



# CAPSTONE BRIEF FREMONT ADVENTURE RECREATION

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## Purpose

Fremont Adventure Recreation (FAR) is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to developing, improving, and sustaining human powered outdoor recreation opportunities in Colorado’s Royal Gorge Region. Trails have the capacity to improve residents’ quality of life and diversify Cañon City’s outdoor recreation economy. With FAR’s support, over 50 miles of trails have been developed around Cañon City in the last decade. However, FAR has not conducted a comprehensive impact analysis of its work. This study provides FAR with a baseline analysis of trail use in the region. It focuses on the impacts these trails have on residents and regional tourism in order to illustrate the value of investing in trails to the local community and policy makers. Additionally, this report outlines recommendations for future study.

## Timeline

### February - May 2023

- Defining Scope
- Literature Review
- Stakeholder Engagement

### May - September 2023

- Volunteer Training
- Survey Dissemination
- Data Collection

### September - November 2023

- Data Analysis
- Final Report
- Stakeholder Presentations



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The FAR Capstone Team would like to thank our partner Ashlee Sack, Coordinator for FAR, and our capstone advisor, Lydia Lawhon. We would also like to express gratitude to the University of Colorado - Boulder Office of Outreach and Engagement for their support of this project.



Fremont Adventure Recreation flag at the Oil Well Flats Trailhead, Cañon City, Colorado

## Methodology

The Capstone team reviewed 13 comparable socio-economic impact studies to guide our methodology and research design. To better understand the local context and to ensure that our research questions met the community's needs, we surveyed and interviewed stakeholders from the local government, land management agencies, and small businesses. Through this process we identified two priority areas of focus, 1) the impacts of trails on residents' quality of life and 2) the impacts on tourism. We then designed and distributed an online survey to collect data on local attitudes regarding the trails and to quantify the impacts trails have on residents' quality of life. The team distributed the online survey via social media, QR codes, and flyers. To assess trail use trends and the impact of trails on tourism, we conducted a separate trailhead intercept survey at the Royal Gorge, South Cañon, and Oil Well Flats trail systems. The team, along with local volunteers, intercepted users in person to conduct surveys.

## Outcomes

The trail intercept survey yielded 86 in-person individual responses and the online survey was completed by 322 people.

These responses are indicative of trail use trends and attitudes relating to:

- Demographics
- Quality of Life Impacts
- Usage
- Satisfaction
- Economic Impacts from Residents
- Economic Impacts from Visitors

Our analysis will help FAR understand its relationship with the local community and prioritize future investments to best serve its users. While our data is not robust enough to provide a comprehensive economic impact analysis or extrapolate conclusions to all trail users, our analysis will be a baseline assessment of trail use in the region. We will also provide FAR with a road map for further studies that can more thoroughly quantify annual trail use and total economic impact from trails. Finally, our analysis of qualitative data on residents' attitudes towards trails demonstrates the value trails bring to the local community. This analysis will help FAR advocate for continued support, and funding, for trails as Cañon City continues to develop itself as a destination for trails-based outdoor recreation and lifestyle.



The Capstone team in front of the famous Royal Gorge and Arkansas River, Cañon City, Colorado

### GET IN TOUCH

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