



# PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

DECEMBER 2015

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Art in Open Air for Jeffco Open Spaces

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PLAN Jeffco is excited to announce a series of events in September and October 2016 to celebrate the beauty of Jefferson County's Open Space. The events include:

September 19 to October 9

An exhibit in the Government Center Rotunda of Open Space paintings from Greg and Susie Stevinson's collection

October 4 to October 8

Painting by up to 30 artists in four Open Space Parks and along the Clear Creek Trail

October 8

VIP reception in the Golden Community Center

October 8 and 9

Art Gallery displaying the week's paintings that are available for purchase.

More details and sponsorship information at  
[www//planjeffco.org](http://www.planjeffco.org)

## *Land and Water Conservation Fund Expires*

### Land and Water Conservation Fund Expires

By John Litz

Congress allowed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to expire Oct. 1. With it could go thousands of projects nurtured along by people who had hoped that the chaos of a political party in a high fever would not reach into their favorite places. But it has. Neighborhood playgrounds, walking trails bordering bustling cities, national parks, beaches, bridges, bike paths and birding sites are all imperiled by a handful of Congresspersons. For a half century, everything including the hugely popular Appalachian Trail and the memorial in Pennsylvania where Flight 93 went down Sept. 11, 2001, has relied on money from this fund, generated by revenues from oil and gas leases.

Representative Rob Bishop of Utah, R, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee is the primary impediment. He clearly doesn't like public land or parks. If Bishop would only get out of the way and let renewal of this popular fund come up for a full vote, it would pass with bipartisan support, as evidenced by commitment letters from members of both parties. The fund was last renewed 25 years ago, and sailed through with nary a complaint. This money has helped to protect places in all 50 states and 98 percent of American counties. Bishop has complained that the money is a "slush fund," misused by those who want to help expand the public land footprint.

More than 40 percent of the National Parks contain privately owned inholdings. The LWCF is the main source of funds used to acquire these inholdings. The Fund has been used to acquire more than 7,000 acres in Zion National Park and about 5,000 acres in Dinosaur National Monument.

Much of the fund has been spent assisting in providing conservation easements on private lands. It has been used by many states, counties, cities, and districts as a source of matching funds for park, trail and similar projects. In Jefferson County the LWCF provided Open Space with part of the funding for the acquisition of Clement Park.

From 2011 through 2014, 29,200 acres were conserved in Colorado with the help of LWCF dollars. The total spent on all of the projects within the state was \$26,300,000.



## *Trails Talk*

By John Litz

The Fall Trails Talk was held November 10 at the Buchanan Recreation Center in Bergen Park.

Unfortunately the attendance was poor with more staff there than public.

Tom Hoby opened with a quick review of accomplishments over the summer (mainly completing the repair of the flood damage with the help of many volunteers.) He also discussed the climbing management guidelines, the revised activity permits, and the results of surveys where designated trail use was evaluated. In this case, the

trails were designated for all users uphill with a separate downhill trail for cyclists. The results are still being evaluated as to whether it would be appropriate when designing trails on new parks.

After a few questions from the audience, those in attendance were able to talk with staff at various table stations that included:

- Climbing management guidelines
- Completed flood recovery work
- Designated use trails survey
- Revised activity permits
- Trail volunteer projects
- Safe winter outdoor experiences
- Your trail experience



Photo by Peter Morales, PLAN Jeffco Board Member

## *Be Wild*

By John Litz

In the summer of 2015, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), solicited proposals for a grant program designed to get low-income children and families more involved in the outdoors. The program consisted of two phases: 1) grants up to \$100,000 for planning during 2015 and 2016 and grants in 2016 for implementing from a \$5 million pool.

Jeffco Open Space was made aware of the program early in 2015 and gathered a group of 31 agencies to assist in developing the grant application. The proposal criteria were not available until June, but that did not keep the agencies from regular meetings and developing ideas for the proposal. The proposal was submitted in mid-August and awards were made in October. Jeffco received a planning grant of \$75,000.

The objective of the “Be Wild Jeffco” proposal is to increase access to and availability of outdoor programs to residents along the Eastern Corridor of Jeffco – essentially Sheridan to Wadsworth and north of Hampden, plus a node going west of Wadsworth between 6<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> avenues. Arvada already has a program in place serving the southeast corner of the city and Lakewood had a program this summer focused on the area surrounding Mountair Park (14<sup>th</sup> and Depew.)

The 31 agencies, ranging from the city park departments to the Forest Service and Denver Zoo, will be working on developing a detailed proposal to present to GOCO in August 2016. The proposal then will serve as basis of GOCO making an implementation grant.



Photo by Peter Morales, PLAN Jeffco Board Member

## *Birds at Mount Falcon*

by **Ann Bonnell**

On Sept. 29, 17 members of the “Tuesday Birders” spent four and one-half hours looking for and counting birds at the West (upper) end of Mount Falcon Open Space Park. One hundred ninety-five individual birds, representing 31 species, were sighted. At the upper park's elevation, about 7800 feet, both plains and mountain species can be seen.

The most common mountain species were:  
nuthatches – 18 pygmy, 6 white-breasted, and 2 red-breasted; and  
dark-eyed juncos – 18 gray-headed, 1 pink-sided, and 1 Oregon.

The most common plains species were:  
robins – 15 American and sparrows – 10 chipping and 2 juvenile white-crowned.

Hawks included: 1 Cooper's, 2 red-tailed, and 1 American kestrel (it really is a falcon).

Woodpeckers included: 2 Hairy and 3 northern flicker.

Jays included: 2 pinyon and 6 Steller's.

Chickadees included: 16 mountain and 3 black-capped.

Bluebirds included: 39 western and 6 mountain.

Finches: 22 Cassin's and 2 lesser goldfinch

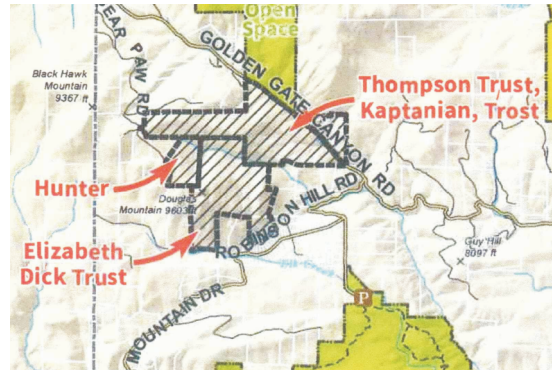
Other birds identified were: 1 turkey vulture, 1 black-billed magpie, 3 American crow, 1 common raven, 2 brown creeper, 6 Townsend's solitaire, 1 yellow-rumped warbler, 1 western tanager, and 1 pine siskin.



## Douglas Mountain Acquisitions

by John Litz

By the end of 2015, Jefferson County Open Space will have closed on three parcels of land totaling 1,036 acres that include the summit of Douglas Mountain. The map shows that most of the three properties are located west of the intersection of Golden Gate Canyon and Robinson Hill Roads. The small acreage to the north of the intersection contains the Centennial House, which was built of stone between 1872 and 1876. The building served as a stage stop for travelers along the historic Gregory Toll Road between Golden and Central City.



PLAN Jeffco has advocated for the acquisition of properties on Douglas Mountain for more than 20 years. We are pleased that the owners have allowed Open Space to preserve them.

The upper slopes of the southern part of the property have numerous locations that provide scenic views to the east and south - Mount Tom and Centennial Cone. The northeast side of the property is adjacent to 573 acres owned by Open Space that abuts the wildlife preserve portion of Golden Gate State Park. The southern boundary is about one mile north of Centennial Cone Park.

The property is part of the ecosystem that contains drainage to both Clear Creek and Ralston Creek. Parts of the ecosystem were included in the "2010-2011 Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Jefferson County by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program". The property on the west, Blackhawk Mountain, is forested with Douglas fir and aspen and supports a small, montane grassland. It was rated at "B-5 - General Biodiversity." The property to the east, Mount Tom, supports limber pine, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine,

and Douglas fir. It was rated "B-3 - High Biodiversity." The southern extent of the Douglas Mountain property was certified for the previous owners, through the American Tree Farm System, as a sustainable Tree Farm. A site visit by Open Space staff identified heartleaf arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*), which is an indicator of a healthy, highly functioning ecosystem.



The properties are included in the North Mountain Community Plan, which recommends preserving as much open space as possible, especially along the Golden Gate Canyon Road Corridor. The Plan also recommends diffusing the impacts of recreational development throughout the area. Public access probably will be from points on both Golden Gate Canyon and Robinson Hill Roads.

Open Space will take two years or so to study and understand the natural resources on the property. Then the planning group will look at the recreational possibilities of the property. Any development, probably, is at least five years away.

## 2015 Annual Dinner

By John Litz,

The September 21 dinner in the Vista Room at the Applewood Golf Course was enjoyed by the almost 100 attendees. The dinner was also attended by the three County Commissioners and Tom Hoby, the Open Space Program Director who joined with PLAN Jeffco in honoring the Mountain Area Land Trust, Clear Creek Land Conservancy and Colorado Open Lands. All of these have been actively protecting Jeffco open space lands and two of these also focus their efforts on preserving lands throughout Colorado.

Representatives of the land trusts received framed photographs of properties that they have conserved. Peter Morales, a member of the PLAN Jeffco board, volunteered his services as photographer

Claire Riegelman received the award for the Clear Creek Land Conservancy. The conservancy has protected lands on both sides of Clear Creek.



Dan Pike and Tony Caligiuri receive the award for Colorado Open Lands. Colorado Open Lands has protected lands along North Turkey Creek and adjacent to Golden Gate State Park.



Kurt Ballantyne receives the award for the Mountain Area Land Trust. MALT got its start with an easement on Noble Meadow and since then has protected many properties within the county, including a large area of Resort Valley.



## OSAC Notes

By John Litz

### August 14 - Open Space Advisory Committee Retreat

Hugh Wilson reviewed the five-year budget projections for 2015-2019. The budget assumes a 3% increase in revenue in 2015 and 2016 and 2% thereafter. Unless growth is greater than these amounts, the funds available for acquisition and capital projects will be limited. Note that through July, the sales tax revenue had increased 8.8% over 2104. Things improve significantly in 2020, when the annual bond payments are reduced by about \$8 million.

Amy Ito discussed that JCOS was going to change the Land Management Classifications - will be reducing the number to two, Parkland (open access) and Reserve (minimum access)

Hugh and Amy led a brief discussion on acquisitions (focus on contiguity, on setting priorities - consensus was not determined), parks (set urban park hours at 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.) trails (looking at more options to separate users, expand trail heads, connectivity focus), history education (focus of Jeffco and property histories), local grants (possibly adjust the criteria; Note the criteria were not changed).

Reviewed the expense allocation for the next five years. The OSAC consensus was acquisitions first, maintenance and administration second, trails third.

### September 10, 2015 - Study Session

Clement Park Funding – Clement Park now is almost 30 years old and is in need of major repairs. Foothills is looking at doing some refinancing using Certificates of Participation to raise \$3 million, but that still will not be enough. Discussion was for JCOS to match with local grants using Foothills' next eight years of eligibility. This would allow the repairs to be done simultaneously at a lower cost

than if all the projects were contracted separately.

The projects and estimated cost include:

Core building at the baseball complex (no longer safe and are using a rental trailer) - \$2.4 million

Amphitheater - sod and area for vendors, etc. - \$1 million

Parking lot lighting - poles are corroding and falling over - \$0.5 million

Additional restroom - \$0.2 million

Re-sod field 5 - \$0.24 million

Johnson Lake - new piers, stabilize banks, clean the lake - \$0.65 million

Destination playground - move present one away from restroom and enlarge - \$0.94 million.

OSAC consensus was that JCOS has obligation to help as JCOS does own the park.

### Regular Meeting -

Recognized the Service of Tookie Nemchak, on the Advisory Committee.

The 2016 Jeffco Open Space Budget as presented at the retreat was approved. The budget includes an additional Park Ranger and an additional Park Service Specialist. Other than development items, webcams on a few of the parking lots are planned.

Van Bibber Park Parking Lot - JCOS will design and construct a parking lot on Prospect's Stripgen property at Van Bibber Creek and Indiana with connection to Van Bibber Park. JCOS expenditure will be capped at \$150,000 with Prospect Park & Recreation District covering the balance of the costs.

### Executive Session

Great Outdoors Colorado PROTECT Initiative will be requesting proposals for acquisition of unique and threatened properties. Discussed the opportunities that Open Space had for the proposal.



# OSAC Notes continued

## October 1 - No Study Session

### Regular Session

Approved an easement for Consolidated Mutual Water to drill a bore under the hogback for a water line to serve Red Rocks Park.

Approved negotiations for the Deloris R. Wright Trust property adjacent to the west side of the Douglas Mountain property being acquired this year.

## November 5, 2015 - Study Session

Field Trip to Crown Hill Park  
OSAC viewed the new restroom and trailhead area. Looks terrific. Also went to the North side of the park where Wheat Ridge High School students

congregate and have caused problems with walkers. Are working with school and will post the statutes that under 18 cannot possess tobacco. Are patrolling the area daily and have not had any complaints since the patrolling started.

Any discussed that the staff is following up on the potential for a trails grant program to assist in connecting parks, especially in the

older sections of Jeffco

### Regular Session

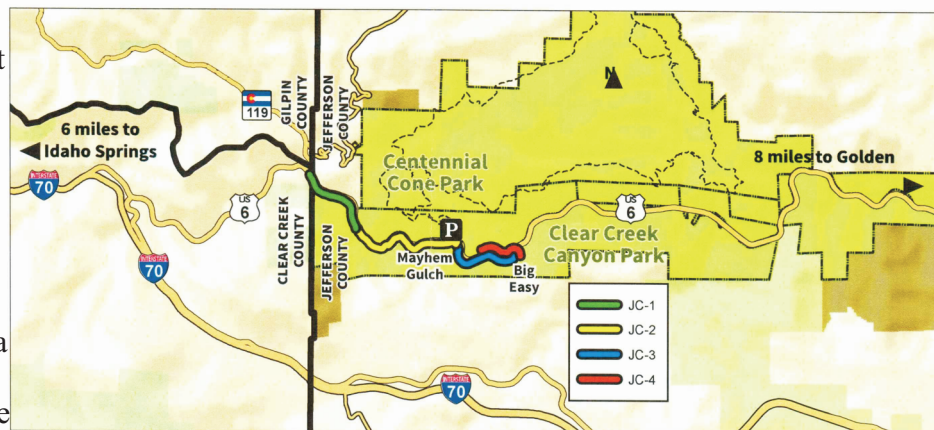
Don Moore (PLAN Jeffco member) commented on the weed infestation along the new North Fork Trail from Reynolds Park to the South Platte.

Hugh Wilson presented the list of potential projects for 2016. Developing the list started in spring 2015. Ultimately it has reached 90 projects. The required staff time for each project was estimated so that the total fits within the staff time available during 2015.

28 projects are in planning including the mouth of Clear Creek Canyon (the Welch Ditch, including the flume section, was donated to Open Space, allowing the opportunity for some interesting trail options) and revising the west trailhead and parking at Mt. Falcon.

18 projects are asset management - inventory of water rights and develop a new database for the real estate inventory.

18 projects are park improvements - primarily completing JC-3 and JC-4 segments of the Clear Creek trail, see the accompanying map.



12 projects are visitor related, including making the website mobile compatible and updating the park

## OSAC Notes *continued*

2. Smaller events, less than 200 participants, also would need to apply by the end of the year for the next year. Permits also will be approved by the end of January. The organizer would not have to be a public entity or a non-profit.

No events will be approved for holidays or holiday weekends.

3. Small group permits will not change - about 500 permits will be issued in 2015.

A 50-year lease on the house, barn, and small pavilions at Alderfer was approved. The new lease excludes the restrooms.

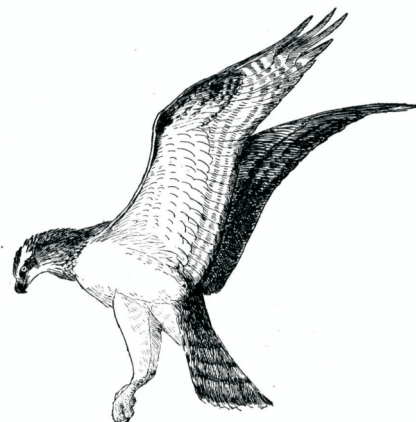
### Director's Report

Beaver Ranch (on Foxton Road west of Conifer) Grant: We were successful in our application for planning assistance from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance program for the Beaver Ranch Master Plan. There will be 2 NPS staff, Alan Ragins and Joy Lujan, both out of the Park Service's Lakewood office, who will be working with us on this Master Plan in 2016.

Crown Hill Park Rules Changes: We will be posting new park hours of 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., to align with the hours of surrounding jurisdiction's park hours. We are also going to post that the

underage possession and use of tobacco is prohibited. This will help us to address issues we are having with Wheat Ridge High School students smoking in the Park and to allow our rangers to enforce this state law.

Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Committee Retreat - On Oct. 30, nine members of the Breckenridge Open Space Advisory Commission and staff from Breckenridge and Summit County visited Jeffco Open Space to hear about visitor management strategies used on our trails and in our parks. The visit concluded with a site tour of Apex and Matthews/Winters Park trailheads.



## 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 303.237.9494 or email [contactus@planjeffco.org](mailto:contactus@planjeffco.org) for membership information.

**Our membership rate is:**

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### 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

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Jefferson County Citizens for  
Planned Growth with Open Space

PLAN JEFFCO NEWSLETTER