

Editors' Preface & Executive Summary

THE 2009 COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES REPORT CARD

By Walter E. Hecox, Elizabeth L. Kolbe, and Matthew K. Reuer

Rockies Baseline: Vital Signs for a Region in Transition

State of the Rockies - Elizabeth Kolbe and David Carlson

Each year, the State of the Rockies Project updates a set of key demographic indicators—the Vital Signs—to take the pulse of the Rockies region. This year, data from the 2007 American Community Survey are compared against data from the 2000 Census. The “Rockies Baseline” show that we are diverse, well-educated, and earn more money than we used to. Our homes are worth more, our rent is cheaper, and we continue to see strong job growth. Perhaps the most critical indicator of all, the region’s population is still growing swiftly, at 2.6 times faster than the U.S. population.



© Ryan Grenoble '09

Rockies Snapshot: Federal Representation

Guest Contributor – Chris Jackson

This section examines to what extent our federal representatives and senators cooperate on regional issues. We also compare Western and non-Western politicians to answer the question of whether Rockies politicians favor policies which benefit our home region.

Rockies Snapshot: Historic Preservation

Guest Contributors – Chris Jackson and John MacKinnon

As more people migrate to the Rockies region and development continues, preserving historic sites is vital

to protecting the region’s cultural heritage. Jackson and MacKinnon measure, map and emphasize the importance of active preservation and integration of historic buildings into modern communities. The National Register of Historic Places greatly contributes to the identification of historic structures, but still more attention and care are needed to continue and expand historic preservation.

Rockies Snapshot: Incarceration and Crime

Guest Contributors – John MacKinnon and Chris Jackson

“Incarceration and Crime” describes the geographical distribution of crime throughout the Rockies and the patterns of incarceration by federal, state, and private prisons. We highlight areas that “export” incarceration services by specializing in the provision and staffing of prisons (public and private facilities) that import jail inmates from other regions.

Repopulating the Rockies

State of the Rockies – Porter Friedman

The Valley of the Sun, the Enchanted Corridor, the Front Range, Treasure Valley, Las Vegas, and the Wahsatch Front; these are the Rockies’ megapolitan areas, or geographic areas where two or more cities and their previously independent economies merge together. Broadening the scope of a report published by the Brookings Institution in July 2008, we define six Rockies megapolitan regions. Additionally, we highlight the phenomena of rural economic clusters, a trend that draws populations away from small Western towns and big cities to mid-sized, service-rich towns. Within rural economic clusters, we identify three specific types of clusters: rural service clusters, rural resource extraction clusters, and rural recreation clusters.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

State of the Rockies – Sarah Turner

The rivers and streams of the Rockies are among the most beautiful in the nation and their waters the most coveted by a growing Western population. In this section, the State of the Rockies Project focuses on the intricacies of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the role it plays in Rockies’ water protection. Enacted in 1968, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protects rivers with outstandingly

remarkable values in their free-flowing condition. Although the Act only protects two percent of the region's rivers, it provides an exceptional model for state and local river protection measures. We also examine other river designations and current debates on water sustainability in the Rockies.

Faculty Overview - United States Laws and Policies Protecting Wildlife

Guest Contributor – Phillip M. Kannan

Phillip M. Kannan, a distinguished lecturer and legal scholar-in-residence in the Colorado College environmental program, opens the wildlife section of the *2009 Report Card* with a discussion of laws and policies protecting wildlife. A responsibility once held by individual states, wildlife protection has evolved into a complex, multi-faceted endeavor shared by state and federal governments. The federal government, through the power of the interstate commerce clause and property clause 2, has usurped primary control, but states are allowed to enact wildlife protection laws where consistent with federal policy. The result is a broad web of protection, but no piece is adequately straightforward or comprehensive.

Wildlife: Range and Condition in the Rockies

State of the Rockies – Julia Head

As climate change, pollution, and urban development pressure wildlife diversity and abundance, the Rockies Project explores the historical and current range and condition of the region's key species. When settlers first came to this region, they efficiently killed most of the plains bison to allow for cattle grazing on fenced private land. The early pioneers similarly battled with large predators that killed or bothered their stock, such as wolves and grizzlies. The protection, reintroduction, and resurgence of these species are a success story for

wildlife, but are often met with resistance and controversy. This section of the *Report Card* serves as a backdrop for the following sections, "The Impacts of Energy Development on Wildlife" and "Wildlife Management in the Rockies."

The Impacts of Energy Development on Wildlife

State of the Rockies – Alex Weiss

The energy resources of the Rockies exceed those of any other U. S. region. Past *Report Cards* have examined the development of fossil fuels in the Rockies and the potential and existing capacity for renewable energy development. This section of the *2009 Report Card* examines the impact of energy development, notably oil and gas drilling operations, on wildlife and their habitat. In addition to an overview of the region's energy versus wildlife issues, this section provides a detailed case study of energy development on the Pinedale Anticline (Pinedale, Wyoming). This region possess world-renowned wildlife commingled with vast energy resources. Nowhere are the tradeoffs between nature and human needs more visible.

Wildlife Management in the Rockies

State of the Rockies – Scott Wozencraft

In the Rockies region, the deer and the antelope still may play, but they play by our rules. As humans encroach ever more frequently on wildlife habitat, encounters between humans and wildlife increase and become more dangerous for both. Bears digging in garbage cans, foxes denning in backyard gardens, and elk walking down Main Street are common occurrences. Wildlife populations, constantly in flux, create myriad challenges for wildlife managers as they strive to simultaneously protect the animals, their habitat, and humans. This section of the *Report Card* outlines the role of state wildlife agencies in their quest to manage the region's wildlife and the various management tools currently in use.

