*

**Instructions:** Which of these potential development opportunities would you like to see first at Wild Horse SRA? Please select up to three.



## **Poster Title: *What would you most like to see at Wild Horse SRA?***

**Instructions:** *If could build/add anything at all to Wild Horse SRA, what would you most like to see at the park?*

**Below are all comments written by participants:**

- *“A loop hiking trail around the lake and an artist in residence program”*
- *“Access to the west side of the lake”*
- *“Ice & wood for sale”*
- *“Through mutual agreement - manage Wild Horse Crossing Camp sites (BLM campsites)”*
- *“Indoor event center that could be rented”*
- *“Ice skating rink/sledding hill*
- *“Floating dock”*
- *“Floating playground”*
- *“Shop for like food-ice-light”*
- *“A little pool—hot tub”*
- *“Swim area designated”*
- *“Additional boat trailer room & parking”*
- *“Hook-ups”*
- *“Additional boat ramp space”*
- *“Bench at shower buildings”*
- *“Electric hook-ups”*
- *“Educational signs & opportunities”*
- *“An astronomy center”*
- *“A place for music”*

## ***Photos from the Workshops***



***Photograph A: Overview of the layout for the Planning Open House event at the park on October 8, 2023.***



***Photograph B: Overview of the layout for the Planning Workshop at the Elko Public Library on October 9, 2023.***

## ***Photos from the Workshops***



***Photograph C: Park visitors participants participating in the Planning Open House event on October 8, 2023.***



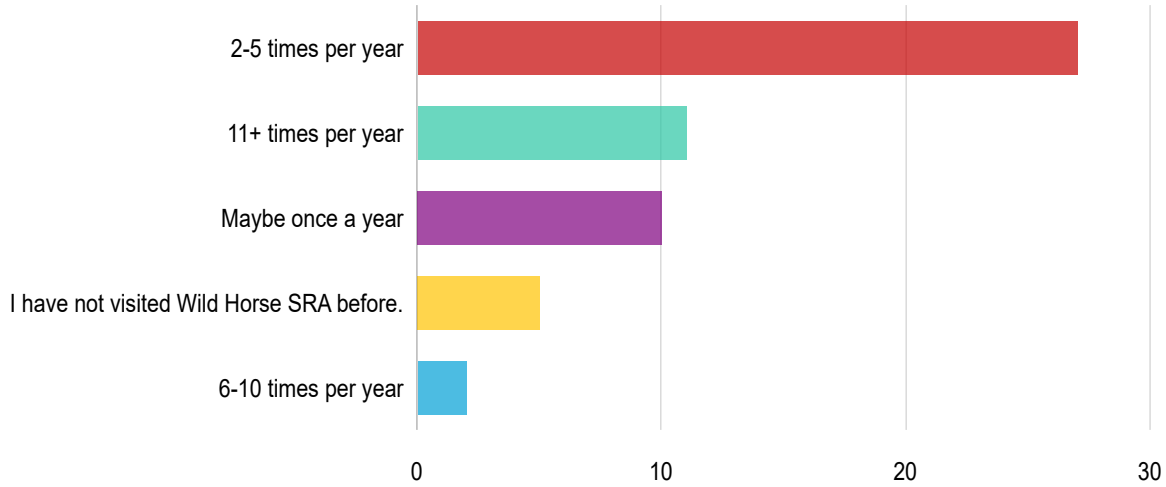
***Photograph D: Park visitors participants participating in the Planning Open House event on October 8, 2023.***



## APPENDIX C: STORYMAP SURVEY DATA

### Wild Horse SRA Master Plan Update - Public Input Survey

How often do visit Wild Horse State Recreation Area? \*



#### Answers

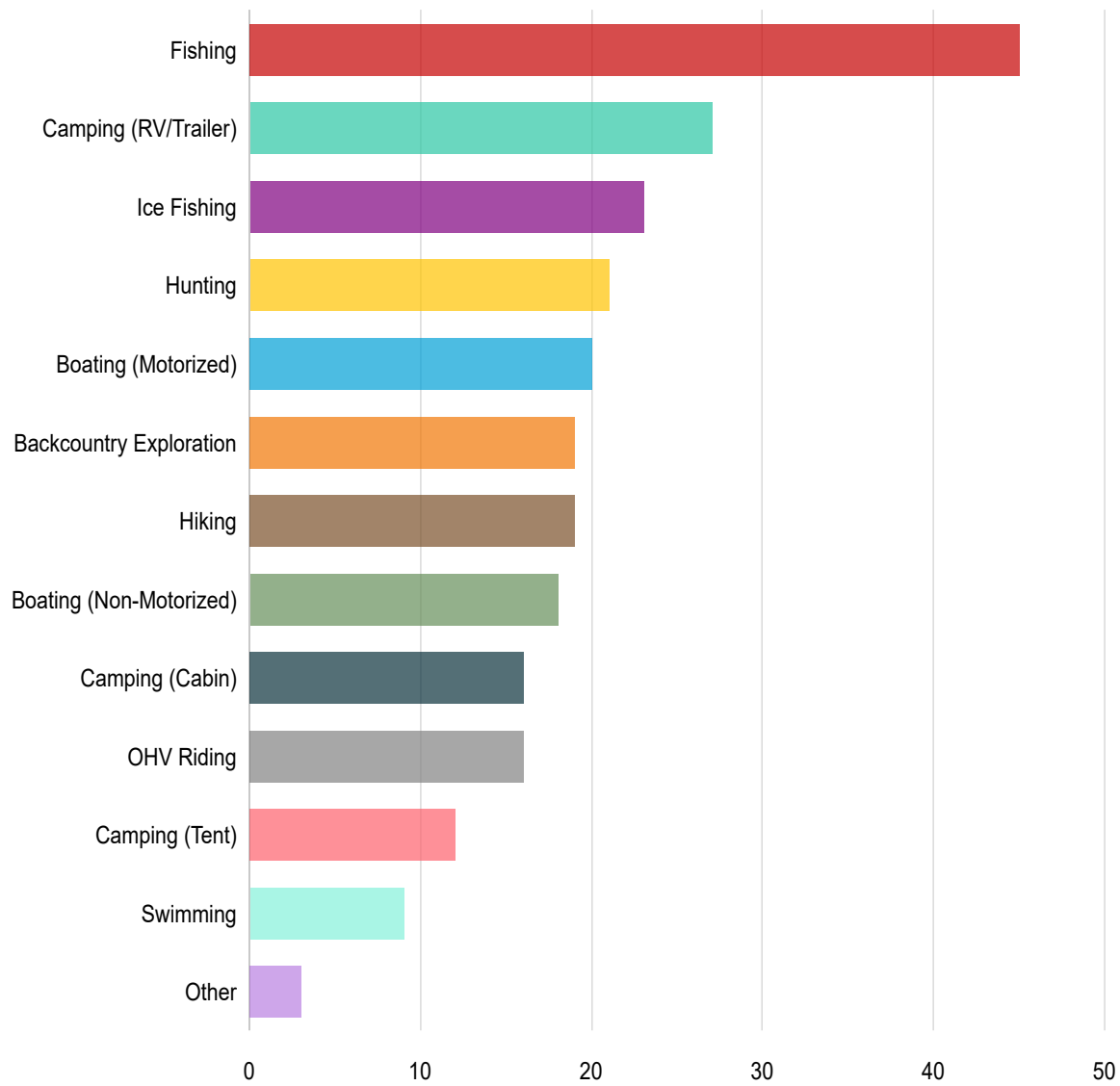
#### Count

#### Percentage

Answers	Count	Percentage
2-5 times per year	27	51.92%
11+ times per year	11	21.15%
Maybe once a year	10	19.23%
I have not visited Wild Horse SRA before.	5	9.62%
6-10 times per year	2	3.85%

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

What do you like to do at Wild Horse SRA? \*



**Answers** **Count** **Percentage**

Fishing	45	86.54%
Camping (RV/Trailer)	27	51.92%
Ice Fishing	23	44.23%
Hunting	21	40.38%
Boating (Motorized)	20	38.46%
Backcountry Exploration	19	36.54%
Hiking	19	36.54%
Boating (Non-Motorized)	18	34.62%

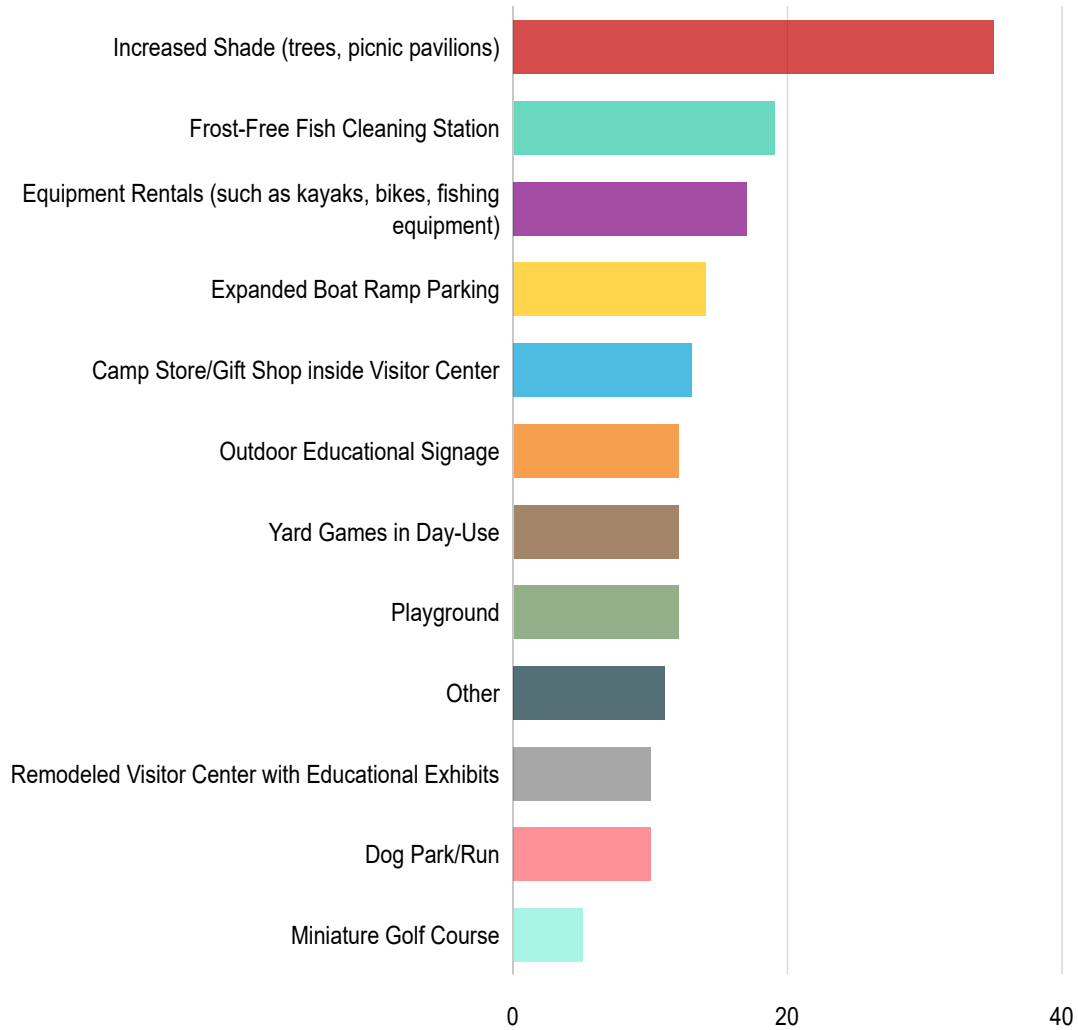


The cleanliness in the restrooms and bathrooms is first and foremost the absolute best. Campground and park overall is very clean as well. The general condition of the park facilities is great and adds to the enjoyable experience. Access to the boat launch is very good, with great parking access. The park staff past and present has absolutely ROCKED IT. This park is my absolute favorite and it's because of the care and time the personnel put into it. THANK YOU!!	1
The back country is spectacular and easily accessible	1
The area is clean and well kept	1
Solitude.	1
Solitude, no jet skis, people who journey this far seem to be like minded, just want to relax, fish, camp and enjoy the beauty of the area. And my biggest draw for my family is the quality fishing at Wild horse 👍	1
Semi-remote location. Overall lack of high-speed watercraft (ski boats, jet skis) which often disregard their disruption of fishing activities. Camp loop 2's restroom facility. Lake view camp sites. Well maintained launch ramp.	1
Remoteness and simplicity	1
not that far away from Elko	1
Nice and well maintained park and campground facilities. Good access to shore trout fishing locations. Especially depend on clean and modern bathroom facilities.	1
Love being able to do 1st come 1st served and not having to make reservations. Nice, clean, showers. Etc. Great campsites.	1
Love being able to come up there and take the family camping and fishing. Any age group or experience level can have a great time catching perch, bass or trout. The campground is always nice and clean.	1
Location to trails	1
Location is beautiful Love the camping and cabins	1
Less crowded than other lakes. Great fishing.	1
Its remote location sets it as an excellent base spot to explore the surrounding area. Nice variety of available activities from hiking, OHV use, fishing, and camping.	1
It's always clean and well kept. The staff are always friendly. The cabins are awesome. The bathrooms and showers are great! Overall, Wild Horse Reservoir and the area is very beautiful.	1
It's usually quiet and good clean facilities. Good fishing and easy access to the shore. Campsites are neat and kept well. Everyone is so helpful and friendly.	1
It's absolutely beautiful and I love that it isn't as crowded as South Fork. I can let my kids ride their bikes and have to worry about them.	1

Ice fishing is amazing. Great quality fish. It's pretty cool to rent a cabin and get up early in the morning and drive your snowmobile to a fishing spot. Love it.	1
I think it looks beautiful and it is high on my bucket list for camping/outdoor adventures for next summer	1
I love the fish cleaning station! It's always clean and well taken care of	1
I like the quiet, isolated location and the diversity of wild AND cultivated plant species. Supervisor Joshua Johnson and Ranger Sean Flores are two of the nicest people you'll ever meet. They make everyone feel welcome and important.	1
I especially like the showers as we do not have a camper. We tent camp and it makes a difference. The camp ground is clean and level with excellent fishing.	1
I actually live near by and love the reservoir, it has been great for us, as we have retired in this area and love the wild life the water brings. When ice fishing usually use the restroom that is the closest to the water edge! It is always very clean and well taken care of!	1
Hours ago, number one and foremost, the cleanliness of everything. Having access to nice restrooms and showers. The boat ramp and the boat parking. Feeling that my equipment is secure when I leave it there when I'm out fishing. The green grass and trees.	1
Heated restroom	1
Great place to camp with a large group, good fishing in spring and winter and good hunting nearby.	1
Getting away from a busy life. Sitting back to breathe and just enjoy the scenery.	1
Former employee - it was home for a while. I found a great deal of peace in the quiet solitude the park is able to offer at certain times of year. A beautiful place to enjoy the night sky, wildlife, and the quiet peace of a remote part of Nevada.	1
fishing station	1
Central location for all activities and pretty good fishing.	1
Beautiful and quiet	1

Answered: 38 Skipped: 14

**Potential Visitor Amenities \***



**Answers**

**Count**

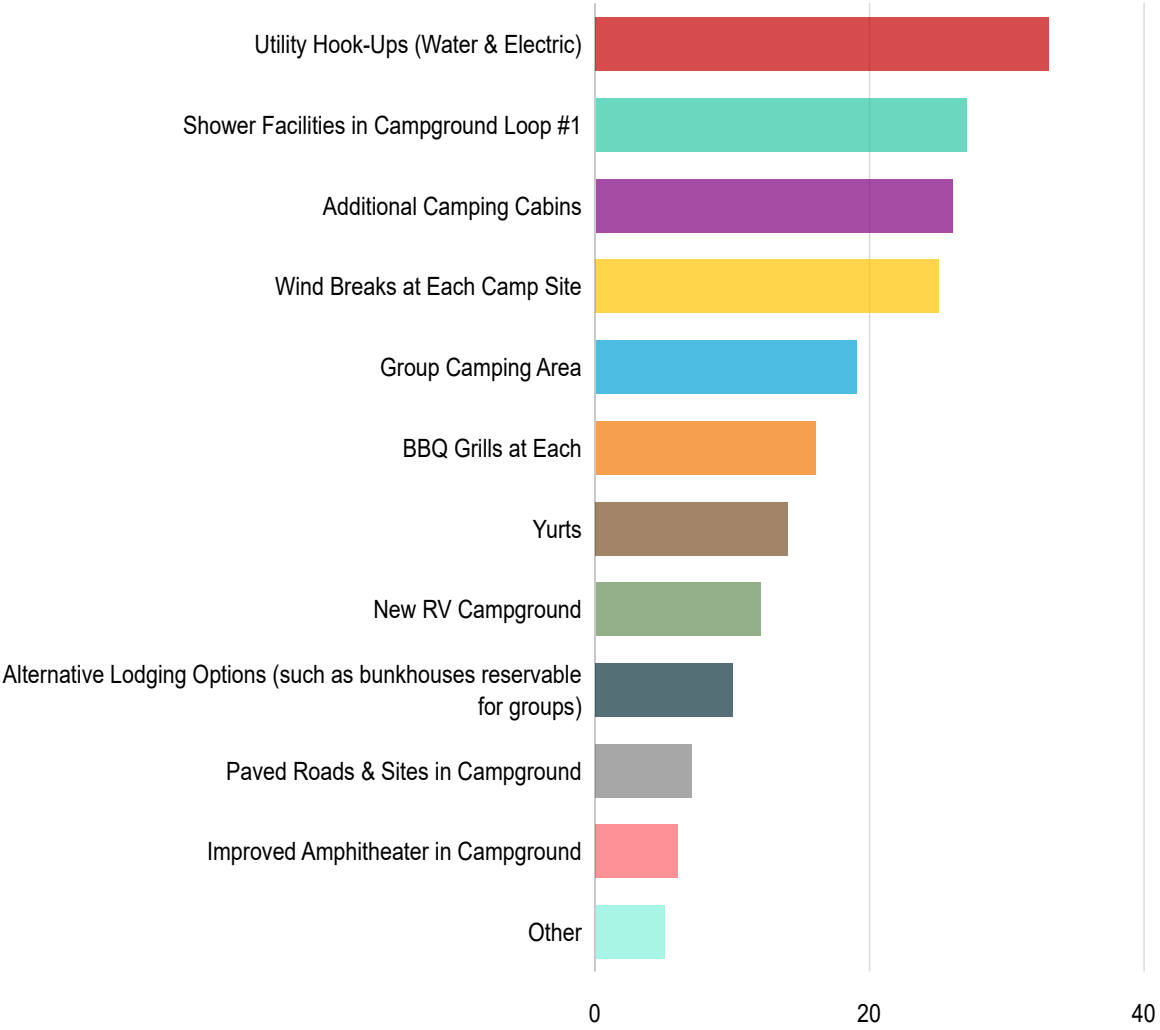
**Percentage**

Increased Shade (trees, picnic pavilions)	35	67.31%
Frost-Free Fish Cleaning Station	19	36.54%
Equipment Rentals (such as kayaks, bikes, fishing equipment)	17	32.69%
Expanded Boat Ramp Parking	14	26.92%
Camp Store/Gift Shop inside Visitor Center	13	25%
Outdoor Educational Signage	12	23.08%
Yard Games in Day-Use Area	12	23.08%
Playground	12	23.08%
Other	11	21.15%

Remodeled Visitor Center with Educational Exhibits	10	19.23%
Dog Park/Run	10	19.23%
Miniature Golf Course	5	9.62%

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

**Potential Camping Opportunities \***



Answers	Count	Percentage
Utility Hook-Ups (Water & Electric)	33	63.46%
Shower Facilities in Campground Loop #1	27	51.92%
Additional Camping Cabins	26	50%
Wind Breaks at Each Camp Site	25	48.08%

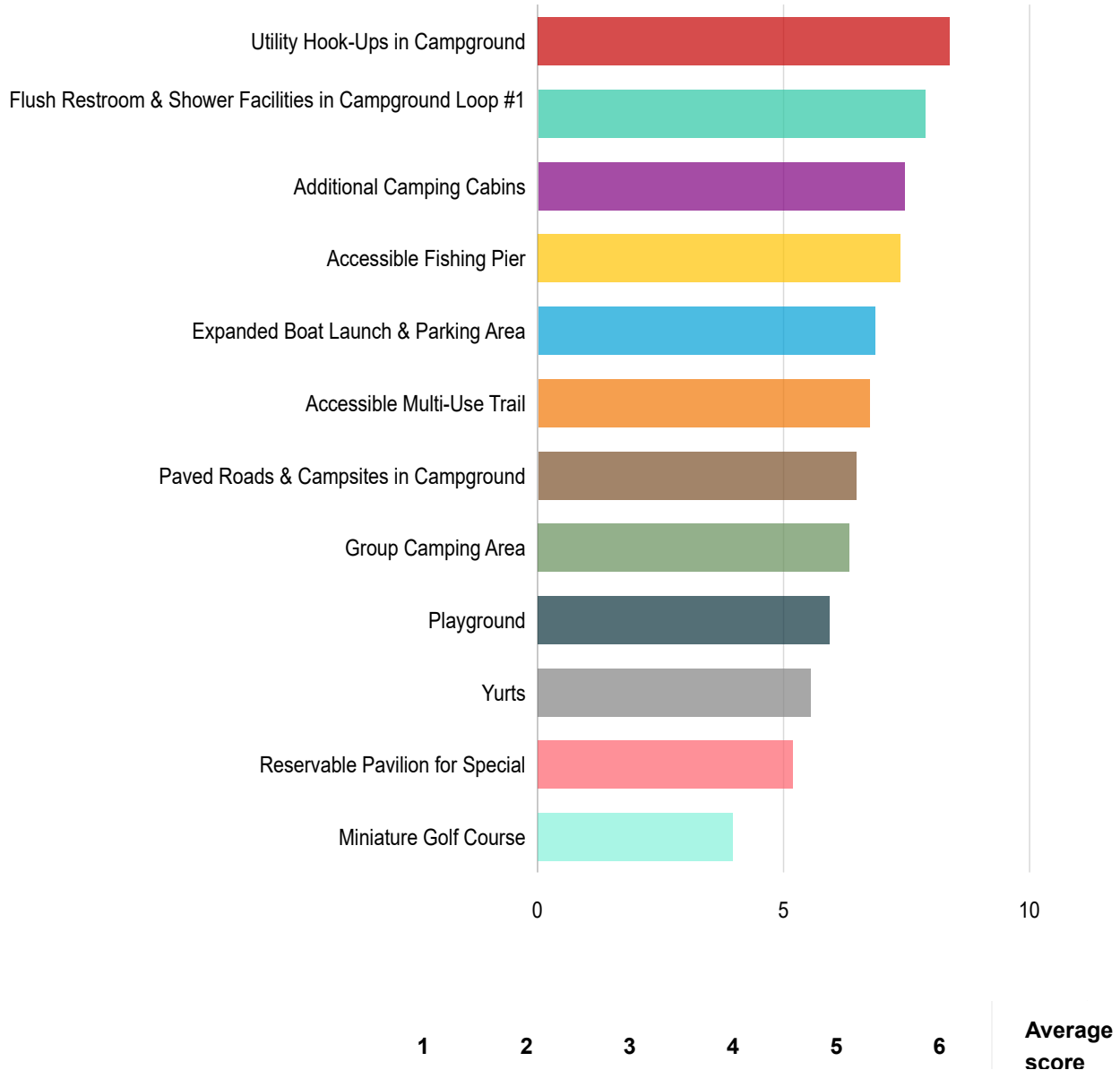




2	Wind Breaks at each Campsite	19.23%	30.77%	7.69%	9.62%	7.69%	7.69%	6.37
		10	16	4	5	4	4	2
3	Night Sky Viewing Amenities	11.54%	9.62%	15.38%	9.62%	21.15%	7.69%	5.38
		6	5	8	5	11	4	11.54%
4	Outdoor Educational Signage & Exhibits	3.85%	9.62%	9.62%	23.08%	11.54%	13.46%	5.00
		2	5	5	12	6	7	9
5	Updated Educational Exhibits inside Visitor Center	7.69%	3.85%	5.77%	19.23%	13.46%	15.38%	4.62
		4	2	3	10	7	8	15.38%
	Camp Store/Gift Shop	1.92%	11.54%	11.54%	11.54%	21.15%	7.69%	4.56

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

### Development Opportunities - "Big Ideas" \*





-Utility hookups would probably be beneficial and show immediate impact and revenue (I assume). -I think it'd be good to consider revision of the boat launch and enable two boat launching capabilities, but understand the current location may not permit the expansion. -Additionally, the amount of personal watercraft use would benefit from having a specific personal watercraft launch location, or at minimum access. Even if a 2-boat launch isn't possible, perhaps revising the existing launch to expand the ramp area to improve access for personal watercraft launch space. I could see the benefit of a rental setup for kayaks and such, but wonder if there's enough use/visitors to sustain the rental if it were a private entity operating it.	1
The boat ramp area	1
Shade	1
RV hook ups will be great	1
Restrictions on high-speed watercraft.	1
Rentals and more cabins	1
Reduced rates	1
Personally, updating the restrooms would be HUGE! Second, the need for a second boat ramp is highly needed. A wheelchair accessible pier to fish would be far for those who need it. We met a gentleman not long ago in a wheelchair and just getting down to the water was extremely hard for him.	1
Number one is definitely another loop designated for large 5th wheels or motor homes. I also think another shower facility is important. We spend a lot of time at Wildhorse and would love to see some updates, but nothing that is going to make it feel like big city campground. We camp at Wildhorse because it is out in the middle of nowhere and we love the rural, laid back feel.	1
More trees	1
More group camping areas	1
More camping spots and bigger campgrounds.	1
More camp spaces and group spaces.	1
More Cabins. Trees/Shade.	1
More cabins and a playground	1
More accommodations to paddlers	1
It would be nice to have at least electric hook ups at the campsites. No noisy generators running, especially during the hot summer days. It makes it a really enjoyable camping experience instead of sounding like an idling parking lot. The boat ramp could also use some revamping. It can get very congested. Since there really isn't a staging area. It's just one at a time.	1
Improvement listed above. Could only choose one for top priority, could not move other choices around.	1

I'd like to see a bigger loading, unloading ramp for the boats and longer so that when the water goes down, you still have access to the docs. Definitely more parking for the vehicles after they have launched their boats.	1
I'd have to visit it first to know enough to ask what I'd like. Some RV hookups would be nice, especially electricity!	1
I think you should maintain the natural beauty of the park without adding too many man made structures (playgrounds, shelters) because adding man made things will interfere with the views and the skyline and the wildness of the park.	1
I think the park is pretty great the way it is. Trees are always a nice addition.	1
I think a group use area that can be dual purpose for group events as well as park events (amphitheater/ fire pit) would be a great addition to the park to draw in larger groups.	1
I personally like it as it is. My answers are based on "if we changed it".	1
Honestly for me this place is pretty special already. I remember when I was a kid camping at state parks in Maine, we would go on hikes with the rangers and they would teach us about wildlife, geography and history of the area. They would even call in birds on some of the trips. Something like that would be cool.	1
Group camping spots	1
group camping site or shade in campsites	1
Full hook ups and more shade.	1
For selfish reasons 🙄, I caution on making this area a 5 star destination, I'd hate to see the reasons we love it so much today disappear due to a boom in attendance because now they can get \$300k motorhomes parked at wild horse . But that's just me. It's rural Nevada, some of us like wild horse as it is- you folks have done an awesome job and I love it , thank you	1
Fish cleaning station during winter season	1
Extending the existing boat ramp even further to allow boat access during low water years.	1
Expansion of recreational and interpretive opportunities inside the park beyond fishing/boat access.	1
Expanded boat ramp.	1
Expanded boat ramp	1
expand the boat launch	1
Covered area with tables to rent for parties and weddings	1
Better roads, more RV sites, more SHADE	1
As mentioned facilities on the other side. A lot of what is listed will ruin the quiet beauty of Wild horse	1

Additional camping cabins. Additional parking area. Paved roads. Thanks	1
Add power at more camp sites, increase shade/trees, wind break	1
Add longer hiking trails in the park such as a longer lake perimeter trail (10 miles). Electric/water hookups in campsites would be great, too!	1
Add electric hookups in the campgrounds since it would increase the campground use year round	1
Add covered picnic tables and more trees	1
Add a boat dock.	1
A little more room at the boat ramp	1
A fishing pier would be nice.	1
1. Utility hookups in all Loop 2 campsites but leave Loop 1 primitive for those many campers who don't want or need RV hookups, but upgrade the restrooms in Loop 1 to flush toilets with showers. 2. Interpretive information in the Visitor Center describing the history and natural resources (including plant, animal, bird, insect and fish species) found in the park. 3. Trade off the basically unusable 40-acre parcel on the west side of the reservoir to land owners adjacent to the developed 120 acres of park for easier park management and possible future development.	1

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0