

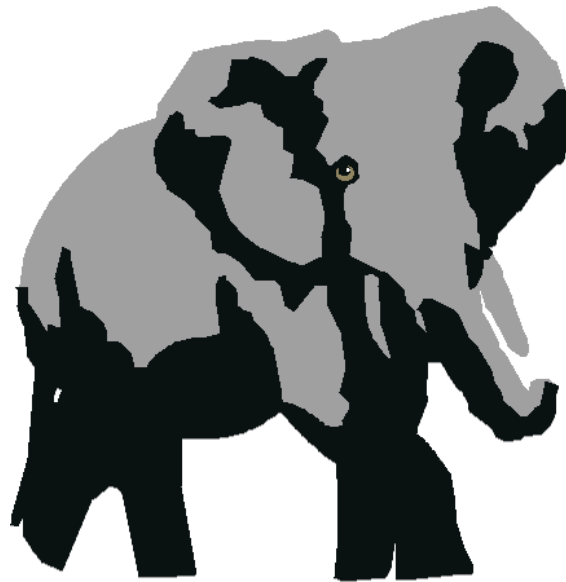


PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

JANUARY 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stampeding Black Elephants	1
Local Grants	2
Conservation Cafe	3
2015 Open Space Goals	6
PLAN Jeffco Web	7
OSAC Notes	9



Stampeding Black Elephants

Did you realize that PLAN Jeffco and Jefferson County Open Space are an integral part of a world wide effort to deal with massive environmental problems such as global warming, climate change, deforestation, mass extinction and water pollution? Well, PLAN Jeffco did not either until we were alerted to the New York Times, November 23, 2014 op-ed column authored by Tom Friedman, entitled “Stampeding Black Elephants”.

So what's a Black Elephant? When Friedman was at the recent World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, he heard this term used for the first time. The Black Elephant is a cross between “... 'a black swan' (an unlikely, unexpected event with enormous ramifications) and 'the elephant in the room' (a problem that is visible to everyone, yet no one still wants to address it).”

The Black Elephant in question is the plethora of environmental issues which are accumulating such as global warming, deforestation, ocean acidification, mass extinction and massive fresh water pollution. These tragedies strike and we claim they're unpredictable black swans. In truth they're the elephant which is already in the room.

The Congress brought together some 6,000 scientists and environmentalists from around the globe, all of whom were focused on the same goal: “guarding and expanding protected areas, which are the most powerful tools we have to restrain the environmental black elephants.”

Black Elephants - continued

Russ Mittermeier, one of the world's leading primatologists, said to Friedman that "...protected forests, marine sanctuaries and national parks are not zoos, not just places to see nature. They are the basic life support systems that provide the clean air and water, food, fisheries, recreation, stable temperatures and natural coastal protections that sustain us humans..."

The op-ed piece brings a global perspective to what we're doing in Jefferson County, by preserving and conserving our open spaces. Friedman cites perspective after perspective, from countries across

the world, and they all point to a common thread of thought...our open spaces and "parks are really the heart, lungs, and circulatory systems of the world — and they're all endangered.

You can read the entire column in the New York Times online, at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/opinion/sunday/thomas-l-friedman-stamped-black-elephants.html?rref=collection%2Fcolumn%2Fthomas-l-friedman&r>

Local Grants

The Open Space Department budgets \$1.2 million each year for local grants plus an amount of the lottery funds that come to Jefferson County. This year the County Commissioners authorized OSAC to distribute \$450 thousand of the County's share of the lottery funds.

On December 4th, 2 cities, 5 districts, and 3 non-profits presented their requests for Grants to OSAC. OSAC and JCOS staff reviewed the grants and on January 8th OSAC approved Grants totaling \$1,750,030. Funds for the awards over and above the amount available this year are coming from Grant funds that were not expended in previous years.

The preliminary grants as approved by OSAC are listed below. The County Commissioners will consider the Grants at a meeting early in February and make the official awards.

Arvada - \$140,000 for improving the Van Bibber trail as it passes through the Stenger-Lutz athletic fields along 58th Avenue, west of Kipling.

Lakewood - \$435,000 for the first phase of redeveloping Carmody Park, south of Jewell along Old Kipling.

Evergreen P&R - \$40,000 to cost share with CDOT on replacing the bridge over Bear Creek into Evergreen Lake Park.

Foothills P&R - \$1,000,000 to replace the irrigation system at Clement Park and begin a major renovation of some of the facilities at the park. (Note that Open Space developed this park 30 years ago, before leasing it to Foothills.)

Ken-Caryl Metro - \$54,280 for installation of a playground and paths at the Community Center in the Hogback Valley.

Normandy Estates Metro - \$8,750 for repairs to the tennis courts and seating for the courts and an adjacent playground off Coal Mine west of Sheridan.

Beaver Ranch - \$20,000 for a master plan for the ultimate development of Beaver Ranch Park southwest of Conifer.

Evergreen Audubon - \$11,000 for exhibit signage and landscaping modifications at the shelter at Evergreen Lake, which is used as a nature center in the summers.

Prospect P&R - \$15,750 for outdoor fitness stations at Applewood Park, on 18th West of Youngfield.

Friends of Dinosaur Ridge - \$6,000 for an entry sign on the west side of Dinosaur Ridge.

Starting the Discussion: Regional Conservation Networks

By Vicky Gits

“We need to find out what's on your radar screen and get those things on the map,” ---Tom Hoby

Jefferson County Open Space is encouraging conservation enthusiasts to think regionally and get together with like-minded individuals across county and organizational lines.

In pursuit of the goal Jeffco Open Space conceived and hosted a “Conservation Café,” to explore the idea of creating “conservation networks,” specifically four such networks, targeting four major drainage regions in Jefferson County.

Ralston Creek, Clear Creek, Bear Creek and Deer Creek potential conservation areas were discussed.

PLAN Jeffco and The Jeffco Outdoors Foundation joined in as sponsors of the half-day event and participated in the planning process. The idea for the event grew out of a proposal by PLAN Jeffco on how to implement the acquisition strategies in the recently adopted Open Space Master Plan.

Forty-five individuals involved in recreation, parks, nature preserves and watershed joined Open Space staff for the gathering November 20, 2014 at the Boettcher Mansion on Lookout Mountain. See side bar for the 35 organizations attending.

The goal was to introduce the concept of regional conservation networks and explore the possibility of creating regional conservation networks in Jefferson County.

The structure of the gathering was “World Café style.” Participants rotated among four conversation centers covering four geographic areas of concern: Ralston Creek, Bear Creek, Clear Creek and Deer Creek, all of which run from the western border of the county to the east.

Organizations represented at the Conservation Cafe

Bear Creek Watershed Association
Boulder County Parks and Open Space
Clear Creek County
Clear Creek Land Conservancy
Coalition for the Upper South Platte
Colorado Department of Health and Environment
Colorado Ecological Services Office
Colorado Open Lands
Colorado State Land Board
Conifer Area Council
Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield
Denver Mountain Parks
Denver Mountain Parks Foundation
Denver Water
Douglas County Open Space & Natural Resources
Evergreen Audubon Society
Federal Highway Administration
Foothills Park & Recreation District
Golden Gate Canyon State Park
Great Outdoors Colorado
Jeffco Outdoors Foundation
Jefferson County Conservation District
Jefferson County Nature Association
Ken Caryl Master Association
City of Lakewood
Lariat Loop National Scenic Byway
National Park Service
Jeffco Open Space Advisory Committee
PLAN Jeffco
Rocky Mountain Wild
Table Mountains Conservation Fund
Team Evergreen
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Water Action Network
City of Westminster

Conservation Café continued

Executive director Tom Hoby set the stage by introducing the concept of regional conservation and describing the successful Chatfield Basin Conservation Network (CBCN), which was created in 2006 and functioned for about six years before disbanding. (See Chatfield Basin Conservation Network Green Infrastructure System: Conservation Connections for Nature and People, May 2006.

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.douglas.co.us%2Fplanning%2Fdocuments%2Fsection-1-0-to-6-0.pdf&ei=hOG9VPH_NcKZNpTogqAL&usq=AFQjCNHKeUqE6yySC9qeziY5F_jvGLPXQg&sig2=iqQLU8Qwc_CZKcg26XxI_g&bvm=bv.83829542,d.eXY&cad=rjt

The CBCN consisted of 75 partners, including several developers. As a group they worked together to identify important conservation priorities, such as preserving trails and wildlife corridors around Chatfield Basin.

The network received a \$6 million grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, and partners acquired the property that resulted in Hildebrand Park, created a trailhead at County Line Road between Broadway and Santa Fe, and created the Audubon Nature Center at Chatfield State Park.

Hoby cited the example of the creation of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop, an \$80 million investment, as another successful regional effort.

The main purpose of conservation networks is to identify various lands that, in the opinion of the network members, need to be preserved for various reasons. The second part is to demonstrate the need to the general public.

“Jeffco Open Space's guiding philosophy is we only deal with willing buyers and fair market values,” Hoby said.

“How much land is enough? It's difficult to quantify. Some people think we have enough and others think there is never enough,” Hoby said.

“We need to say why that's important, categorically, whatever those things might be. Conservation is an ongoing process. Not something we are going to be done with some day. We can slice and dice them however we want to. The ones we identify could be a starting point or expanded,” he said.

“We need to find out what's on your radar screen and get those things on the map,” Hoby said.

After the introductions, participants broke up into groups to discuss their areas for 15 minutes per group.

These breakout groups viewed large tabletop maps and made notes on their goals such as creating trail connections from Meyer Ranch to Beaver Ranch, From Flying J Open Space Park to Evergreen and from Flying J to Conifer High.

Overall, there was a concern for protecting areas identified as especially valuable for biodiversity purposes by scientists from Colorado State University under the Colorado Natural Heritage study program that identifies the rarest and most threatened species and plant communities.

“[Survey of Critical Biological Resources Jefferson County, Colorado](#)” located at

http://www.cnhp.colostate.edu/download/documents/2012/FINAL_REPORT.pdf

The **Ralston Creek Region** has some efforts that are underway. The Rocky Mountain Greenway project builds on President Obama's “America's Great Outdoors Initiative” intended to connect communities to the nature that

Conservation Café continued

surrounds them. This initiative includes connecting the Rocky Mountain Arsenal to Rocky Mountain National Park.

Associated with the Rocky Mountain Greenway is the desire to realize the full alignment of the Colorado Front Range Trail. Identification of opportunities to fill gaps in this important north-south trail alignment across Colorado is most important in this northern portion of Jefferson County, leading into Boulder County where there are many on-road and off-road cycling possibilities.

View sheds were discussed as critically important to preserve along both the Indiana and Highway 93 corridors. Protecting the Ralston creek watershed and water quality in the corridor were found to be important.

The Ralston Creek Region is rich in natural resources, including the Preble's Jumping Mouse, raptors of all kinds, sensitive native prairie habitat, and open expanses which enable wildlife movement. Protecting areas of high biodiversity is paramount in this region.

Conversation on the **Clear Creek** region referred to preserving the view north from I-70 to Centennial Cone. Large parcels in the watershed such as the Goltra property east of Centennial Cone and north of Clear Creek Canyon Park need to be protected.

Maintaining momentum on the Peaks to Plains Trail project along Clear Creek was discussed along with protecting gaps along the corridor with emphasis on wildlife habitat and movement.

A shuttle from the Jeffco Courts & Administration building along the Lariat Loop was mentioned as a means of allowing more people to enjoy the parks and cultural resources in the area.

Suggested opportunities for preservation of lands in the **Bear Creek Region** include private lands west of Matthews/Winters Park, east of Red Rocks Park,

and south of Lair o' the Bear Park. Water quality was discussed by the participants for this region along with forest health and wildfire mitigation. Also discussed was the expansion of Firewise practices on all properties within the region.

Additional trails to connect Evergreen with Morrison and Conifer were discussed.

Conservation partnerships were the focus of discussion about the **Deer Creek Region**. Because of the many areas of high biodiversity, there is need for a preservation effort that focuses on plant communities, watershed/source water protection, restoration, and recreation.

The major water corridors, including the South Platte, Buffalo Creek, and Deer Creek offer opportunities for large-scale restoration. Trail opportunities include along the South Platte and connecting Conifer with the parks in the Region.

At the end of the morning, JCOS planning director Amy Ito said the division staff was committed to choosing one of the four areas and organizing and leading a conservation network group for that area. It would be up to participants to organize other groups.

PLAN Jeffco's Margot Zallen urged the JCOS staff to think about how many opportunities might be lost if the staff doesn't think about the rest of the county at the same time.

Open Space is planning to start with a Network focusing on the **Deer Creek Region**. There are at least 56 partner agencies in this region and many efforts already are underway.

The staff report on the conservation Café is posted on the Open Space web site under Meetings.

2015 Open Space Goals

At the beginning of each year the Open Space staff prepares a list of projects to be addressed during the year. These projects are in addition to the normal daily routines and potential acquisition projects. This year there are 97 projects listed, with 55 to be completed by the end of the year. Following is a list of the major projects anticipated to be completed by the end of 2015.

County-wide

- Develop standardized elements for trailhead design
- Implement new designs for trail switchbacks
- Develop and implement a trail rating system
- Prepare 8 regional maps - similar to the existing Bear Creek Regional Map
- Continue enhancing the website
- Develop system-wide sign standards

Open Space Building

- Major rehabilitation of building parking areas

Apex Park

- Realign Pick N Sledge and Poco Calle trails
- Complete the reconstruction of the East Trailhead

Clear Creek Canyon Park

- Complete the design of the two sections of the Peaks to Plains Trail East of Mayhem Gulch
- Complete design of a trail section utilizing the Welch Ditch flume at the mouth of Clear Creek
- Complete construction of the first two sections of the Peaks to Plains Trail - County line to Mayhem Gulch

Crown Hill Park

- Replace signs to match present sign standards
- Remove and replace restroom, new kiosk, and trail realignment

Deer Creek Region

- Establish Conservation Network for this County area

Deer Creek/Hildebrand Parks

- Develop design for trail connecting Deer Creek and Hildebrand Parks through Lockheed Martin easement

Elk Meadow

- Additional trailhead design
- Determine how to resolve the groundwater problem impacting the Pioneer Trail
- Construct a loop trail within the North area

Hildebrand Ranch Park

- Maintenance on permeable pavers in parking lot
- Repair of Old Time Ditch

Hiwan Homestead Museum

- Repair all roofs

Lair o the Bear Park

- Replacement of Dipper Bridge

Matthews Winters Park

- Develop a new trailhead design
- Complete restroom upgrades
- Complete trail connection to I-70 right-of-way

Mt. Falcon

- Redesign of the West Trailhead
- Relocate West Trailhead restroom

North Table Mountain Park

- Realignment of Mesa Top Trail
- Complete modifications to the West Trailhead parking – fewer horse trailer spaces
- Implement prairie dog management on colony below the West Slope of North Table
- Reconstruct trail from Perry Trailhead to the climbing area

Pine Valley

- Weatherproofing the exterior of the Baerden Lodge

South Table Mountain

- Review park plans and complete design plans for Quaker Street access
- Improve some of the trail surfaces with aggregate

South Valley

- Repair asphalt trail by chip sealing

White Ranch

- Realignment and repair of Mustang Trail
- Realignment and repair of Rawhide Trail

Have you visited PLAN Jeffco's web page recently?

Why does PLAN Jeffco have a web site?

To keep our members and interested citizens informed on PLAN Jeffco's activities.

To keep our viewers up to date on happenings that might be affecting Open Space.

To keep our viewers up to data in happenings that might be affecting our environment.

To supplement the Jeffco Open Space Department web pages.

What information is on the PLAN Jeffco web site?

Home Page

Current **news** items of interest to those involved in land conservation.

About us

PLAN Jeffco's Vision, Mission & Guiding Principles. PLAN Jeffco's history - PLAN Jeffco drafted and campaigned for the original Open Space Resolution approved by the voters in 1972. We protected Open Space at the ballot box in 1978 and 1980. We led the campaign for the 1998 Bond issue that has allowed for doubling the Open Space acreage.

PLAN Jeffco's Board of Directors - Who are they!

Contributors who have created content for the web site - Who are they!

Open Space Oversight - What we do!

Strategic Planning, Citizens' Advocacy, Conservation & Preservation – we work with Open Space and other private and governmental agencies to achieve the goal of conserving open space lands. Meet with County Commissioner candidates and new OSAC members to review the history of PLAN Jeffco and the Open Space program.

Current Initiatives - Ensure that the program does not deviate from the original purposes detailed in the Open Space resolutions.

Open Space Master Plans - Participate in the

development of the program's Master Plans - the last 3 plans are available on our site.

Open Space Documents - the 1972 Open Space Resolution, the 1980 Amendment, the 1987 Ad Hoc Committee Report, and the 1998 Open Space Policies and Procedures, all of which are available on our site.

OSAC Meetings & Meeting Notes - Notes taken by observers at the (nearly) monthly OSAC Meetings.

Reports & Studies - from PLAN Jeffco Conferences and other entities on the economic benefit of Park Lands.

Surveys - The Open Space Citizen Survey taken in late 2011.

News - Current and archived news items of interest to Jeffco citizens:

News / Front Page – late-breaking happenings and articles of interest are initially published here, for quick review.
News / Features & Opinions – articles which are not time-sensitive, or on-going issues with continuous follow-up, are published here.

News / From the Board – opinion pieces from various members of the PLAN Jeffco Board are published here.

News / The Archives – as articles “age out”, they will be moved into the archives, but they will still be available for your reading pleasure.

Experience Open Space - Visit Open Space Parks

Open Space Parks - Information, history, news and photographs relating to each of Jeffco's 29 Open Space Parks.

Educational Articles: Plants, Animals & the Environment - Articles on birds, coyotes, pines, geology, weeds, and more.

PLAN Jeffco Web Site continued

Links - To other Open Space Programs, City Recreation Sites, Park & Recreation District Sites and other Conservation Advocates.

Newsletters - PLAN Jeffco's latest newsletter is posted shortly after publication and many of the previous issues are archived in this space.

Meetings & Events -

Monthly Board meetings - Date, time and location of upcoming Board meetings.

Upcoming PLAN Jeffco Events - When an event is scheduled.

Past Events - Notes on previous PLAN Jeffco Conferences and celebrations.

Events Around Jeffco -Upcoming and Past

Join or Give

Membership application – join us and become a top-level supporter of Jefferson County Open Space.

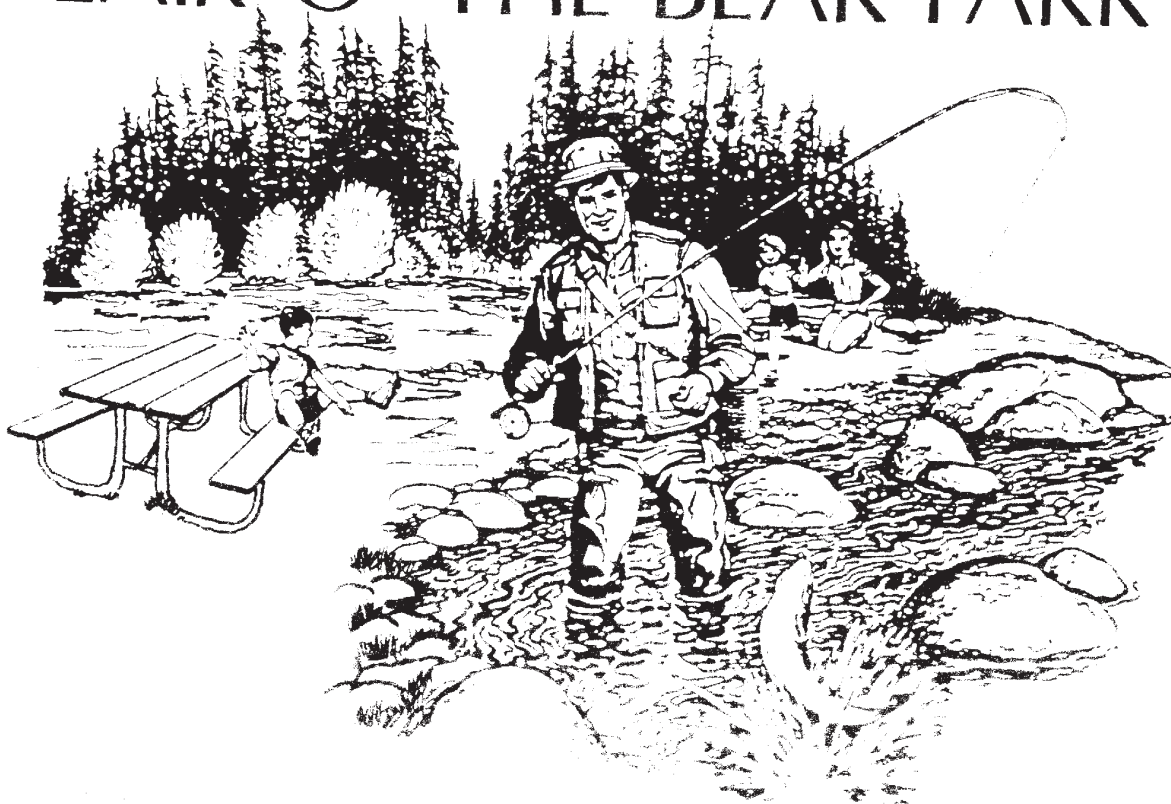
Donate - we are self-supporting. All funds go toward the newsletter, website, and conference expenses.

Volunteer - we have interesting projects that can use additional help.

Land Bequeathments - we can assist in helping to conserve lands that have open space potential.

Contact us - email or snail mail.

LAIR O' THE BEAR PARK



OSAC Notes - OSAC Notes

October 2, 2014 - Study Session

OSAC listened to and viewed a presentation by the Architerra Group on the Master Plan that had been developed by all of the entities along the planned and completed Peaks to Plains Trail along Clear Creek, from Clear Creek County through to Adams County. There will be standardized signs for distance, intersections/entrances/exits, and other features along the trail.

Regular Meeting

The City of Arvada proposed an exchange of properties South of Leyden Creek to allow for the right-of-way of the proposed Jefferson Parkway. The exchange would be for a similar-sized property just West of the property to be exchanged. The exchanged property is West of the existing trail along Leyden Creek; so there would be no impact on facilities trail. There was a short Executive Session to discuss the request to have the ability to pave the access to an inholding property in Coal Creek Park. The access crosses about one-half mile of Open Space.

October 22, 2014 Public meeting on Douglas Mountain Proposed Acquisition

Location: 964 acres in five parcels located between Golden Gate Canyon Road and Robinson Hill Road, including the summit of Douglas Mountain in Jefferson County, CO. Properties border the Mount Tom Potential Conservation Area identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

Properties in this area were considered for conservation by Jeffco Open Space. In 2004, staff negotiated terms with the landowners and presented the project to the Advisory Committee on March 3, 2005. Public testimony focusing on traffic problems led OSAC to table the proposal indefinitely, Note that Centennial Cone Park had not yet opened.

The properties have good natural resource values and

the steepness of the slopes will limit the amount of development and the number of users at any one time.

Negative public comments focused on potential traffic, increased fire danger, and the effect on water quality; whereas the positive comments focused on preservation of the property, which is the desire of the present owners.

November 6, 2014 Study Session

Presentation by the Conifer Recreation Council on a survey of the community. The desires included more trails, connecting trails, an indoor community center, and expanded outdoor recreation opportunities. Of the 50,000 Jeffco residents not served by tax-supported recreation facilities, 20,000 live in the Conifer area.

Mary Ann Bonnell and Lisa Kluesner gave a presentation on prairie dogs - including species, food sources, healthy densities, and ecological benefits - food chain and burrowing animals. Open Space does have a number of colonies, the largest is on flats on the West side of North Table Mountain.

Regular Meeting

Joy Lucisano made a quarterly report on real estate activities, 25 projects were completed and 25 new proposals were received.

Approved an easement for the Valley Water District (Wheat Ridge) to cross into the Greenbelt.

Approved a maintenance agreement to share costs for reconstruction of the road accessing Booth Ranch Park from Coal Creek Canyon. About one-half mile of this road was totally washed out in the September 2013 floods.

OSAC Notes *continued*

Executive session: discussed potential acquisition proposals for Douglas Mountain, Mt Tom properties, and Indigena inholding in Booth Ranch.

After executive session - field trip to Mt Tom properties was scheduled.

December 3, 2014

Listened to presentations from the ten entities that had applied for Local Grants.

January 8, 2015

Study Session - Don Klima and Tom Hoby presented the staff recommendations for the local grants. The requests ranged from \$6,000 for an entrance sign at Dinosaur Ridge to \$1,000,000 to assist Foothills P&R to begin a major maintenance/redevelopment program at Clement Park. See article in this newsletter for details on the grants.

Amy Ito discussed a few of the 97 projects that are planned during 2015, with 55 being target for completion during this year. See article in this newsletter summarizing some of the projects.

Thea Rock demonstrated JCOS's new web site. The site still is limited by the County's decision to use an older version of the software and their policy of powering down the County servers at night and on weekends. The site is much improved, easier to navigate, but can be slow to respond.

Regular Meeting

The Jefferson County Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC) made a presentation on their activities. Participants in the JCEDC include the County, cities, businesses, educational institutions, and chambers of commerce. The goals of JCEDC are to: connect to resources, promote primary employers, stress Jeffco's advantages (quality of life), and recognize Jeffco's challenges (aging workforce, low inventory of undeveloped land and vacant office space, limited incentives, and cost of housing.) The objectives of their Forward Jeffco Initiative are:

Attract business - be more aggressive
Retain business - outreach to existing companies

Entrepreneurs - work with technology groups (Mines, NREL, etc.)

The staff's recommendations for the local grants were approved.

Executive Session - An update on the Douglas Mountain, Mt Tom properties, and Indigena inholding in Booth Ranch proposals. Offers had been made on all of the properties.

Director's Report - The Jeffco Outdoors Foundation will be paying the upfront costs for producing a set of eight park, trail, and facility maps similar to the one prepared for the Party for Parks. The goal is to have the complete set ready for printing by the end of 2015.

JCOS worked with Conifer High School parents to get a GOCO grant for lighting the athletic fields at Conifer High School.



Bobcat

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.

PLAN Jeffco works for open space and we work for you! Please sign up or renew your membership now! Your address label shows the date of your last renewal. Call 303.237.9493 for membership information.

Our membership rate is:

\$35 per year

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Make checks payable to PLAN Jeffco and send to:

PLAN Jeffco
11010 W 29th Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80215

Are You wired??

If you are, PLAN Jeffco would like to have you on our email tree, so that we can inform you of special events and items that may be of concern to you. We will not share your email address without permission. Please include with your dues payment or email to

jklitz@comcast.net

Thanks





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Jefferson County Citizens for
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