

5. APPENDIX A: Planning Team, Public and Agency Involvement

Planning Team

Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department formed a planning team to update the resource management plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park. The team was made up of Larimer County staff and consultants from EDAW, a landscape architecture and environmental planning firm with an office in Fort Collins, CO.

The planning team was made up of the following people:

Name	Title	Project Role	Organization
Gary Buffington	Department Director	Supervision	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Mark Caughlan	Horsetooth District Manager	Project Manager	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
K-Lynn Cameron	Open Lands Manager	Open Lands Advisor	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Meegan Flenniken	Resource Specialist	Resource Management	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Tom Keith	Principal	Supervision	EDAW
Drew Stoll	Landscape Architect	Project Manager	EDAW
Greg Oakes	Landscape Architect	Park Entrance Design	EDAW
Kelley Savage	Landscape Architect	Park Entrance Design	EDAW
Craig Severn	Ecologist	Resource Management	EDAW
Chad Schneckenburger	Park Planning	Reviewer	EDAW
Linda Spangler	Publishing	Publication	EDAW

Public Involvement

Extensive public and agency involvement was utilized to ensure full representation of those parties interested in Horsetooth Mountain Park.

Two public meetings were conducted to hear issues and concerns from the public. The first meeting introduced the management planning process, reviewed existing conditions and identified public recommendations and concerns regarding the Park. The second public meeting was an open house to present the preliminary management plan alternatives. These meetings were advertised with press releases and individual invitations to Park neighbors, public agencies



and organized visitor groups. A third meeting was held with leaders of organized user groups to discuss management plan alternatives. A summary of public meeting outcomes can be found at the end of this appendix.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with Park neighbors and organized visitor groups. The purpose of these interviews was to seek the opinions of key stakeholders that have a particular interest in the Park, or have significant knowledge of Park resource or visitation. A summary of stakeholder comments can be found at the end of this appendix. The following list of questions was asked during the stakeholder interviews:

- What do you like most about the Park?
- What do you like least about the Park?
- What trails do you use the most?
- What improvements would you like to see in the Park?
- Do you have other comments or suggestions?

The following stakeholder groups were interviewed:

Stakeholder Group	Primary Activity / Interest
CSU Outdoor Adventure Program	Outdoor Education
Continental North Subdivision	Neighbor
Colorado Mountain Club	Hiking/ Nature Study
Quarter Horse Association	Horseback Riding
Diamond Peaks Mountain Bike Patrol	Mountain Bicycling
Larimer County Horseman's Association	Horseback Riding
Team BOB (Babes on Bikes)	Mountain Bicycling
Individual Neighbors	Neighbor

Technical Advisory Committee

Three Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings were held with public agencies and scientists that have an interest in the management of the Park's resources and visitor experiences. These meetings served to review important aspects of the Park and review management alternatives and evaluate potential natural and cultural resource impacts. The agencies and scientists are important to the long-term conservation of the Park. Members of the technical advisory committee are listed below.

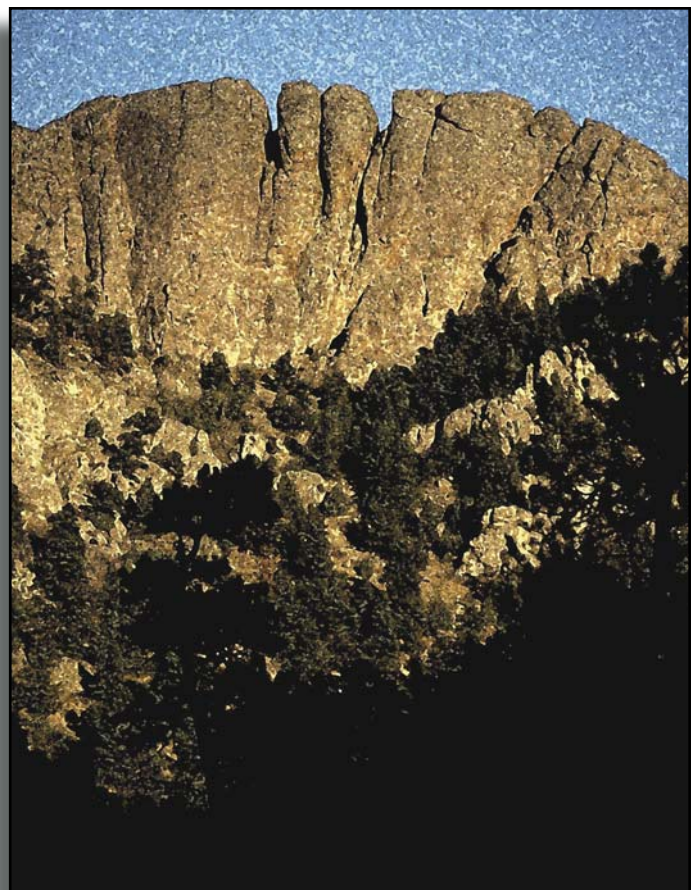


Name	Expertise	Organization
Kathy Seiple	Director	Lory State Park
Ann Montoya	Interpretation/ Education	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Renee Rondeau	Ecology/Vegetation Communities	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
Karen Mancini	Environmental Planner	Fort Collins Natural Areas Department
Don O. Hunter	Mountain Lion Research	USGS
Porter Ingrum	Land Use Planning	Larimer County Planning Department
John MacFarlane	Park Management	Retired HTMP Manager
Maxine Guill	Weed Specialist	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Kym Williams	Trails Management	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Joel Wykoff	Trails Management	Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
Boyd Lebeda	Forestry Management	Colorado State Forest Service
Paul Opler	Butterfly Expert	Independent Researcher

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the technical advisory committee and the public for their participation, interest and feedback in the development of the Resource Conservation and Visitor Experience Management Plan for Horsetooth Mountain Park.

This plan is the compilation of previous management plans, studies, and contributions of all those who participated in the process. Every person that has worked over the years to conserve the Park, as well as the tax payers who funded the original purchase of the land, deserve a great deal of credit. Thank you!



Issues and Solutions Identified During the Public Process

Issues	Management Solutions
Keep public access open 24 hours a day to the Park	The main Park entrance on County Road 38E will remain open 24 hours a day.
Provide a trail along CR 38E from the Park to Inlet Bay	The management plan will recommend bike lanes along CR 38E to Inlet Bay, however construction of bike lanes will depend on future road improvements to CR 38E.
Improve the Park service roads for visitor use.	The service roads will be maintained and improved as budget allows. This includes erosion control and surface material.
Audra Culver trail ends on the road and should connect to another trail	This possibility was explored with Trails Staff and connecting the Audra Culver Trail to HT Rock Trail would not be a sustainable trail option.
Provide hitching posts for horses.	It is intended that visitors tie their horses to their trailers. Posts can be provided if warranted in the future.
Expand trails into Culver Open Space Only allow guided public access to Culver Open Space.	The management plan will explore management zones for the Park and look at areas where varying levels of recreation and buffering are appropriate in light of sensitive natural and cultural resources. Culver Open Space was created to protect sensitive resources and to buffer both the Park and residential areas from each other. New trails would limit the effectiveness of this buffer. In addition, there is currently poor non-sustainable access from the Park into this open space.
Restore/ stabilize historic structures and use them for Park services.	The Soderberg Open Space Management Plan already calls for the preservation and conservation of historic structures. This activity will be implemented as budget is available. These structures could be used for educational purposes.
Provide graduated entrance fees for different visitors (i.e. county residents, single Park pass, family pass).	The County Commissioners approve fees on an annual basis. There are stipulations on graduated or flat rates. Everything is fair game.
Keep the Park undeveloped Keep access to the backcountry difficult Sawmill Trail should not be open to horses Reroute Mill Creek trail (erosion, sensitive habitat) Stout, Sawmill and Herrington trails need more maintenance	The management plan will explore management zones for the Park and trail system and look at existing trail uses and designations. These zones will reflect the allowable uses in the Park (developed zone will be the only zone allowing trailhead facilities, etc.). Trails will be designated as level I, II or III depending on the following factors: location in frontcountry or backcountry zones, frequency of use, remoteness, desired experience and hence will receive a specific level of corresponding maintenance. For example, Westridge Trail, located in the backcountry zone, receives low use and provides a more remote visitor experience and therefore will be maintained less frequently and at a narrower width with only a trail name sign and no other amenities. Some trails may require re-routing due to sensitive habitat balancing visitor experience and sustainable trail routing options.
Connect Stout to Horsetooth Falls Trail	Due to the current existence of a good quality trail making this connection already, the low resource impact it creates and connectivity to popular trails within the Park, this trail is proposed for designation.



Issues	Management Solutions
Create a new trail in the NW part of the Park where there are no trails. Protect sensitive wildlife habitat. Keep some areas of the parks as low intensity areas.	The management plan will explore management zones for the Park and look at areas where varying levels of recreation and buffering are appropriate in light of sensitive natural and cultural resources. The Park currently has a high density of trails and the NW part of the Park is important wildlife habitat. Effort will be made to minimize impacts to sensitive wildlife habitat and some existing trails may be rerouted or closed.
Interpret Native American History in the Park	Native American history will be part of the interpretive messages provided at the Park.
Provide backcountry patrolling during high use times and camping	As Park budget allows, backcountry patrolling will be increased to provide services and enforce regulations.
Provide designated backcountry campsites	Potential for backcountry campsites will be explored and potentially phased in order to evaluate impacts on resources and budget. If impacts or costs are too high, the backcountry campsites will likely be discontinued.
Some trail users don't yield the right-of-way to others.	Education of multi-use trail etiquette will be done via information signs and education efforts by staff and volunteers.
There is conflict with bikes on trails close to the trailhead If some trails will be hiking only, then provide some trails for horses only	As part of looking at Park zoning, the possibility of designating the Frontcountry - HT Falls Trail and HT Rock Trail (to the Wathan intersection) as hiking only will be proposed. Both these trails are the highest used in the Park with the majority of the use as hiking. By designating hiking only on these two heavily used pedestrian trails, multi-use conflicts may be reduced and visitor experience improved. These two trails represent 11.3% of the trail system in the Park, leaving 88.7% as multi-use trails.
Allow the use of Park passes for pedestrian access for both Lory State Park and Horsetooth Mountain Park.	Currently you are able to purchase a pass from one of the Parks and travel by trail the same day to the other Park (reciprocity).
In the Park, explain why some conservation lands have entrance fees and other's do not.	The new entrance kiosk will include a description of why entrance fees are charged for this Park.
Provide better wayfinding and other signs. Provide better Park maps for visitors.	As the trail network is improved, the way-finding signs will be improved. A new Horsetooth Mountain Trailhead kiosk will be built, which will include way finding information.
Consider road capacity and aesthetics when redesigning the Horsetooth Mountain Trailhead.	The redesigned Park entrance will emphasize an attractive and natural landscape. There will be a new entrance sign that will reflect the character of the Park. Trailhead travel lanes will allow for automobile stacking to minimize congestion on CR38E.
Can an additional access point be added in the future?	The new entrance at Soderberg Open Space provides additional parking and access to Horsetooth Mountain Park. Any future trailhead development would need to account for carrying capacity of the Park to ensure protection of resources as well as consideration of visitor experience such as impacts from crowding on trails, etc.
Improve erosion and vegetation control on the trails.	Trail maintenance is completed as budget allows. Organized user groups may assist with trail maintenance. Some trails that are located on highly erodable soils may be rebuilt or relocated
Limit the use of lights in the Park to preserve the dark night sky.	Lights will not be used in the Park entrance. If lights are needed, only lights activated by motion sensors or work on a limited-time timer will be used.
There are no signs marking the Park boundaries to prevent trespassing	Signs will be installed where feasible to notify of "leaving public lands" and private property boundaries.



Issues	Management Solutions
Add a visitor contact building at the main entrance.	A small visitor contact building will be built close to the Park entrance. This building will be staffed during high-use periods so long as user fees are charged. The staff person will hand out Park information, assist with emergencies and charge entrance fees. The building will have windows for cars to drive up to when a staff person is present, otherwise there will be a self-service kiosk.
Keep the public informed about the planning process.	The project webpage will be used as the main communication tool. A list of interested people and organizations will be contacted directly (people who participated in public meetings and those who have contributed their comments). Project website: http://www.larimer.org/parks/htmlp_plan/
Close some trails during mud season, but provide alternative routes.	The Parks and Open Lands Department has a policy which allows closing some trails during mud season; however this policy has not yet been implemented. This plan will address closing some trails during mud season without closing access to the Park.
It is difficult to find the new Soderberg Trailhead	Directional signs will be placed on CR 38E to direct users to the Soderberg Trailhead
Slash piles are unattractive	Slash piles are created when forest improvement and management thinning projects are undertaken. Piles of the cut tree branches are temporarily created until they can be burned under allowable burning conditions (at least 3" of snow on the ground and acceptable air quality standards).
Acquire adjacent lands to buffer the Park	As lands become available for acquisition or offered for donation as fee-simple or conservation easements, they will be considered within the mission of the Department.
Show costs associated with changes from this management plan.	The management plan will reflect approximate costs associated with changes/ improvements.
Provide financial information of how Park entrance fees are used and the Park's annual budget. Annual passes are too high	The county budget is published on the county web site at www.larimer.org . The cost of annual entrance fess to beyond the scope of this project



Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

In October, 2005, organizations and individuals were interviewed to seek their opinions about the resource conditions and visitor experiences at Horsetooth Mountain Park. These organizations and individuals were recognized as stakeholders for the Park.

The following questions were asked and the responses are listed below the questions.

Question: What do you like most about the Park?

- The Park is close to home
- Trails: good network, width, difficulty, diversity, length
- The roads take away from the backcountry experience
- There is a good range of activities
- Nice views
- The pedestrian access entrance north of the Soderberg entrance is appreciated
- New Soderberg trailhead is a good connection to Lory S.P. and disperses use
- Public access on the east side helps reduce trespassing on west side of the Park
- The thinning of trees has improved the forest in the Park
- The no hunting rule is appreciated
- It is good that the Park attracts people who care for nature
- The metal sign posts work well
- No facilities in the backcountry

Question: What do you like least about the Park?

- Trail signs and network are confusing for new visitors
- Add directional signs to the new Soderberg Entrance/Exit
- There is conflict with bikes on trails close to the Horsetooth Mountain Trailhead
- Audra Culver Trail ends on the road and should connect to another trail
- It is sometimes necessary to use roads to access some trails
- Some trails should not be open to horses: not designed for horses (Sawmill Trail)
- Reroute Mill Creek Trail (erosion, sensitive habitat)
- Stout, Sawmill and Herrington Trails need more maintenance
- Connect Stout to Horsetooth Falls Trail
- There are no signs marking the Park boundaries to prevent trespassing
- Park visitors tear down fences to access private property
- Camping causes a fire risk in the Park (actually no fires are allowed)
- Annual passes are too high
- Slash piles are unattractive
- Night riding should be allowed

Question: What trails do you use the most?

(note: more bicyclists responded than other users)

- Horsetooth Rock -1
- Audra Culver -1



- Horsetooth Falls -1
- Nomad – 7
- Shoreline -3
- Spring Creek -7
- Mill Creek -5
- Loggers -4
- Service Roads -4
- Herrington Loop -4
- Watson Trail -1
- Wathen -5
- West Ridge -1
- Stout -4
- Carey Springs -2
- Soderberg -1
- Ridge Trail -1

Questions: What improvements would you like to see in the Park?

- Improve some trails to reduce erosion, slope and danger (Mill Creek, Horsetooth Trail near Horsetooth Rock)
- Improve Tower Road for public use (bad erosion)
- Provide backcountry patrolling during high use times and camping
- Forest condition (disease) on neighboring properties may affect the Park's forest
- Keep it undeveloped
- Keep access to the backcountry difficult

Questions: Do you have other comments or suggestions?

- Improve the Park maps (too busy)
- Multiuse trails are appreciated
- If some trails will be hiking only, then provide some trails for horses only
- Cooperatively manage the forest with neighbors when possible
- People illegally access the Park from the west to avoid pay entrance fees
- Acquire adjacent Redstone Canyon properties when they are available to buffer the Park from adjacent land use
- Improve communication with neighboring homeowner associations

