

Rocky Mountain National Park



Rocky Mountain National Park



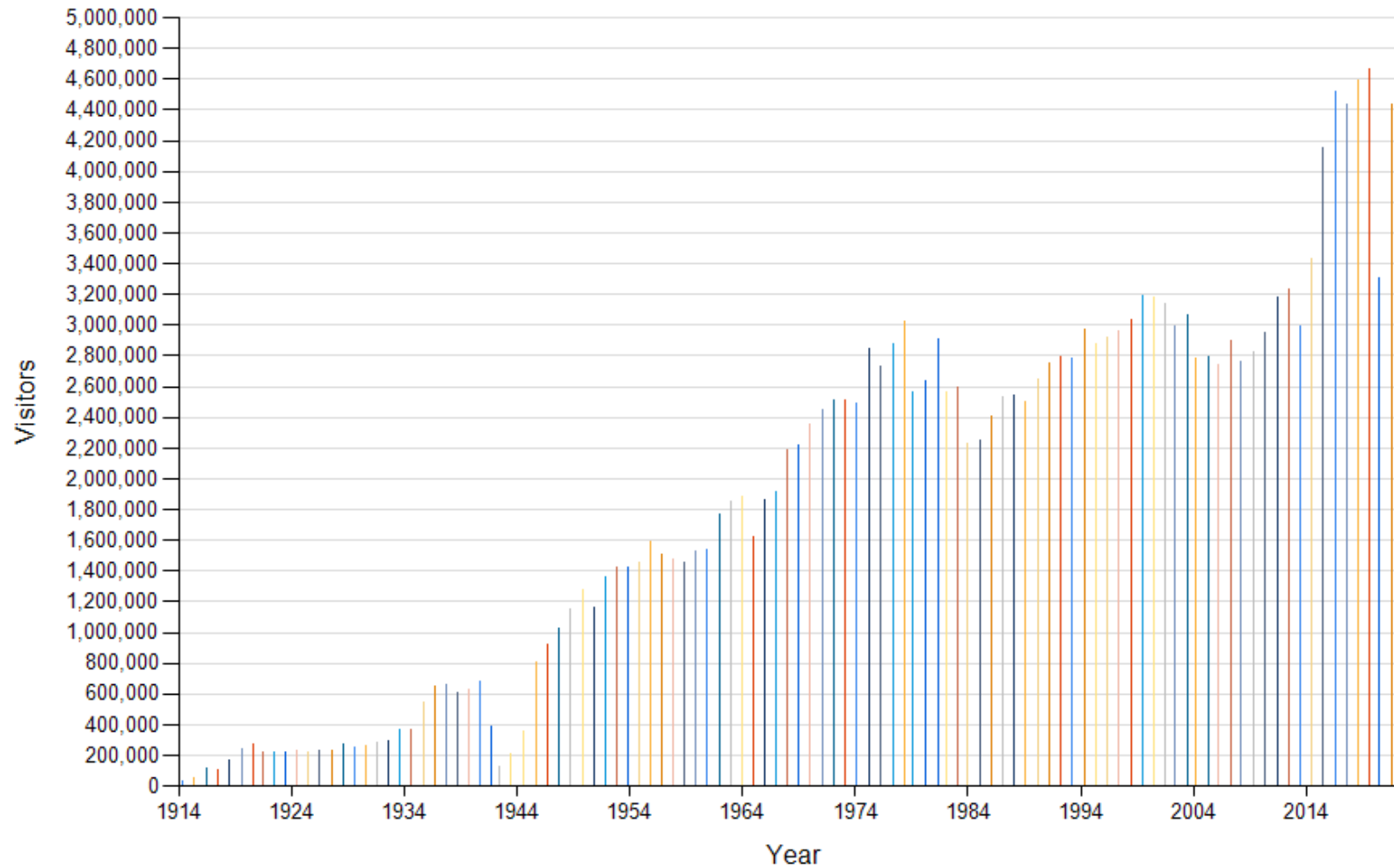
Visitor Use Management



Rocky Mountain National Park



Total Recreation Visits



Rocky Mountain National Park

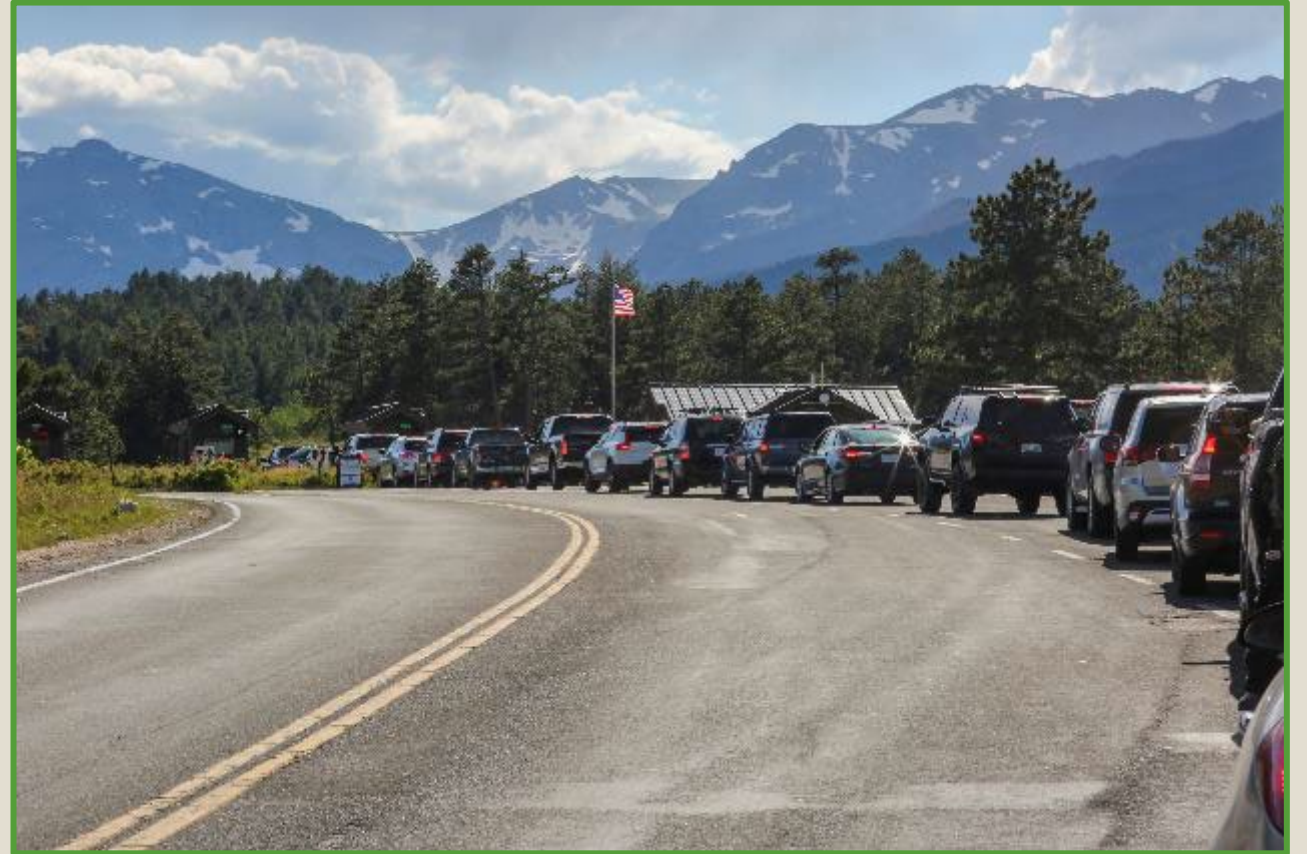


- Rocky is one of the busiest national parks, 3rd in 2019 with over 4.6 million visitors, 44% increase in visitation since 2012. 4.3 million in 2022, with managed access in place, fourth most visited national park in 2022. Fifth most visited park in 2023 and 2024.
- Rapid growth in day use visitation and changing use patterns in the park have degraded natural and cultural resources, diminished quality of the visitor experience, increased visitor and staff safety concerns, and created a heavy strain on the park's facilities and ability to perform daily operations.

Visitor Use Research and Monitoring

Justification, Informing, and Efficacy

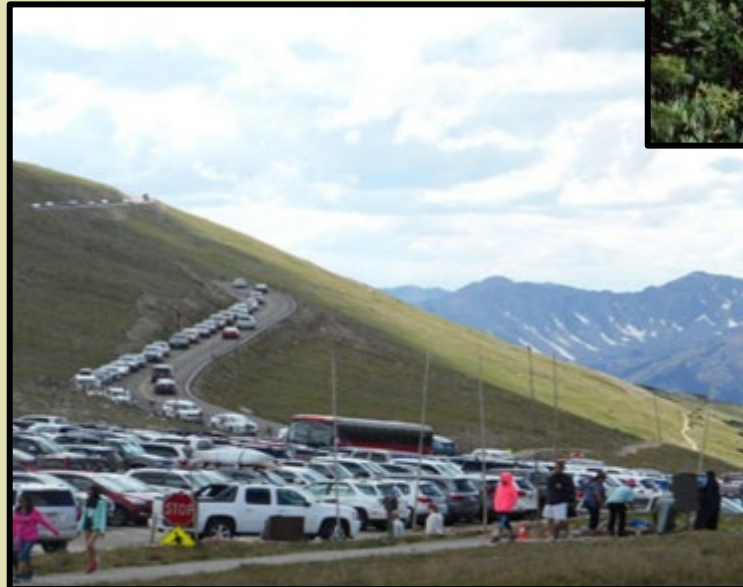
- Natural and Cultural Resource Impacts
 - Social Trails/Human Waste
 - Water Quality
 - Soundscapes
- Visitor Experience
 - Traffic Volumes (i.e. Congestion)
 - Wilderness Experience on Trails
 - Parking Lot Turnover Rate/Dwell Times
- Visitor and Staff Safety
 - Evacuation Simulations
 - Staff Surveys and Listening Sessions
 - Emergency Access/Egress (Congestion)
 - Increased Illegal Activities
- Strain on Park Infrastructure
 - High Levels of wear and tear on facilities
 - Traffic and Trail Volumes



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All photos pre-2020



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The National Park Service has a dual mission: to conserve park resources and to provide for their use and enjoyment “in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”



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*Conserve the
resources...*

*Provide for
Enjoyment...*



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History Of Day-Use Visitor Access Strategies



1978 - Shuttle buses in the Bear Lake Road Corridor

2000 - Major improvements to shuttle system including expansion of the Park and Ride transit hub

2006 - Hiker shuttle added to connect Estes Park to RMNP

2015 - Real time traffic data with webcams at east-side entrance station

2016-2019 - Bear Lake Road Restrictions and active parking management at Alpine Visitor Center

2017 - Rocky Pledge started

2017-2019 - Wild Basin Road Restrictions

2020-2023 - Timed entry permit system (TEPS) pilots

2024 - Plan signed

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- 2016 through 2019, park staff experimented to address increased use – implemented restrictions at Bear Lake and Wild Basin Road, and active management of Alpine Visitor Center Parking when congestion warranted. Additional impacts pushed elsewhere.
- Timed Entry Permit Reservations Park Wide 2020 – 2024



Pilots were evaluated

- Extensive Traffic and Trail counter data collection and analysis
- Visitor perception of TEPS surveys (2021 and 2022)
- Mid-Action and After-Action Reviews
- Visitor Comments
- Baseline data collection – social trailing, human waste, and bare ground
- Socioeconomic Monitoring Survey



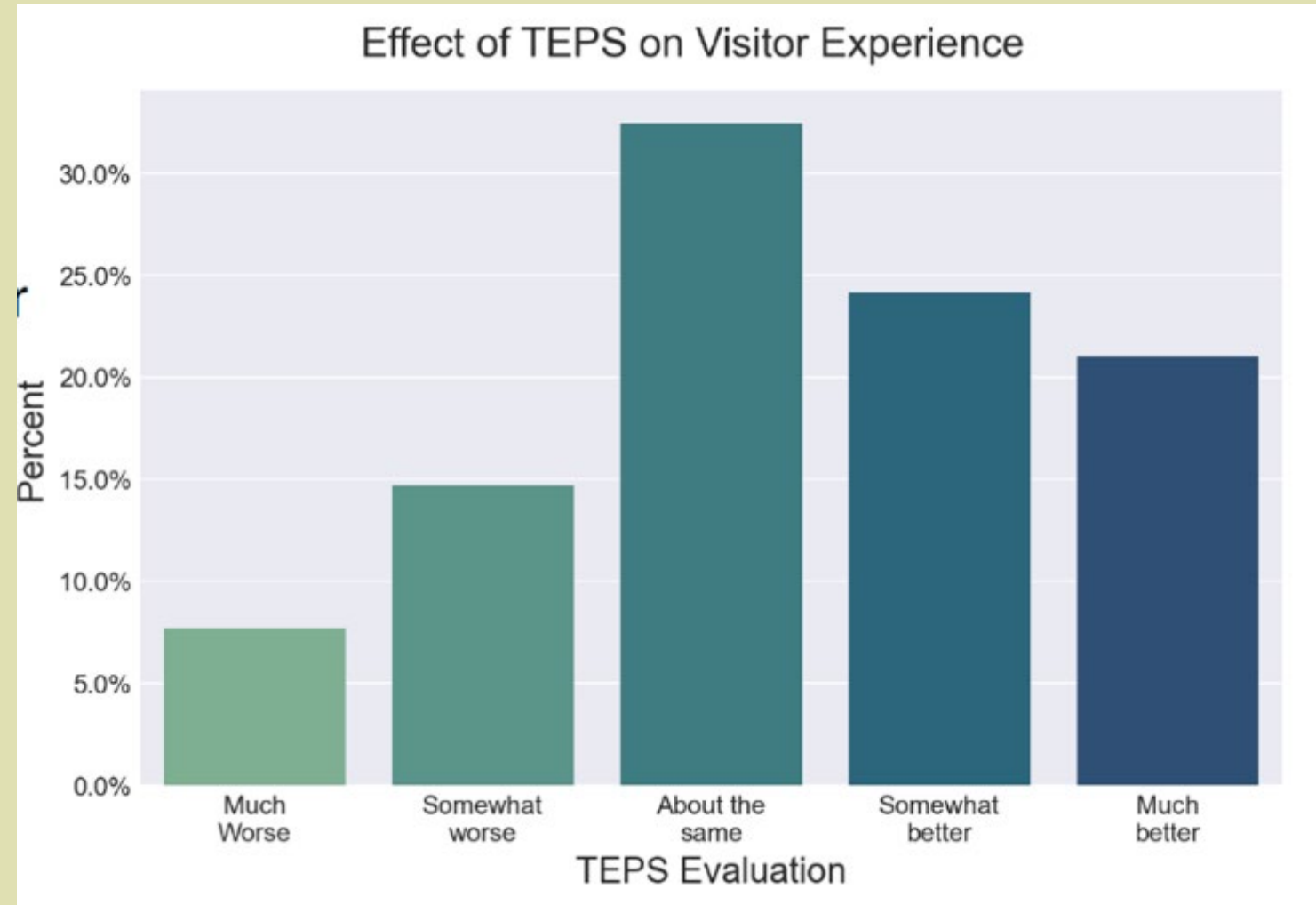
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2021 Visitor Experience Survey

18.6% response rate for
10,258 surveys

Approximately 77.6% of
visitors indicated that TEPS
made their experience
about the same or better.



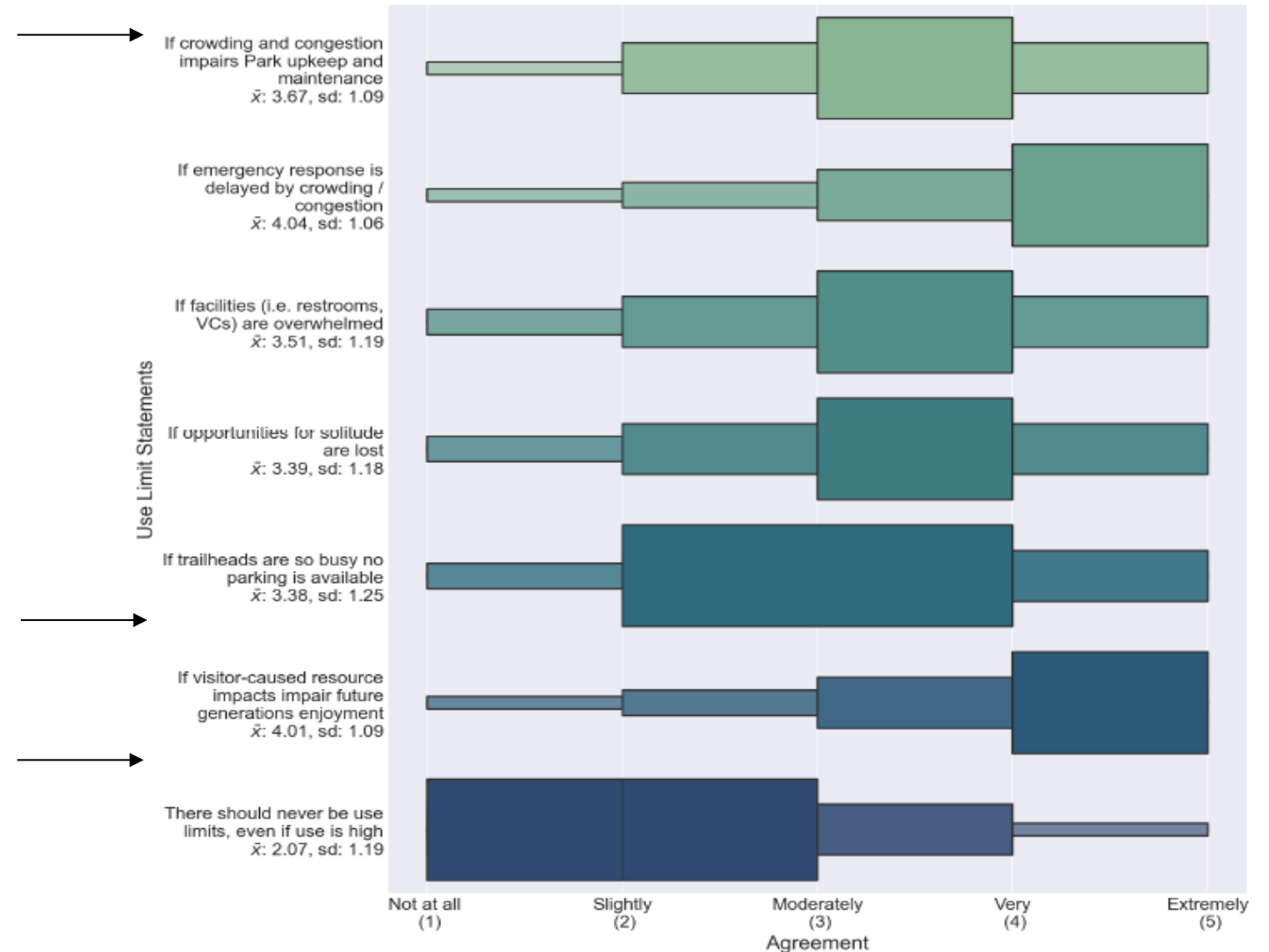
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Visitor Evaluations of Justifications for Use-Limits

Strong support for use limits
for protection of:

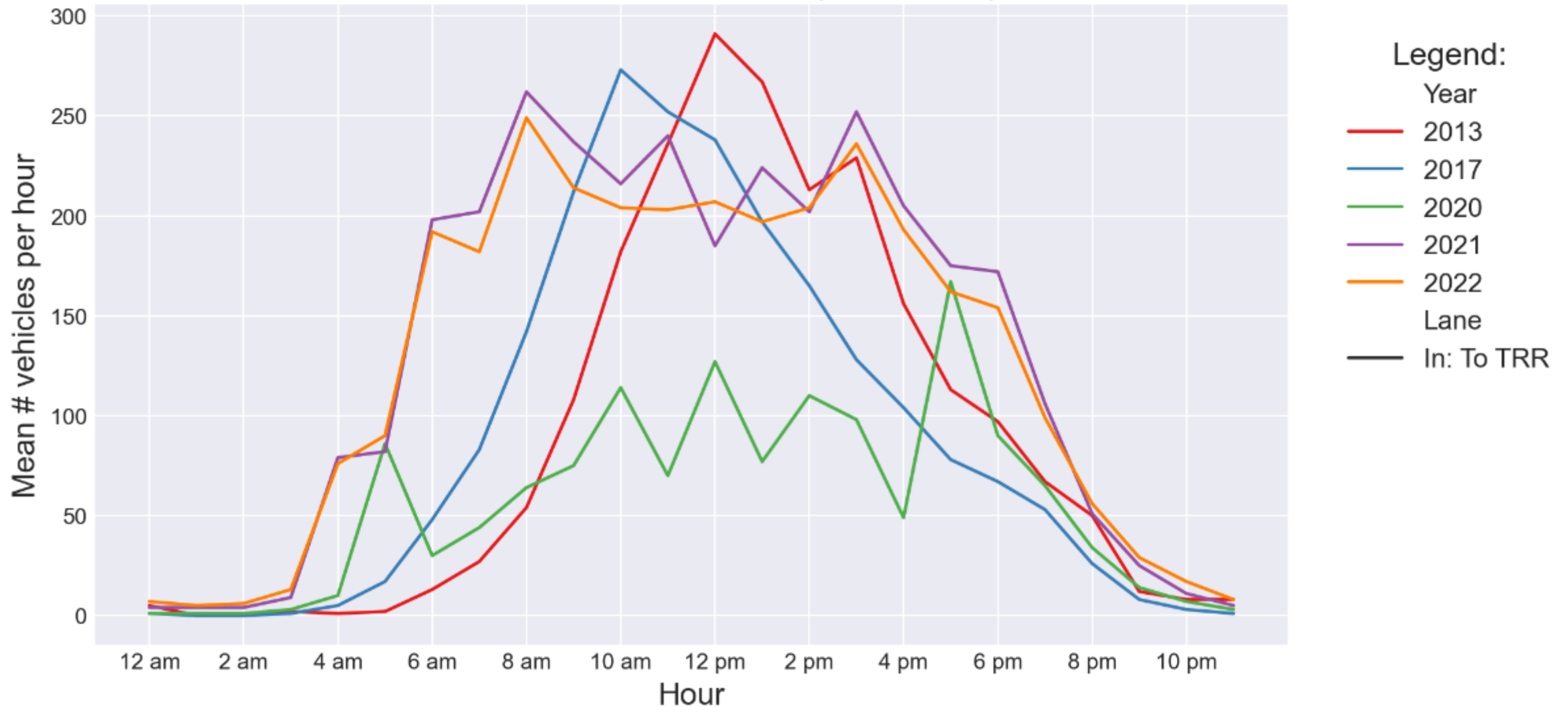
- Visitor experience
- Wilderness character
- Solitude
- Resource protection.



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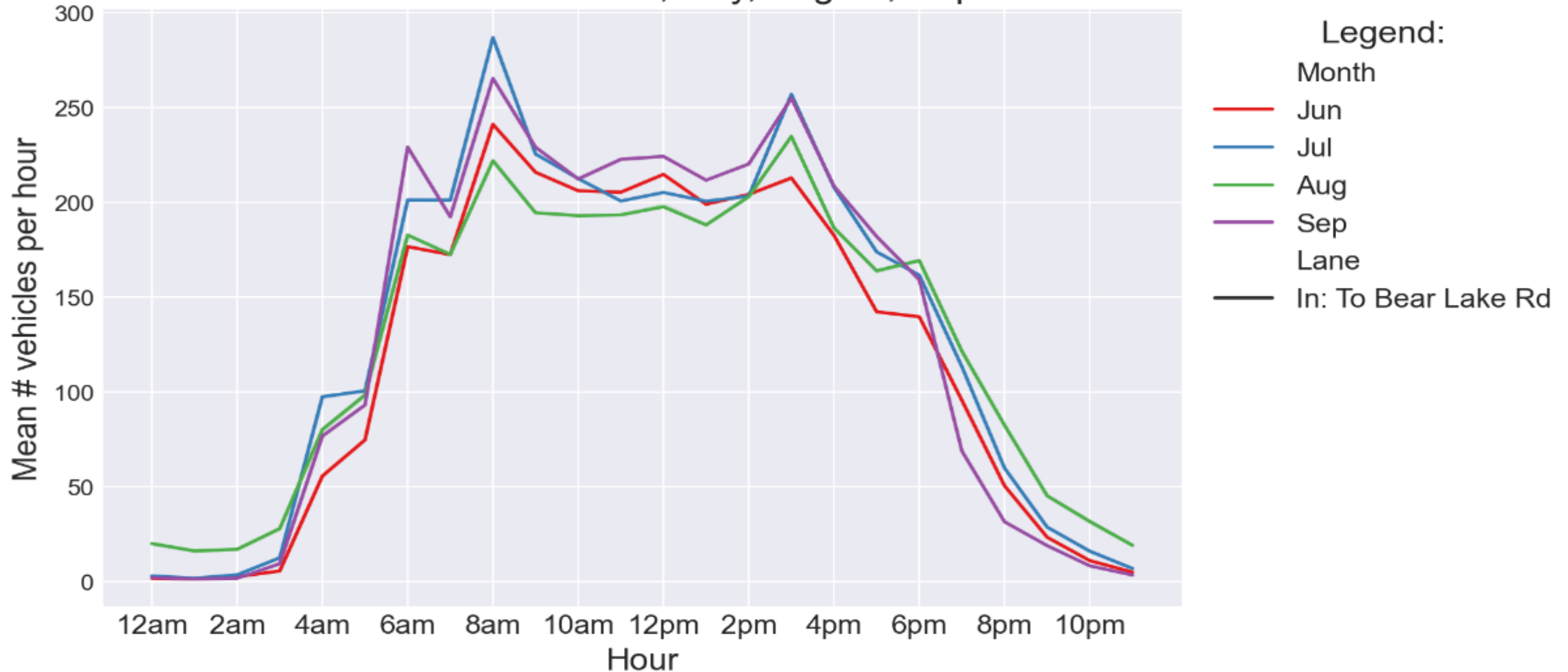
Beaver Meadows Entrance Hourly Counts by Year



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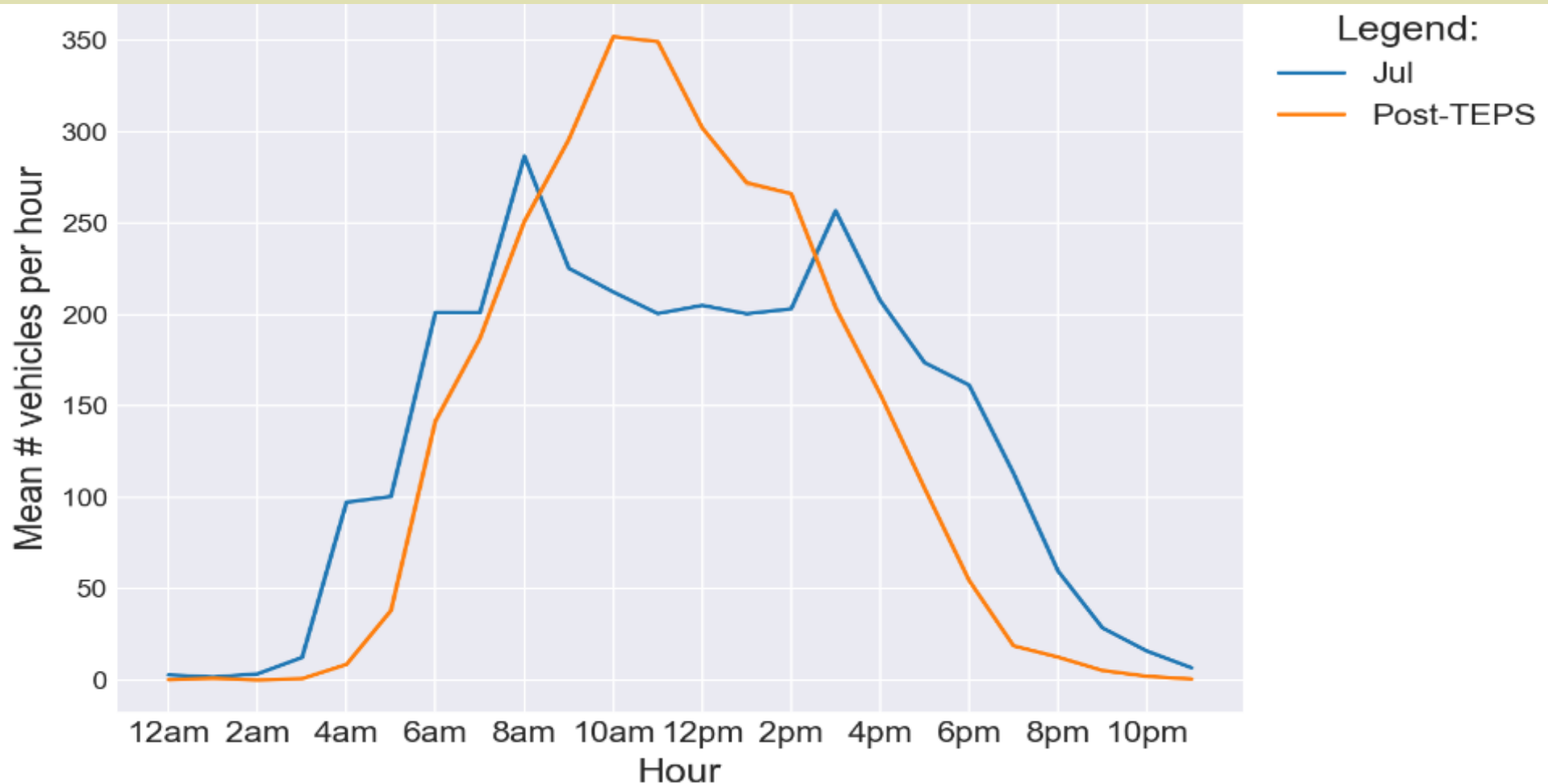


Beaver Meadows Entrance Mean June, July, August, September '22 Counts

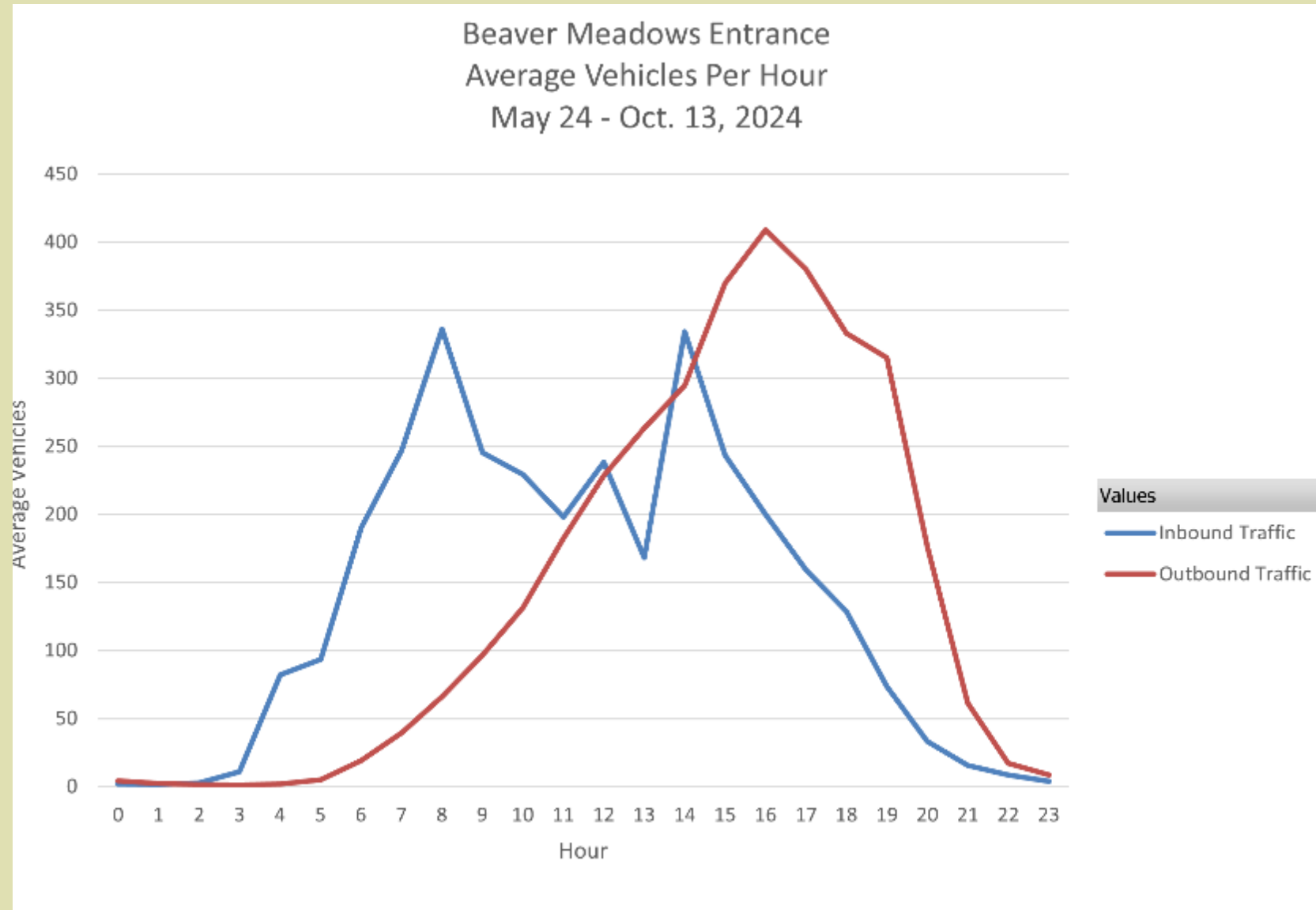




What happened after TEPS October 2022?



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Civic Engagement

Webinars and public meetings

Pre-NEPA:

Summer of 2021

Winter of 2022 – 2023

NEPA:

Winter of 2023-2024



Day Use Visitor Access Environmental Assessment & Final Decision

Manage day use visitor access in a way that protects the park's resources, maintains positive visitor experiences, promotes safety, and supports the park's ability to maintain daily operations.

The plan establishes two timed entry reservation systems from late-May through mid-October, one for the Bear Lake Road Corridor and one for the rest of the park. This is similar to what the park piloted. The reservation systems have been successful at spreading visitor use out throughout the day and throughout the park.

The ability to be flexible and adapt the timed entry reservation systems to changing use patterns is a key element of the Day Use Visitor Access Plan. Park staff will continue to learn and adapt accordingly.



Timed Entry Reservation Options

Timed Entry

Access to most of park, including outlying areas (no Bear Lake Road access)

Reservations required
9 am - 2 pm (MT)

Re-entry allowed
9 am - 2 pm with valid reservation.

Timed Entry+ Bear Lake Road

Access to Bear Lake Road, rest of park, and outlying areas

Reservations required
5 am - 6 pm (MT)

Re-entry to Bear Lake Road allowed 2 - 6 pm with valid reservation. Re-entry for rest of park allowed 9 am - 2 pm.



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Timed Entry Reservations

To visit any area of the park from **May 23** to **mid-October**, you need:

**Timed Entry
Reservation**



**Park Pass or
Entrance Fee**



**Arrive During
Your Time Slot**

Two reservation options available (see below)



Only available online at:
www.rec.gov



Available in person or online at:
go.nps.gov/RockyFees



Have your reservation ready to scan

**Timed
Entry**

Access to most of park
Reservations Required 9 am - 2 pm
May 23 - October 13

**Timed
Entry+**
Bear Lake Road

Access to park + Bear Lake Road
Reservations Required 5 am - 6 pm
May 23 - October 19



Already Booked an Activity?
Camping, guided trips, or commercial tours
do not need a timed entry reservation

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www.nps.gov/romo



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Timed Entry Reservations

Successful at spreading
use out throughout the
park and throughout
the day

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Questions?

