

In the heart of the world's largest inhabited alpine valley lies San Luis State Park. The natural lakes and wetlands of this high-altitude oasis nestle near the world famous Great Sand Dunes National Monument and the spectacular Sangre de Cristo Mountains. San Luis provides outstanding watersports and wildlife watching in the San Luis Valley amidst eight of Colorado's awesome snow-capped fourteeners. The scenic splendor of snow-capped peaks, crystal-clear air and broad vistas delights the eye in all directions.

A WET AND WILD PLACE

The combination of wetlands, lakes and dry valley floor environments provides a fantastic wildlife viewing and recreation area. Migratory waterfowl and other birds are frequent visitors to these tranquil waters. Coyotes, kangaroo rats and rabbits are common sight in the surrounding dunes. Elk, songbirds, raptors, reptiles and amphibians all find refuge in this unlikely riparian oasis hidden in the low dunes of the San Luis Valley.

The protected lands of the 2,054 acre park and wildlife area preserve critically-important habitat for unusual flora and fauna. Park facilities have been carefully planned to minimize the disruption and impact of visitors to these species. The fragile dune environment is damaged easily. Please obey all access restrictions to provide undisturbed habitat for our rare plants and wildlife.

SAN LUIS STATE PARK

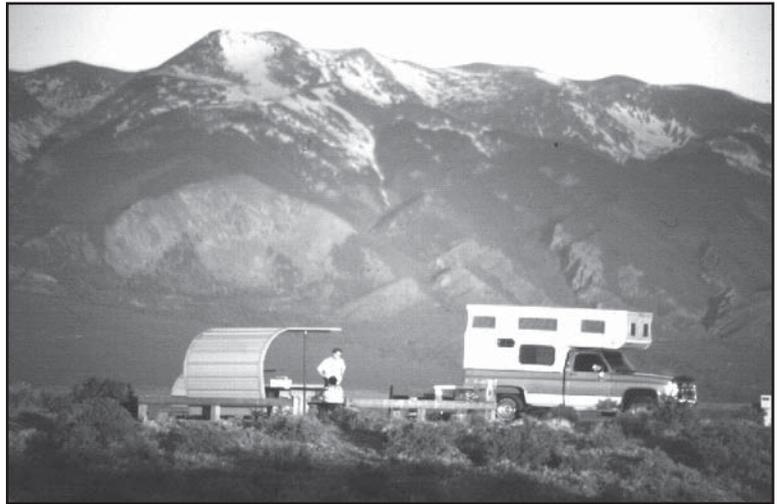


Photo by John Koshak.

ENTRANCE FEES

Fees are charged year-round and pay for the operation of park facilities. Passes are available from the entrance station, self-service station or park office. All visitors are required to display a current Colorado State Parks Pass on their vehicle windshield.

A **daily pass** is valid on the day purchased until noon the following day. An **annual pass** grants unlimited use of all Colorado State Parks for a full calendar year. **Aspen Leaf** annual passes are available for Colorado seniors age 64 and older.

A LAND OF LEGENDS

With artifacts of Folsom Man found nearby, the wildlife and water supply of the lakes has attracted humans for hunting and camping for more than ten thousand years. Pueblo Indians retell the legend that their people originated under the sparkling waters of San Luis Lake.

In another legend, a Spanish priest pierced by Indian arrows, lay dying on a raft in the middle of San Luis Lake. Watching the blood red sunset on the rugged peaks of Mt. Blanca and the Crestones he uttered the name of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

Other legends abound concerning the Native Americans, Spanish explorers, mountain men and settlers who lost and found a wealth of real and imagined treasures on the sandy plains, lofty peaks, steep flanks and narrow canyons of this scenic valley and its spectacular, surrounding mountain peaks.

REGULATIONS

It is your responsibility to know and obey park rules and regulations. Please read the rules and regulations posted at the park entrance or ask a park ranger for a current copy of park regulations.

- ☛ Respect others – keep noise down near campgrounds and wildlife areas. Observe campground quiet hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- ☛ Do not litter. A clean park is healthier for our visitors and our wildlife. If you pack it in, pack it out, and use the garbage and recycling containers.
- ☛ For your safety and the safety of others and for the protection of wildlife, keep pets under control and on a leash no longer than six feet. Please obey **all** posted restrictions to pets in the wildlife area and on the swim beach.
- ☛ Build fires only in grates provided; tend them constantly; and make sure they are completely extinguished when no longer needed.
- ☛ Please keep vehicles on designated roadways and hike only on designated trails.
- ☛ Obey all access restrictions and trail closures in the wildlife area.

Common sense and common courtesy will help all of us enjoy the park more.

AN INVITING PLACE

The wetlands and low dunes of San Luis State Park are areas of diverse beauty and fascination. The quiet roads and trails of the park and wildlife area provide a wonderful opportunity to explore and experience this corner of southern Colorado. Leaving your car behind, you need walk only a few minutes to experience this unique environment and true solitude.

The Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph described the subtle beauty of the area:

“It’s the beauty of contrast: wetlands surrounded by high plains desert, vast expanses hemmed by distant mountain ranges on all sides, tiny wildflowers that can’t be seen unless you’re on foot and looking. But the beauty – and adventure – are there. For those willing to seek it.”

Please treat all plants and wildlife with respect by staying on designated roads and trails. Ranger-led hikes and tours are offered to intimately explore the park.



Photo by Gene Schmidt.

RECYCLE

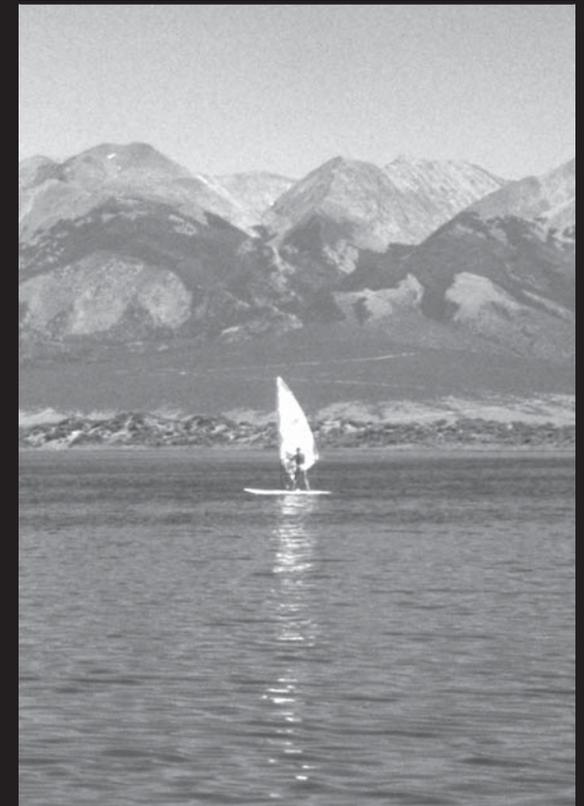
Please help us preserve our natural resources and protect the park environment by putting litter, garbage and materials that can be recycled in the proper place. Marked containers are available for recycling in the campground and picnic area. Even this brochure can be recycled! Simply place it in the drop box located near the park entrance.

SAN LUIS STATE PARK
 P.O. Box 175
 Mosca, CO 81146



Colorado State Parks

SAN LUIS



Visit all your Colorado State Parks
 at www.parks.state.co.us

Photo by Gordon Kelley

SAN LUIS STATE PARK

PARK ACTIVITIES

Hiking & Biking

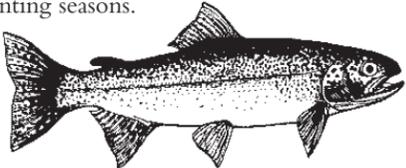
The wide, level gravel trails in the wildlife area provide a pleasant, safe hiking or mountain biking experience among the low dunes and wetlands. These hard-surfaced trails are recommended for hikers and bikers of all ages and abilities, including physically-challenged visitors. Sandy, primitive trails allow limited visitor access into the dunes and wetlands.

Picnicking

The Needles Picnic Area is located at the swim beach and boat ramp and has restroom facilities. Although designed for individual family use, the area is popular with groups. Please call the park in advance to schedule large group picnics. Additional picnic sites are located along the western shore of San Luis Lake.

Fishing & Hunting

There is fishing for rainbow trout at San Luis year-round. Hunting of waterfowl and small game is permitted in the wildlife area north of San Luis Lake in season. Check with a park ranger or the Colorado Division of Wildlife for current possession limits and information on special restrictions, regulations and hunting seasons.



Camping

The Mosca Campground is located in the low dunes west of San Luis Lake. Campsites feature a panoramic view of the lake, the surrounding mountains and the Great Sand Dunes. All sites have electrical hookups, sheltered tables, fire grates, drinking water and an available dump station. A bathhouse with modern restrooms, hot showers and laundry facilities is located in the campground. Campsites can accommodate motorhomes, trailers and tents. Campground reservations can be made by calling (303) 470-1144 in the Denver metro area or 1-800-678-CAMP (2267) or via the web at www.parks.state.co.us. For winter camping opportunities please contact the park office.

In addition to a parks pass, all campers are required to purchase and display a camping permit at their campsite. **Camping permits** are available at the entrance station, self-service station and at the park office. Camping is allowed in designated campsites only.

Firewood is available for purchase at the entrance station or park office. Fires can only be built in fire grates. **NO** wood gathering or tree cutting is allowed in the park or wildlife area.

Winter Sports

When winter snows cover the Valley, the gentle park trails offer the perfect opportunity for easy cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Winter wildlife watching includes excellent opportunities to view bald eagles and waterfowl. Ice fishing and ice skating are popular activities on the frozen lake surface, although winter recreationists should be extremely cautious on the lake due to the danger of thin ice.

Wildlife

Wildlife watching is a year-round activity at San Luis State Park. Abundant nesting and migrating birds and other native animals provide visitors with a "world class" watchable wildlife experience. Bald eagles and other raptors, sandhill cranes, shorebirds and water birds can be seen seasonally near San Luis. Small and large mammals, amphibians and reptiles are common in the surrounding riparian area. Wildlife checklists are available at the park entrance or park office. Guided wildlife tours are available - ask at the park entrance or park office for more information.

Water Sports

San Luis has been a water-sports haven in the San Luis Valley since the early 20th century. Water-skiing, motor boating, personal watercraft, fishing, sailing, windsurfing and swimming continue to be popular activities. Swimming is permitted only in designated swim areas and is undertaken at the individual's own risk.

The lake is a sandy, shallow bowl with gently sloping sides and few hazards. The wide boat ramp and stable water level provide boaters with easy loading and unloading of vessels. **All boats must remain south of the wildlife area buoy line at the north end of the lake to protect valuable waterfowl nesting habitat.** Colorado boating statutes and regulations apply and are enforced by park rangers.



COOPERATING AGENCIES



Colorado State Parks
San Luis State Park
P.O. Box 175
Mosca, CO 81146
(719) 378-2020 (Phone and FAX)



U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
San Luis Valley Project/Closed Basin Division
P.O. Box 449
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-5855



Colorado Division of Wildlife
722 County Road 1 East
Monte Vista, CO 81144
(719) 852-4783



Rio Grande Water Conservation District
10900 Highway 160 East
Alamosa, CO 81101
(719) 589-6301

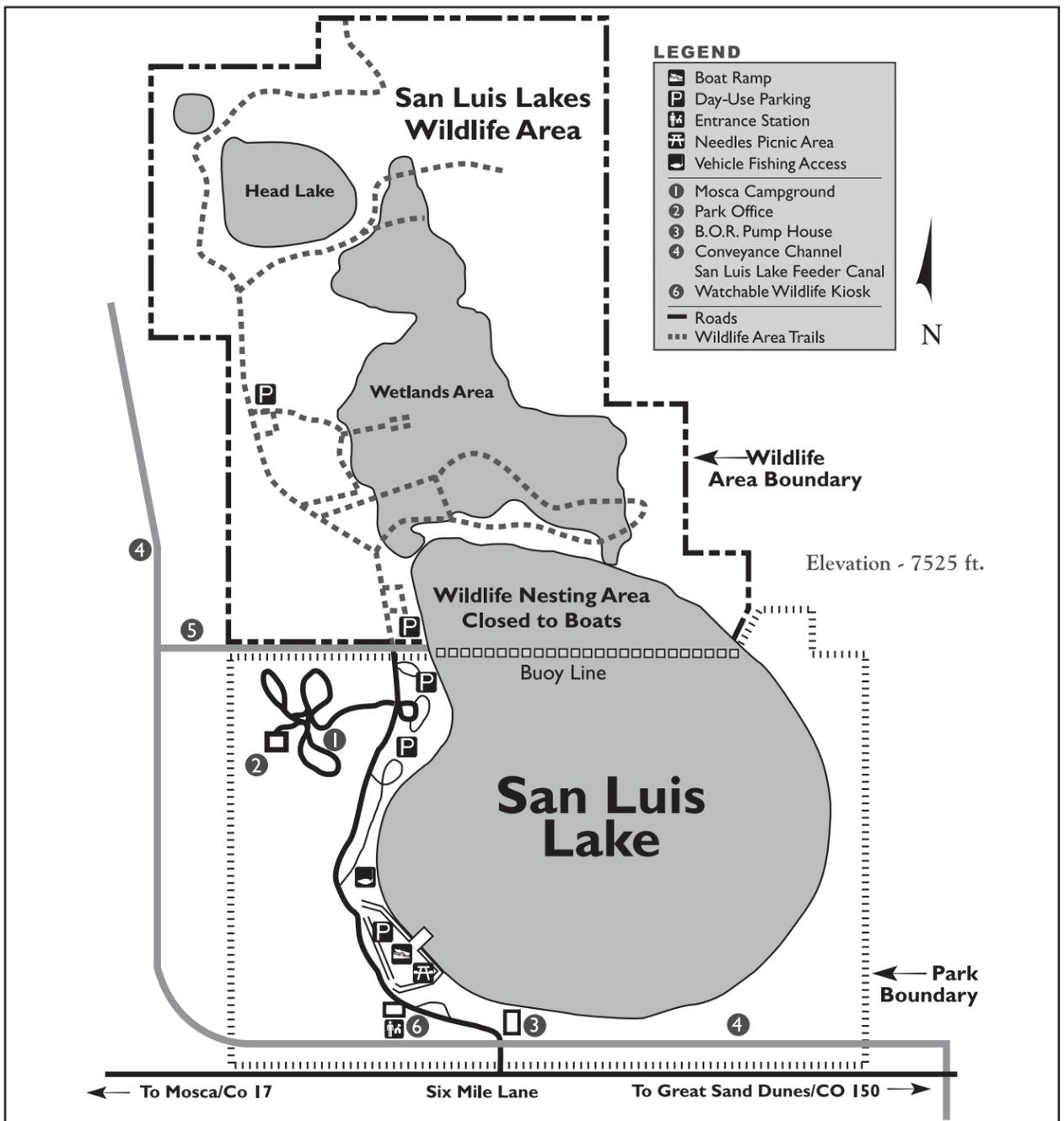
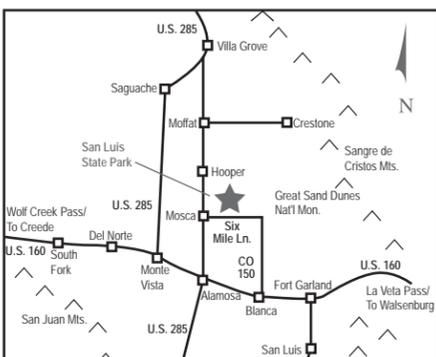


Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman, Room 721
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-3441



San Luis Valley Tourism Council
P.O. Box 609
Monte Vista, CO 81144
1-800-835-0281

LOCATION MAP



Any person who is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on the grounds of race, creed, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, should contact the park manager, the nearest local regional office, the Division headquarters in Denver, Colorado - telephone (303) 866-3437 - or the National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

Cualquier persona que sea excluida, negado los beneficios, o discriminado en cualquier programa del Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation por su color, raza, credo, sexo, edad, desventaja o nacionalidad debe avisar a la oficina mas cercana de esta organizacion o por telefono a numero (303) 866-3437 o National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C., 20013-7127.

For current information on all of your Colorado State Parks visit us online at www.parks.state.co.us.