



PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

JANUARY 2005

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OSAC Notes

JOIN US IN THANKING COORS AND THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LANDS FOR PRESERVING A KEY PART OF SOUTH TABLE MOUNTAIN AND MEET THE NEW COMMISSIONERS

**PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL-
PLAN JEFFCO DINNER WITH THE
COMMISSIONERS, OSAC, AND OPEN SPACE STAFF
FEBRUARY 8, 2005**

**Mount Vernon Country Club
Social Hour at 6:00 P.M.
Buffet Dinner at 6:45 P.M.
Dinner cost is: \$25 per person**

**For reservations or information, call Wanda Blackburn at
- 303-279-0664 or email rnkidst@comcast.net
Please reserve by February 2 - Thanks**

Coors Property on South Table Acquired for Open Space

On November 10, 2004 over thirty years of advocacy for South Table Mountain open space was finally rewarded with the announcement that the Coors Brewing Company and Jefferson County had agreed to the preservation of 737 acres of Coors property on the West side of South Table Mountain as open space. The cost of the open space acquisition is \$10,000,000. This fee simple acquisition was completed December 15th.

Discussions between Coors representatives and the Jefferson County Commissioners, which culminated in the agreement, had actually been taking place over the last year. Commissioner Michelle Lawrence had an important role in seeing that the discussions were successfully concluded. They and the representatives of Coors Brewing Company, led by Neal Jacquet, are to be commended for their creative efforts in bringing this deal to fruition. Commissioners Holloway and Lawrence will be leaving office in January so the acquisition of South Table Mountain for Open Space represents a significant addition to their legacies of open space protection during tenure.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national non-profit land conservation organization, also participated in these discussions and was an intermediary in the conveyance of the property to Jefferson County Open Space. Coors made a \$200,000 charitable contribution to the Jeffco Open Space Foundation for the future protection of South Table Mountain property. Open Space reimbursed TPL for their expenses and paid a \$150,000 fee.

The acquisition was formally approved by the Jefferson County Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) at a special meeting on the evening of November 11 and subsequently by the Board of County Commissioners on November 16.

Virtually lost in the euphoria and hype surrounding announcement of the deal has been the over thirty years of citizen advocacy for the preservation of South Table Mountain. South Table Mountain has been a high priority acquisition for the county open space program since its inception in 1972 but its high priority has, no doubt, been fueled by tenacious and successful citizen opposition to repeated threats to development- from quarries proposed in the 1970's through the early 1990's to a NIKE corporate headquarters proposed in the late 1990's. Literally generations of citizen open space advocates - from the Alliance for the Preservation of South Table Mountain to Save the Mesas to the Table Mountains Conservation Fund and the numerous homeowners associations in Golden, Applewood and Pleasantview and the SOS bond campaign- have maintained preservation of South Table Mountain as a high visibility issue.

It is hoped that the acquisition of the Coors property will spur subsequent acquisition of 400 acres of Bradley property- the remaining privately owned land on South Table Mountain - for open space.

However, citizen advocacy regarding South Table Mountain and North Table Mountain should not, and will not end with their acquisition as open space. It will just enter a new phase associated with the management of the land as open space parks. Citizen groups will be active participants in the crafting of creative and appropriate management plans, sensitive to the significant natural values of the land and the communities that surround the new open space.

By Elliot Brown

A Bridge for the Future

One of the priority trails in the Trails 2000 program is a trail up Bear Creek Canyon from Morrison to Evergreen that would connect with trails going North to Bergen Park and South to Conifer. A small piece of this trail has been in place for years. It is (was) the section from the Highway 73 bridge across Bear Creek along the bank and up the stairs along side Evergreen Lake Dam.

The reconstruction of the Highway 73 and Highway 74 intersection in Evergreen and the new bridge provided opportunity to upgrade this trail. Room was made for a trail underpass under the bridge. This particular corridor is restricted by the highway, the creek, and the large elevation change.

Modifications to existing trails generally are designed by Open Space staff without public input. OSAC generally is informed of the design decisions but does not discuss details. Staff considered a number of options and determined that a sloping ramp would be the most feasible and a bridge design was selected. Although the ramp would be steeper than ADA guidelines, which are not required in this case, staff believed it would allow safe use by hikers, bikers, skateboarders, etc. Staff then selected a standard design bridge for the ramp. Bridges of this standard design are in place over Highways 93 and 58 in Golden, crossing 44th Avenue on the Clear Creek Trail, and crossing Clear Creek in Wheat Ridge.

However, installation of the bridge ramp in Evergreen resulted in a lot of very vocal reactions, with those upset over the industrial design and the impact on the view most vocal. Most of the negative reaction was due to the fact that the bridge superstructure impacted the view of the Bear Creek valley from the highway. Others, however, appreciated the improved access. A number of meetings were held by Greg Stevinson, OSAC chair, with a committee

which including Evergreen community representatives, Margot Zallen, Chair of PLAN Jeffco and Jan Wilkins, OSAC member. Greg Stevinson and Ralph Schell, OSAC Director, decided that it would be best to recommend to the Commissioners that the bridge be removed and alternates discussed in 2005 as part of the discussions on the other parts of the trail thru Evergreen which are to be constructed. The Commissioners agreed.

The bridge was removed the week of December 20 and will be stored by the fabricator in Greeley until it can be used on another trail. Note that the conceptual trail up Clear Creek from Golden to the County line anticipates eleven crossings of the creek and the bridge may be used for one of these. .

This section of trail will be included in a public meeting to be held **January 25th, 2005, at 6:30 p.m., at the Buchanan Recreation Center** that will discuss the complete trail corridor from the dam to the Eastern edge of Evergreen.



The Future - Clear Creek Canyon Trail

Wenk Associates were retained by Open Space to make a feasibility study for a trail up Clear Creek Canyon from Golden to the County line. A major difficulty for a trail corridor is that Highway 6 occupies most of the easy-to-build trail corridor. Most of the proposed trail alignment is within the CDOT Right-of-Way.

The trail length is anticipated to be about 12.6 miles and will cross Clear Creek 11 times. Three trailheads are planned - canyon mouth, near Tunnel 3, and at Mayhem Gulch. The Mayhem Gulch trailhead also will serve as an access point to Centennial Cone Park.

The trail will be expensive to build as very little of the corridor can utilize flat benches or the old railroad bed. Six cross-sections will be required: A) two using the Highway 6 embankment for 5.6 miles; B) filled bench, 1.6 miles; C) natural bench, 3.1 miles; D) railroad grade, 1.9 miles; and E) 0.4 miles along a vertical rock wall. Options for the vertical rock wall are a 0.2 mile tunnel and/or up to 0.4 miles structurally supported from the rock wall.

The trail is divided into eight segments for detailed design and construction.

1. 1.6 miles from Golden to Tunnel
2. 2.8 miles from Tunnel 1 to Huntsman Gulch
3. 0.5 miles from Huntsman Gulch to Hwy Bridge 1
4. 1.6 miles from Hwy Bridge 1 to Tunnel 2
5. 1.5 miles from Tunnel 2 to West end of Tunnel 3
6. 1.9 miles from Tunnel 3 to #37 Pullout Area
7. 1.0 miles from #37 Pullout Area to Mayhem Gulch
8. 1.9 miles from Mayhem Gulch to the County Line

Detailed planning is scheduled for 2005 and, if the budget permits, Segment 7 may be constructed in 2006.



Candidates' Night

On the evening of September 20, 2004 PLAN Jeffco hosted a Jefferson County Commissioner Candidates' Night at the Open Space hearing room. Republican commissioner candidates Jim Congrove and Kevin McCasky, Democratic commissioner candidates Scott Benefield and Guy Stocking, Green Party commissioner candidate Tanya Ishikawa and Libertarian Party commissioner candidate Steven Gallant were invited to present their positions on issues and to field questions from the audience.

Prior to the candidates' night the candidates responded in written form to a series of questions submitted to them earlier. The public in attendance followed up on these questions, resulting in an evening of lively debate and discussion moderated by Margot Zallen, PLAN Jeffco Chair.

Mr. Gallant, the Libertarian candidate for commissioner in District 2, stated simply that it would be his intent to eliminate the open space program in favor of private sector efforts to preserve open space. Of course, this is a position consistent with Libertarian Party aims to generally reduce the footprint of government. Mr. Congrove, the Republican candidate for commissioner in District 2, had previously made statements in the press regarding his concern with the reduction of property tax revenue by open space acquisition and that perhaps citizens should be given the opportunity to revisit the need for the open space program.

Of course, we now know that the subsequent election of Messrs. McCasky and Congrove to the position of county commissioner have rendered all other candidate positions moot. As in the past, new commissioners may be concerned about removing land from the tax

rolls when it is acquired as open space. Advocates of the open space program need to help the new commissioners understand that the program actually enhances the economic vitality of the county as well as its quality of life. PLAN Jeffco will continue to watch over the open space program and inform the public of future developments.

By Elliot Brown



One-seed juniper

CDOT - Hogback Parking Lot

Much time and effort was given by members of PLAN Jeffco and CARE (Canyon Area Residents for the Environment,) in working with OSAC and the Colorado Department of Transportation, (CDOT) on the proposed enlargement of parking space at the intersection of I-70 and U.S. 40 at the entrance to Mt. Vernon Canyon. The proposed design came before these parties because it would involve the purchase of a small parcel of Open Space land. The area involved a prominent part of the mountain backdrop, whose preservation is a stated goal of the counties which border this unique edge of the great plains.

A PLAN Jeffco/CARE Group, responding to an initial proposal which graded out one giant parking lot, raised objections to the visual impact of a large number of parking spaces in the area which is acknowledged to be the Gateway to the Rockies.

CDOT has been studying the parking demands generated by the various types of park and ride users driving the I-70 corridor who often fill the four parking areas at the intersection of U.S. 40 to capacity and who also illegally park along the roadway. The inadequacy of these lots is particularly evident during ski season. In the course of developing plans for the expansion of parking, CDOT's favored solution included realigning Hwy 40 to the north after it passes Conoco gas station and expanding the RTD parking area into a mega lot for 1300 cars. It would be necessary to purchase 6 acres of land from Open Space which is part of land recently acquired from Lafarge, plus acquire a similar amount from a commercially zoned privately owned parcel adjacent to US 40.

CDOT believes that moving the US 40 North would improve the safety of the intersection. CDOT has the power to condemn the needed Open Space property for the land to be used for the road but not for the parking lot. Open Space land is needed for both purposes. PLAN Jeffco and CARE prepared an alternate proposal last February. Our proposal moved the parking lot to the north of the realigned U.S. 40, leaving the existing area along I-70 to be landscaped and graded to enhance the Gateway to the Rockies.

OSAC requested CDOT to go back to the drawing board and study the feasibility of the PLAN Jeffco/CARE idea. We were greatly encouraged by this action. Understandably satisfied with what had been a firm directive by OSAC Chairman Greg Stevinson, PLAN Jeffco, and CARE left the matter in the hands of those who were sent back to the drawing board. We mistakenly did not ask to be included in the alternate design studies.

The original scheme was presented again, with few changes. Without any preliminary conferencing, OSAC and PLAN Jeffco/CARE were presented with an alternate solution showing no reduction in the number of parking spaces, a high cost to span Lena Gulch, and a \$3 million estimated cost to acquire the additional commercial property required.

One area of question involved the exiting from I-70 to the west. With the U.S. 40 east entry moved to the North, Westbound cars wanting to use US 40, especially in storm conditions or accident pile ups on I-70 would have an awkward sequence: stop-light, turn right-stop-light turn left with very short line-up distance.

CDOT - Hogback Parking Lot - continued

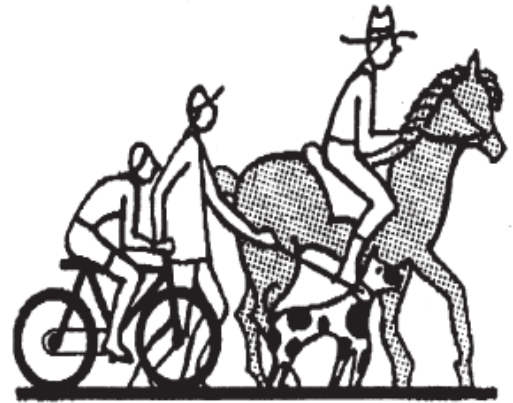
This did not seem to be the safety improvement touted with the changed configuration. Those present who often use this intersection, stated that there would be unmanageable backups of traffic, both on the exit ramp and in right-left kink to connect to US 40. Once more, the objection was raised against designing the parking lot for the ski season, leaving unnecessary areas of asphalt empty the rest of the year. There is also a heavy traffic mix of LaFarge gravel trucks coming and going through this intersection.

This observer did not feel that this was a “good faith” effort. Public input had been brushed aside and no ingenuity was used to reduce the much higher cost estimate. It should be noted that this project is not to be constructed for an unknown number of years.

For OSAC, the matter at hand was to approve or disapprove of the sale of this small amount of open space land and it appeared that there was nothing to be gained in further arguments about the design. There was some discussion regarding the benefits of new trail connections to be made on all sides of this complicated intersection. OSACs unanimously approved the sale but noted that many had voted approved it only because of the threat of condemnation.

PLAN Jeffco and CARE will try to keep tabs on this project. There is still possible input on final landscaping and signing. Changing what we continue to consider an unsatisfactory design is not likely without more clout than PLAN Jeffco or CARE can command.

By Marilyn Mueller



PLAN Jeffco member, Ron Larson receives honors

Ron Larson is a retired former College Professor (Georgia Tech) and retired Government policy analyst (Solar Energy Research Institute [now NREL], where he was a Branch Chief and Principal Scientist). Ron was one of the original SERI staff members when the Institute was founded in 1977. As one of the founder's Ron was instrumental in setting up much of the original structure for NREL.

Ron's solar energy activities began in 1973 as the first IEEE Congressional Fellow, working on the first solar legislation passing the house Science Committee. For the past 7 years he has served as the volunteer coordinator of an Internet list called "stoves" (for developing countries, under the sponsorship of the Renewable Energy Policy Project). His stoves and international interests grew out of leading a USAID project in Sudan in the early '80s.

Ron is active in the Colorado Renewable Energy Society (CRES), the America Solar Energy Society (ASES), the Colorado Environmental Business Alliance (CEBA), Hydrogen Now (H2N) and the STEPP Foundation – and has served on all of their Boards of Directors.

In early 1996, Ron was asked by then ASES Executive Director, Larry Sherwood, to co-found an ASES chapter in Colorado. That led to the birth of CRES. Within CRES, Ron is most active monitoring the State legislature and the Colorado Public Utility Commission. But Ron has been a Board member for all of those years and has been active in organizing and carrying out many of the programs now well underway. To mention a few: the CRES Annual Conference, the Legislative Action Committee, the Solar Home Tour, the CRES Annual Meeting and the Solar Decathlon.

In March of this year, the ASES Board of Directors elected Ron Larson as it's Vice Chair - which effectively is the "Chair-Elect" for the post of Chair in two years. As a result, he will be cutting back his activities in CRES and other organizations so that he can devote full-time to leading ASES.

For his lifetime of contributions to the cause of renewable energy and in particular for his work in Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Chapter bestowed it's highest award, the John Wade Award, upon Ron Larson.



OSAC NOTES *** OSAC NOTES *** OSAC NOTES

August 5, 2004 - Study Session

The meeting started with a discussion on the manner in which Joint Venture Grants are awarded. Should distribution be more “per capita” based? After much discussion as to how a ‘per capita’ basis would impact the smaller districts, the Committee’s consensus was to stay with the present method of awarding grants.

The status of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop/Foreground acquisitions was reviewed. OSAC and the Commissioners have authorized staff to pursue lands that total about 41,500 acres. In addition the Natural Areas authorization totals 33,900 acres. Allowing for overlaps, the two authorizations total 64,200 acres. The amount preserved by Open Space to date is 18,715 and by other agencies is 14,935 (including private open space). Of the remaining 30,600 acres, about 8,900 are already developed, heavily subdivided, or are small remnant-type parcels. The majority of the remaining 21,700 acres are already covered by active projects.

Regular Meeting

A second review was made on a proposal by a developer for a road easement over the Southwest corner of Elk Meadow Park. This access to his property under development would be much more convenient than the presently adjudicated access. Some of the OSAC members had taken a field trip to the location prior to the meeting. After much discussion the request was denied.

CDOT re-presented their proposal for the Hogback Park-N-Ride at I-70 and US 40. The proposal moves the Hwy 40 intersection to the North and combines and enlarges the present RTD and Pterodactyl lots. CDOT’s evaluation

of the alternate proposed by PLAN Jeffco and CARE was presented. CDOT’s major concerns on the alternate were that it would have a \$5,400,000 higher cost to cover more Right-of-Way acquisition and addressing the Lena Gulch wetlands. As a result of the earlier presentation, CDOT had changed their proposal to include more landscaping and adding trail under I-70 at an estimated additional cost of \$250,000. Recognizing that if the proposal was not accepted, CDOT had the right to condemn the property, OSAC unanimously approved the sale of the desired 6.36 acres.

A land trade of 86 acres of Ken-Caryl Ranch Metro District land near the Southwest corner of the South Valley Park for 32.46 acres of open space land acquired in the Hildebrand Ranch acquisition was discussed. The open space land is North of the Deer Creek road and is surrounded by Ken-Caryl Open Space, including the Cathy Johnson Trail. The matter was tabled until September so that the resolution could be rewritten.

September 2, 2004. - Study Session

A presentation on the Youth Engaged in Service & Stewardship (Y.E.S.S.) was made. This is a new program begun this year to bring youth into the Open Space Program. Nine students participated two days a week shadowing staff and doing trail building, slash clean-up, service projects at Hiwan, and participating in the Bear Creek Festival at Lair O’ the Bear Park.

Regular Meeting

The Ken-Caryl - Hildebrand Ranch land trade discussed in August was approved unanimously.

OSAC NOTES CONTINUED

OSAC accepted final terms for purchasing the portion of Alderfer Three Sisters Park that is leased from the State Land Board. This 440-acre parcel, which includes Evergreen Mountain, has been leased by Open Space since 1979.

Staff was given authorization to negotiate for a 1.4-acre parcel along Dutch Creek that is adjacent to the Foothills Park & Rec District's Christian Meadows Park. The parcel would provide trail corridor and a connection from the Christian Meadows Park to the trail.

October 7, 2004 - Study Session

Presentation was made of the Clear Creek Canyon Trail Feasibility Study, see separate article in this newsletter.

Regular Meeting

Terry Green gave an update on the Rooney Soccer Field. The capping of the landfill was finally complete and seeding for erosion control would be done in the next few days. The facility will be turned over to Golden for installation of fields in March or April 2005.

OSAC approved the sale of Open Space's storage rights in Bergen Reservoir #5. This reservoir is located along Racoon Creek, North of Bowles Avenue between Alkire and Simms Streets. Bill Swalling is developing the adjacent property and desired moving the reservoir, which is not used for water delivery, and converting it to a detention pond. The developer agreed to pay \$11,452 for the storage rights and \$150,000 for other considerations.

The DOE and Fish & Wildlife Service need to do some mitigation to off-set lost habitat on Rocky Flats. However, they are not authorized

to acquire real estate rights outside of the Rocky Flats boundary. Open Space has negotiated a lease with the State Land Board for an 100-acre parcel of Section 16 that will be re-leased to the two Federal agencies. The 100-acre parcel has been high on the list for preservation of the Rocky Flats ecosystem and previously had been subject to potential gravel mining.

An amended resolution was approved for the a conservation easement on 120 acres adjacent to Cathedral Spires. The amendment adjusted the price to reflect the inflation in land values since the original resolution was passed in October 2003.

November 4, 2004 - Study Session

Brian Posthumus, Natural Resource Specialist, gave a presentation on wildlife management in Open Space Parks. The Open Space staff and volunteers inventory wildlife by surveys and photography, monitor changes by surveys, and do some research mainly on avian species. One of the findings is that the abundance of cavity nesting bird species are about one-half that of most forested communities. Staff have drilled cavities, but they tend to only be used as protection from the wind. There are 27 Golden Eagle nests on Open Space with 7 or 8 being active any one year. There are 7 prairie falcon territories and two peregrine falcon territories. Peregrine falcons nested at Ralson Buttes in 2004. The photography is done using a infra-red camera triggered by a motion sensor. In one 24-hour period of activity 74 photo's were taken of Black Bear with about one-half of the photos taken during daylight hours.

Regular Meeting

OSAC approved Arvada's requested change in their acquisition priorities which change the

OSAC NOTES CONTINUED

Gunter property in East Arvada and Hiatt Lake to high priority.

A five-year lease with the State Land Board on 160 acres that are part of Hildebrand Ranch Park was approved.

Ralph Schell reported that prescribed burns were completed on a total of 220 acres in Elk Meadow, White Ranch, and Mount Falcon Parks during 2004.

November 11, 2004 - Special Meeting
Ralph Schell presented final terms for the acquisition of 737 acres of South Table Mountain from Coors Brewing. The purchase price is \$10,000,000. A GOCO grant will cover \$4,000,000 of the cost with the balance coming from bond funds. Open Space is paying all closing costs and a fee of \$150,000 to the Trust for Public Lands for their assistance in the transaction. Closing for the transaction was December 15th and Coors Brewing made a \$200,000 donation to the Jeffco Open Space Foundation for further acquisitions or development on South Table.

December 2, 2004 - Study Session
Thea Rock narrated a Power Point presentation reviewing Open Space's accomplishments in 2004.

Regular Meeting -
Wheat Ridge requested revision of their acquisition priorities. The request, which adds the Northwest Lakewood Sanitation District property at 41st and Miller as a high priority, was approved.

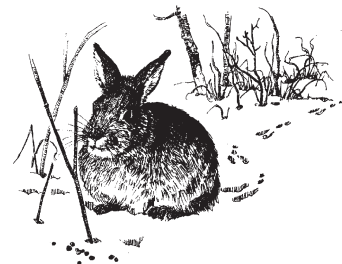
Approval was given for the County General Fund to purchase the remainder of the Foothills Government Complex property owned by, but not used by Open Space. Included are 18.47 acres for Human Services to erect a building for the Workforce Development Center and six other parcels totaling 28.19 acres. Of the purchase cost, Open Space will receive \$2,440,000 that must be used for acquisition and \$4,055,000 will be added to the Open Space fund balance.

Approved negotiations for 2.7 acres near Coal Mine and Pierce for Columbine Knolls Grove Metro District.

Approved transfer of 10 acre property at 82nd and Simms (adjacent to Pioneer Park) to Arvada. Arvada then will lease the property to North Jeffco Parks. The property needed to be annexed into Arvada in order to have water and sewer connections.

Approved negotiations to acquire a 40-acre parcel adjacent to Cathedral Spires. Withdrew approval of negotiations for a Conifer recreation site as the inclusion vote into the Foothills Park and Recreation District failed.

Reviewed the North Table Mountain Park Management Plan.



Cottontail with scats and chewed twigs

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