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Resource Management Plan for the
Soderberg Homestead Open Space

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Larimer County Open Lands Program, via the Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax, purchased the 101.5-acre Soderberg Homestead Open Space as well as a life estate on 12.5 acres that include the house and ranch buildings. This resource management plan addresses in general the management of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space with emphasis on management of the surrounding lands for resource stewardship and public use. At a future date, input taken at this stage in the management planning process will help to determine the long-term use for the Soderberg Homestead and ranch buildings.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Plan

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space was acquired in 1998, with the intent to buffer Horsetooth Mountain Park, protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources and provide educational and expanded outdoor recreational opportunities. The Soderberg Homestead is the last remaining parcel of the original Soderberg Ranch property, the majority of which was purchased in 1982 to create what is now Horsetooth Mountain Park. This plan is a Phase I of II for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. Phase I will predominately focus on development of passive outdoor recreational facilities and management of natural resources, while Phase II will at a later date be developed to focus on management of the historical resources long-term, particularly the Soderberg Homestead house and associated ranch buildings.

The purpose of this document is to: 1) examine the management objectives for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space given the current ecological, social, economic, and political environment; 2) provide the formal program and policy guidelines that will direct the management and use of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space well into the future; and 3) develop specific implementation strategies for carrying out various components of the management effort. The overall objectives of the plan are to:

- Protect, manage, and enhance natural, cultural, and visual resources including maintaining and promoting healthy ecosystems and their processes;
- Provide and promote safe, enjoyable, passive, outdoor recreation opportunities while minimizing detrimental impacts upon natural, cultural, and visual resources;
- Provide educational opportunities regarding the values of the surrounding natural, historic, and visual resources and the importance of working landscapes, historic ranchlands and land stewardship;
- Define implementation policies, programs, and responsibilities for the above goals that tie into the *Resource Management Plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park* (1998) when appropriate.

It should be noted that as a component of Horsetooth Mountain Park, the general management program and policies for the Park established in 1998 will apply to the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. This management plan is designed to address issues specific to the Soderberg Homestead Open Space and to incorporate additional information in to the general *Resource Management Plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park* (1998).

1.2 History

Now partially submerged under Horsetooth Reservoir, the town of Stout was once the main community in the Horsetooth Valley. Swan Johnson came from Sweden after his fiancée died, first living in Pennsylvania and then settling in the Horsetooth Valley area on the 700-acre Leshner Ranch. Swan lived in a two-story stone ranch house with a white porch west of what is now Dixon Cove. Around the turn of the century, his niece Wilhelmina, her husband John Soderberg, and their first of what would eventually be 11 children moved in with him. The water for the house was piped from a spring ¼ mile away, and the house was heated with wood and coal.

On Swans ranch there were two stone quarries where flagstone was removed and sent to Ft. Collins and Denver for sidewalks. Stone from the quarries was also used by John Soderberg in building the old Ft. Collins Library (now the Ft. Collins Museum). The Soderberg children worked at the quarry, blasting and splitting the stone into smaller pieces. The quarries closed in the late 1930's or early 40's. The Horsetooth Valley also boasted gold and silver prospecting (though nothing substantial was ever found), cattle ranching, and agriculture activity (alfalfa, grain, hay, wheat, and corn).

Johnny Soderberg was born to John and Wilhelmina in 1912 and grew up in the Horsetooth Valley north of what was the town of Stout. His first job at 15 years old was farming and ranching for neighbors (the Butlers) who lived 4 miles away, for \$30/month. As a young man, Johnny hunted deer with a 30-30 Winchester and trapped coyotes, skunks, and bobcats and sold the furs. At one point the Soderberg brothers had their own sawmill and harvested mostly ponderosa pine and some Douglas fir from Horsetooth Mountain. Later, after selling the majority of the ranch to Larimer County, Johnny and his brothers Carl, Harry, and Paul, purchased a ranch in Wyoming and Johnny would spend time helping his brothers hay on the Ranch for weeks at a time.

The Herringtons moved to the Horsetooth Valley in the 1880's, and Mrs. Herrington was the original homesteader of the current "Soderberg Homestead Open Space" property. The original ranch was ~1,100 acres, and the Herringtons both ranched and grew hay. After selling the Leshner Ranch, Wilhelmina, and four of the children, Johnny, Carl, Harry, and Ellen, bought the "Old Herrington Ranch." The 2,055 square foot ranch-style house on the property was built in 1889 and has been remodeled and additions made since. The homestead includes the ranch house, which features turn-of-the-century ranch architecture and several historic out-buildings. The original entrance to the house was on the north side across the stone bridge. When Johnny moved to the house in 1947, he added the front addition that includes what is now the kitchen. In 1986, the Soderbergs added a third addition including the garage, living room and east deck. The

outbuildings on the property include what was formerly a dwelling house the Herrington's and friends stayed in for short periods. This two-story plastered building, came to be called the "Herringtons Chicken House" because both the Soderbergs and Herringtons kept chickens there at one time. There is a stone garage built by Mr. Herrington for his Model T car that is located just north of the house. There is a wooden barn west of the chicken house built jointly by Mr. Herrington and Johnny in the late 1920's and a log grainery to the west of the barn. A loafing shed built in the 1950's is located out near Shoreline Drive. To the west of the house there is a stone well house that also was used as a cellar for storing food.

Virginia Rose Grigg, born in the Ozarks region of Arkansas, came to Pueblo, Colorado at age 18 to attend X-ray technician school. Virginia met Johnny through his sister Ellen and they were married in 1980 in Arkansas and returned to Colorado to live at the "Old Herrington House." Johnny and Virginia had no children, but many nieces and nephews (interview, Johnny and Virginia Soderberg 1999).

In the early 1980's, the Soderbergs tried to sell the ranch to State Parks; however the State declined and they decided to divide the ranch into 35-acre lots. To protect the ranch from development, citizens passed an initiative for a 6-month sales tax to purchase a large portion (2,027 acres) of the Soderberg Homestead as a county park. Johnny and Virginia retained 114 acres that included the house and outbuildings. In 1998, Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department, through the existing Help Preserve Open Spaces Sales Tax, purchased the remaining 101.5-acre portion of the Soderberg Ranch as well as a life estate on 12.5 acres that include the house and ranch buildings. Johnny and Virginia lived in the Soderberg Homestead house until Johnny's death in August 2001. Virginia moved to Ft. Collins in the summer of 2002.

1.3 Scope and Organization of the Plan

The Phase I Resource Management and Implementation Plan for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space contains three major sections: 1) a review of existing conditions, including natural, visual, cultural, and socioeconomic resources; 2) a discussion of opportunities, constraints, and planning issues related to management of the land and protection of the ranch buildings; 3) a management plan addressing existing conditions, opportunities, constraints, and planning issues; and 4) implementation steps.

1.4 Public and Agency Involvement

Extensive public and agency involvement will be utilized to ensure full representation of those parties interested in the Soderberg Homestead Open Space [In Process].

Two public meetings will be conducted to hear issues and concerns from the public [In Process]. The first meeting introduced the management planning process, reviewed existing conditions of the open space, and identified public visions and concerns regarding the Soderberg Homestead

Open Space. The second meeting will be an open house to present the proposed draft management plan for public review.

In addition to public meetings the draft management plan will be reviewed by Open Lands Staff and various specialists and potential user groups, who comprise a technical advisory committee, to ensure resource expertise and diverse user group input. Members of the technical advisory committee for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space Management Plan are listed below.

Name	Affiliation	Expertise
Joe Andrews	Larimer County Horseman's Assoc.	Equestrian Users
Mike Babler	Colorado State Forest Service	Forest Management/CSFS
Edith Bucco	Citizen	Historian
K-Lynn Cameron	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Open Lands Manager/ Outdoor Recreation and Planning
Mark Caughlan	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Horsetooth District Manager
Georgia Doyle	Colorado Natural Heritage Program	Ecology/Plant Communities
Andre Duvall	Colorado Division of Wildlife	Wildlife Biology
Meegan Flenniken	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Open Lands Resource Specialist/Project Manager
Eric Fried	Larimer County Building Code Enforcement	Structure Codes
Greg Mazu	Diamond Peaks Mountain Bike Patrol	Mountain Biking Users
Maxine Guill	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Weed Specialist
Rodney Ley	CSU Outdoor Adventure Program	Hiking/Outdoor Enthusiast
Ann Montoya	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Education Coordinator
Paul Opler	N.B.S./C.S.U.	Entomology/ecology
Virginia Soderberg	Soderberg Family	Soderberg Family
Holly Knowles	Lory State Park	State Parks
Joel Wykoff	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands	Trails and Weeds

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the technical advisory group for their participation, interest and feedback in the development of the Soderberg Open Space Management Plan. Additional information regarding the history of the Soderberg Property and Horsetooth area was provided by Charlie Gindler and Ryan Berg.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Overview

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space comprises 114 acres and is located west of Ft. Collins and adjacent to the east of Horsetooth Mountain Park. The location and boundaries are shown on Figure 1. The property is located in the Horsetooth Quadrangle, E ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 31, and a long diamond-shaped piece on the W ¼ of NE ¼ of Sec. 31, and the SW ¼ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 30, Township 7 North, Range 69 West of the 6th P.M.

Current access to the site is from Larimer County Road 38E, off Shoreline Road.

2.2 Natural Resources

a. Climate

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space has a highly variable, semi-arid climate. The climate data used to characterize the Soderberg Homestead Open Space has been recorded in Ft. Collins, which is more than 500 feet lower in elevation. However, the climate data is reflective of conditions at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space (Colorado Climate Center 1999).

The average maximum daily temperature (F) is approximately 70 degrees or above from May through September, with the daily average maximum reaching approximately 85 degrees in July and August. High temperatures may exceed 100 degrees, but nights are cooler with an average low during the summer of approximately 54 degrees. Winters are generally cold but are characterized by temperature swings. January is the coldest month with an average daily maximum of 41.5 degrees and an average daily minimum of 13.6 degrees.

Average annual precipitation is 14.4 inches, with the highest amount of precipitation occurring in May. Average annual snowfall is approximately 50 inches.

b. Topography/Geology/Soils

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space consists of gently rolling foothills just west of Inlet Bay of Horsetooth Reservoir. The average elevation at the site is 5600 feet. Slopes are fairly gentle throughout the property with the lowest elevations on the eastern side of the property at approximately 5440 feet rising upwards in elevation to the west to a maximum elevation of approximately 5800 feet.

The main soil associations listed in the Soil Survey of Larimer County Area, Colorado by the USDA-SCS (1980), for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space property include:

Kirtley-Purner-Haplustolls association: Shallow to deep, nearly level to steep, well drained mainly loams, fine sandy loams, and clay loams that formed in materials weathered from sandstone; on uplands and fans.

Haploborolls-Boyle-Ratake association: Shallow to deep, nearly level to very steep, well drained to excessively drained mainly loams, sandy loams, gravelly sandy loams or channery loams formed in materials weathered from granite and schist, on mountainsides.

Exposed geology on the site is mostly in the uplands containing sandstone strewn with granitic colluvium from higher elevations within Horsetooth Mountain Park. Large chunks of rose quartz are common.

c. Hydrology

Horsetooth Reservoir is the nearest major water body to the Soderberg Homestead. Two small drainages originating above the property in Horsetooth Mountain Park, cross the property from west to east and flow into Inlet Bay of Horsetooth Reservoir. A small pond, washed out in the 1997 flood, was located near the juniper and cottonwood trees in the drainage along the north access road.

There are five springs on the property (Figure 2) described below from south to north on the site: The first spring is the largest spring and is piped into the house. It is located just above the first major switchback along the old road leading up the hill to the northwest of the Herrington Chicken House. The second spring is located to the southwest and uphill of the house and is a large cistern built by Herrington that drains underground in a pipe and fills the horse trough in the northeast corrals. This spring is covered with several sandstone slabs and marked by a tall metal pole. The third is also in a cistern that is covered with a large stone slab and located immediately west uphill from the house. This cistern then flows down into the well (3' wide x 100' deep) in the cellar building outside the house's west entrance. The fourth spring is located up the drainage directly west of the Herrington Chicken House and is in the vicinity of a flat stone that once was placed over several stone blocks to make a cover. The current cover on this spring is two stacked stone slabs over a wooden cover with a bike tire seal. This spring is piped underground to the stock tank just east of the granary building. The fifth spring is located just north of the Herrington Chicken House next to a Russian olive tree.

d. Vegetation

Vegetation types present at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space include open ponderosa pine woodlands, mountain mahogany shrublands and foothills grasslands. The uplands are in better condition than the bottomlands or grasslands due to grazing pressure over time. There are several drainages that run through the property out to Inlet Bay and these include some mesic vegetation as well. Over time, trees have been planted around the Soderberg Homestead house and predominately include evergreens, apple, pear, walnut, spruce and boxelder trees. Vegetation types are shown on Figure 2 and dominant Plant Species are listed in Appendix A, Table 1.

Open Ponderosa Pine Woodland

Forest communities at Horsetooth Mountain Park are dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), as is a small portion of the northwest corner of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. The north facing slope of the main drainage at the north end of the property is dominated by ponderosa pine with shrub and grassland understory predominately consisting of mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), sulphur flower (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), hairy grama (*Bouteloua hirsuta*), and kinnikinnik (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), among others.

Mountain Mahogany Shrubland

Mountain mahogany shrublands dominate the sloped hillsides at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space where the soils are fairly shallow. The shrubland community is dominated by mountain mahogany but also includes other shrubs such as skunkbrush (*Rhus trilobata*), currant (*Ribes* sp.), and an herbaceous cover including needle-and-thread grass (*Stipa comata*), fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*) and blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*).

Foothills Grassland

The central valley of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space property is predominately composed of foothills grassland and forb species including needle-and-thread grass, blue grama, wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum effusum*), scurfpea (*Psoralea tenuiflora*), side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), purple three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*), sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), prickly-pear cactus (*Opuntia macrorhiza*) and others. Mixed in with these native species are planted or introduced grasses such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and timothy (*Phleum pratense*).

Riparian Drainages

These drainages traverse the property and drain the uplands into Inlet Bay. Dominant vegetation includes wax current (*Ribes cereum*), golden currant (*Ribes aureum*), ninebark (*Physocarpus monogynus*), plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii*).

Rare or Imperiled Plants or Plant Communities

The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) conducted a survey for rare and imperiled plants and plant communities on the Soderberg Property in 1996. No rare plants were found; however small patches of a globally and state imperiled (G2G3 S2S3) foothills shrubland plant community of mountain mahogany/skunkbush/big bluestem (*Cercocarpus montanus/Rhus trilobata/Andropogon gerardii*) were documented. This plant community also occurs within Horsetooth Mountain Park and Lory State Park. Additionally big bluestem and little bluestem are host plants for imperiled butterflies documented on the site (see Section 2.2 e).

Exotic Plants and Noxious Weeds

In 2002, noxious weeds documented and mapped at Soderberg Homestead Open Space included Canada thistle, dalmation toadflax and Russian olive. The dalmation toadflax was spray treated in 2002.

e. Wildlife

Soderberg Open Space is located within an ecotone, or ecological transition area, containing characteristics of the montane zone to the west and the prairie grasslands to the east. The blending of these two ecological zones in this transition area provides a variety of habitat types for both resident and migratory wildlife species.

Large vertebrate species include mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), and black bear (*Ursus americanus*). The Soderberg Homestead Open Space provides a summer concentration area for black bear and winter range and a winter concentration area for mule deer. Elk (*Cervus canadensis*) and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) have occasionally been observed in the area. Some other mammals in the area include the least chipmunk (*Eutamias minimus*), Abert's squirrel (*Sciurus aberti*), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), mice, red fox (*Vulpes fulva*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), mountain cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus nuttalli*), and bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). Reptiles likely found on the Soderberg Homestead Open Space include bullsnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), rattlesnake (*Crotalus* spp.), plains hognose snake (*Heterodon nasicus nasicus*), and garter snake (*Thamnopsis* sp.). See Appendix A, Table 2 for a list of common wildlife species.

Birds are especially abundant in this area with 126 bird species identified within Horsetooth Mountain Park and neighboring Lory State Park. These birds include a pair of nesting golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and wintering bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

Rare, Threatened or Imperiled Species

There are several rare and imperiled butterfly species documented within a larger area inclusive of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space called the Horsetooth Reservoir Hogback Conservation Site. This site was delineated by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program for its very high biodiversity significance (B2 ranking). In particular this area supports several rare and imperiled butterflies including the hop-feeding azure (*Celastrina* sp.), mottled dusky winged butterfly (*Erynnis martialis*), Arogos skipper (*Atrytone arogos*), Ottoe skipper (*Hesperia ottoe*), Schryver's elfin butterfly (*Callophrys mossii schryveri*), Simius roadside skipper (*Amblyscirtes simius*), and Morrison's skipper (*Stringa morrisoni*) among others (Colorado Natural Heritage Program 1996). The hop-feeding azure is a globally imperiled species known to occur only on the Colorado Front Range from Douglas County north to Larimer County. The mottled dusky winged, Arogos skipper and Ottoe skipper butterflies are globally common but rare to uncommon in Colorado. Each of these butterfly species has a larval host plant and adult nectar source plant that are important for the butterfly's persistence (see Appendix A, Table 3).

The drainages along the foothills including Horsetooth Mountain Park and Lory State Park provide potential habitat for Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) – a threatened species.

2.3 Visual Resources

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space provides a physical and visual buffer to Horsetooth Mountain Park from encroaching residential development. Both Horsetooth Reservoir and Horsetooth Mountain Park are prominent landmarks in northern Colorado and receive high annual visitation. By preserving the rolling foothills of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space, the viewshed to the north along the foothills corridor is also preserved. In addition, from the Soderberg Homestead Open Space itself, there are striking views of Horsetooth Reservoir to the east and of Horsetooth Mountain Park and Lory State Park to the west and north.

2.4 Historical Resources

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space has a colorful history. The buildings on the property each hold individual historical interest (see History Section 1.2 and Structures Section 2.5b). A large number of ranching implements including a pair of mounted antlers, a tractor mower stool seat, wine jug, horse bits, two draft horse work harness, oxen shoes, coyote traps, wooden fur stretchers, castrators, miscellaneous horseshoes, cow bell, horseshoes with cleats, weaning ring, hobbles for milk cows, branding irons, glass bottles, miscellaneous medicinal powders, a child's sled, manual corn planter, brass bed frame, large hay rack wheel, orthopedic horseshoes, hay hooks, cream separator, dishes, a hoof trimmer, grain shovel, a de-horning tool for cattle, and a potato digger machine, among other items have been generously donated by the Soderbergs to be used for educational purposes.

2.5 Socioeconomic Resources

a. The Soderberg Homestead Open Space Land Status

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space consists of approximately 114 acres of land situated between Horsetooth Reservoir and Horsetooth Mountain Park, both managed by the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department. In 1998, 101.5 acres of the Soderberg property was purchased outright and an additional 12.5 acres purchased as a life estate by the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department, for conservation of natural, historic, and visual resources, and provision for educational opportunities and limited outdoor recreation.

Easements and Encumbrances

There is one access easement across the Soderberg Homestead Open Space servicing the CSU radio antenna site atop Horsetooth Mountain. This easement crosses the northern edge of the property and is also used for fire control purposes. There is a second recorded easement that is a

right-of-way granted to Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association for installation and maintenance of the existing power lines crossing the southeast corner of the property.

Adjacent Land Use

Surrounding lands are both public and private. Private lands mainly consist of low-density rural, residential neighborhoods. Northeast and south of the property are rural subdivisions such as the Continental North, Thompson and Kerchman subdivisions. Adjacent land uses are labeled on Figure 1.

To the west, the 2,309-acre Horsetooth Mountain Park is owned and managed by the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department for outdoor recreation, natural resources protection and environmental education. East and southeast of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space is Horsetooth Reservoir, owned by the Bureau of Reclamation and managed by Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department for water-based recreation and camping. Further southeast of Bureau of Reclamation-owned lands lies the 437-acre Rimrock Open Space, purchased in two phases in 1998 and 2001. This property ties into Coyote Ridge Natural Area and combined boast over 6 miles of trail. The next phase of trail development at Rimrock Open Space includes a trail connection from the existing trail north along the base of the rimrock cliffs up to Horsetooth Reservoir.

b. Structures

The 2,018 square foot Soderberg house (with a 1,260 s.f. basement), built in 1889 is a ranch-style home, which features turn-of-the-century ranch architecture. The address is 3909 Shoreline Road, Fort Collins, Colorado. When Johnny Soderberg moved to the house in 1947, he added the front addition that includes what is now the kitchen. In 1986, the Soderbergs added a third addition including the garage, living room and east deck.

There are several historic ranch buildings including a two-story plastered building (the “Herrington Chicken House”), a stone garage built by Mr. Herrington for his Model T car, a log granary building, a small stone well house, wooden corrals, a cattle chute and two wooden loafing sheds on the site. These buildings were all inspected by the Larimer County Building Inspection Department in April 2003 and with the exception of the Model T garage and granary, all appear to be stable and sound. The Model T garage has settlement cracks on three walls and is not structurally sound. The granary buildings’ stone foundation has suffered a partial collapse in the northwest corner. The Building Department’s recommendation is that public access to these two ranch buildings should be prohibited until further evaluation by an architect or professional engineer.

A final structure on the open spaces is a small stone building previously used for dynamite storage along the access road to the north. A small ranch dump site is located just west of the main access road and north of the Herrington Chicken House and contains mostly old fencing materials.

c. Gravesite

Johnny Soderberg passed away in August 2001 and his ashes were buried on a small rise to the southwest of the house that is marked by a plaque attached to a stone from the old Soderberg quarry. There are also four pets buried in this location. The County, per a memorandum of agreement, will allow Virginia Soderbergs ashes to also be buried in this location after her death and immediate siblings of Johnny and their spouses' ashes may also be buried at this same site.

d. Fences

There are several fences on the property. Corral fences are primarily wooden and enclose five separate corral areas. Some of the posts were put in by the Herrington's, some by Johnny Soderberg and others are replacement posts over time. Of particular interest, there is a round corral used for training horses, a cattle chute, original gates with hand hewn closing mechanisms, and an old stone foundation for a hay barn located adjacent to one corral. There are also barbed and smooth wire fences that delineate the property boundary and a fenceline that runs north to south through the property separating the valley from the uplands.

e. Water and Mineral Rights

Water rights include a domestic well that serves the house and a small spring suitable only for livestock watering. All water rights and all mineral rights associated with the property are owned by Larimer County.

f. Agriculture

The site has been grazed in the past by the Soderbergs livestock. Since 2002 there have been 2-4 horses that have grazed the property and 2-3 goats penned in the corral area per the current lease on the residential house. The current residential lease ends on August 31, 2003. However there are currently no additional agricultural leases held.

g. Roads, Trails and Parking

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space and Horsetooth Mountain Park are located west of Ft. Collins in the foothills. Road systems in the region provide good access to the Soderberg Homestead Open Space via Ft. Collins from CR 38E and Shoreline Road. There is a fully-developed parking area for the Horsetooth Mountain Park off of CR 38E that includes 55 vehicle and 8 horse trailer parking spaces. There is currently parking available for 3-4 vehicles at the Soderberg house. Currently there are no established or designated trails.

A ranch road exists through the property, connecting the house to the ranch buildings and then all the way north to the property boundary. This road eventually ties into Towers Road at Horsetooth Mountain Park in proximity to the Nomad Trail within the Park that lead north and into Lory State Park. Two old access roads that connect into Horsetooth Mountain Park lead uphill to the west of the house via road cuts that are in poor condition.

h. Public Facilities, Utilities and Services

The Soderberg home is fully equipped with such amenities as running water (via a well and not on a tap), electricity, sewer (from Spring Canyon Water and Sanitation District), phone and propane gas. The home is wheelchair accessible including an elevator that connects the garage with the living room. The house consists of a kitchen, two full baths and two half baths (one that is partially a laundry room), a large outside deck on the east side, three bedrooms, a large living room, an office space, a mud room at the west entrance, and a two-car garage.

Fire protection. Fire protection is ultimately the responsibility of the Larimer County Sheriff's Department. The area, however, is also served by the Poudre Valley Fire Protection District. Fire hazard in this area based on fire hazard mapping by the Colorado State Forest Service shows that about half the Soderberg Homestead Open Space property is considered to be low hazard and half to be severe brush fire hazard. The open ponderosa pine drainage at the north end of the property is rated as a severe fire hazard.

Public safety. The Larimer County Sheriff's Department is responsible for law enforcement. Rangers and Volunteer Program staff are responsible for the education and enforcement of regulations. Rangers assist the Sheriff's Department and other law enforcement agencies in responding to and preventing criminal activity in the park. Rangers and staff will also be available to provide visitor assistance and emergency and medical needs. The Poudre Valley Hospital Ambulance Service responds to more serious medical emergencies while rescues and searches are conducted by the Larimer County Search and Rescue Team of the Sheriff's Department.

i. Environmental Assessment

The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDH&E) conducted a records review of pertinent environmental data on the Soderberg property relating to hazardous material spills, illegal dumps, underground storage tanks, septic systems, etc. While this is not a Phase I Assessment that would provide historical information and information from other agencies, it does reveal specific site information on household hazardous waste containers, an underground gas storage tank and a farm dump. Several containers of household hazardous substances, vehicle batteries, a 55-gallon drum and a 30-gallon drum were found near or within the ranch buildings. Some containers are empty and some contain material that must be disposed per label instructions. Most of these could be sent through the Larimer County Household Hazardous Waste Program. A 1000-gallon underground storage tank buried 10 feet deep was used to store gasoline for farm equipment but has not been used since approximately 1988. This tank, covered in part by a concrete block, is located just north of the drive leading to the Model T garage. The LCDH&E recommends removal of the tank and a full-site assessment be performed to determine if any contamination exists. The last item is an open farm dump located on the property just north of the Herrington Chicken House. This dump was in violation of the Colorado Revised Statue and Colorado Solid Waste Disposal Site and Facilities Act and was cleaned up by Larimer County staff in spring 2003. The LCDH&E has signed off that the former dump site is now removed and the site is clear of any potential contaminants.

j. Recreational Use and Demand

With increasing population along the Front Range, the demand for close, convenient recreational opportunities is also increasing. The current population of Larimer County is approximately 248,987 (2000 census data), with 118,720 living in Fort Collins. With existing foothills, regional, and local parks and open spaces experiencing heavy use, there is a need for additional foothills trails, recreational amenities and open spaces. In a 1991 survey, Horsetooth Mountain Park Preserve, with its 27 miles of trails, was the second most frequently used park for hiking and mountain biking in Larimer County. In the *Resource Management Plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park (1998)*, it was recognized that heavy use necessitated additional buffers to the park to protect wildlife habitat, provide additional educational resources and provide expanded recreational opportunities. The Soderberg Homestead Open Space was one of the areas identified for acquisition to meet these needs.

k. Operations Budget and Funding

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space operations and capital improvement projects are funded through Help Preserve Open Space sales tax dollars. Based on long-term management fund projections, annual management costs for this area are projected to be \$43/ac/year or \$4902 annually prior to development of public facilities. Once public facilities are in place, annual maintenance costs are projected to be \$324/ac/year or \$36,936. Maintenance dollars will cover the cost of building maintenance, rangers and regulation enforcement, weed management, fence repair, trash removal, outdoor education, trail maintenance and vegetation restoration as needed. Funding will be available through Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax dollars as well for purchase of additional properties to be added to the existing Horsetooth Mountain Park system. As an addition to Horsetooth Mountain Park, use of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space is subject to the user fee currently in place for the Park. Additional monies are not available for upgrade and improvements to the house to make it accessible for the public and therefore additional dollar sources would have to be determined pending the outcome of the Phase II Management Plan for long-term use of the house.

3. OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS AND PLANNING ISSUES

3.1 Overview

During the management plan development process, input will be received from the public, the Open Lands Advisory Board, a voluntary and informal Technical Advisory Committee, and Parks and Open Lands staff, regarding opportunities, constraints and planning issues in regards to the current existing conditions and management of Soderberg Homestead Open Space [In Process]. This input or planning issues may be divided into four key components: 1) natural resource, 2) outdoor recreation, 3) cultural resource and 4) education.

3.2 Natural Resource Opportunities, Constraints and Planning Issues

- *Protect, manage and enhance natural and visual resources including maintaining and promoting healthy ecosystems and their processes.*

Natural resource opportunities include:

- Protecting and maintaining the natural communities and habitat, which will enable the continued use of the area by wildlife, in particular, rare, threatened and imperiled species.

Constraints and planning issues associated with the natural resources of the property include:

- Maintenance of the continuity of vegetation communities is important for protecting species within the larger Horsetooth Reservoir Hogbacks Conservation Site.
- The threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat may be impacted by multiple trails that bisect drainages.
- Imperiled butterfly populations might be impacted by loss of larval host plants and/or nectar sources.
- Larger numbers of visitors may have the effect of increasing introduction of exotic weed species.
- Noxious weed species have the potential to impair grassland and shrubland health.
- Off-trail use may cause vegetation disturbance and soil erosion.
- Open space users may directly or indirectly disturb wildlife.
- Dogs off leash may disturb wildlife or other users.
- Existing or additional fencing in the area may prove detrimental to raptors and impede movement of other wildlife utilizing the area (i.e. mule deer adults and young).
- Rattlesnake habitat may be disturbed and conversely rattlesnake/visitor interactions may be a safety concern.

3.3 Outdoor Recreation Opportunities, Constraints and Planning Issues

- *Provide, promote and enhance safe, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities while minimizing detrimental impacts upon natural, cultural and visual resources.*

Outdoor recreation opportunities include:

- Constructing the “Swan Johnson” trail from the Soderberg Homestead Open Space into Horsetooth Mountain Park to commemorate this Soderberg relative and early settler of the Horsetooth Valley.
- Constructing a trailhead and parking area for a future foothills regional trail link connecting Horsetooth Mountain Park to the Devil’s Backbone Open Space to the south.
- Providing an opportunity for visitors to enjoy this unique landscape and homestead and experience the foothills ecotone in this area.
- Providing additional close-in recreational opportunities to meet an increasing public demand for such amenities.

Constraints and planning issues regarding outdoor recreation include:

- There may be potential multiple use conflicts associated with the future trail.
- A trail design addressing user wants and interests may conflict with a trail design protecting sensitive wildlife.
- Social trails, users travelling off-trail and multiple access trails could be destructive to the natural resource values and fragment this relatively small area.
- Too many people may impact the enjoyment of the open space by all.
- Charging a user fee will be necessary to off-set long-term management costs of the site.
- Charging a user fee may act to help limit visitor numbers and overcrowding at the open space.
- Dogs off leashes may impact other users experiences.
- A secondary trailhead to Horsetooth Mountain Park will allow recreational users to access less visited portions of the Park. Thus, this trailhead also has the potential to increase impacts to wildlife and habitats that were previously less impacted in the Park.
- Pet or animal waste may be a health issue or a menace if left on the trail.
- Larimer County needs to pay their share of maintenance costs on Minuteman Drive from where the pavement currently ends up to the parking lot entrance.
- Allowing an adequate buffer and screening between the trailhead and the private home to the south is important.
- Use of the area by large groups (e.g., commercial horseback riding trips, large group events, commercial tours, etc.) may overwhelm the capacity of the area.
- People using “nature’s restroom” may damage the natural environment and create a public health issue.
- If the trailhead is not appropriately located and designed, then it may take away from the historic and natural character of the property.
- Trespassing may occur onto adjacent private property.
- Neighbors in the Continental North Subdivision desire that they still may access HTMP via the gate at Towers Road.

- The location of where the regional trail will cross Minuteman Drive is important for safety reasons.
- Artificial lighting at the parking/trailhead area may be a visual eyesore.
- Interior fences and over-signage may be a hazard or a visual eyesore.
- Increased traffic, on top of Horsetooth Reservoir traffic, on Shoreline and Minuteman Drives may impact adjacent landowners.
- Signs are needed along the road to let visitors know that there is no public access beyond the trailhead.
- Noise and voices may disturb adjacent landowners.
- Camping on the property is not appropriate given the historic value of the area and that this use is already accommodated at the campgrounds around Horsetooth Reservoir.
- Use of the trail after dark may be a safety and noise issue to adjacent landowners as well as increase the potential of vandalism to the site.
- Hunting or shooting on the site may disturb sensitive wildlife and be a safety issue for adjacent landowners and the public.

3.4 Cultural Resource Opportunities, Constraints and Planning Issues

- *Protect and appropriately use the Soderberg Homestead Open Space House and associated ranch buildings*

Cultural Resource Opportunities include a variety of options such as:

- Providing a limited use facility that can be leased for small events appropriate to natural or cultural resource programs (i.e. similar to the Coyote Ridge Cabin or Livermore Community Hall).
- Providing a Visitor Center with interpretive exhibits and displays and space for natural and cultural history programs and volunteer naturalist training.
- Providing a combined Visitor Center/Office Space with interpretive exhibits and meeting space and a separate area for Departmental office space.
- Creating a living history or working ranch with on-site interpreters and signs at the ranch buildings.
- Leasing the space to a non-profit or other appropriate group that would in-kind provide educational or other benefits to the community through natural and cultural resource-related programs.
- Using the house as a caretakers home or employee housing.
- Selling the house separately from the open space lands.
- Continuing to lease the house as a residence.
- Leaving the house vacant.
- Creating a self-guided historical walk around the house and ranch buildings with interpretive materials.
- Stabilizing the ranch buildings and with fencing allow viewing of the structures from either a designated trail or other distance.

Constraints and Planning Issues related to cultural resource management include:

- Costs associated with meeting Larimer County building codes, remodeling and providing regular maintenance will require an additional funding source for improvements and long-term maintenance.
- Leaving the house vacant may increase incidents of vandalism and lead to dilapidation of the house and ranch buildings.
- Leasing the house may provide an income source for building maintenance.
- Leasing the house may be a staff time and cost constraint involving the County to act in a landlord capacity.
- Fencing or means to keep the public out of the historic buildings and prevent vandalism may be necessary.
- Donated historic clothing including the wedding dress, coat and top hat from the Soderberg family would be expensive and difficult to ensure proper preservation of by the Parks and Open Lands Department.

3.5 Education Opportunities, Constraints and Planning Issues

- *Provide and enhance educational opportunities regarding the area's natural and cultural history, visual resources and the importance of responsible land use and stewardship.*

Environmental education opportunities include:

- Developing a historic map and cultural educational program.
- Incorporating the Soderberg Homestead Open Space and cultural history as part of the Larimer County Volunteer Naturalist and On-site Naturalist Programs.
- Developing appropriate educational materials to inform the public on the historical significance of the buildings while not enticing the public to enter the building area during Phase I of the use of this open space area.

Constraints and planning issues regarding environmental education are:

- Over-signage of the trailhead and trail may take away from the natural and historic character of the site and create eyesores.
- Highlighting sensitive natural and/or cultural resources may result in their destruction or additional impacts.
- Education on wildlife and wildlife habitat may be important to mitigate user impact as well as protect users from negative wildlife interactions.
- There is a need for appropriate signage of regulations, maps, and other important information.
- Incorporating the volunteer naturalist program into this open space will enhance the educational opportunities available at this site.
- Large groups visiting the site may overwhelm the capacity of the open space and result in resource impacts or reduce the quality of other visitors' experiences.

4. MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Overview

To meet the purpose and objectives of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space Management Plan and to address the opportunities, constraints and planning issues brought forth by the public, technical advisory group and staff, the plan is divided into four main components: 1) natural resource management; 2) outdoor recreation management; 3) cultural resource management; and 4) education opportunities. These four components, while addressed separately, are interrelated and will likely impact and influence each other. This plan will serve as the guide for management of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space for as long as it is valid. Management guidelines should be flexible and management techniques adaptive and reviewed on a regular basis.

Overriding Management Focus

The focus of management activities at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space will be protecting, managing, and enhancing natural, cultural, and visual resources. In particular, the focus of management at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space will be to regularly monitor wildlife, vegetation and cultural resources to ensure that visitors and other activities on the open space are not having an adverse impact. Regular on-going monitoring will occur for wildlife (in particular the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM)), plant communities, and riparian area vegetation. The homestead house, outbuildings and cattle chute should also be regularly monitored for wear, damage, and unauthorized use. If it is determined that in the process of providing safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities, the resource values at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space are adversely impacted, the recreational activities will be evaluated to assess means to minimize the impact. Specifically, seasonal trail closures, trail re-routing, timing of activities, elimination of specific activities and so forth would be examined to reduce or minimize impacts. The protection of resource values will take precedence over recreational opportunities.

Vision

Both the 1993 Comprehensive Parks Master Plan and the 2001 Larimer County Open Lands Master Plan identify the Devil's Backbone to Horsetooth Mountain corridor as a priority for open space protection and a regional trail connection. This area has high natural, cultural, agricultural, visual, and open space values. Based on these two Master Plans, which were developed with extensive citizen planning efforts, the Soderberg Homestead Open Space fits both the goal of protecting these conservation values and serving as a trailhead for a regional foothills trail connection.

The proposed Larimer County Parks and Open Lands *vision* for the Soderberg Homestead Open Space is to protect the native vegetation and wildlife and important historic resources, while providing non-motorized outdoor recreational opportunities. The proposed trailhead and trail location and design will focus on minimizing impacts to sensitive wildlife and historic buildings while enabling visitors to enjoy this area. The trailhead would serve as a second access point to Horsetooth Mountain Park and as a northern trailhead for the foothills regional trail connecting

Horsetooth Mountain Park to the Devil's Backbone Open Space. Recreation opportunities will potentially include hiking, running, horseback riding, mountain biking and wildlife viewing on or from a natural surface trail. To manage and protect the cultural resources on the site, the homestead house and outbuildings will be maintained to avoid deterioration over time until funding is available to make additional use of or improvements to these buildings.

Visitors and the local community will be able to enjoy the protected view of this historic ranchland and homestead as the foreground to Horsetooth Mountain Park. Educational opportunities will allow visitors to learn about the ranching tradition, historic buildings, native flora and fauna and colorful history of this area. Additionally, visitors will have the opportunity to learn how to protect this valuable natural and cultural resource area and potentially participate in such programs as volunteer on-site naturalists, educational hike leaders, weed warriors, trail maintenance and trail construction.

4.2 Natural Resources Management

Natural resources management addresses the health and dynamics of the plant and animal communities and the preservation of natural geologic features and scenic vistas of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. For purposes of this plan, natural resources management is grouped into four categories: a) grassland and shrubland health and management; b) wildlife management; and c) hydrology and erosion management.

a. Grassland and Shrubland Health and Management

The management of grassland and shrubland health is important for ensuring long-term sustainability of the landscape. Over time the grasslands and shrublands have been invaded by or seeded with non-native grass species such as cheatgrass and other bromes that are extremely difficult to manage and control.

To address these issues, a grassland and shrubland management plan is proposed that will identify practical management tools for reducing the impact of invasive exotics and maintaining the native plant communities and system functions of the grasslands and shrublands. Potential management tools may include the use of grazing or prescribed burning in these communities to maintain community health. Additionally, visitor education as to how noxious weeds are spread and how they can be managed will be an important component to managing grassland and shrubland health over the long-term. In 1999, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP), was contracted to develop a grassland and shrubland management plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park. This plan is also directly applicable to lands at Soderberg Homestead Open Space and the principles contained within will be applied as necessary to management of this property as well.

Implementation steps:

- Include the Soderberg Homestead Open Space in the *Management Alternatives for Natural Communities and Imperiled Invertebrates at Horsetooth Mountain Park, Larimer County, Colorado* (1990) and continue ongoing monitoring of community health.
- Revegetate the additional access road through the valley and road cuts.
- Include the Soderberg Homestead Open Space Property in the *Integrated Weed Management Plan for Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department*, that includes stipulations for weed inventory, control and monitoring.

b. Wildlife Management

Various management tools may be utilized to protect wildlife including trail placement to avoid disturbing wildlife and seasonal trail closures. The trail location was chosen to minimally disturb currently unfragmented wildlife habitat to the west of the valley and to minimize impacting vegetation in the drainages which provide potential habitat for the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse (PMJM). Efforts to study and monitor wildlife species should be encouraged to begin to build a baseline of information.

The USFWS requires issuance of a permit for any “take” of threatened species including the Federally Listed PMJM. Larimer County will work with the USFWS to ensure that all legal requirements are met before trail construction begins.

To help control disease with elk, deer or other wildlife on the property, Larimer County reserves the capability to allow game management through hunting or culling on a limited basis in conjunction with the Division of Wildlife.

Implementation steps:

- Engage volunteer groups such as wildlife biology students, Audubon Society, etc. to inventory and regularly monitor the locations of sensitive species (PMJM, birds, mammals, rare butterflies and other wildlife) and determine steps to be taken, if necessary, to prevent human disturbance and enhance visitor experience.
- Encourage small-scale research of existing wildlife populations including academic studies by Colorado State University.
- Work with the Division of Wildlife to enhance wildlife habitat and manage wildlife populations, in particular the PMJM, as needed.
- Work with the USFWS to comply with regulations on the PMJM.

c. Hydrology and Erosion Management

Soil erosion is a major threat to land productivity and subsequently may impact wildlife habitat, native plant species and water quality. A combination of the soils and geology of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space make the site susceptible to high runoff during precipitation events and

potentially soil erosion and gully formation. The site will be managed for grassland and shrubland health (maintenance of adequate vegetative cover), a factor of utmost importance for erosion prevention.

The trail through the Soderberg Homestead Open Space will be planned such that it follows the lands' natural topographic contours and will be less likely to be a conduit for runoff collection and incise or deteriorate soils. Trail users will be encouraged to remain on designated trails, which will help reduce the development of social trails and, thus, subsequent erosion and gullying.

Existing springs on the property support habitat and provide a water source for wildlife. These spring will require monitoring and occasional maintenance to ensure they continue flowing.

Implementation steps:

- Design and locate the trail to minimize erosion.
- Educate users to remain on designated trails so shortcuts or social trails are not created.
- Keep springs cleaned out and flowing for wildlife use and habitat.

4.3 Outdoor Recreation Management

Recreation management generally refers to people management and the management of outdoor recreational facilities. For purposes of this plan, recreation management is grouped into three categories: a) multiple use and user interaction, b) trail maintenance and construction and c) trailhead development and maintenance.

a. *Multiple Use and User Interaction*

The Soderberg Homestead Open Space will be open to such recreational uses as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, running, and wildlife viewing. Consequently, the Soderberg Homestead Open Space will be used by a variety of visitors and therefore visitor management should emphasize trail courtesy. Use of the area by large groups (e.g., commercial horseback riding trips, large group events, commercial tours, etc.) may overwhelm the capacity of the area. Any special event or large group event would require review through the Parks and Open Lands Department Special Event review process that evaluates event requests based on the compatibility and appropriateness of an activity with the specific site.

Dogs and other pets are allowed at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. They must be on a leash and under control, however, at all times and owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. Keeping pets on leashes prevents the harassment of wildlife and ensures a safe experience for all users.

Implementation steps:

- Promote trail etiquette through information signs and brochures.

- Provide dog waste bags at the trailhead and a trash can approximately ¼ mile up the trail for disposal.
- Design the trail to allow for a 4 ft. width to accommodate a greater capacity of trail use on this segment that will tie into Horsetooth Mountain Park.
- Signs will be posted on appropriate fencelines to denote private property beyond.

b. Trail Maintenance and Construction

The proposed trail connecting the Soderberg Homestead Open Space to Horsetooth Mountain Park will be located to minimize impacts to important plant and wildlife species, reduce conflicts between users and wildlife, provide a safe and enjoyable trail experience and reduce erosion potential. The trail will be natural surface and 4 feet wide to accommodate greater use in the vicinity of the trailhead. Signs along the trail should be minimal and architecturally compatible and congruous with the setting and sign character at the trailhead. The proposed trail location is shown on Figure 3.

A low rail or wooden fence that is congruous with the setting will be installed along the trail as it passes by the historic buildings to serve as a visual reminder to visitors to remain on the trail.

Implementation steps:

- Construct the “Swan Johnson” trail, a 4 foot wide natural surface trail, connecting the trailhead at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space to Horsetooth Mountain Park at Towers Road.
- Low height metal or wooden corral style fencing will be installed along the trail in the vicinity of the historic buildings to keep visitors on the trail and minimize contact with these historic structures.

c. Trailhead Development, Maintenance and Access

To allow access into Horsetooth Mountain Park and to the foothills regional trail to the south, a parking area and trailhead will be developed on the Soderberg Homestead Open Space. This trailhead will also in the future serve as parking for the Homestead House if there is public use. To best manage the amount of use into the open space and along the regional trail, a carrying capacity of the open space and park will be set and determined by the number of parking spaces in this new lot. By limiting the number of users to an appropriate carrying capacity of the site (20 vehicles/10 horse trailers), impacts to the natural environment and user conflicts will be minimized, and visitor experience enhanced.

Traffic studies have been conducted on Shoreline Road near the fire station 7 different years in the last 10-year period by the Larimer County Engineering Department. The most recent traffic count in 2001 showed that there are 1300 trips/day made on the road. By estimating an approximate twice a day turnover of the Soderberg Trailhead, the predominant use of which

would occur during non-peak hours of the day, the estimated traffic increase on Shoreline Drive is 7.5%. Larimer County acknowledges that they will need to participate in maintenance of the approximately 800 foot portion of Minuteman Drive to be used to access the trailhead and will pay to pave this portion of the road from the intersection to the trailhead access. Signs will be posted at the end of this 800 foot paved road section to notify visitors that there is no park or open space access beyond.

To minimize night noise and the potential of vandalism to buildings, the parking area and trailhead will be open only from dawn to dusk with the exception of special approved after hours activities such as ranger or volunteer led moonlight hikes. The trailhead will have a light on the restroom and if necessary, in the future, additional lighting may be added to further protect the historic buildings.

The development and maintenance of the trailhead and parking facilities will be performed by the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department. To off-set long-term management and maintenance costs and because this area will be directly linked into Horsetooth Mountain Park which already has a user fee system in place, a user fee will also be charged at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space Trailhead.

The regional trail will be located to tie into the Soderberg Trailhead and cross Minuteman Drive in a location that will have maximum site distance. Signs denoting the trail crossing will be posted along the roadway.

Implementation Steps:

- Develop the parking area/trailhead to accommodate 20 vehicle parking spots and 10 horse trailer parking spots.
- Locate the trailhead at an appropriate buffer distance to minimize impacts to neighboring property owners.
- Provide plantings of appropriate shrub or tree species to help screen the trailhead from the private residence to the south.
- Install a gate that can be closed and locked after hours at the parking lot entrance.
- Install a natural colored vault-style restroom facility with a down-cast night light and drinking water at the trailhead.
- Integrate the Soderberg Trailhead into the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department permit system.
- Place signs along the road to let visitors know that there is no public access north on Minuteman Drive beyond the trailhead.
- Develop appropriate trailhead signage including a map of the area and regulations for the open space and park.
- Install 2-3 picnic tables north of the trailhead in the vicinity of the trees.
- Work with the Continental North Homeowners Association to determine an equitable solution to maintenance costs on the portion of the road used by

Larimer County to access the trailhead and homeowners to access their neighborhood.

4.4 Cultural Resource Management

There is a rich cultural history of the Horsetooth Valley and Soderberg Homestead Open Space Area. For the Phase I portion of this plan, the intent is to protect and interpret the historical resources of the area, while waiting until future funding becomes available to develop these resources for public use. Therefore, the focus will be to keep visitors out of contact with the historic buildings, while allowing for views of the buildings from the trail and educational signs along the trail to explain their historic significance.

Implementation steps:

- Investigate the viability of various options for long-term use of the Soderberg House and funding opportunities available for the option chosen.
- Create a cultural history map and text describing important cultural features on the property.
- Protect and stabilize as needed the ranch buildings and continue to maintain the house appropriately.
- Protect, store and use, when appropriate for educational purposes, the donated ranch implements and items from the Soderberg Family.
- Work with the Soderberg Family to help find an appropriate venue to which they could donate the historic clothing to ensure it's proper preservation.
- Clean up the farm dump on the property, remove all storage drums and if necessary, the underground gas storage tank.
- Complete construction of corral fencing between the trail and historic buildings.

4.5 Education Opportunities

Numerous educational opportunities exist at the Soderberg Homestead Open Space that could allow for the development of an integrated historical/cultural/education site. Long-term educational amenities are dependent on funding for the house and associated interpretive features. Educational signs will be placed in the homestead and trailhead vicinity that include Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Regulations (see Table 2) for the site, cultural resource interpretive information and a site map showing significant features such as trails, protected lands, etc.

Implementation steps:

- Design and install trailhead signs that include educational information, a map of the park, open space and trails, Departmental regulations, and a fee station at the entrance to the Soderberg Homestead Open Space.
- Develop educational materials that would be placed in the vicinity of the outbuildings along the trail that would provide educational information on

these historic buildings and cultural history of the area and encourage visitors to protect them by staying on the trail.

- Involve volunteers to lead cultural and natural history programs along the trail and thereby incorporate the Soderberg Homestead Open Space into the Volunteer Naturalist Program.

4.6 Land Acquisitions

Expansion of Horsetooth Mountain Park with such properties as the Soderberg Homestead Open Space is important for providing a buffer to protected lands.

Implementation steps:

- Continue to work with adjacent property owners to protect remaining lands adjacent to Horsetooth Mountain Park that meet the criteria of the Open Lands Program.

4.7 Summary of Implementation Steps and Phasing

A tabular summary of implementation steps and proposed timelines are provided below (Table 1). These steps will be prioritized and implemented as budget and time allows. In general, Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department updates management plans on a 5-10 year basis. Issues, proposed new activities, special event requests, or other unforeseen actions not covered in this management plan will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Resource Stewardship Team to determine if the proposed action is appropriate.

Table 1. Summary of Implementation steps for The Soderberg Homestead Open Space Management Plan.

Management Implementation Steps	2003	2004	2005 and beyond	Responsible program*
Grassland and shrubland health				
Incorporate property into the <i>Horsetooth Mountain Park Grassland and Shrubland Community Health Management Plan (1998)</i>	Fall			Open Lands Program
Include the property in the <i>Integrated Weed Management Plan for Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department.</i>	Spring			Open Lands Program
Reclaim/revegetate roads and road cuts		Fall		Open Lands Program
Wildlife management				
Inventory and monitor the locations of sensitive and non-sensitive wildlife species			On-going	Open Lands Program/Volunteers
Encourage small scale research of existing wildlife populations			On-going	Open Lands Program
Work with the DOW to enhance wildlife habitat and manage wildlife populations			On-going	Open Lands Program
Work with USFWS to receive a permit or permission to proceed with trail construction on road thru drainages.	Fall/Winter			Open Lands Program
Hydrology and erosion management				
Design and locate trail to minimize erosion		Fall		Open Lands Program
Encourage users to remain on designated trails			On-going	Open Lands Program/Volunteers
Keep springs cleaned out and flowing for wildlife use and habitat			On-going	Open Lands Program
Multiple Use and User interaction				
Promote trail etiquette through signs			On-going	
Provide a trash can approx. ¼ mile down trail and dog waste bags at the trailhead.		Fall		
Design the trail 4 ft. wide to accommodate higher use from trailhead to Towers Road.		Fall		Open Lands Program
Post private property signs on appropriate fence lines.	Fall			
Trail maintenance and construction				
Design and construct Swan Johnson multi-use trail from Soderberg Trailhead to Towers Road.		Fall/Winter		
Install fencing along trail near buildings to further		Fall		

Management Implementation Steps	2003	2004	2005 and beyond	Responsible program*
delineate trail and keep visitors from entering the building area.				
Parking facility acquisition and maintenance				
Develop the trailhead with 20 vehicle and 10 horse trailer parking spaces.		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Provide plantings of appropriate shrub/tree species to help screen the trailhead from the private residence to the south.		Fall		Open Lands Program
Install a gate that can be closed and locked after hours.		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Install a vault style toilet with downcast lighting		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Install drinking water at the trailhead		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Install a fee vault and associated signs		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Install signs along Minuteman Drive letting visitors know there is no park/open space access along the road beyond the trailhead.		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Install 2-3 picnic tables north of the trailhead in the vicinity of the trees.			Spring 2005	Open Lands Program
Cultural resource management				
Investigate the viability of various options for long-term use of the Soderberg House and funding opportunities available.				Open Lands Program
Create a cultural history map and text of the site.				Open Lands Program/Volunteers
Protect and stabilize as needed the ranch buildings and continue to maintain the house appropriately.				Open Lands Program
Protect, store and use for educational purposes the donated ranch implements				Open Lands Program/Volunteers
Work with the Soderberg Family to help find an appropriate venue to which they could donate the historic clothing.				Open Lands Program
Clean up the farm dump, remove all storage drums and if necessary the underground storage tank.				Open Lands Program
Complete construction of corral fencing between the trail and buildings.				Open Lands Program
Educational Opportunities				

Management Implementation Steps	2003	2004	2005 and beyond	Responsible program*
Develop a trailhead kiosk with maps, regulations, educational materials, and general open lands program information.		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Develop educational materials that would be placed in the vicinity of the outbuildings along the trail.		Fall/Winter		Open Lands Program
Involve volunteers to lead cultural and natural history programs along trail.			Spring	Open Lands Program/Volunteers
Land acquisitions				
Continue to work with adjacent property owners to protect remaining lands adjacent to Horsetooth Mountain Park that meet the criteria of the Open Lands Program.				Open Lands Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that while various programs may be responsible for a particular task, the implementation of the task may involve cross-program cooperation and participation as well as the use of volunteers. 				

5. APPENDIX A

Table 1: Common plant species located at Soderberg Open Space

Grasses	
Needle-and-Thread	<i>Stipa comata</i>
Green Needlegrass	<i>Stipa viridula</i>
Blue Grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>
Buffalo Grass	<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i>
Mountain Muhly	<i>Muhlenbergia montana</i>
Foxtail Barley	<i>Hordeum jubatum</i>
Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>
Hairy Grama	<i>Bouteloua hirsuta</i>
Side-oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>
Indian Ricegrass	<i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>
Three-awn	<i>Aristida purpurea</i>
Junegrass	<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>
Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>
Western Wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron smithii</i>
Sand Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>
Sedges	
Sun Sedge	<i>Carex stenophylla</i>
Shrubs	
Mountain Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>
Skunkbush	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus macranthra</i>
Woods Rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>
Wax Currant	<i>Ribes cereum</i>
Golden Currant	<i>Ribes aureum</i>
Rabbitbush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>
Wild Plum	<i>Prunus americana</i>
Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus monogynus</i>
Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
Wormwood	<i>Artemesia filifolia</i>
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos oreophilus</i>
Common Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>
Snakeweed	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>
Trees	
Ponderosa Pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Rocky Mountain Juniper	<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>
Plains Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>
Succulents	
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia macrorhiza</i>
Nipple Cactus	<i>Coryphantha missouriensis</i>
Prickly Pear Cactus	<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>

Forbs	
Violet	<i>Viola purpurea</i>
Violet	<i>Viola nuttalli</i>
Sulphur Flower	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>
Kinnikinnik	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>
Wild Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum effusum</i>
Yucca	<i>Yucca glauca</i>
Sunflower spp.	<i>Helianthus</i> spp.
Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea coccinea</i>
Locoweed	<i>Oxytropis</i> spp.
Prairie Sage	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>
Scurfpea	<i>Psoralea tenuiflora</i>
Mountain Bladderpod	<i>Lesquerella montana</i>
Nailwort	<i>Paronychia jamesii</i>
Shorts Milkvetch	<i>Astragalus shortianus</i>
Drummond Milkvetch	<i>Astragalus drummondii</i>
Geyer Larkspur	<i>Delphinium geyeri</i>
Nuttall Larkspur	<i>Delphinium nuttallianum</i>
Salt and Pepper	<i>Lomatium orientale</i>
Sand Lily	<i>Leucocrinum montanum</i>
Wild Blue Flax	<i>Adenolinum lewisii</i>
Wild Onion	<i>Allium textile</i>
Western Wallflower	<i>Erysimum asperum</i>
Skull Cap	<i>Scutellaria</i> spp.
Fringed Sage	<i>Artemisia frigida</i>
Gumweed	<i>Grindelia squarrosa</i>
False Dandelion	<i>Nothocalais undulata</i>
Golden Smoke	<i>Corydalis aurea</i>
Mouse Ear	<i>Cerastium strictum</i>
Groundsel	<i>Senecio fendleri</i>
Wild Geranium	<i>Geranium</i> spp.
Carolina Whitlowgrass	<i>Draba reptans</i>
Bluebells	<i>Mertensia lanceolata</i>
Puccoon	<i>Lithospermum incisum</i>
Western Wallflower	<i>Erysimum asperum</i>
Evening Primrose	<i>Oenothera brachycarpa</i>
Poison Ivy	<i>Toxicodendron rydbergii</i>
Alumroot	<i>Heuchera parviflora</i>
Death Camas	<i>Toxicoscordion venenosum</i>
Prickly Poppy	<i>Argemone</i> spp.
Pussytoes	<i>Antennaria rosea</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea lanulosa</i>
Non-natives	
Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia trifida</i>

Alyssum	<i>Alyssum parviflorum</i>
Redstem Filaree	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>
Kentucky Bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>
Canada Bluegrass	<i>Poa compressa</i>
Canada Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Dalmation Toadflax	<i>Linaria genistifolia</i>
Russian Olive	<i>Elaeagnus orientalis</i>
Whitlowort	<i>Draba nemerosa</i>
Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Blue Mustard	<i>Chorispora tenella</i>
Jim Hill Mustard	<i>Sisymbrium altissimum</i>
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>
Crested Wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron cristatum</i>
Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>
Salsify	<i>Tragopogon dubius</i>
Smooth Brome	<i>Bromus inermis</i>
Japanese Brome	<i>Bromus japonicus</i>

Table 2: Common wildlife species located at Horsetooth Mountain Park/Soderberg Homestead Open Space

Common name	Scientific name
Mule deer	<i>(Odocoileus hemionus)</i>
Mountain lion	<i>(Felis concolor)</i>
Coyote	<i>(Canis latrans)</i>
Black bear	<i>(Ursus americanus)</i>
Elk	<i>(Cervus canadensis)</i>
White tailed deer	<i>(Odocoileus virginianus)</i>
Least chipmunk	<i>(Eutamias minimus)</i>
Uinta chipmunk	<i>(Eutamias umbrinus)</i>
Rock squirrel	<i>(Citellus variegatus)</i>
Golden mantled squirrel	<i>(Citellus lateralis)</i>
Abert's squirrel	<i>(Sciurus aberti)</i>
Hispid pocket mouse	<i>(Perognathus hispidus)</i>
Deer mouse	<i>(Peromyscus maniculatus)</i>
Rock mouse	<i>(Peromyscus difficilis)</i>
Mexican woodrat	<i>(Neotoma mexicana)</i>
Prairie vole	<i>(Microtus ochrogaster)</i>
Porcupine	<i>(Erethizon dorsatum)</i>
Rattlesnake	<i>(Crotalus spp.)</i>
Red fox	<i>(Vulpes fulva)</i>
Raccoon	<i>(Procyon lotor)</i>
Striped skunk	<i>(Mephitis mephitis)</i>
Mountain cottontail rabbit	<i>(Sylvilagus nuttalli)</i>
Bobcat	<i>(Lynx rufus)</i>

Table 3: Imperiled Butterfly Species and Associated Habitat List (from CNHP 1999)

Butterfly species	Life Cycle	Habitat found	Larval Host plant	Adult Nectar Source
Hop-feeding azure	Adult – June Larvae – eat male flowers buds on the hops plant Pupae - hibernate	Canyons and ravines containing permanent water	Hops (<i>Humulus lupulus</i>)	Flowers of the waxflower (<i>Jamesia americana</i>); adult males sip mud
Ottoo skipper	Adult – mid-June to early August Larvae – eat host plant and overwinters in tied-leaf nests near the base of host plant	Undisturbed tallgrass prairie and gulches or low lying areas	Big bluestem (<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>), little bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>), and side-oats grama (<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>)	Yellow prickly pear (<i>Opuntia</i> sp.), milkweeds (<i>Asclepias</i> sp.), coneflower (<i>Ratibida & Rudbeckia</i> sp.), wavy-leaf thistle (<i>Cirsium undulatum</i>)
mottled dusky winged butterfly	Adult - April to mid-June Larvae – over winters in leaf shelters	Shrubby, hilly	Buckbrush (<i>Ceanothus fendleri</i>), red root (<i>C. herbaceus</i>)	Buckbrush, red root
Arogos skipper	Adult – late June to mid-July Eggs – laid on underside of host plant leaves	Sloping mixed and tallgrass prairie meadows	Big bluestem, little bluestem and switchgrass	Milkweeds, dogbane (<i>Apocynum</i> sp.) coneflower, wavy-leaf thistle, horsemint, Canada thistle and musk thistle.
Schryver’s elfin butterfly	Adult – Feb to June Eggs – laid on underside of host plant’s leaves Larvae – eat both leaves and flowers; do not build nests	Wooded canyons with steep rocky slopes and in foothill ravines and gulches	Stonecrop (<i>Sedum lanceolatum</i>)	
Simius roadside skipper	Adult – late May to July Eggs – laid under the leaves of host plant Larvae -	Hilly shortgrass prairie with shaley substrates	Blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>)	Blue beardstongue (<i>Penstemon</i> sp.), possibly prickly pear cactus (<i>Opuntia</i> sp.)
Morrison’s skipper	Adults – May to mid-June	Open pinyon and ponderosa pine foothills – granitic soils and open sunny areas.	Blue grama, little bluestem	Sip mud for nourishment.

6. APPENDIX B: Soderberg Homestead Open Space Regulations*

Due to the sensitivity of the Soderberg Homestead Open Space, it is requested that visitors observe the following:

- A. Camping is prohibited.
- B. Fires and smoking are prohibited.
- C. Motorized vehicular traffic is only allowed in the event of an emergency or maintenance.
- D. Dogs are allowed on leashes.
- E. Use hours are from dawn until dusk.
- F. Disorderly conduct and public indecency are prohibited.
- G. Property should not be left unattended longer than 8 hours.
- H. Commercial uses and special events require a permit.
- I. Use of glass containers is prohibited.
- J. Consumption of alcohol greater than 3.2% alcohol or possession of a keg is prohibited.
- K. Possession of marijuana or other drug paraphernalia is prohibited.
- L. Possession or use of any fireworks, sparklers or explosive is prohibited.
- M. Hunting or trapping activities are not allowed unless under special provision with the Division of Wildlife for wildlife management purposes at Soderberg Homestead Open Space.
- N. Hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding is allowed only on designated trails.
- O. Please do not disturb wildlife in any manner.
- P. Please treat public property with respect.

* See Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department Regulations (2002)

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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