



# PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

JULY 2012

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## Peaks to Plains Trail - Clear Creek Canyon Phase

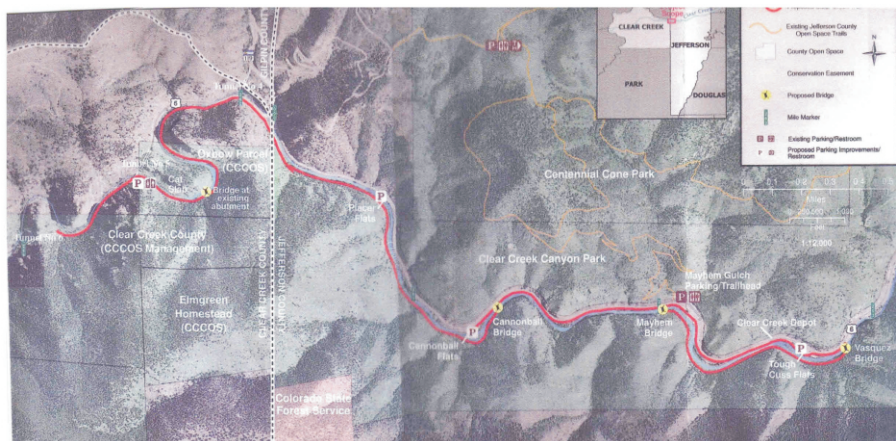
Earlier this year GOCO announced that grants would be available for developments along Colorado river corridors. Both Clear Creek and Jefferson Counties expressed interest in applying for grants. The GOCO Staff suggested that the two counties partner in a joint application.

In mid-March a joint application was submitted by Clear Creek and Jefferson Counties for development of trail along six miles of Clear Creek spanning the county line. Clear Creek County already has 14 miles of completed trail plus a number of miles of available frontage road along the 35 miles of Clear Creek in the County. The Clear Creek County portion of trail would begin at Tunnel 6 and extend to the County Line - about two miles. The Jefferson County portion would extend from the County Line to

east of the Mayhem Gulch Parking Lot near Mile Marker 263 - about four miles. The map below shows the trail corridor, proposed parking areas, and bridges.

The application was approved for further consideration in the first round of evaluations. The GOCO Board visited the site in mid-April and final decisions were made in mid-June. \$9.2 million was requested from GOCO to fund a

little less than 60% of the project's estimated cost. The estimated project costs were \$6 million in Clear Creek and \$10 million in Jefferson Counties. In June the GOCO Board awarded Clear Creek and Jefferson Counties \$4.6 million. The two counties now have the problem of fitting the development into the funds available. In addition to Open Space development funds, Jefferson County has commitments for \$145,000 from outside entities to assist in the funding.



# Open Space Citizen Survey

In the Fall of 2011, the Open Space Department funded a scientific survey to gather public feedback on Jefferson County Open Space Parks. The survey covered usage characteristics of parks, trails and other facilities, community values with respect to open space, satisfaction with current facilities and the importance of various park features, views on park and trail management, and communication. This feedback and subsequent analysis was designed to assist Jefferson County Open Space in future planning and policy formulation efforts.

A total of 10,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Jefferson County residents in early October 2011, with 9,990 being delivered after subtracting undeliverable mail. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 1,345, resulting in a response rate of 13.5 percent giving a margin of error of approximately +/- 2.7 percentage points. A detailed summary of the survey is posted on the Open Space Website - the URL is:

[http://jeffco/openspace\\_uploads/Jefferson\\_County\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://jeffco/openspace_uploads/Jefferson_County_Final_Report.pdf)

Respondents were almost equally divided female (52%) and male (48%). The random survey was targeted at residents 18 years and older. The age profile of responses is virtually identical to the County as a whole. The average age of respondents was 47 years. The average respondent had lived in Jefferson County for 19.6 years. About 24% of respondents had lived in the County less than five years.

The questionnaire contained a question designed to determine “household status” or the makeup of the family unit. About 28% of respondents reported that they are single. About 72% are couples, with 34% reporting that they are couples with children at home. Open Space use by children was 90% on family outings, 50% with friends, 35% with school groups, and 19% with youth organizations.

The results suggest that about 83% of County residents visited the Open Space Parks at least once each year. The most visited parks, by 10-11% of the residents, are Crown Hill, Lair o’ the Bear and Deer Creek Canyon parks. The results are similar for children’s activities and use with Lair o’ the Bear 20%, Deer Creek Canyon Park 13%, Apex 13%, Mount Falcon 12%, and Elk Meadow 11%.

The typical uses of open space were hiking/walking (87%) and hiking/walking with dogs (46%), enjoying the scenery (59%), wildlife viewing (40%), picnicking (33%) and mountain biking (29%). Most frequent uses were hiking/walking (45%) and hiking/walking with dogs (23%) mountain biking (10%) and running (4%).

Continued on Page 10

Striped Skunk



# *The Jeffco Conservation Café*

Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, Boettcher Mansion, 32 invitees (colleagues and partners) representing 27 state, county, city, park and recreation districts, and community organizations sponsored by both the Jeffco Open Space Foundation and Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS), brought together a wide array of voices to share ideas and brainstorm where we can more effectively collaborate on matters that affect us all: conservation and connecting people to the outdoors.

Six topics were presented for discussion. Attendees sat at six round tables with a staff facilitator who presented the topic. Discussions then identified the challenges, presented solutions, and offered good examples.

## **#1) HOW DO WE BALANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WITH HABITAT PROTECTION?**

Access to public lands, parks and open space allows people to discover, experience and appreciate the natural resources of our area and can foster support for resource protection, including habitat acquisition and restoration. Recreational offerings, educational and interpretive opportunities are important ways to engage the public. Ecosystem services are the benefits derived from nature and include the maintenance of biodiversity, aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural values tied to the landscape. These services help to raise awareness of the value of public lands that help to ensure their protection. Appropriate strategies are needed to find a balance.

## **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Special Protection Areas (SPAs); identify sensitive areas and those where closures make sense for resource protection and offer education campaigns as to why closures are important (both onsite and online).
- \* Direct park users to other, less used parks through the use of technology (smart phone apps/webcams at trailheads or at home; disperse use through creation of effective regional maps that are multi-jurisdictional in nature).
- \* Good signage that interprets the importance of the environmental systems at play in a park.
- \* Education to get out the stewardship message, incorporating that into volunteer projects.

## **#2) HOW DO WE INCORPORATE A CONSERVATION ETHIC INTO OUR WORK APPROACH?**

The conservation ethic is an ethic of resource use, allocation and protection. As Colorado's Front Range becomes more urbanized, sustaining a connection to our natural resources becomes extremely challenging. Parks and nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities provide critically important connections to our natural world and help to advance an effective conservation ethic.

## *The Jeffco Conservation Café, Continued*

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Provide on-site information that is real-time.
- \* Provide parks with natural elements in urban environments .
- \* Natural play facilities intended to engage youth.
- \* Define specific areas for active recreation and for relaxing in nature.
- \* Communication and coordination on a regional basis needs to occur.
- \* Signage – what can you do to be good stewards of the land?
- \* Get families outdoors; educate kids about the wonders of nature and how outdoor activities can be fun.

### **#3) HOW DO WE ADDRESS THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP IN CARING FOR OUR LANDS?**

Stewardship is an ethic that embodies responsible planning and management of resources and is closely tied to sustainability. Empowering communities to improve their quality of life through caring for their environmental heritage fosters lasting stewardship. Community engagement gets people with diverse agendas to articulate shared goals. Community stewards can come in many forms, including, but not limited to educators, health care providers, government, non-profits and private sector partners. Utilizing this group of supporters takes time, institutional capacity and commitment. However, embracing them can yield great rewards.

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Create ownership by using volunteers to build/create.
- \* Health benefits/tie in to underserved populations or non-users through events and programs.
- \* Using technology to connect users and get buy-in (e.g., cameras on birds/wildlife can allow for buy-in from home computers! Especially good for closed areas; e.g., elk calving grounds)
- \* Broaden the scope of partners (expand to include grassroots organizations).
- \* Continue to foster community support to ensure political endorsements (toot your horn and tailor messages to address elected officials' agendas).
- \* Put more effort into community partnerships; explore the potential for partnership through cooperative efforts.

### **#4) HOW CAN WE MORE EFFECTIVELY FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS?**

A partnership is an agreement to do something together that will benefit all involved, bringing results that could not be achieved by a single partner operating alone, and reducing duplication of efforts. Partnerships are a key instrument of local governance and can be a great help in improving services provided to constituents. A successful partnership enhances the impact and effectiveness of action through combined and more efficient use of resources, promotes innovation, and is distinguished by a strong commitment from each partner.

## *The Jeffco Conservation Café, Continued*

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Bonding of colleagues and nature.
- \* Collective volunteer opportunities.
- \* Family, schools and service clubs.
- \* Company service projects (churches, schools, businesses, etc.).
- \* Work with private sector to provide company perks.
- \* Volunteer service opportunities.
- \* Highlight the benefits to business.

### **#5) HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AS A REGION RATHER THAN AN ORGANIZATION?**

Across our region there are public lands, parks and open space that adjoin each other, some more challenging to manage and communicate ownership than others. Users of parks, open space and trails tend not concern themselves with ownership. They want a seamless transition whether that is a regional trail, access to open space outside of jurisdictional limits, or information on opportunities to connect with the outdoors.

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Regional maps (open space parks, transportation, including RTD routes and bike trails, online, paper or smart phone/pad apps); universal, inter-related interest maps for trails, etc.; master or universal map available on all jurisdictions' websites with links to particular jurisdictions.
- \* Joint applications (leveraging funds); GOCO grants.

- \* Work with groups which have maps already in place!
- \* Economic benefits need to be publicized.
- \* Address transportation issues with underserved populations.
- \* Use other agencies as a model (e.g. DRCOG).
- \* Bring jurisdictions under a similar setting – an umbrella organization.

### **#6) HOW DO WE BETTER ENGAGE YOUTH IN OUR PROGRAMS?**

We all know that fostering the next generation is an important challenge we must all meet for the longevity and sustainability of parks, open space and public lands. Levels of youth involvement in the outdoors have been falling. “Nature Deficit Disorder” is becoming more widely acknowledged as one of the roots of childhood obesity and increased chronic health conditions. Unstructured play delivers cognitive benefits, increased creativity and improved physical health for youth.

### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**

- \* Curriculum alignment in local schools with nature-based themes (e.g., place-based education).
- \* Create outdoor education classrooms (space in our parks, nature, history, health, nutrition, and weather themes all possible).
- \* Fund transportation to parks.
- \* Corporate sponsorships of field trips to parks.
- \* Grants/foundation dollars for field trips.
- \* Hold technology events at parks to get kids there (e.g., geocaching and scavenger

## *The Jeffco Conservation Café, Continued*

hunts).

- \* Build awareness of proximity to parks.

A result of this 6-hour world café style event is not only a deeper working relationship among entities in our region, but also some concrete, actionable ideas related to communicating opportunities and services as a region rather than an organization. The event also fostered more effective partnerships on a myriad of efforts.

For example, JCOS is now working toward a *regional map series* to benefit park users across many systems. Visitors to parks and open space in Jefferson County tend not to concern themselves with ownership. Maps that provide seamless information on trail connections across multi-jurisdictional park boundary lines as well as cultural, historic, paleontological and geologic features along the way would be invaluable to all park users.

Additionally, the concept of *collective volunteer opportunities* is also now under development at JCOS, geared toward celebrating our parks and those groups who help make the program a success. These will reflect JCOS partnership with public, private and nonprofit partners. JCOS' evolving *health partnership* with the Jefferson County Health Department on the important benefits our parks provide to the public is another example of a topic discussed at the café, and is now being acted upon.

There are many more areas of collaboration possible as a result of this hugely successful event!



## OSAC NOTES, OSAC NOTES,

February -

Study Session - Presentation and discussion on deeding Open Space purchased lands to Park & Recreation Districts. Present policies only relate to deeding to cities. Lands used by Park & Recreation Districts are leased.

Regular Meeting - Presentation of the results of the Citizen Survey, see article in this newsletter. Presentation on making an application for a GOCO Colorado Rivers Initiative grant. Grant request would be for the west part of Clear Creek Canyon, see article in this newsletter.

Director Tom Hoby reported that JVA Consulting had been retained to develop a business plan for using the Baehrden Lodge at Pine Valley Ranch Park. Thirteen potential upcoming capital improvement projects on park sites were approved by the Planning Commission. Scheduling will depend on budget availability. A reorganization of staffing occurred February 1 with a reduction in the real estate and planning staffs (because of limited funds for acquisition and development until the bonds begin to be retired) and assigning staff to coordinating recreation, performing research, coordinating partnerships, and expanding communication.

March -

Study Session - Scott Grossman gave a presentation on applying for accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. The City of Golden is accredited and there are benefits when applying for grants. The application process will take about one year. There was additional discussion relative to deeding land to park and recreation districts.

Regular Meeting - Presentation was made on the final terms for acquiring the Faller Trust property adjacent to Reynolds Park. The terms for this acquisition were approved. This property will allow

for a trail loop in the Southwest section of the park. An access agreement with the State was approved for extending Quaker Street on the South side of South Table Mountain. This will provide access to the planned trailhead and parking lot at that locale.

Director Tom Hoby announced the plans for the Conservation Café -see article in this newsletter. Staff is working on leasing the Dinosaur Ridge Visitor Center directly to the Friends of Dinosaur Ridge. At present the lease is to the Town of Morrison with a sub-lease to the Friends. The new lease also would include portions of Alameda Avenue.

April -

Study Session - Both the ability for electronic attendance at OSAC meetings and the status of sub-committees were discussed, along with possible changes in the Local Grant program.

Regular Meeting - Approval was given to allowing deeding of lands to park and recreation districts on a case-by-case basis.

Director Tom Hoby reported that the GOCO grant was in progress with a site visit by the GOCO board planned in mid-April. Over 50 applications were received for this year's Youth Work Program.

May - no Study Session

Regular Meeting - Approved revisions to the Local Park & Recreation District Grant Program. Approved easements on Fehringer Ranch to allow for road improvements to Quincy Avenue, including widening a segment along the southern boundary of the Ranch and removing Open Space restrictions so that the County and Xcel can maintain their infrastructure.

June-

No meeting.

## Douglas-fir: By any other name

The tree we know today as Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) baffled botanists for decades. People have known it as yellow spruce, red spruce, red fir, Douglas spruce, and Oregon pine. It's not unusual for a plant to have many common names, but this one has tried on many botanical names as well. Botanists first called it *Pinus taxifolia*, the pine with yew-like leaves. Later, they tried squeezing it in with spruces, then firs. In 1867, 75 years after it was made known to western science, they finally gave up and created a new genus (*Pseudotsuga*) to house Douglas-fir and its oriental cousins.

*Pseudotsuga*, meaning false hemlock, reflects its similarity to true hemlocks, or *Tsuga*, which, to compound the confusion, is the Japanese word for larch.

Our species is named for Archibald Menzies, Scottish naturalist with the Vancouver Expedition, who first collected it in 1792. These grand trees occur from British Columbia to the highlands of northern Mexico, although our Rocky Mountain version of Douglas-fir (the hyphen reminds us it's not a true fir) is sometimes considered to be a distinct variety, called *glauca* for its bluish color. A second American species, bigcone Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*) occurs in southern California.

The accepted common name honors another Scotsman, David Douglas, pioneer explorer-botanist of the Pacific Coast, who collected the seeds of Douglas-fir and also discovered many other new conifers in California and the Pacific Northwest. He once wrote to William Jackson Hooker, recipient of the many specimens he sent to England: "You will begin to think that I manufacture pines at my pleasure." New species were, in those days, more abundant than botanists.

Through all the confusion of nomenclature, the trees have, of course, not changed perceptibly—nor has their utility been compromised by botanical uncertainties. If this tree was tough to categorize, it was easy to appreciate. In the temperate rainforests where Douglas-fir was first "discovered," its size, abundance, and the quality of its wood were all that mattered, and few cared what you called it. When you hear "old-growth forest" on the evening news, this coastal Douglas-fir is the tree in question. It comprises almost 90% of those forests.



From the Blue Ox to the Spotted Owl, Douglas-fir is part of our lore and landscape and more. For a century and a half, Douglas-fir has literally formed the foundation of our history and development.

In Oregon and Washington, Douglas-firs may reach 300 feet in height and 15 feet in diameter. Who could resist such timber? No one did. Its contributions to western civilization have been both mundane and monumental: from the humble 2x4s that hold up our roofs to the massive beams of the Mormon Tabernacle, from the railroad ties and telephone poles that knit the growing West together to new (in 1925) masts for the U.S.S. Constitution, Douglas-fir has served our needs. Its popularity was assured, in part, by the demise of virgin eastern white pine, which had provided the Constitution's original masts in 1798, but no longer grew tall enough to do so. That species had dominated the lumber market from the late 1700s until its virgin stands were logged beyond effective use a century later. (Eastern white pine still occupies its original range, but it has not yet returned to its original glory.) Logging firms from the east shipped their lumberjacks (and sometimes



## *Douglas-fir: By any other name, Continued*

their entire operations, mill and all) west to the new frontiers of timber, to the great forests of Douglas-fir.

Here in the Rocky Mountains, our trees do not grow nearly as big or as quickly. They can reach diameters of three feet and heights of 130 feet at maturity; about half the height of large scale coastal Douglas-fir. Our trees are, by necessity, better able to withstand drought and are less shade tolerant than those in the Northwest. Rocky Mountain trees are also valuable as timber, though less so than their coastal cousin. Douglas-fir makes up about 10 percent of Colorado's forest acreage, but only accounts for about 5 percent of the harvested wood.

Never mind the differences—you'll recognize Douglas-fir wherever you find it. The 3-pronged bracts between the cone scales are unique to *Pseudotsuga*. In fact, it's often easiest to recognize Douglas-fir along the trail by

the squirrel-cut cones you see on the ground; the leafy tops are often too tall to distinguish. You'll find its needles are flat but blunt, giving it a softer feel than spruces; its twigs are somewhat roughened—not as much as in spruces, but more than those of true firs. The graceful presence of Douglas-fir illuminates our woodlands from the foothills to the upper montane, but it rarely occurs in large, single-species stands. At its lower elevations, it often accompanies ponderosa pine, replacing it on the cooler north-facing slopes. In southern Colorado, it's likely to be found with white fir (*Abies concolor*).

In addition to its value to us humans, Douglas-fir provides many services to wildlife. Its branches provide cover and nesting sites; its seeds provide nourishment, but keep critters busy in the process. With 20 to 30 seeds per cone, a bushel of cones yields about half a pound of seeds. That's the entire production of an average tree in a



## *Douglas-fir: By any other name, Continued*

good year. At that rate, by my clumsy calculation, it would take about 12 Douglas-fir trees to support one hungry squirrel through winter—if he can get all the seeds. (In real life, it probably takes even more trees. Squirrels might do better on ponderosa pine seeds, which have more calories, but they'll have to work harder to get them out of the tougher cones.)

So how does a tree make sure some seeds survive to grow new trees? By tricking those pesky squirrels, and anyone else who's looking for lunch. Douglas-fir, and a number of other trees, have "learned" to do this by

starving the squirrels (or forcing them to look for food elsewhere) during most years, then overwhelming them with a massive seed crop in an occasional good year. Because the squirrels can't take advantage of this sudden wealth, seeds have a better chance to escape and some will grow. Douglas-fir generally has one complete failure and two or more light crops between heavy, or "mast," years. After each the squirrels must be prepared for a few lean ones ahead.

By Sally L. White

## *Open Space Citizen Survey, Continued*

About 95% of the respondents to “What is the greatest value of Open Space?” supported “Assurance that open space will be there for future generations” and “Outdoor recreation in a natural setting close to home.” Close to home was most important with similar ratings for respondents in older (over 40 years) and younger age groups.

Respondents to a question on how Open Space funds should be spent: Acquisitions was most important with 68% priority, 22% for protection of the land, 15% for recreation, 13% scenic, 9% for land preservation, and 9% for trail corridors. Capital improvements priorities were: 11% for capital improvements, 6% renovation of historic structures, and 4% for regional (off park) trails. Support was equal for preservation vs. recreation.

Support was even for designating trails for single

and multiple use trails 56-58%, with high opposition to single use parks or alternate day use.

Positive response to “Friendliness and manners of other visitors” was 68%. Higher positive response was shown by both trail runners (78%) and mountain bikers (73%).

Comments by responders filled 280 pages.



## HAVE YOU JOINED PLAN Jeffco???

### HAVE YOU PAID DUES LATELY???

(THE ADDRESS LABEL SHOWS  
THE DATE OF YOUR LAST RENEWAL)

PLAN Jeffco needs your dues to continue to publish four newsletters a year so we can keep our members and elected officials up to date on Jeffco open space and related issues. We distribute almost 600 copies. With increased printing costs and postal rates, we have not been receiving sufficient numbers of dues to cover these costs.

### IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER, PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING!!!

PLAN Jeffco is the county-wide 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. PLAN Jeffco also spearheaded the Bond Election in 1998 that has allowed doubling the Open Space acreage. We currently function as a watchdog group, observing meetings of the Open Space Advisory Committee, participating in subcommittees and issue groups, proposing and working for important acquisitions, and keeping citizens informed of what is going on in their Open Space Program

Our membership rate is: \$35 per year  
Make checks payable to PLAN Jeffco and send to:  
PLAN Jeffco  
11010 W 29<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Lakewood, CO 80215

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PLAN Jeffco will add you to our email tree, so that we can inform you of special events and Open Space related issues. We do not share your personal and contact information with others.



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Jefferson County Citizens for  
Planned Growth with Open Space

PLAN JEFFCO NEWSLETTER