

Memorandum

Date: December 3, 2025

To: Douglas County Advisory Boards

Through: Douglas J. DeBord, County Manager

From: Nick Giauque, CPRP, Parks Program Manager
 Amy Knopp, Manager, Rueter-Hess
 Morgan Morehart, LICP CPSI, Parks Operations Manager
 Luke Thornton, CPRP, Parks Program Coordinator

CC: Steve Shoultz, Assistant Director of Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds

Subject: **Parks, Trails, Building Grounds, and Rueter-Hess Recreation Update for November 2025**

PROGRAM UPDATE

Location	2024 totals through November	2025 totals through November
Bayou Gulch Regional Park – Dog Park	17,396	21,009
Bingham Lake	73,292	85,283
Bluffs Regional Park*	141,453	133,553
Cherry Creek Regional Trail – Pinery	27,514	37,713
East/West Regional Trail – Grigs Trailhead	43,332	41,067
East/West Regional Trail – High Point	N/A	42,498
East/West Regional Trail – Monarch Trailhead	18,126	20,528
East/West Regional Trail – Schweiger Ranch	13,705	14,607
East/West Regional Trail – Stepping Stone	36,709	47,291
Fairgrounds Regional Park – Dog Park	45,596	46,328
High Line Canal – East	N/A	11,384
High Line Canal – West	28,170	33,494
Rueter-Hess Reservoir – Coyote Run Loop	8,979	14,187
Rueter-Hess Reservoir – Incline Trailhead	64,254	67,030
Rueter-Hess Reservoir – Newlin's Gold	1,067	1,795
Totals	519,593	617,767
*Portions of Bluffs were closed in March and April 2025 for construction, including the counter location.		

RUETER-HESS UPDATE

Wildlife Safety

Rueter Hess Park Rangers initiated a targeted fishing line cleanup within a heavily utilized fishing area of the reservoir. During the operation, they recovered eight fishing lures and approximately fifty yards of fishing line, much of which was entangled in willow trees along the shoreline. The removal of this debris not only addressed the immediate hazard to local wildlife but also enhanced the overall safety and environmental quality of the reservoir for water quality and public use.



Vegetation Control

Beginning early November, Park rangers launched a brush and scrub oak clearing project aimed at improving trail accessibility. Removing the dense, overgrown vegetation that can obstruct paths, limit visibility, and create safety concerns is vital for safe recreation. Staff worked on making these trails easier to navigate for hikers, runners, cyclists, and reduced potential wildfire risks in high-traffic areas.

Maintaining clear, accessible trails is an essential part of providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all visitors. These improvements made our trails more welcoming while ensuring the long-term health of the surrounding landscape.

Continued vegetation management supports the health of the local ecosystem by allowing more sunlight to reach the forest floor, encouraging the growth of native grass and wildflowers while helping to control invasive plant species.

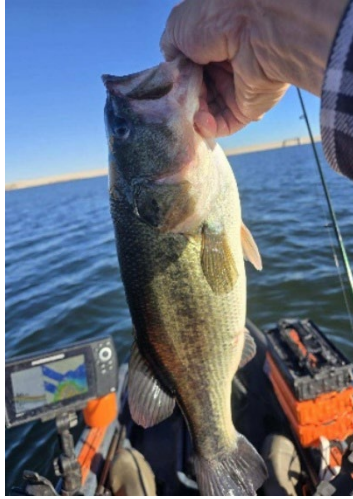
Trail users are reminded to stay on designated paths and follow all posted signage. Maintenance operations are planned for minimal disruptions so hiking and recreation can continue safely. Once completed, the improved trails will offer smoother passage and a more enjoyable outdoor experience.



Master Anglers

Just before closing for the season to watercraft usage on Rueter Hess Reservoir, we had multiple anglers reel in some impressive award-winning fish.

Race, an avid youth angler who has spent countless hours on the water searching for big walleye happened to catch a 12-inch yellow perch. A fish of that size was able to secure Race the title of Master Angler, awarded by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW).



On the same note, another one of our frequent anglers, Jim, came out looking for trophy walleye but instead found himself catching his first ever largemouth bass, and a big one at that. His bass measured 19 inches and netted him a master angler title with the CPW as well.

With so many of our anglers focusing on walleye it is so promising to see that our fishery is holding incredibly sizeable fish of all species. As we begin to pivot to shoreline fishing until ice forms on the reservoir, we are pleased with the quality of fish within our waters and are already looking forward to next paddle season with larger fish waiting to be caught.