



Rocky Mountain National Park

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Moraine Park Campground and Headquarters East Utility
Rehabilitation Project

Civic Engagement
March 1, 2022

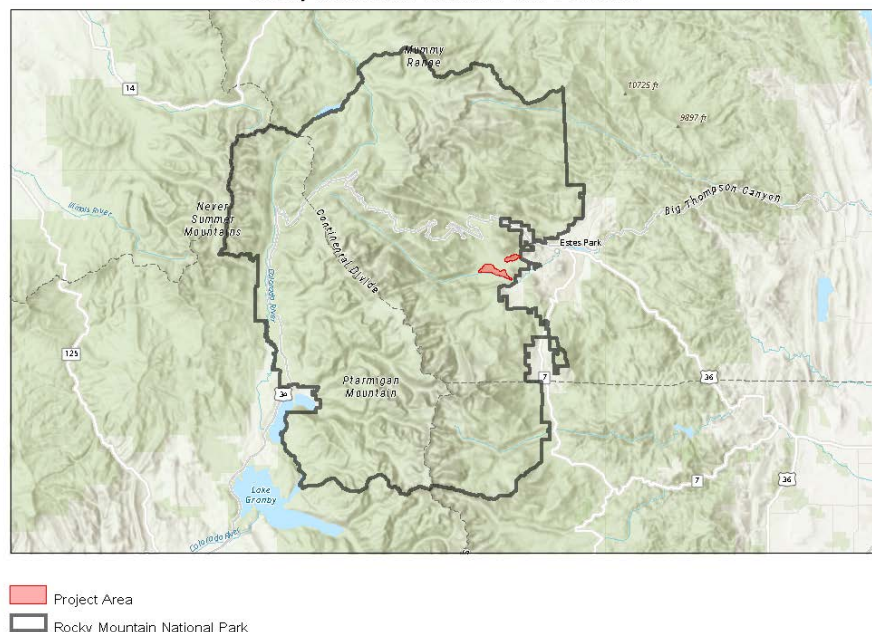


Introduction

Rocky Mountain National Park

Straddling the continental divide, Rocky Mountain National Park's 415 square miles encompasses a spectacular range of mountain environments. From meadows found in the montane life zone to the glistening lakes in the subalpine, to the mountain peaks in the high alpine, there is something for everyone to discover with over 350 miles of hiking trails and incredible wildlife viewing opportunities, hundreds of wilderness campsites and five front country campgrounds that host overnight visitors.

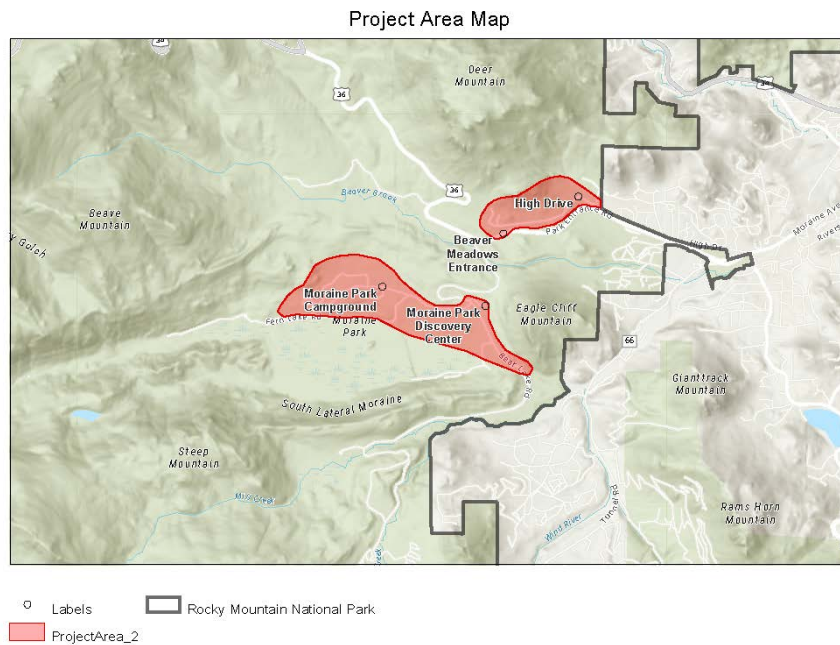
Rocky Mountain National Park Overview





Project Overview

The goal of this proposed project is to improve the visitor experience at the Moraine Park Campground and to rehabilitate infrastructure at the campground and park headquarters. It includes repairs to the park's water, wastewater, and electrical distribution systems. At the campground, visitors will notice improvements to parking, drainage, and the ranger station and kiosk. The park will add electric service to some campsites. A limited number of campsites and campground facilities will be rehabilitated to meet federal accessibility standards.



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Project Location

This project will take place in the eastern portion of the park, at these primary locations:

- Moraine Park Campground.
- High Drive, within the park boundary and north of Beaver Meadows Entrance Station.
- Northeast Moraine Park (focused around Moraine Park Discovery Center, Bear Lake Road and Moraine Park Campground Road).

**National Park Service
NEPA Handbook**



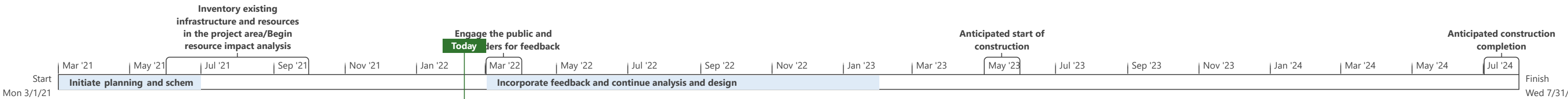
2015

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The park is asking for your feedback on this proposed project, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Park Service policies. NEPA ensures federal agencies consider the environmental consequences of their proposed actions and inform the public about their decision making. To learn more about NEPA, visit [NEPA.gov](https://www.nepa.gov).

A "NEPA review" refers to the process, analyses, and documents developed under NEPA to inform a decision. The NPS is carefully reviewing the project and is anticipating utilizing a categorical exclusion (CE) to document its decision. A CE describes the documentation for a category or type of action that does not cumulatively or individually have the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Project Timeline



Project Timeline

March - June, 2021

Initiate planning and design



June - September, 2021

Inventory existing infrastructure and resources in the project area; begin resource impact analysis



October 2021

Complete schematic design



January - March 2022

Engage the public and stakeholders for feedback



March 2022 - January 2023

Incorporate feedback and continue analysis and design



May 2023

Anticipated start of construction



July 2024

Anticipated construction completion



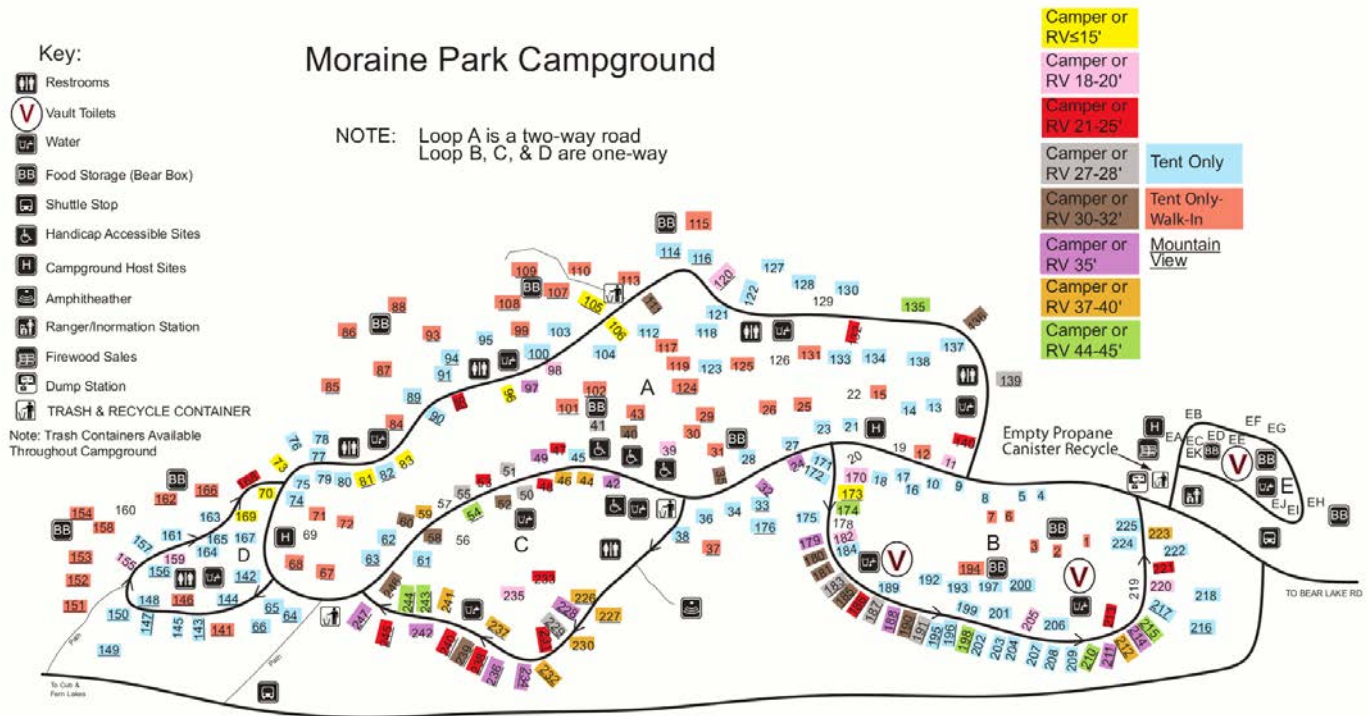
Moraine Park

Moraine Park is located and accessed off of Bear Lake Road. Here, you can find trailheads for both Cub Lake and Fern Lake.

A relic of geologic history, Moraine Park was carved by ancient glaciers that flowed through the region. As humans entered the landscape, they used the meadows for hunting, camping, and fishing. By the late 19th century, homesteaders tried ranching and soon realized that hosting guests would be more profitable.

When Congress created Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915, several privately owned lodging facilities existed in Moraine Park. When the NPS acquired these properties, it demolished most of the buildings and tried to restore the land to a "natural" state. Fires and an overabundance of elk have greatly impacted the ecology of Moraine Park.

Even in an altered ecological state, Moraine Park affords visitors spectacular views of the continental divide, access to world class fishing, and easy hiking trails. During elk rut from September to October, visitors hear the haunting bugles of bull elk echoing in the meadow. Year round, it is a beautiful place to watch the sunset.

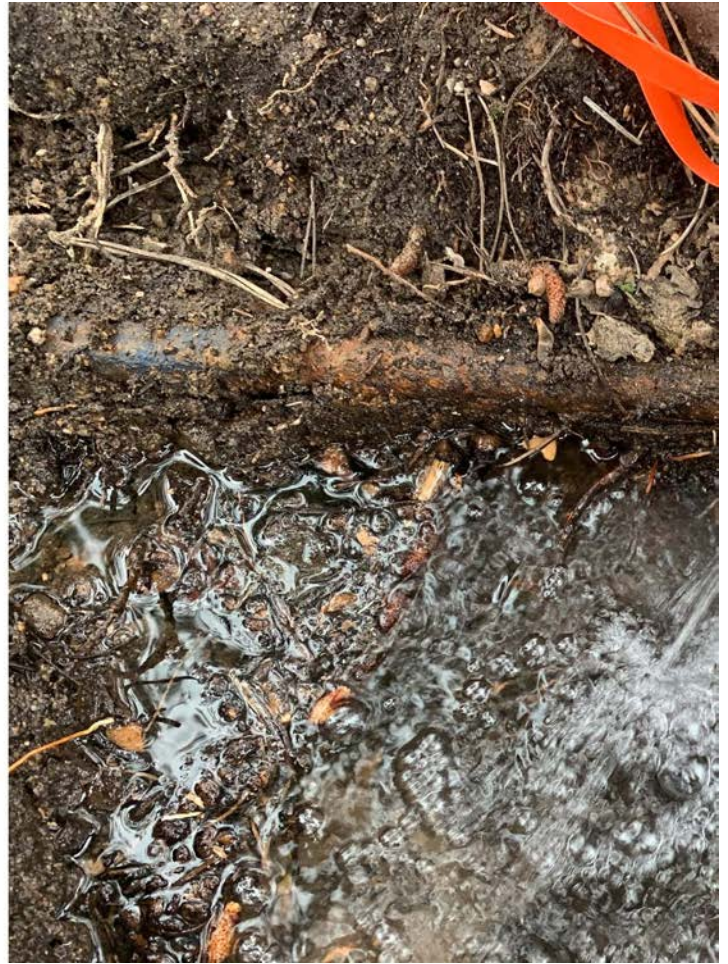


Moraine Park Campground

Moraine Park Campground is one of five front country campgrounds in the park and is the largest. It typically serves over 30,000 Recreation Vehicle (RV) and tent campers annually.

Moraine Park Campground offers an array of campsites, of different types and sizes, for RV/campers, sprinter vans, and tents. The campground also accommodates a range of different campers with varying degrees of mobility. Currently there are approximately 93 RV campsites, 102 tent only campsites, and 51 walk in campsites. The Park reassigns campsites as needed.

Moraine Park Campground is open year round. For more information on how to reserve a site at Moraine Park Campground, visit our [website](#).



Project Purpose

A majority of the existing utility infrastructure providing water, sewer, and electric to the Moraine Park Campground and park headquarters was installed in the 1960's, when the campground was constructed. Rehabilitating this infrastructure will reduce the need for ongoing repairs and address future capacity at the campground.

The project will also improve the visitor experience at the campground. The park will correct drainage problems that leave some campsites flooded. The ranger station and kiosk will be rehabilitated to allow visitors and park staff with mobility

challenges to better access the facilities. The park will add electrical hookups for some campsites and another host site.



Improving Visitor Experience: Drainage

Poor drainage along roadways and within campsites has resulted in stranded vehicles and have impacted nearby wetlands. Some tent pads are surrounded by standing water throughout the spring and early summer, making those campsites unavailable for use. After major rain events, park staff have needed to reroute the water or move campers to drier sites.



Improving the Visitor Experience: Access for All Users

To help ensure people of all abilities can have an enjoyable and memorable experience at Moraine Park Campground, the Park is updating existing buildings, campsites, and campground trails so that these facilities will be more accessible by visitors and staff with mobility challenges.



Improving Visitor Experience: Rethinking the Campground Entrance

The entrance to the campground includes a ranger station, a kiosk where campers check in, trash/recycling dumpsters, and an RV dump station. This area gets very busy, and the park will improve circulation to minimize traffic conflicts. This project does not include changes to the comfort stations, vault toilets, and amphitheater. The shuttle bus stop will remain in the same location.



Replacing Infrastructure: Water and Wastewater

The water systems for the campground and park headquarters area are owned and operated by the park. Replacement and rehabilitation of water lines, water tanks, and treatment facilities are needed to meet current standards for water quality. By improving the water and wastewater distribution network, the park will reduce its maintenance back log and increase its efficiency with water management. In addition, the existing water lines are not buried below the frost line, so the park has had to drain most of the campground system and repair frozen pipes regularly.



Replacing Infrastructure: Electric Utility Improvements

The majority of the existing primary power supply was installed in 1965 and is well past the components' typical service life. Additionally, electric service is not currently available at any campsite. The park will add electric to a limited number of campsites, meeting modern expectations for the camping experience.

Relocating the primary power underground in Moraine Park Campground will ensure the system is not susceptible to damage due to wind, snow or falling branches or trees while providing better aesthetics. Underground lines will result in increased safety due to prevention of electrical hazards and forest fire.



Proposed Project

- Water system
- Wastewater system
- Electrical
- Ranger station and kiosk rehabilitation
- Campground rehabilitation

Water System

- Replace water distribution lines and locate below frost line.
- Replace drinking water spigots.
- Rehabilitate water treatment and storage infrastructure.

Wastewater System

- Rehabilitate wastewater system, focusing on slip-lining previously unlined portions of the sewer lines, utilizing

manholes for access.

- Replace sewer line in key areas.
- Repair and replace structurally compromised manholes.

Electrical System

- Add electrical infrastructure and campsite electric pedestals to 62 campsites (25% of total campsites) within loops B and C.
- Replace heaters in existing comfort stations (6) and update electrical panels.
- Remove existing overhead conductors, running the power distribution underground adjacent to existing asphalt roadways.

Campground Entrance, Ranger Station, and Kiosk Rehabilitation

Campground Entrance, Ranger Station, and Kiosk Rehabilitation Overview Map



 Campground Entrance, Ranger Station, and Kiosk Rehabilitation



View of ranger station at the entrance to Moraine Park Campground.

Ranger Station Rehabilitation

- Repair exterior components and construct accessible pathways around the exterior of the building.
- Make the interior of the Ranger Station accessible by providing a lift at the interior stairs, widening doors, and expanding the bathroom.
- Update interior finishes throughout.
- Update Kitchen/break area, office, and workspace to meet current staff needs.

Kiosk Rehabilitation

- Replace kiosk with larger layout to allow for comfortable two-person occupancy.
- Design exterior components to maintain historic character.

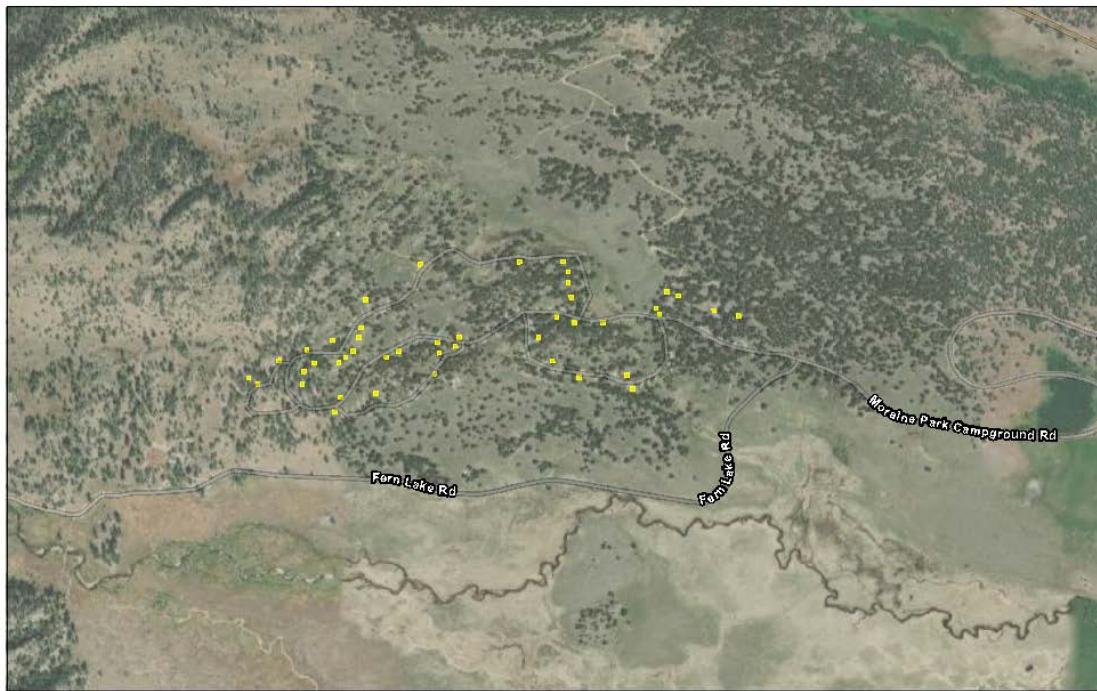
Trash and Recycling

- Improve trash and recycling infrastructure and add dumpster pads to improve access.



Existing Kiosk at the Entrance to Moraine Park Campground.

Moraine Park Campground Improvement Maps



 Campground Improvements

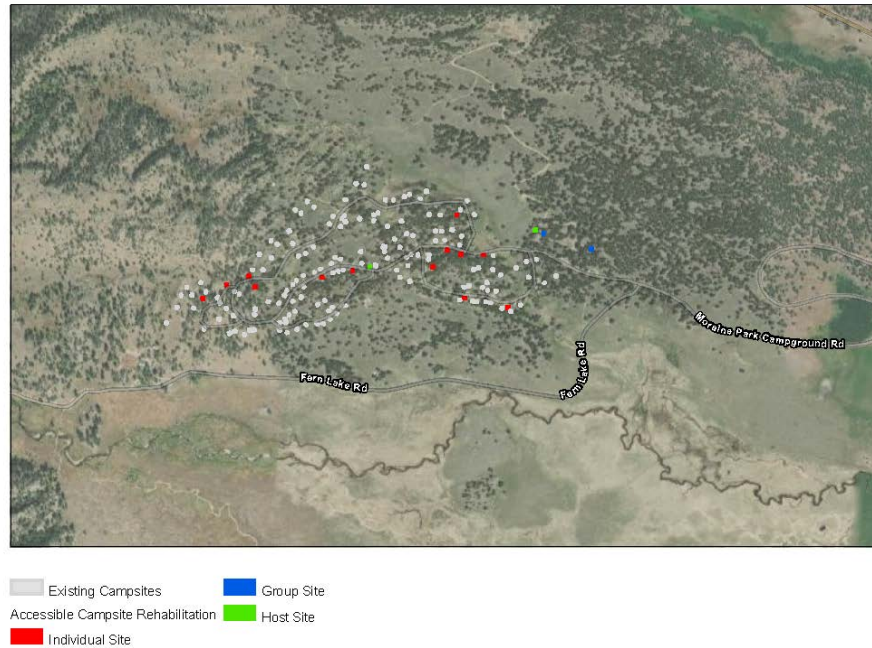
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Campground Rehabilitation

- Repair or replace pathways to comfort stations and vault toilets. Rehabilitate approximately 44 campsites to address accessibility, drainage, and wetland interface.
- Provide a food storage locker and concrete pad at each campsite. 90 new food storage lockers and 138 new concrete pads are needed to furnish all sites.
- Add another host site to the campground.
- Address poor drainage and erosion issues at selected locations, including both campsite-specific site drainage and campground-wide drainage and culvert improvements needed for vehicular access, parking and pathways.

Campground Rehabilitation - Access for All Users

ROMO Moraine Park Campground Rehabilitation: Accessible Campsites



- Design grading, pavement, site features, and architectural elements to address accessibility-related deficiencies at existing buildings and select campsites.
- Create routes to 13 individual sites, 2 host sites, and 2 group campsites.
- Improve pedestrian traffic flow between short term and employee parking and the ranger station and kiosk.
- Replace parking and walks with a firm and stable surface material respecting the historic character of the site.

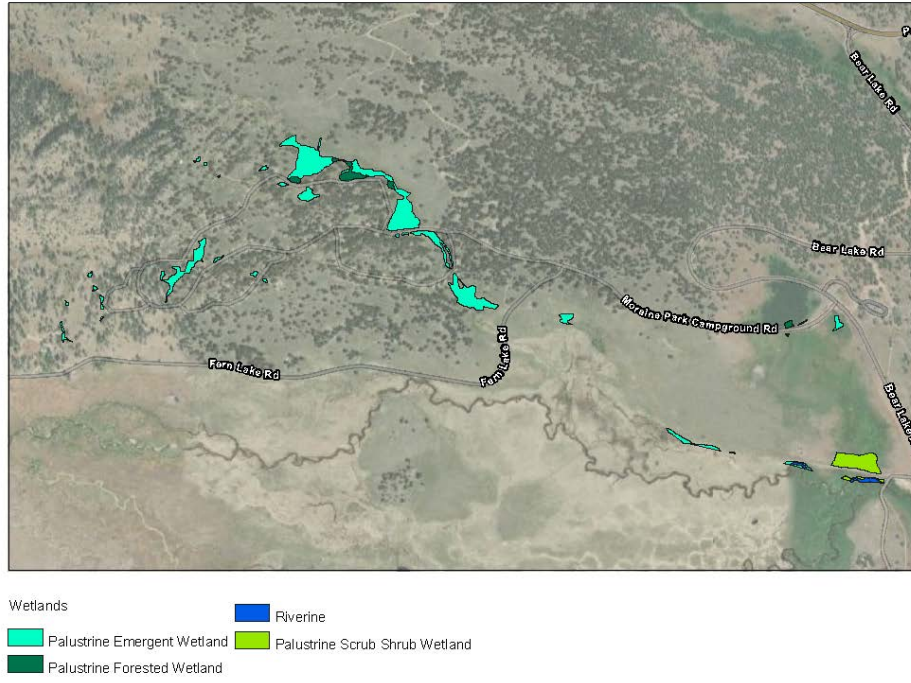


Resource and Impact Assessments

Resource Assessment: The park completed an inventory of the natural and cultural resources in the project area. Natural resource surveys included wetlands and other waters, and special status plant species. Cultural surveys included archeological sites, buildings, and landscape elements.

Impact Assessment: Through careful assessment of the resources identified within the project area, the project design will avoid impacts to natural and cultural resources to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the park is considering how to minimize impacts to visitors and park operations during construction. Analysis of impacts and design work is ongoing.

Delineated Wetlands Map



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Delineated Aquatic Resources Inventory

Resource Assessment: Moraine Park Campground and the adjacent Moraine Park host a large expanse of wetlands, with fewer and smaller wetland and riverine features found throughout the other project locations.

The park completed a wetland delineation to assess and map aquatic resources within the project areas.

Delineated aquatic resources included:

- 0.71 acres of Riverine habitat covering a distance of 5,777 linear feet.
- 9.6 acres of Palustrine Emergent Wetlands.
- 1.46 acres of Palustrine Scrub Shrub Wetlands.
- 0.72 acres of Palustrine Forested Wetlands.

- TOTAL WETLANDS = 11.78 acres



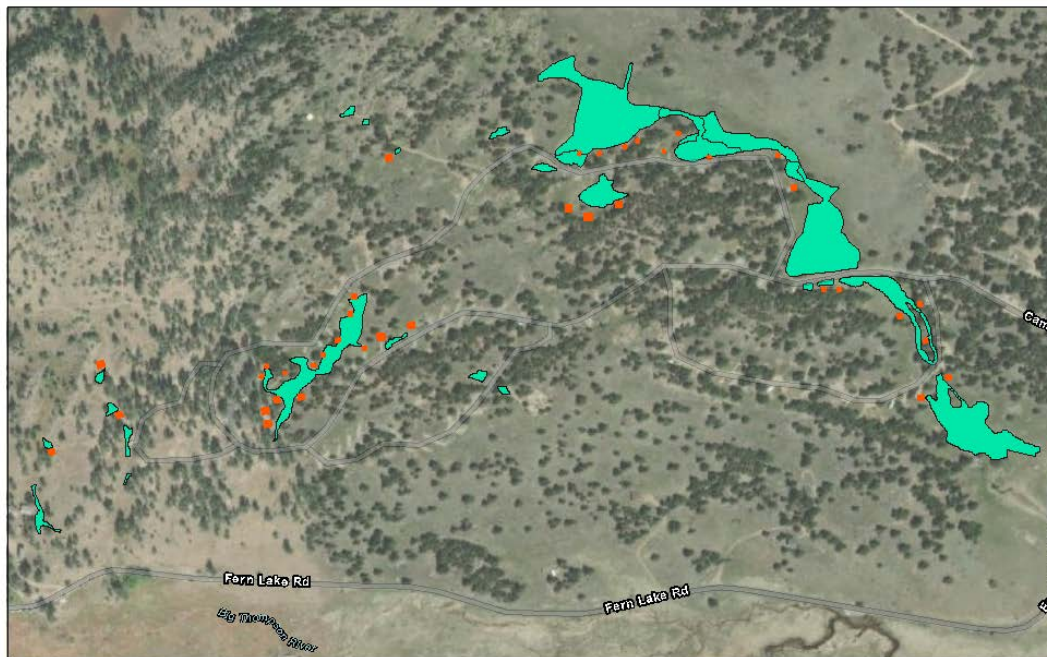
View of delineated emergent wetland soil sample pit.

Impact Assessment: Impacts to aquatic resources are being assessed in accordance with National Park Service policy and the Clean Water Act. The project design will avoid impacts to aquatic resources to the extent possible. All current assessed impacts to wetlands and other waters are anticipated to be temporary, with revegetation efforts to restore impacted area to pre-project conditions.

Delineated Aquatic Resources and Campsites

Interface Assessment: All campsites in or adjacent to wetlands within Moraine Park Campground were identified and assessed for reclamation. Eight (8) campsites have been identified for relocation to nearby upland areas. All existing site furnishings and features will be removed and the soil de-compacted and restored to a natural grade to allow for the regeneration of wetlands in these locations.

Moraine Park Campground Wetland Campsite Interface Map





Trees

Resource Assessment: The area encompassing the eastern entrance to the park is located within the lower montane vegetation zones, with ponderosa pine forests being the dominant vegetation community throughout.

Since the campground opened, the park has prioritized the protection and enhancement of the arboricultural resources. While all of the vegetation found within and adjacent to the campground is important to the setting, the trees especially help connect visitors and campers to this place. The trees have both natural and cultural significance.

To that end, the NPS team has completed protection and assessment activities through the years including mountain pine beetle outbreak treatment, assessment of hazard trees, forestry operations such as thinning, and other key activities aimed at

protecting these iconic Ponderosa Pines that are the backbone of Moraine Park Campground.

Impact Assessment: While the park anticipates tree removal along utility lines, it is unclear at this time the extent of tree removal needed. The park will not allow clear cutting of utility corridors and will prioritize the protection of the largest diameter trees. All trees removed will be assessed for active bird nesting or roosting activity.



Wildlife

Resource Assessment: Rocky Mountain National Park supports a diversity of wildlife and wildlife habitat. There are no special status wildlife species in the project area. Measures designed to protect wildlife will be utilized in all phases of construction including:

- **Elk Seasonal Closures:** No construction activities will be permitted in the Moraine Park meadow during the elk rutting season from September 1st- October 31st.
- **Nesting Birds:** The project area will be surveyed for nesting birds prior to construction or other potential disturbance. Disturbance to nesting birds will be avoided during the nesting period, generally from April 1 - August 31. If this is not possible, appropriate mitigation measures will be identified and implemented.



Special Status Plant Species

Resource Assessment: Surveys for special status plant species were completed in June and August of 2021. The entirety of the project area was covered, with more attentive focus given to areas of known suitable habitat as identified for each species of interest.

Four (4) special status plant species were identified during the surveys.

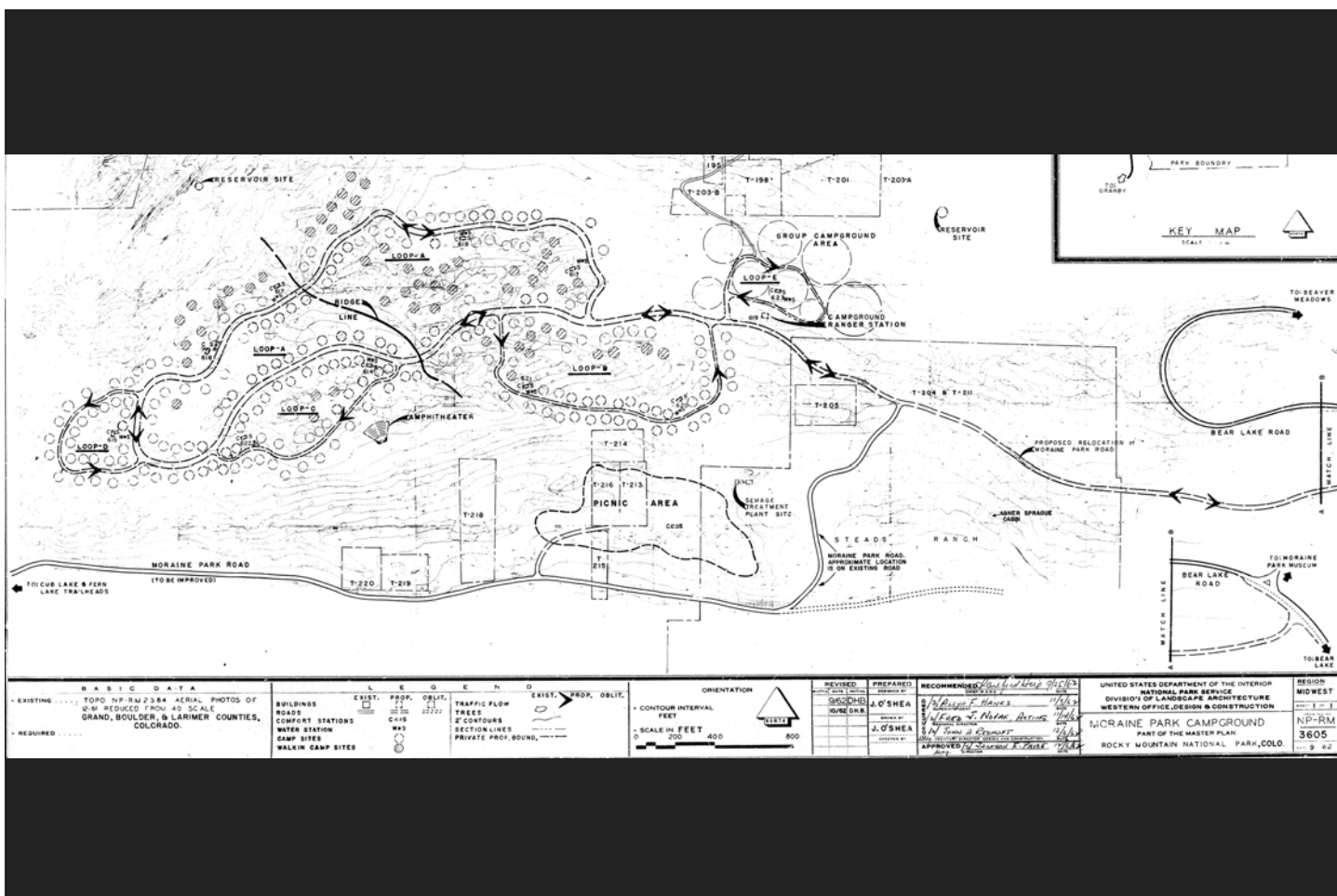
Impact Assessment: Impacts to special status plant species are unknown at this time. Through the pre-construction planning and design efforts, the extent of the known plant populations will be utilized to configure the design layout to avoid disturbances associated with site access, equipment operation, and installation and removal of utilities and other infrastructure to the extent possible.

Because design is on-going, some locations of special status plant species can be avoided, while others may be impacted during ground disturbing activities. There may be a need to replant special status plant species after construction.

The park will require an ecologist to be on site during the construction activities, to monitor impacts and help avoid special status plant species. Any newly discovered special status plant species will be carefully documented.



In addition to special status plant species, Rocky Mountain National Park and the Moraine Park area host and abundance of wildflowers consisting of a diversity of species, including commonly found saxifrage, groundswell, daisy, and bistort species pictured above.



Cultural Resources - Historic Landscape


Resource Assessment: The Moraine Park Campground was constructed in the 1960's, when the National Park Service was building infrastructure to support a spike in visitation. This "Mission 66" effort resulted in modern campgrounds, visitor centers, roads, and comfort stations all over the park. Moraine Park Campground still reflects this mid-century aesthetic, from its "suburban" campsites to the glass-front ranger station to the rough finish asphalt paths. Over the years, the park has increased the number of campsites to meet growing demand. As the size of recreational vehicles grew, so too did the parking areas. Most changes to the campground are subtle - like the addition of roadside parking deterrents to keep vehicles on pavement. However, the park's recent reconstruction of the amphitheater, comfort stations, and vault toilets have diminished the historic quality of the landscape.



Overview of current aesthetic of Moraine Park Campground amphitheater, completed in early 2000's.

Impact Assessment: The rehabilitation of the campground may have an adverse effect on historic resources, though consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office is ongoing. The park is carefully reviewing materials to be used on new routes to campsites, comfort stations, and the ranger station to assure they meet both the federal accessibility requirements and protect the historic character of the landscape. The ranger station and kiosk are historic buildings and the changes to the exterior will alter these buildings, so the park will carefully design the improvements to complement the 1960's architectural character.

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SUBJECT	OTHER	NATIONAL ARC	Neg #
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Moraine Park ?	
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Cultural Resources - Archeological

Resource Assessment: People have used the Moraine Park vicinity for thousands of years. During the recent inventory of cultural resources, archeologists found evidence of many types of occupation from prehistoric tool processing sites to aluminum cans. This archeological record provides opportunities to learn more about the history of the area.

Impact Assessment: Impacts to archeological resources are unknown at this time. Around 50 new archeological features were discovered or redocumented during the inventory, and the park is working with tribal partners and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at History Colorado to better understand the importance of the resources.

Because design is ongoing, some of these archeological sites can be avoided, while others may be impacted during digging activities.

The park will require archeologists to be on site during the construction activities, to monitor impacts and help avoid the most sensitive resources. Any newly discovered resources will be carefully documented and consultation with tribes and the SHPO will continue as needed.





Visitor Impacts

The Bear Lake Corridor of the park is a popular destination for visitors, and access to this area will be impacted by the construction activities of this project. The park will do what it can to minimize the extent of closures while maintaining visitor and contractor safety.

Construction activities for this project will begin in May 2023 and continue through early July 2024. For public safety and efficiency of construction, the Moraine Park Campground will be closed to the public starting May 2023 for an entire year. Additionally, the Moraine Park Discovery Center will have limited closures for the waterline improvements. Dates will be further defined as the project moves along.

For the duration of the project, partial road closures and delays on Bear Lake Road, Fern Lake Road, and Moraine Park Campground Road for utilities work and access are anticipated. There may be delays to reach Cub Lake Trailhead and Fern Lake Trailhead during some aspects of the project work.

Private landowners who access their property through Moraine Park Campground and/or Bear Lake Road will maintain access throughout the extent of the project.

Give Feedback

We want to hear from you. Use this link to comment on the project and provide your valued insight to the questions below.

- **Question 1:** Following the completion of the project, how will your long-term user experience at Moraine Park Campground be impacted?
- **Question 2:** What additional considerations should the park team analyze as part of this project?

To provide comments on the questions above please visit the [project website: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/rehabilitateMPCG](https://parkplanning.nps.gov/rehabilitateMPCG)

For more information on how to [reserve a campsite at Rocky Mountain National Park](#), visit our website.

For general information about the park, visit our [website](#).

