

PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

MARCH 2006

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OSAC Notes

JOIN US IN THANKING THE
NORTHWOODSIDE FOUNDATION
AND THE CLEAR CREEK LAND
CONSERVANCY FOR MAKING IT
POSSIBLE FOR NORM RALSTON TO
SEE HIS CLEAR CREEK LAND
PRESERVED

PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL-PLAN JEFFCO DINNER WITH THE

COMMISSIONERS, OSAC, AND OPEN SPACE STAFF ON MARCH 30, 2006

Mount Vernon Country Club Social Hour at 5:30 P.M. Buffet Dinner at 6:15 P.M. Dinner cost is: \$25 per person

For reservations or information, call

Wanda Blackburn - 303-279-0664 or email rnkidst@comcast.net

PIONEER FAMILY AGREES TO LAND SALE FOR PRESERVATION

During the years since the beginning of the Open Space Program, preservation of Clear Creek Canyon has been a prime priority of the Program and of PLAN Jeffco. Consistent with PLAN Jeffco's Clear Creek Land Preservation Initiative. many properties were acquired by Jeffco Open Space and preservation agreements reached with major adjoining property owners, including Mt. Vernon Country Club and the North Woodside Foundation. In 1998 PLAN Jeffco worked with the County to obtain a significant grant from GOCO for a comprehensive proposal to preserve most of the Clear Creek Corridor from the South Platte River to the West County Line. A grant from GOCO of \$5,000,000 was received 1998, with later grants of smaller amounts. In addition some conservation easements and lands have been donated.

The Beaver Brook Trail, a hiker only 8 mile trail owned by Denver Mountain Parks, from Lariat Trail Road to Stapleton Park has long been favorite and well used trail. Most of it is along the south rim of Clear Creek Canyon and it goes through 320 acres which was owned by descendants of the Ralston family, well known pioneers. Efforts to obtain these 360 acres by Jeffco and others from Norm Ralston, had been unsuccessful for over 30 years. Recently, however, Bob Weimer, of the Northwoodside Foundation and Rock Pring, of the Clear Creek Land Conservancy were finally successful in reaching an agreement with Norm Ralston to preserve this key parcel in Clear Creek Canyon and along the Beaver Book Trail.

On October 31st, 2005, Norm Ralston donated a Conservation Easement to the Clear Creek Land Conservancy and then sold the land to the Northwoodside Foundation for \$1.68 million (\$4,600 per acre.), PLAN Jeffco is grateful to Norm Ralston for assuring preservation of this land in its natural state.

As explained in a letter to Mount Vernon Proprietary Members, written by Pieter Hoekstra: "The Ralston acquisition means that Northwoodside will own the title and will oversee and manage the property. The conservation easement- a deed that transfers specified development rights of the landowner to the Conservancy "in trust" forever- 'means the Conservancy can protect against all residential, commercial, and industrial development and other actions that would destroy the area's scenic, natural state, no matter who owns the property in the future " The continuity of the Beaver Brook Trail is therefore assured.

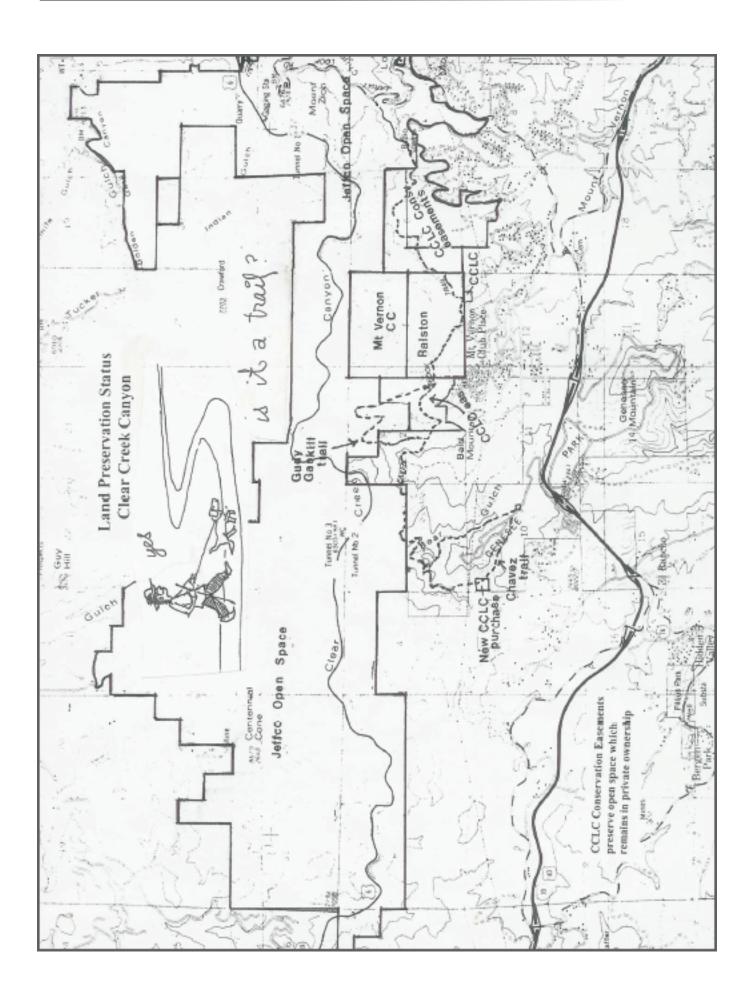
Jeffco Open Space, Mt. Vernon, Northwoodside and Clear Creek Land Conservancy had worked together in 1996 to provide contiguous land for the nearby Gudy Gaskill Trail.

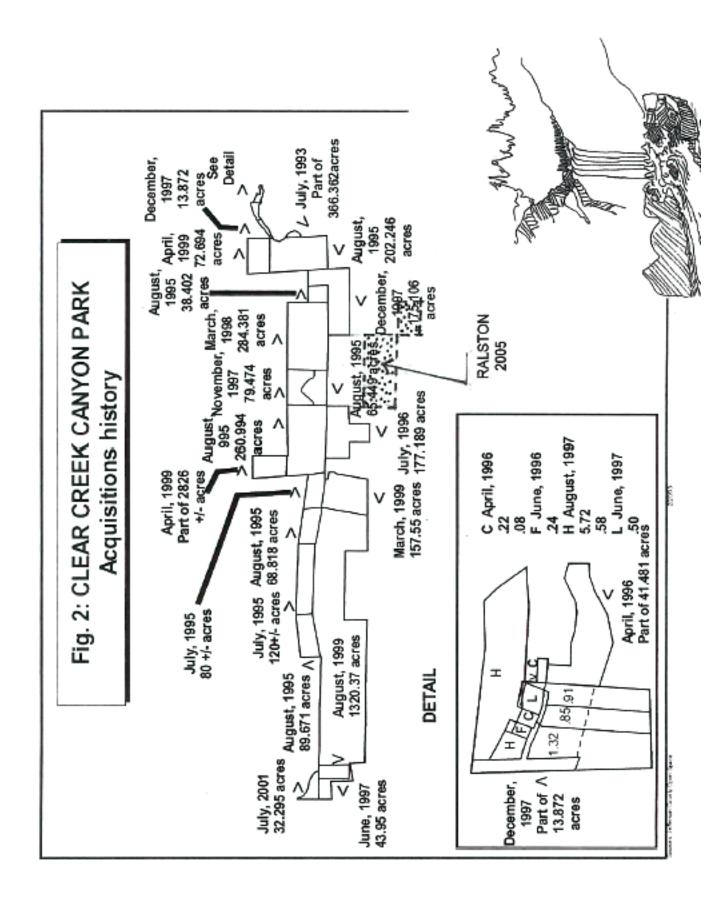
Adjoining the Ralston land is another 320 acres of land owned by Mount Vernon. A meeting is being held with Mount Vernon Country Club members in February to vote on preserving their land a conservation easement.

Much of the land along Clear Creek Canyon and stretching over to Mt. Vernon Canyon was settled in the late 1800's or early 1900's. Ralston, Dieker, Flynn, and Coleman are all family names of landowners from these times. The late Carla Swan Coleman founded and funded the Northwoodside Foundation to preserve the lands around the Beaver Book Trail. The Foundation has been acquiring and managing such lands for many years and its acquisition of the Ralston land finally fulfills Carla Swan Coleman's goal, the preservation of all of the lands surrounding the scenic Beaver Book Trail. The Clear Creek Conservancy was formed in the late 1980's as a citizen group, (nonprofit, non governmental land trust,) with the goal of working toward preserving both sides of the canyon.

All citizens of Jefferson County should be pleased that one of the long range goals set forth by Open Space in the early 1970's is almost accomplished. This had been a daunting challenge when first proposed. (See Maps) More than 10,000 acres of land have been preserved, thanks to Open Space, GOCO, Mount Vernon Country Club, North Woodside Foundation, and the Clear Creek Land Conservancy (with prodding from PLAN Jeffco.)

By Marilyn Mueller





North Table Mountain Ad Hoc Group

Some PLAN Jeffco board members and biker representatives met in October to discuss the potential for resolution to the concerns about the proposed North Table Mountain Management Plan. At the November OSAC meeting, this group proposed forming an Ad Hoc Committee to work on the conflict among hikers, bikers, equestrians and natural resource protection. The consensus of OSAC was that it was a good idea. The Ad Hoc Group was formed and presented their mission statement, rules and work plan at the December OSAC meeting at which time OSAC postponed consideration of the Management Plan for 9 months.

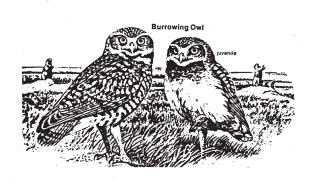
The Ad Hoc Committee's members are:

The Mission Statement, of the Ad Hoc Committee states:

The Ad Hoc Group for North Table Mountain Open Space represents a spectrum of interest groups, potential park users and perspectives. The efforts of the Ad Hoc Group underscore the importance of and need for cooperative involvement in the formulation of vision statements and planning for Jefferson County Open Space Park management.

The mission of the Ad Hoc Group is to examine the management of North Table Mountain Open Space Park in the broad context of balancing recreational use and ecosystem protection.

Specifically, the Ad Hoc Group will first seek to educate all members with regard to the pertinent issues of natural resource and ecosystem protection and recreational use. The former will include the science and ecology of natural resource protection and ecosystem stewardship. The latter will include aspect of trail designs, location, construction and management associated with all types of recreational use. Subsequent to this educational phase the Ad Hoc Group will examine, analyze and discuss a variety of management approaches towards formulating consensus recommendations on the management of North Table Mountain Open Space Park.



The Ad Hoc Committee rules include the following: Rules of Discussion so that everyone is allowed input.

Responsibility of Membership is to be open, flexible and consider information provided by experts. While working within the Group, members may also continue with their own advocacy efforts.

Rules for Expulsion so that one member doesn't keep the Group back.

Voting will be by majority rule until a recommendation to the OSAC and that decision should be consensus.

Rule Changes would be provided to OSAC should they be changed.

North Table Mountain Ad Hoc Group - Continued

The objective of the Work Plan is to educate the Committee prior to making any recommendations. The Plan will be accomplished by:

Presentations from experts (Open Space staff and outside)

Review and group discussion of written material

Field trips

Information that may be obtained by additional field studies

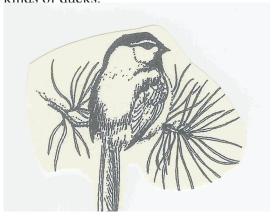
The work plan is divided into two categories: natural resources and recreation management. The plan lists items they would like to learn about in each category.

The Group has been meeting bimonthly and is first focusing on natural resources so that if there is a need for additional data it could be accomplished this coming field season. PLAN Jeffco and the Table Mountains Conservation Fund each have stated that they have \$5,000 available for these studies. The first meeting after getting the go ahead from OSAC in December was with Open Space staff to discuss baseline information used to prepare the Management Plan and the acquisition history. Subsequent meetings included presentations and discussions with a natural resources planning consultant, and vegetation and avian experts. The Committee has determined that current baseline data on vegetative communities, ground nesting birds and lichens are needed and is working on a proposal to present to OSAC in March when it is due to report on the status of the Committee's work. The Committee will be starting to develop a schedule for speakers on the recreational management issues.



SPRING / SUMMER BIRD COUNT RESUMES IN MAY

In Jefferson County, there are Bald Eagles and there are Golden Eagles. There are Red Tailed Hawks and Cooper's Hawks and Kestrels, sometimes called Sparrow Hawks. You've already noticed that there are Robins, Magpies, Bluebirds and Meadowlarks. Remember that there are owls and there are ducks. Gold stars for you if you know, or have seen a Solitaire, a Vireo, a Yellow rump Warbler or a Blue-Grey Gnatcatcher. Gold stars, if you know, or have seen, ten or twelve different kinds of ducks.



The Open Space division of Natural Resources, under the supervision of Randy Frank, has been collecting data on what birds are where, since 1993. Natural Resource Specialist Bryan Posthumus has been working with more than twenty volunteers, making regular avian surveys at several of our parks as well as locating cliff nesting raptor sites that have been noted in nine places. Some 147 species have been recorded. Since Colorado lies in the path of major migratory bird movements, many of these species are seasonal. What is of major interest to Open Space, is the relation of birds to different kinds of habitats that exist on our lands. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has published a listing of various habitats found throughout the state. The most common habitats for focused observation in Jeffco are:

Mixed Conifer - Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa, Douglas fir Meadows

General -Varied meadow, shrubs, trees Low Riparian - Mixed shrubs, grasses along water Mountain Shrub

High Elevation Riparian - steep slopes, fast water Wetlands - marshy areas, seasonal drainage lands Cliffs/Rock

Aspen

Shore/Bank - Shallow edges, lakes and ponds

Each of the surveyed parks have a specific number of locations selected where the volunteers go twice a month to observe, within a 50-meter radius, what birds are visiting that site. Fifty meters is about 150 feet, which is a fairly large circle. Originally, the observers went all year, but the observations now start in May and finish the end of July. These are the most active months when birds are mating and nesting as well as migrants coming through.

Those who are observing the raptors determine their visits by what nests are occupied or newly being constructed and then keeping watch to try to determine if eggs are being incubated and hopefully witnessing the appearance of fledglings. Some of these nests are conveniently visible from a road, but others require a lengthy mountain hike. Nests which have been monitored are: Bear Creek Park - Golden Eagle; Cathedral Spires - Peregrine Falcon; Clear Creek - Golden Eagle; Matthews-Winter - Great Horned Owl; Mount Lindo - Golden Eagle; North Table Mtn. - Golden Eagle, Red Tail Hawk, Prairie Falcon; South Valley Park - Prairie Falcon; White Ranch Park - Golden Eagle. Great Horned Owls usually nest in someone else's nests in trees but the one at Matthew Winters is located on a cliff. This writer has observed other nesting owls at Van Bibber Park, Bear Creek Park and along Clear Creek Trail in some woods a short distance east of Coors. For many years, Bald Eagles have nested at Stanley Lake, managed by the city of Westminster.

Avian Census will be continuing at Lair of the Bear, Meyer Ranch, Mount Falcon, Van Bibber and White

Bird Count - Continued

Ranch West. Volunteers have the pleasure of being out in these parks in the early morning, witnessing the gradual greening up of the landscape as spring progresses as well as the sequence of wild flowers appearing, each in their own time. Add to that the reward of seeing some of the more colorful birds such as the Orioles, Cedar Waxwings or Western Tanagers. Their work consists of noting which birds are seen at the designated viewing sites. The temperature, cloud cover and wind speed are also recorded as well as birds seen between the sites.

Bryan works with two Natural Resource Specialists, who will be helping him with the Bird Census and the Cliff Nesting programs. Julie Simon and Ember Brignull, both with environmentally oriented degrees, will help with organizing the data and handling any necessary communications.

Time priority for Natural Resources has to do with forest management and forest management involves vegetative inventories, of our new properties as well as our existing ones. Thus, the bird data program could be considered a branch of this work and not a prime study objective in itself.

There have been some data organized as part of management activity going on at Meyer Ranch, since 1995 and continuing thru 2005. Although time spent was primarily physical work for fire mitigation, thinning of Lodgepole Pine stands, weed control, and trail building and repair. Additional bird data was continued to see if comparing the earlier '93 to '95 data showed any species decline that might be attributed to these disturbances. Of interest in this study are the methods of looking at this data. The actual number of observations and the limited number of observing stations make the numbers of birds seen rather small. A definitive study would probably require more frequent and more extensive observations

The methods used consisted of some comparative graphs relating to individual species and other graphs relating to grouping birds according to how and what they feed on, such divisions as nectar, insects in bark, insects in the air, seeds on trees or bushes and seeds on the ground. Further expansion, with more graphs can relate the different eating patters to each of the different habitats.

Early conclusions were not clearly meaningful and it would seem more time, letting the management dust settle, so to speak, would be beneficial in coming to any final conclusions. The changes in numbers did not indicate any drastic reduction in bird/habitat relationships. In time, with the thinning of trees and the consequent increase in open areas between trees enabling more varied plant and shrub development, a shift in species numbers would be expected.

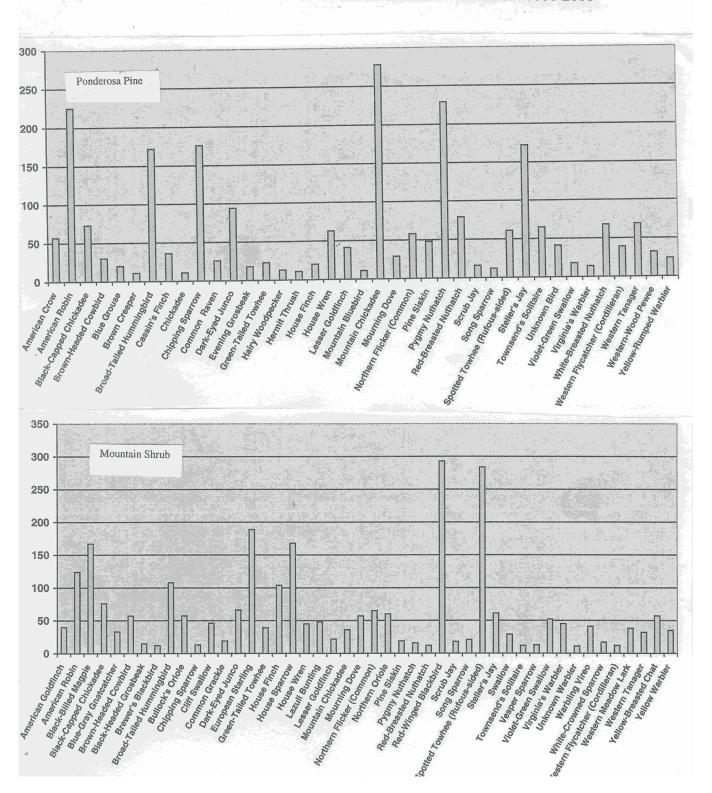


For those working in Forest Management, meaningful change is not something that happens quickly. The factors relating to soils, rainfall, fire, and human activity all effect the balance of nature. Bryan is thinking in terms of needing fifty years! For now, we will content ourselves with what we know from the last twelve.

Natural Resources posts ongoing information on the Open Space web site http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/openspace/ Or call Bryan at 303-271-5993

COMPARISON OF THE NUMBERS OF BIRDS BETWEEN PONDEROSA PINE AND MOUNTAIN SHRUB HABITATS

Totals from all volunteer Points from 1993-2005



OSAC Notes - OSAC Notes - OSAC Notes

August 4, 2005 - Study Session

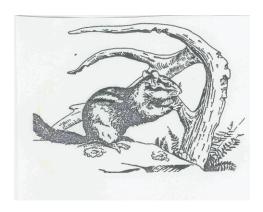
Don Klima, with the help of Park Rangers Mark Olinie and Eric Holzman presented an overview of "Geocaching" in Open Space parks. Geocaching is a treasure hunt of sorts where clues are given on the internet, including GPS coordinates. The searcher, if they find the cache, he or she then exchanges an item in the cache for a new one. As of the end of July, there were 72 known Geocaching sites in 18 Open Space parks. Staff concerns have been disturbance of the habitat, creation of social trails, and objectionable cache contents.

Regular Meeting

Approved a conservation easement on 29 acres in Blue Mountain Estates. The property is at the North end of the East ridge between the railroad tracks and the ridgeline. The easement precludes public access, but is a significant contribution to the mountain backdrop.

Approved acceptance of an easement from Cotter Corporation for a trail connection from White Ranch to Open Space property along Ralston Creek and granting a road easement to Cotter for access to their 577-acre property that contains the Schwartzwalder Mine - now inactive. The trail easement will let Open Space connect White Ranch with Golden Gate State Park.

Approved negotiations on up to 80 acres adjacent to the Cathedral Spires Park, along the South Platte near Foxton, which are suitable for the park access and trailhead.



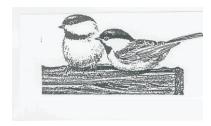
September 1, 2005 - Study Session

Nanette Neelan, County Director of Transportation, gave OSAC an update on the Northwest Corridor. She stated that in 2003 the then Commissioners were considering the hiring of a design/build contractor to connect Interlocken Boulevard with the Northern border of Golden. CDOT then stepped in as it would not solve Golden's traffic dilemma. CDOT is now conducting a \$16 million Environmental Impact Study. A total of 79 alternatives were considered between Wadsworth, Highway 93, The Northwest Parkway, and C-470. These proposals have been reduced to four that meet the need. They include: a freeway, a tollway, a regional arterial, and a combination. All routes start at the Northwest Parkway, go South along Indiana, turn West along Leyden Creek, and then South along Highway 93. The Combination includes upgrading Indiana and McIntyre into an arterial as far South as Highway 58.

Regular Meeting -

OSAC agreed with staff and voted to forego consideration of a 105-acre property in Coal Creek Canyon. Even though the property connects two Open Space parcels and straddles Coal Creek, there is no way it could be used for a trail connection.

The residence in Mount Galbraith Park is on a separate 5-acre parcel and is now vacant. It is serving no purpose to Open Space, is an ongoing expense, and staff recommended pursuing disposal. Discussion was both positive and negative relative to disposal and a resolution was approved to obtain an appraisal of the house and property. Negotiations were approved for a 28-acre property contiguous to Alderfer-Three Sisters Park and the Denver Mountain Park (Dedise) surrounding Evergreen Lake.



October 6, 2005 - Study Session

Field trips to North Table Mountain and residence on Mount Galbraith Park. The North Table portion focused on location of trails outlined in the management plan.

Regular Meeting -

Margot Zallen of PLAN Jeffco presented a proposal that approval of the North Table Mountain Management Plan be delayed and that considerations are given to coordinating management with South Table Mountain.

Approval was given to negotiating a public access easement through the RE Enterprises property at the mouth of Clear Creek Canyon.

Revisions to the OSAC Policies relative to acquisition approvals were approved.

Staff presented suggested trail names for Centennial Cone Park. OSAC felt that some names were inaccurate and that some Indian names might be more appropriate. Staff was to bring alternate names in November. Interim signage for Centennial Cone Park also was presented, The signs to be in place this fall.

Gambel Oak



November 3, 2005 - Study Session

The study session primarily was a presentation of the Oral History Project being done by Open Space. The objective is to research and share the history and heritage of the individuals whose stories were a significant part of the various Open Space Parks by interviewing the previous landowners, relatives, and neighbors. As of November 2005 interviews had ben completed with Ken and Judy Johnson -Lair o' the bear Park and Eve Douglas Jolivette -Hiwan Ranch.

Regular Meeting - Approval was given to adding the Wilson property at the Northwestern corner of Tabor Lake to the Wheat Ridge list of priority acquisitions.

Approval was given to adding the Amato-Smaldone property, an in-holding in O'Kane Park (1st and Teller), to Lakewood's list of priority acquisitions as the owner now is interested in selling.

Stanton LaBreche presented information as to whether one user group or another causes more damage to trails. Stanton that each user group brought different levels and types of damage and that it is the volume of use that causes the most damage - soil compaction and erosion.

Amy Ito then presented a review of the October 27 Trail Task Force meeting. This meeting focused on potential trails and use on North Table Mountain.

All three user groups supported having separate parking areas for equestrians.

Mountain bikers and equestrians prefer having

multi-use trails.

Hikers would like to restrict trails to hikers and equestrians.

Good ideas were presented on how various users could approach the mesa top from different locations.

Equestrians felt that horse access from the North was most practical for them.

Bikers felt that the grade on the road up from Hwy. 93 was so steep that it would be selflimiting or many bikers and they would desire other points of access.

OSAC Notes - Continued

Margot Zallen (PLAN Jeffco) and Peter Morales (TCS Mountain Bike Coalition) proposed that an Ad Hoc Group be organized to make a thorough study and develop recommendations for the use of North Table Mountain. The Group would consist of Margot as Chair, 2 hikers, 2 bikers, 1 equestrian, 1 Open Space staff, 1 Golden representative, 1 soils/plant person, and 1 avian/wildlife person. (See a separate article on the Ad Hoc Committee.) Margot and Peter asked delay in implementing the Management Plan for North Table, but that there did need to be signage to encourage staying on the existing trails.

The consensus of OSAC was to allow the Ad Hoc Group to form and to delay implementation of the North Table Management Plan.



December 1, 2005 - Study Session

A report from the Board members and staff from the Ken Caryl Metro District brought OSAC up to date on their long range plans for their Community Center, Open Space owned and leased to the District. Their objective is to make the building more suitable for Community needs than its original racquet club/restaurant configuration. They have completed an enclosure for the indoor tennis facility and now want direct capital toward the Community Center. They also explained their implementation of a 3-tier user fee system, with Ken Caryl residents having the lowest fees, Jeffco residents the next level, and out-of-County residents the highest fees.

A short Executive Session was held to discuss new information on the house and 5-acre portion of Mount Galbraith Park.

Regular Meeting -

Margot Zallen and Peter Morales reported on the Ad Hoc Group. Ms. Zallen said that the Group's work plan focused on natural resources and recreation management. The Group would begin with natural resources, reviewing all existing information available on North Table. The first meeting, January 8, would be with Open Space staff to discuss baseline information and the acquisition history. Subsequent meetings would include presentations from various outside experts. An update to OSAC is planned for the March OSAC meeting.

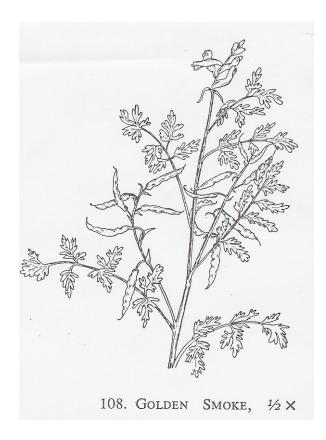
Amy Ito reviewed the 25 or so signs that would be placed in and around North Table by the year's end.

A motion to table the North Table Mountain Management Plan for nine months to allow the Ad Hoc Group time to develop information and recommendations was approved unanimously.

Approval was given to trade approximately 2 acres of Mount Galbraith Park adjacent to the County shops North of Golden Gate Canyon road for 2

acres at the West entrance to Centennial Cone Park.

Rod Tarullo, Director of Parks, Recreation and Golf, for Golden presented an update on the Rooney Soccer Complex. The capping and methane collection systems were completed in the Fall. An agreement still needed to be completed between Golden and the County relating to potential future costs - settling, etc. Mr. Tarullo hoped that the agreement could be completed within the next few months so that construction could begin in the Spring.



January 5, 2006 - Study Session

Dave Cohen, Trails Taskforce member, "Ad Hoc" committee member, and avid biker presented a possible "downhiller" bike trail. The presentation based the trail on the portion of Matthews-Winters Park on the North side of I-70. The trail would start at the Mother Cabrini border and end at the Mount Vernon gas station. The layout would be similar to the International "don't" symbol - a circle with a

slash through it. The downhiller trail would be the slash and the circle would be a counterclockwise, multi-use trail. This would allow bikers to either use US 40 to return to the top or ride up the multi-use trail.

Regular Meeting:

Approved due diligence and negotiations for a 70-acre property in Coal Creek. The property does contain a small house, but is a natural connection between Golden Gate and Eldorado State Parks.

OSAC had a long discussion over a request by Cingular to put a telephone pole cell tower on the Dakota Hogback and the service boxes near the Matthews-Winters parking lot. OSAC generally was against the proposal feeling that the CDOT parking lot would be a better location - Verizon already has a light pole cell tower there. CDOT policy is not to have cell towers on CDOT land closer than 2500 feet. Ralph and Greg were going to work on a waiver.

Jim Smith, Golden Realtor, asked in Public Comment, about the status of the house in Mount Galbraith Park. He felt that if disposal was to be considered, the homeowner's association might be interested. The item was not on the agenda so discussion was limited. The disposal is on the agenda for February 2, as an information item. Majority of OSAC favors scraping the house, not disposal. Commissioner's may need convincing.



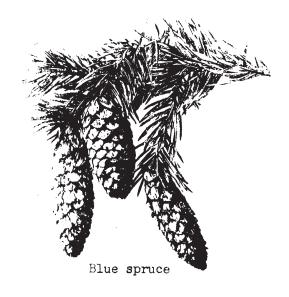
OSAC Notes - Continued

February 2, 2006 - Study Session

The historical background on the formation of the Trails Use Task Force (TTF) was presented along with the Open Space responses during the next few years (new signage, video, Bike Right events). Staff asked OSAC what their expectation was of the TTF. The consensus seemed to be that OSAC desired and appreciated input from the TTF, but did not feel that the TTF should have any responsibility in setting policy.

Concern was expressed that the bikers and equestrians are organized and appear to have some level of communication within their users. However, the hikers are not as organized and there was concern that communication to and from the hiker representatives was limited. Dave Cohen, biker rep, expressed concern that some hikers felt that no bikers was the only solution and this made work with the other groups difficult.

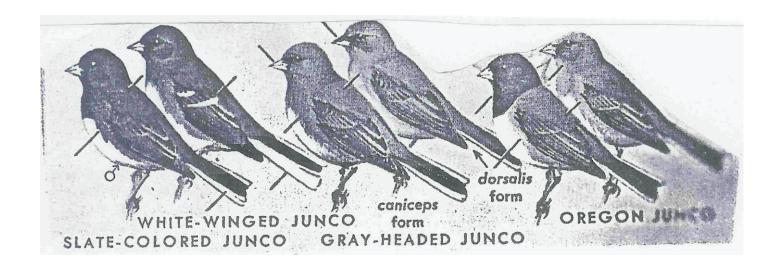
Consensus was that the TTF should continue that their input and efforts as conflict resolution has been important.



Regular Meeting -

Approval was given to acquisition of two 20-acre parcels adjacent to the northern boundary of the Cathedral Spires. The acquisition also will include an access easement for maintenance travel, etc. to the North side of the Spires.

The information developed by staff relating to the Mount Galbraith house and 5-acre parcel on which the house sits was present as an information item.



If you have not!!! Join PLAN Jeffco or renew your Membership today!

PLAN Jeffco is the county-wide volunteer citizen's group that organized and drafted the Open Space Resolution that resulted in the formation of the Jefferson County Open Space Program in 1972. We currently function as a watchdog group, observing meetings of the Open Space Advisory Committee, participating in subcommittees, and issues groups, proposing and working for important acquisitions, and keeping citizens informed of what is going on in their Open Space Program. PLAN Jeffco provided the leadership for the successful vote for bonds in 1998.

Please sign up or renew your membership now! Your address label shows the date of your last renewal. Ca 303.279.0664 for membership information. Name:	
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