CLEAR CREEK COUNTY
OPEN SPACE PLAN

Adopted by the Clear Creek County Open Space Commission

April 13, 2005

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Clear Creek County Open Space Commission
This Open Space Plan was included in the 2003 County Master Plan, in conjunction with the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Element. A subcommittee made up of the staff of the Tourism Board, Open Space Commission, Economic Development Board and County staff worked for over a year to prepare that element of the plan. This Open Space plan is excerpted from the County Master Plan for the purpose of guiding the Clear Creek County Open Space Commission (OSC) in their work. It will also serve to inform the public about open space priorities and policies.

CLEAR CREEK COUNTY OPEN SPACE PROGRAM
The Open Space Program began when the voters approved a mill levy increase in 1999 to go toward the acquisition and management of open space. This resulted in an approximate budget of $180,000 per year. The Open Space Commission was appointed in April 2000. The mission of the OSC is to preserve and maintain the county’s unique character and natural environment by protecting our streams, woodlands, meadows, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, prominent vistas, geologic features, and cultural resources to enhance the quality of life for residents and the enjoyment of the out-of-doors for residents and visitors.

A survey was done prior to the vote and the residents of the county resoundingly supported open space. Another survey was completed as part of this Master Planning process and showed that non-motorized outdoor recreation was the second highest rated economic development activity after retail goods and services, followed by tourism.

EXISTING OPEN SPACE
The USFS, the municipalities, City of Denver Mountain Parks, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Georgetown Historical Society, Colorado State Historical Society, the Georgetown Silver Plume Historic District Public Lands Commission (HDPLC) and the OSC provide Open Space in Clear Creek County (CCC). The major owners and managers of open space land in Clear Creek County are the USFS with 170,629 acres, including 2 Wilderness areas, Mt. Evans and James Peak. Denver Mountain Parks has 2641 acres. Jefferson County Open Space also provides Open Space and recreation to eastern Clear Creek residents. Park land is provided by the Clear Creek Recreation District and the Clear Creek County School District and the municipalities of Empire, Georgetown and Idaho Springs and Silver Plume.

As of April 2005, the Clear Creek Open Space system includes 3,819 acres consisting of:

- The 109 acre Geneva Iron Fen
- The 107 acre Elmgreen Homestead
- 130 acres south of Silver Plume
• The 27 acre Arrastra historical site
• The 340 acre Alps Mountain site
• The 40 acre summit of Snyder Mountain.
• Three small parcels in Waldorf Basin
• 1600 acres of Big Horn Sheep (Sheepkeep) Habitat
• 1442 acres of the Beaver Brook Watershed
• The 2 acre Clear Creek Whitewater Park Parcel
• 8 acres that include the raft launching site in Lawson

The OSC will continue to request management of several additional key county-owned parcels as open space. These parcels are crucial to the Clear Creek Greenway. OSC also assists in open space acquisition activities with various partners within the county.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES
The spectacular natural beauty, high mountains, rushing streams, and mountain meadows are the reason most of us live here. The natural setting is essential to our quality of life. In addition the mountain scenery draws thousands of visitors. Of course, the natural features, environment, and wildlife are also important in their own right, and deserve to be protected. Much of the natural environment is protected by the USFS, so the plan addresses the non-USFS land. Minimal research has been done in the county to precisely locate habitats of various species. The Open Space Program will focus on wildlife production areas and rare and threatened ecosystems. It will also attempt to protect examples of typical native ecosystems. The resources are:

Streams and Wetlands
Because of the mining history of the county, road and private construction, some sections of streams are degraded, while others remain relatively pristine. Past mining activities, highway and road construction, and encroachments have narrowed the channel degrading much of the main stem of Clear Creek. There is meager riparian vegetation along some of the streams. The plan proposes that the pristine sections and riparian areas of streams be protected by various means, and that Clear Creek be restored as part of the Clear Creek Greenway. County regulations and acquisition should also protect identified wetlands. There is no comprehensive mapping of wetlands in the county, which also should be accomplished.

High Altitude Basins
There are several fragile high altitude, (over 10,000’) watershed areas in the county. In addition to providing spectacular scenery, these areas are home to wildlife, plants, and contain threatened species of plants and animals. Some of the most accessible high mountain basins in the Front Range, these basins also provide recreation to thousands. Accessible to high-clearance vehicles, and easily accessed from I-70 and the Guanella Pass and Mount Evans Scenic Byways, their very popularity has placed them at risk. In some areas, the tundra is laced with informal 4-WD roads. The newly created Geneva Basin Iron Natural Area in Geneva Creek has been impacted by such roads, which run through the fens and the stream itself. In order to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources, the County should work with the USFS to reduce the impact of roads and motorized recreation, particularly on high altitude, aquatic and riparian ecosystems.
Although most of the land in these basins is owned by USFS, there are also privately owned mining claims in the basins that could be developed. The threat development poses to the basins is imminent. The Mountain Basin Project of the HDPLC, which includes planning for the Waldorf Basin, Geneva Basin and Stevens Gulch, recommends acquiring private inholdings. OSC has been acquiring inholdings in cooperation with HDPLC and will continue to do so. OSC has recently taken management of the county lands containing the Geneva Basin Iron Fens.

**Critical habitat and wildlife corridors**

Wildlife is one of the most cherished aspects of life in the mountains. There are major corridors through the county for movement of various species, as well as areas where wildlife congregate, produce young and use for winter habitat. An example of an essential wildlife corridor is from Mt. Evans Wilderness, through Beaver Brook Watershed to Elk Meadow Park. Another example is the sheep habitat along the north and west of I-70. Habitats are shrinking, and some species are stressed by crowding. Therefore, it essential to preserve the most important habitat and to protect corridors, even when development is present. It is also important to provide landscape links to provide for movement from high elevation tundra, meadows, and forests and lower elevation forests and grasslands. Essential wildlife habitat is an important factor in open space acquisition decisions, particularly corridors, production areas and severe winter habitat.

**Colorado Natural Areas Proposed Conservation Areas**

The Colorado Natural Areas Program has identified areas in the county which need protection, due to their unique natural characteristics. In Clear Creek County, the State of Colorado has recognized Mount Goliath and the Geneva Basin Iron Fens as Colorado State Natural Areas. The OSC received management responsibilities from the county for the Geneva Basin Iron Fens in 2003. The designated potential natural areas are a priority for preservation for the Open Space Program.

**Cultural resources**

The cultural resources in Clear Creek County are significant to the County’s mining heritage. Currently, 31 historical sites are listed on the state and national registers. Unfortunately, cultural resource studies in the County are limited, and the County Archivist estimates that 90% of the designated and inventoried properties in Clear Creek County are within the municipalities. This means that the vast expanse of lands in the unincorporated areas have never been reviewed for properties or sites of historic value. However, incorporated in the master plan is the initial creation of an inventory of cultural resources studies that have been performed in the County.

**Important features and views**

The incredible beauty of the mountain environment is a major factor in people’s decision to live here. It also attracts thousands of tourists to recreate in the county. Most of the high peaks are
within the National Forest and are somewhat protected from all development but mining and related roads. This analysis deals with the major views in the county that should be improved or protected. There are two scenic byways which are very popular, Mt. Evans Scenic Byway (State Highway 103, the Guanella Pass Scenic Byway (Guanella Pass Road). Tourists and residents alike travel the I-70 corridor. It is important that these areas present the best possible image to the public.

The I-70 corridor shapes the image of Clear Creek County for most tourists, but it does not presently live up to its visual potential. Unsightly and unkempt properties are occasionally visible throughout the corridor. The ridges along I-70 and Clear Creek itself are a major part of the visual image of the corridor. The meadow and ridges at Floyd Hill serve as a gateway to the county. Unfortunately, development and road building threaten some of the other key ridges. The county should restrict ridge top development or development on steep slopes. Any further development on Saddleback Mountain should be designed quite differently than what is there now.

Clear Creek itself does not live up to its potential as a major recreation corridor because of channelization, encroachment, lack of riparian vegetation and several unsightly land uses along it. A few areas remain fairly natural looking. Further filling along the creek should not be allowed. The existing fill slopes should be recontoured and planted with riparian species, particularly those in public ownership. Development of the Clear Creek Greenway is recommended in this plan with re-vegetation, clean-up, re-contouring banks and code enforcement as a major component.

Empire Junction is an important viewshed, with views up the Georgetown and Empire valleys and the high peaks, punctuated by Douglas Mountain, as if it were the bow of a ship. The Open Space Program should work to preserve the portion of Douglas Mountain that is in private ownership.

With its views of snowcapped peaks, valleys and ridges, State Highway 103 is a very scenic drive. Much of the corridor is in the National Forest, but there are private lands that potentially could be developed. These lands include the old Squaw Pass ski area, and private lands near Echo Lake and the Ute Creek area. One of the most popular views along State Highway 103 is the view at the intersection with Witter Gulch, through the Beaver Brook meadow to the Continental Divide. On any nice day, many cars pull over to marvel at the view.

The Upper Bear Creek basin, with its high mountain views, meadows, streams and ridgelines is a major part of the image and character of the east end of the county. Some of this view is protected by conservation easements. However, more land needs to be protected to preserve the spectacular views and rural flavor. The area is shown as a conservation area on the proposed open space map.
The lands on either side of Empire provide scenic vistas. The valley to the west contains one reservoir, with another one filed for possible future construction. The reservoirs have recreational potential, which should be captured. The Bard Creek valley is a beautiful view for those traveling US 40 or living in Empire. There are potential developments that could mar this beauty. Any development in this area should be accomplished after preparation of a small area master plan.

Hicks Mountain and Snyder Mountain are important views for the Witter Gulch area. While the majority of those landforms are protected as open space by Clear Creek Open Space and Denver Mountain Parks, there are private lands interspersed on Hicks Mountain and adjacent to Snyder Mountain. Development of these lands would seriously compromise the views of these prominent peaks.

County-wide, mining equipment, abandoned autos or appliances strung along roads mar the landscape. With the increased emphasis on tourism recommended in the county master plan, the county needs to improve its image. One solution would be for the county and the municipalities to initiate a county-wide clean-up day, and provide the heavy equipment needed to do the job. Overall, the county could benefit from increased code enforcement to combat these eyesores.

**ACQUISITION STRATEGIES**

Because funding is limited, the Open Space Commission attempts to get the most from limited resources by using several strategies to accomplish its mission:

- Obtaining management of appropriate county owned lands
- Acquiring private lands
- Connecting to existing parks and recreational facilities by trail or open space
- Using methods other than acquisition to protect important lands
- Entering into joint ventures with other entities
- Using alternative funding sources.

**County-owned lands**

The OSC has been working with the BOCC for several years to acquire management of some existing County lands. Transferring management to the Open Space Commission does not require the expenditure of funds. Several key parcels have been transferred, with several more in process.

**Appropriate Private Lands**

In order to reach the goals of this plan, private lands need to be acquired on a willing seller basis.

**Connections**

Because of the extensive land owned by the USFS and Denver Mountain Parks, connections to these lands can provide recreational access without the necessity of acquiring large amounts of land. For example, by providing a short trail extension at Lawson, that area would be connected to Georgetown via the Silver Creek Trail. Finally, an extension of the 7:30 Mine Trail north of Silver Plume would connect the town to the Bard Creek and Watrous Gulch trails.
**Joint Ventures**
Limited funding dictates cooperative ventures with other entities and commercial recreation providers. An example of joint ventures is the possibility of expanding the Clear Creek Greenway into a major recreational facility and tourist destination. Cooperative ventures will be needed with the Clear Creek Recreation District, private owners, and the municipalities of Idaho Springs, Georgetown, Silver Plume, recreation businesses, CDOT, and the Economic Development Council.

**Other methods of protection**
Another strategy is to protect land by means other than purchase. These methods include conservation easements, density reductions, clustering, design guidelines, gifts and land trades. Part of the Elmgreen Homestead is being protected by a conservation easement. The plan proposes more extensive use of these methods in the future.

**Funding sources**
The Open Space Commission depends heavily upon grants, using its limited funding to leverage more funding.

**PROPOSED OPEN SPACE**

**Objectives**
The primary objectives of this Open Space Plan are:

- To ensure that the character of the county remains open, with distinct community areas separated by open spaces.
- To identify and plan for open space opportunities and to use open spaces as a design tool to help shape the patterns of growth in our county.
- To use open space to protect and enhance the quality of life and enjoyment of the natural environment and to preserve the rural character of the unincorporated areas of the county.
- To protect areas with significant environmental, ecological, scenic, or cultural values.
- To connect various parts of the county with a network of public and private open space, including trail corridors and wildlife corridors.
- To encourage the private sector and governmental organizations to participate in open space preservation and trail development.
CRITERIA FOR HIGH PRIORITY OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION.
Land with a high priority for open space should possess one of more of the following attributes.

• High altitude watersheds
• Land containing significant cultural resources
• Significant natural features, visual corridors and viewsheds
• Provision of links to other open space, parks and recreational areas or facilities
• Wildlife habitat or provides a corridor to habitat.
• Wetlands, streams, and lakes or other biologically sensitive areas.
• Serves as a buffer between land uses and separation between communities
• Provides a connection to other open space, parks and recreation facilities
• Contributes to a more even distribution of parks or open space throughout the county.

PRIORITIES FOR OPEN SPACE
Map 4.9 of the Clear Creek Master Plan 2030 shows Proposed Open Space, Conservation Areas, and Areas of Opportunity. These areas are based on the criteria above. Some of the priority open space projects proposed in this plan are:

Clear Creek Greenway

The Clear Creek Greenway is the focal point of the Open Space Plan. The Greenway, as envisioned in this plan, is the backbone of the county, tying the communities together with a string of open spaces, parks, recreational facilities and commercial recreation facilities along the creek. The Greenway would serve as the framework of the open space program, with connections to other parks and recreation, open spaces, the national forest, and tourist attractions. It would further the goal of completing a trail system extending from the Continental Divide to the South Platte River. Finally, it would provide a focal point for the county, as well as project a positive, exciting image.

Serving as a backbone for the open space system, several connections to the National Forest, and to municipal parks and recreation facilities from the Greenway are planned. One is the Town of Georgetown’s planned Gateway improvements. Georgetown plans major enhancements to the
lake area, a trail around the lake and a trail along the creek, all of which will be connected to the Greenway. Silver Plume’s open space, historic town and the 7:30 Mine Trail could also be linked with the Greenway. Idaho Springs’ new open space to the north of the city could also be connected through downtown.

Many connections with existing trails or open space should be made, including links to open space and trails in the municipalities of Blackhawk, Georgetown, Silver Plume and Idaho Springs. If a mountain bike system is successfully provided, it would connect to the Greenway. Linkages to the neighboring counties would also be promoted. Transfers of management to OSC of county-owned parcels at the junction of Highway 6 and the County line need to be accomplished as soon as possible to ensure a link to Jefferson County’s Open Space that extends down to the City of Golden.

Activity nodes should be provided along the Greenway. There are several county-owned parcels which, when combined with other public and private parcels, could provide a string of parks, open space and recreation facilities along the creek. These parcels are essential to the development of the Greenway as an open space, parks and recreation corridor. The Recreation District, OSC and commercial providers could provide many types of activities. There could be kayaking and rafting, hiking, walking, biking, and other active and passive recreation. River access for fishing and other activities would be enhanced along the creek. The creek itself would be restored to a more natural appearance, and the large meadows along the creek could be acquired and revegetated, and developed for park or recreation uses. The Greenway could provide other attractions that could include a sculpture park, an ice-climbing park, a demonstration garden, children’s and handicapped fishing areas and interpretive displays featuring the natural and mining heritage.

Developing the Greenway as a major recreational attraction would not only provide recreation, but could result in economic development opportunities for the county and the municipalities. Joint ventures with commercial recreation providers would be possible and some appropriate commercial uses would be encouraged to locate near the creek, providing more developable areas for the county. The municipalities could develop riverwalks and other amenities along the creek. The Greenway would be linked to commercial tourist uses in the towns, encouraging tourists to shop, rent bikes, purchase fishing equipment and dine. Because of its access and visibility, the Greenway has the potential to become a significant tourist destination as well as a wonderful community amenity.

**Recommendations**

- Gain outside funding and create and implement a master plan for the Clear Creek Greenway in 2004. OSC
- Immediately request transfer of management to open space management of appropriate County-owned parcels along the Greenway. OSC, BOCC
• Begin to acquire appropriate privately owned parcels and easements along the Greenway. OSC

• Work with the city of Idaho Springs to create a “Creekwalk” through town. OSC, BOCC, Idaho Springs.

• Rehabilitate the main stem of the Clear Creek and prohibit further filling of the channel. Public lands should be a top priority for rehabilitation. BOCC, OSC, municipalities.

• Link the Greenway with the trail planned around Georgetown Lake and the planned trail along the creek. OSC, BOCC, town of Georgetown.

• Connect Silver Plume’s open space, historic town and the 730 Mine Trail with the Greenway OSC, BOCC, town of Silver Plume

• Link Idaho Springs’ new open space to the north of town to the Greenway. OSC, BOCC, Idaho Springs.

• Pursue linkages to planned trails in Gilpin County.

• Link developed areas, schools, recreation and shopping to the Greenway.

The High Altitude Basins

Waldorf Basin, Geneva Creek and Stevens Gulch should be protected using the recommendations of the Silver Heritage Plan and the Mountain Basin Plan. The County should work with HDPLC and the USFS to implement the recommendations. Acquisitions and road closures of informal roads are a top priority, along with development regulations specific to the Mountain Basins, to lessen the impact of any development that occurs. The County Open Space Program will continue to attempt to acquire inholdings from willing owners to protect the basin from development. The USFS will eventually complete the Continental Divide Trail in the area. Because of the Basins’ popularity, a joint interpretive program should begin, covering the natural and cultural history, but also explaining the fragile nature of the environment.

Recommendations

• Implement recommendations of the Silver Heritage Plan and the Mountain Basin Plan including road closures and the application of appropriate regulations to lessen the impact of development. BOCC
• Take action to protect the Geneva Basin Iron Fen State Natural Area from off-road vehicles. Make selective road closures, with cooperation from the USFS and the BOCC.

• Acquire private lands in the basins on a willing-seller basis. OSC, HDLPC

• Work with the Forest Service to consolidate roads to reduce destruction of natural and cultural resources in the basins. OSC, BOCC, HDLPC.

• Emphasize the fragile nature of the natural and cultural resources in the Basin interpretive program. HDLPC

• Work with the city of Golden and private owners to acquire the mining claims in Waldorf Basin. BOCC

Beaver Brook
Beaver Brook Watershed has been a focus for preservation efforts for many years. In addition to its scenic beauty, it provides a vital segment of a 17 mile wildlife corridor running from the Mount Evans Wilderness to Elk Meadow Park. This unique area is being acquired by the USFS as appropriations are available. Approximately 40% of the property has been purchased. Some of the most scenic land and ecologically significant land is in the final years of the phased acquisition contract, and would be threatened by development should the purchase effort falter. The OSC stands ready to cooperate with various partners and other funding sources to continue acquisition should that happen.

Recommendations

• Work with the USFS and other entities on a backup funding plan should Forest Service funding falter. OSC, BOCC

• Reserve a backup fund to acquire the top priority areas in the Watershed.

Mountain Sheep Habitat along I-70
The County Open Space Commission has been asked to manage approximately 1600 acres of prime mountain sheep habitat along I-70 between Idaho Springs and Georgetown. Besides protecting habitat, this land will also serve the purpose of
separating communities along I-70, also a major recommendation of the land use plan. The ridgeline is dramatic and contributes to the character of the I-70 corridor.

**Recommendations**

- Decide on a management structure for the area in cooperation with DOW, OSC, County Lands and non-profit organizations.

**Hicks Mountain, Snyder Mountain, Denver Mountain Parks Land, the Beaver Brook Watershed**

These areas form a nearly continuous corridor for wildlife and for recreation for a segment of the county. The majority of Hicks Mountain is owned by Denver Mountain Parks, with one large privately owned parcel. On the southeast side of Witter Gulch Rd. are three Denver Mountain Parks adjacent to the Snyder Mountain Open Space. To the east of Snyder Mountain is private land, and adjacent to that to the east is the DOW State Wildlife Area. With a trail easement or acquisition of the private land, a connection can be made to Bergen Peak and the Elk Meadow Park in Jefferson County. This trail is also a recommendation of the Evergreen Community Plan. When the purchase of the Beaver Brook Watershed is complete, a public trail can be provided to the top of Snyder Mountain from Sinton Road.

**Recommendations**

- Acquire or otherwise protect private parcels to provide access, protect the Mt. Evans Wildlife Corridor and prominent ridges. If acquisition is not possible obtain a trail easement. OSC

- Work with Jefferson County to route and construct a trail to Bergen Peak and beyond to Elk Meadow.

**County Lands**

One of the most efficient ways to provide open space is to transfer management of appropriate county lands to the Open Space Commission. The OSC is now managing several such parcels. There are a number of county-owned lands, including those on Saxon Mountain and along the Greenbelt with open space values which OSC will propose to manage. In addition, OSC is currently working on a management structure for the approximately county-owned 1000 acre Mountain Sheep area.

**Recommendations**

- Aggressively pursue management of appropriate county lands. OSC, BOCC
Conservation areas
Large private land holdings that contribute to the visual character of the landscape, but which do not lend themselves to public access, should be protected by methods other than purchase. Some of these methods are: Conservation easements, clustering development to gain open space, gifts, land trades, density controls, and design guidelines. These areas are shown on the open space map.

Recommendations
• Negotiate with the owners of the recommended conservation areas to find the best means of protecting the visual qualities of these lands. OSC and land trusts

Areas of Opportunity
Areas of opportunity shown on the map are areas that deserve special attention through a small area master plan, so that the natural and cultural values are preserved while allowing development.

Recommendations
• Prepare Master Plans for the Henderson Mine, Empire Junction and Floyd Hill to protect visual qualities and natural and cultural resources prior to any further development. The plan for Floyd Hill should provide for substantial open space, wildlife movement and an attractive entry to the county. BOCC, developers, EDC, PC
• Acquire the private holdings on Douglas Mountain at Empire Junction to protect views of this landmark. OSC

TRAILS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES SYSTEM
Development of a county-wide recreational trail system that provides local trails and a hut system to offer overnight hikes, bike tours and winter ski tours is recommended. The concept of the system is to provide a variety of experiences to a variety of users, from families, athletes and elderly and handicapped populations. The trail system will be designed according to user needs: short loop trails for day hikers, longer more strenuous trails systems for longer or overnight trips.

The trail system is planned on the framework of the USFS trails and the Clear Creek Greenway. The Greenway gives close-in access to other trails for residents and visitors. Whenever possible, trails will be extended to the National Forest to provide close-in access. There are several of these proposed extensions on the Trails and Recreational Facilities map.

Links to the trail systems of adjoining counties will be provided whenever possible. Connections to future trails in the city of Blackhawk are possible and will be coordinated with the city. Links to Jefferson County Open Space are planned in several
locations. Two examples are along the Clear Creek Greenway to Jeffco’s Open Space in Clear Creek Canyon and between Clear Creek’s Open Space at Snyder Mountain and Jeffco’s Elk Meadow Park.

There is potential to create a biking mecca in the county by attracting bikers who would normally travel through the county without stopping. There are several roads that are very heavily used. Highway 103 may be the major training route for Front Range bikers. It needs a widened shoulder and repaving to ensure safety for bikers. Other bicycle routes that need to be improved for safety are Stanley and Alvarado Road, Upper Bear Creek Road, and Highway 40 over Berthoud Pass. Guanella Pass Road will be improved by FHWA, resulting in improved safety for bikers. A bike and hiking trail is presently being designed over Berthoud Pass. The proposed Greenway would provide trail biking for a variety of users. The biking system in the county, once developed, should be aggressively promoted. Associated commercial facilities such as bike rentals and restaurants will hopefully be provided by the private sector.

Development of a mountain biking center is recommended. Some existing dirt roads can be used for mountain biking. The areas on either side of I-70 where there is a network of old mining roads are examples of potentially suitable trails. There is a potential for promoting a mountain biking center in the area between Saxon Mountain and the Lawson Greenway node and beyond. Downhill racing may be appropriate in some areas, and this should be explored as an economic development strategy as well as a tourist attraction.

Attracting more biking and running events would help promote the trail system. Loveland Ski Area could become a three-season resort if mountain biking on some of the trails was allowed and promoted.

**Recommendations**

- Develop a county-wide recreational program that provides local trails and a hut system to offer overnight hikes, bike tours and winter ski tours. BOCC, OSC, EDC, Tourism Board, CCMRD, USFS

- Acquire management of the Highway 6 county-owned lands as a critical link to Jefferson County Open Space in Clear Creek Canyon as well as a potential link to the Elmgreen Homestead. OSC

- Design the trail system according to user needs. OSC, USFS, municipalities

- Promote and develop the biking system in the county. OSC, CCMRD, USFS, Tourism Board, EDC

- Design trails to avoid fragile environments and critical habitat. OSC, CCMRD

- Extend trails from developed areas to open space. Require trail easements for new development and with sales of county-owned land.
• Coordinate trail planning with the surrounding jurisdictions. OSC

• Work with Jefferson County to connect the existing Beaver Brook trail from Lookout Mountain to the Beaver Brook Watershed and beyond.

• Plan, construct and publicize a major mountain bike system between Saxon Mountain and Highway 103 in Idaho Springs in conjunction with the USF, OSC, USFS, CCMRD, Tourism Board

• Work with the USFS to develop an equestrian trail from the Mt. Evans Wildlife area to the Continental Divide OSC.

• Provide trail extensions from the communities and the Greenbelt to USFS land. OSC, USFS

• Work with Loveland Ski Area to create a 3-season resort by promoting mountain biking on the trails there. Tourism Board, BOCC, EDC, OSC, USFS

• Make safety improvements to all on-road bicycle routes. Highway 103 is a top priority due to its popularity. BOCC

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

• Work with other counties to revise state legislation to allow state tax incentives and reduce disincentives to allowing land to remain open. Consider a system which reduces taxes on vacant land, and require payment of back taxes when the land is sold for development. BOCC

• Protect pristine sections of streams and riparian areas by adopting development regulations, reconstruction of the natural stream condition, and by acquisition. BOCC, OSC

• Protect examples of typical native ecosystems. OSC

• Preserve and protect essential wildlife habitat, corridors and production areas. OSC

• Work with the USFS to reduce the impact of roads, particularly on aquatic and riparian ecosystem, in order to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources. BOCC, HDLPC

• Plan for the protection of the Colorado Natural Areas Proposed Conservation Areas. Apply for designation of appropriate lands. OSC, BOCC

• Encourage and support the continued development of a County inventory of cultural studies and significant historic sites.
• Encourage and support a county-wide cultural resource study on unincorporated lands.

• Refer to existing studies (if applicable) to determine the historical value of potential open space.

• Preserve areas with significant historical values. Encourage cultural resource studies that obtain an understanding of archeological sites near roadways, including the I-70 corridor.

• Share land use plans with Colorado State Historical Society to determine potential conflicts with any cultural resources.

• Partner with the USFS on land use issues of mutual concern. BOCC, OSC, HDLPC

• Adopt a system for ridgeline and steep slope protection. CCPC, BOCC

• Protect wetlands, and do not allow mitigation as an alternative to leaving wetlands intact. CCPC, BOCC

• Prepare management plans for newly acquired land. OSC

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Conservation Status Handbook-Colorado’s Animals, Plants and Plant Communities-Natural Heritage Program- to be used with maps and descriptions of proposed State Natural Areas

Proposed and Revised Land and Resource Management Plan-USFS

Catalog of Stream Habitat Quality for Clear Creek and Tributaries-Marta Szewecyk and Dr. John Emerick, Colorado School of Mines

Mountain Basin Plan-HDPLC

Silver Heritage Plan -HDPLC
Clear Creek Canyon Management Plan-Jefferson County Open Space

Draft Evergreen Community Plan-Jefferson County Planning Dept.

Meeting with Sean McCarthy, Planner for Blackhawk, and Mike Strunk, DHM on trail connections and the Blackhawk Master Plan.