

# Chapter 7

## Recreation and Open Space

Salida’s high quality of life can be attributed in part to the recreational activities located in and around the city. Organized annual events, youth and adult activities, the Salida Hot Springs Aquatic Center, natural open space areas, trails, parks and the scenic backdrop of the Arkansas River Valley make up the recreation and open space areas offered through the city, state and federal agencies and various community organizations to residents and visitors to the city.

The 2009 Community Survey ranked Recreational Amenities third behind Small Town Atmosphere and Climate as the top reasons why residents choose to live in Salida. The City of Salida retains a year round staff to maintain and provide recreation programs in the community. There are over 16 city owned parks and facilities. The Public Works Department and the Recreation Department have been charged with the task of providing staffing to fulfill these positions within the City. Currently, two full time employees and two seasonal employees (Memorial Day to Labor Day) from the Public Works Department maintain the city’s parks and trails. The Recreational Department has one full time director and over 35 part time employees that staff the Aquatic Center and provide activities and events throughout the year.



Riverside swing set  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

Recent years have seen a push from local organizations to create additional recreational amenities within the city. It is important that the city consider that they will need to provide adequate staffing to maintain these new amenities.

### City of Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan

The “[City of Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan](#)” (Master Plan) adopted in 2008 was created to serve as an assessment, vision, and an action plan for implementation for existing and future recreation uses in the city. This guiding document has been successfully utilized over the past two years to set priorities for many of the city’s recreation based projects.

This Master Plan details an inventory of the city owned recreation facilities and budgetary findings for each of these facilities. The Master Plan outlines goals and objectives and suggested areas of focus. This detailed analysis should be utilized when reviewing the future and existing needs of the community.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan, the Salida Recreation Advisory Board was created to review and make prioritization recommendations to the City Council for future recreation projects for the city. This Board is currently working towards formalizing its relationship with the Recreation Department and other city departments, boards, commissions and Council. As this Board formalizes its role, annual reviews of the Master Plan should be conducted to ensure that the priorities and goals are still consistent with the mission of the Board.

Implementation has begun for some notable city recreation projects that were prioritized in the plan. Upgrades to the Aquatic Center including locker rooms, improvements to the hot water line and roof structure have been completed. This plan has been important for receiving grants for the expansion of the Riverside Park white water park and the acquisi-

tion of the Arkansas Hills Open Space.

Other recent and ongoing projects are the creation of the Salida Mountain Trails on Tenderfoot Mountain, Milk Run Trail, Ben Oswald Soccer Fields and the Loyal Duke Dog Park. These projects were heavily supported by local organizations in the community.

Annual updates to the Master Plan should address shortcomings such as the lack of a financial forecast for the recreation facilities in the city that include items such as cost recovery for recreational services, marketing strategies to bring more residents and tourists to the city facilities and ways to create additional revenues. The Master Plan should be expanded upon to include specifications for new parks and trails. Map 7.1 Park ¼ Mile Walking Radius, highlights areas of the City that are currently not within a ¼ mile walking radius of a park. Lastly, the Master Plan should look at ways to address access to public lands and the Arkansas and South Arkansas River, formalizing the process for the acquisition of open space lands, and the continued prioritization of city recreation projects.



Riverside Park is the crown jewel of the Salida park system with its proximity to the river and downtown area. The Arkansas River Whitewater Park and Greenway (Whitewater Park) was begun in 2003 and expanded in 2009 thanks to a local government grants from GOCO and an array of local and foundation donors. The improved river corridor has created a vibrancy which has radiated out into the community and has created an anchor for public and private projects in the downtown business district. The construction of the Rotary Amphitheater within Riverside Park, and the SteamPlant Event Center, have all come on the heels of the increased traffic of both tourists and locals in the Whitewater Park and greenway area.

# Principles/Policy/Action Items

## Principle R&OS-I. Master Plan

*The “2008 Salida Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan” (Master Plan) should be utilized as the guiding document for recreation related decisions.*

**Policy R&OS-I.1** - Implement, update and continue to promote the Master Plan for the continued maintenance and development of Salida’s parks, recreation, trails and open space.

**Action R&OS-I.1.a** – Yearly prioritization of the implementation goals outlined in the Master Plan should be set in accordance with the yearly fiscal budget cycle.

**Action R&OS-I.1.b** – In an effort to identify new priorities and innovation, missing content from the Master Plan should be identified by staff and the Recreation Advisory Board and the plan should be amended and adopted to reflect these new additions.

**Policy R&OS-I.2** – Collaborative efforts to discuss short and long term recreation priorities for the community should be conducted between the Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Commission, City Council, other city boards and local organizations.

**Action R&OS-I.2.a** – The Recreation Department should work with local organizations, other city boards and other city departments to help provide guidance on the creation and maintenance of recreation amenities in the city.

**Action R&OS-I.2.b** – The Recreation Department should actively engage in discussions with Chaffee County and Poncha Springs regarding regional recreation needs.

**Policy R&OS-I.3** – The Master Plan should serve as a guiding document for new development that includes new recreation amenities or open space for the community.

**Action R&OS-I.3.a** – Update the Land Use Code to reference the Master Plan for the review of land use development applications.

## Principle R&OS-II. Recreation Advisory Board

*The Recreation Advisory Board was established to provide informed guidance to the City Council and Planning Commission.*

**Policy R&OS-II.1** – Define the formal role of the Recreation Advisory Board.

**Action R&OS-II.1.a** – Create guidelines and formalize process for the responsibility of the Board to



Ice hockey on Frantz Lake.  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

make updates and recommendations to the Master Plan and development applications.

**Action R&OS-II.1.b** – The Recreation Advisory Board should meet at least annually with the City Council and with the Planning Commission.

**Principle R&OS-III. Fiscal Planning**

*Fiscal planning is integral in order to provide recreational activities, programs, and facilities that benefit residents and visitors of the city.*

**Policy R&OS-III.1** – Recreation amenities are a service provided to the community with an acceptable level of subsidy provided through the General Fund.

**Action R&OS-III.1.a** – Create a marketing plan for recreation programs, events, and facilities to help attract tourists and residents.



**Action R&OS-III.1.b** – The Recreation Advisory Board should provide an annual recommendation to the City Council with suggested priorities for funding capital projects related to recreation.

**Action R&OS-III.1.c** – Actively pursue grant opportunities for funding future recreation projects for the City.

**Action R&OS-III.1.d** – Investigate the possibility of the creation of a regional recreation district for the future funding of recreational amenities in Southern Chaffee County.

**Action R&OS-III.1.e** – Determine expectation for cost recovery and evaluate recreation programs for revenue generation and cost recovery.

River Boarding on at the new playhole at River Side Park  
Photo Courtesy of Kevin Hoffman

**Action R&OS-III.1.f** – Maintain and possibly expand recreation amenities and programming.

**Principle R&OS-IV. Trail and Parks Planning**

*Continue planning for existing and future trails and parks to provide desired amenities in a fiscally responsible way.*

**Policy R&OS-IV.1** – Work with the Public Works Department to create specifications for the construction and maintenance of new and existing trails and parks.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.a** – Ensure that the expansion of new recreational infrastructure does not create an unreasonable fiscal burden on the city.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.b** – Create standards for park features such as playground equipment, benches, bathrooms and other recreation amenities including park and trail construction.

**Action R&OS-IV.1.c** – A plan identifying current and future maintenance needs and amenities for each park should be created.

**Policy R&OS-IV.2** – Support local organizations that volunteer and help provide new recreational amenities and help to maintain the current infrastructure.

**Action R&OS-IV.2.a** – Work with local organizations to provide maps to the Salida’s park and trail network and public parking areas.

**Action R&OS-IV.2.b**- Continue to provide community support funding for projects brought forward by local organizations with demonstrated community support.



New playgorund equipment at Alpine Park

**Policy R&OS-IV.3** – Regional collaboration should be utilized to provide new parks and trails.

**Action R&OS-IV.3.a** – Continue to work to help implement the land management plans of the Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, Forest Service and Division of Wildlife and establish working partnerships to help with their goals of preservation and wilderness awareness.



Salida Mountain Trails- Frontside Trail being built by local volunteers

## Principle R&OS-V. Land Acquisition

*Open space, parks and trails in and around the city are important amenity for residents and visitors.*

**Policy R&OS-V.1** – Identify and prioritize parcels around the city for the future acquisition for parks, trails and open space.

**Action R&OS-V.1.a** – Establish a working relationship with the Land Trust of the Upper Arkansas to streamline future open space projects.

**Action R&OS-V.1.b** – Continue to look for additional sources of funding for acquiring open space lands and constructing trails.

**Action R&OS-V.1.c** – Utilize the Salida Regional Transportation Plan in reviewing land use applications in the Municipal Planning Area to ensure trails are created with new development.

**Action RO&S-V.1.d** – The logical extension of existing or proposed bicycle/pedestrian trails across a property proposed for annexation shall be a condition of the annexation.

**Action R&OS-V.1.e** – Create an Open Space plan for the management and prioritization of acquisition of parcels in and around Salida.

**Action R&OS-V.1.f** – Pursue opportunities to provide parks in areas of the city that are underserved.

**Principle R&OS-VI. Access to Public Lands and Rivers**

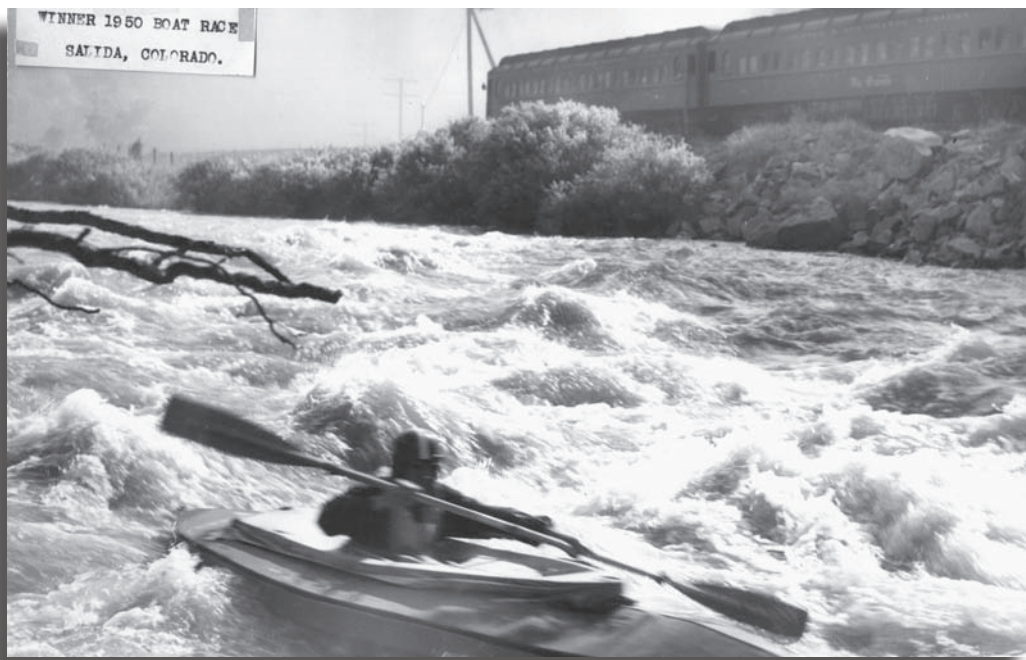
*Access to the Arkansas River, South Arkansas River and nearby public lands is a critical component to recreation in the Salida area.*

**Policy R&OS-VI.1** – Create and implement a plan for multimodal access to Public Lands.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.a** - Work with the Union Pacific to formalize access to Salida Mountain Trails.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.b** – Capitalize on opportunities for future access to public lands and access to the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers.

**Action R&OS-VI.1.c** - Work with recreation groups and land management agencies to create appropriate trailheads and amenities such as parking, picnic areas and restrooms.



Downriver Race FIBArk 1950  
Photo Courtesy of the Salida Museum