



Coal Creek Canyon Park and Recreation District

Park, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan

Final Master Plan

March 2011





Master Plan Acknowledgements

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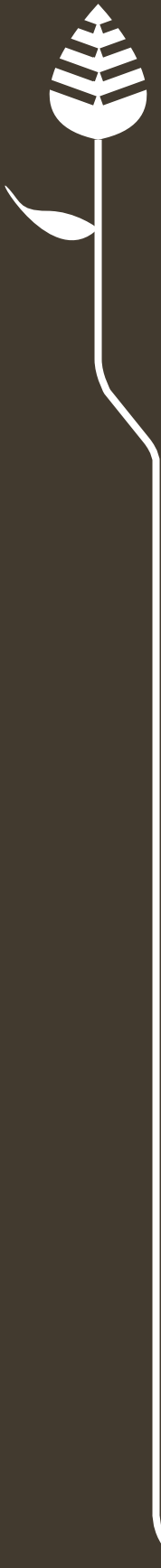
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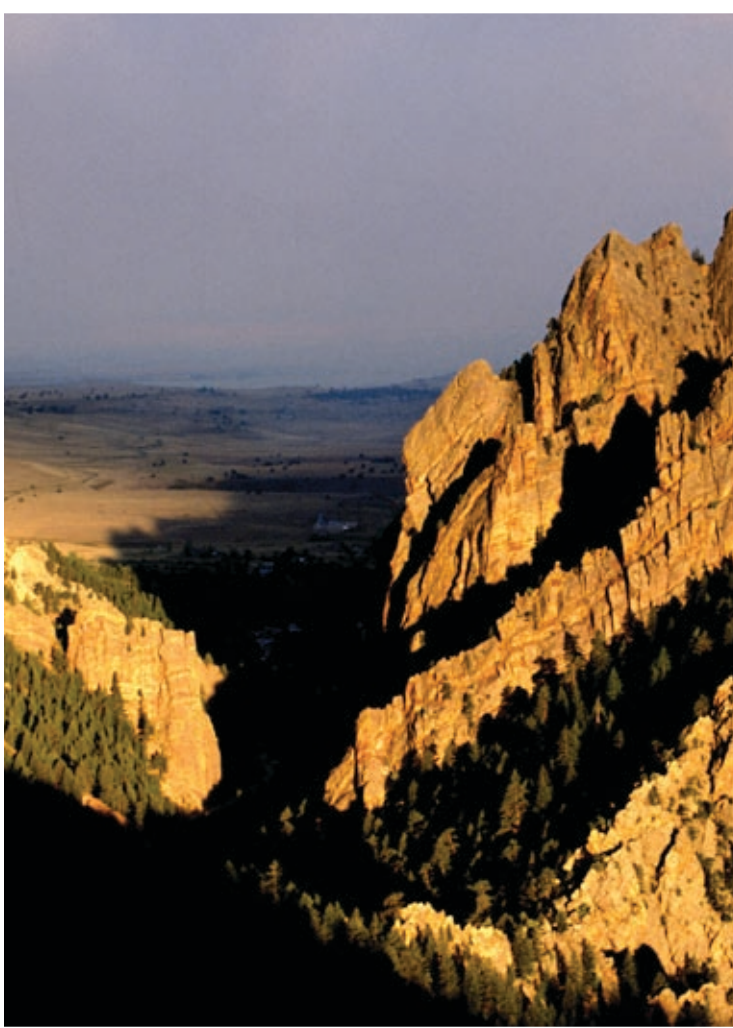
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INTRODUCTION



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Project Purpose & Vision

The purpose of Coal Creek Canyon's first Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan is to evaluate the area's existing recreation facilities, programs and services, assess the community's needs and desires and to provide recommendations for the establishment of facilities and services provided to residents of the District. This community-driven plan is intended to guide the Coal Creek Canyon Park and Recreation District (CCCPRD or the District) by assessing the level of service (residents' access to existing recreation amenities and programs), and establishing prioritized recommendations in regard to facility enhancements, recreation programming, as well as identify the resources and funding associated with each action.

This Plan will provide an invaluable resource for identifying priorities, creating a package to present to the community for mill levy funding, coordinating potential partnerships, and creating new park, trails, facility and program development. Ultimately, the Master Plan will serve as a living document which will assist the District in finding affordable and long-term solutions which will meet the community's recreation, open space, trails and program needs over the next ten years.

Area and District Background

Coal Creek Canyon Area and District History

The CCCPRD is located in unincorporated Coal Creek Canyon, Colorado, southwest of Boulder. The District is a Title 32 Colorado Special District which was created in May 2009 after a grass roots effort lasting about 7 years. Although the creation of the District is quite new, the area has a long and rich history.

Native Americans camped in the area long before white settlement, as seen by teepee ring remnants found throughout the Canyon. As early as the 1860's, white settlers arrived. These early settlers supported the supply route to the mines near Blackhawk that followed the creek up the Canyon. Homesteaders that lived in the Canyon also ranched, farmed, and cut and milled timber for use throughout the region. Originally, the Denver Northwest & Pacific Railroad was intended to run the route planned by David Moffet through the Canyon, but due to costs was rerouted to South Boulder Canyon. Today, the current route of the Union Pacific Railroad, follows the original rail bed, and crosses Highway 72 via the trestle at the mouth of the canyon.

Similar to other near-mountain areas outside of Denver, the Coal Creek Canyon area was a popular destination for tourists and summer cabin residents around the turn of the century. Around the end of World War II, people began moving to the canyon to raise their families outside of the Denver metropolitan area. With the opening of Rocky Flats, the population in the Canyon increased again and the need for services increased. During this time, the Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association (CCCIA) was founded and was instrumental in helping to get electric service, daily postal service, the paving of State Highway 72, and organizing volunteer fire protection for the Canyon. Today, it is still a key private, member-based organization in the Canyon responsible for many community events and the management of a large community meeting facility where organizations and members are able to rent the building for meetings, classes and gatherings. Later, a Fire District was established and after various one-room school

houses, the Coal Creek Canyon Elementary School was built in 1963. The school now serves kindergarten through 8th grade. Mountain Phoenix, a Jefferson County charter school that serves K-8, has also opened. In May of 2009, the Park and Recreation District was voted into existence by canyon residents in order to provide desired parks, recreation and quality of life amenities.

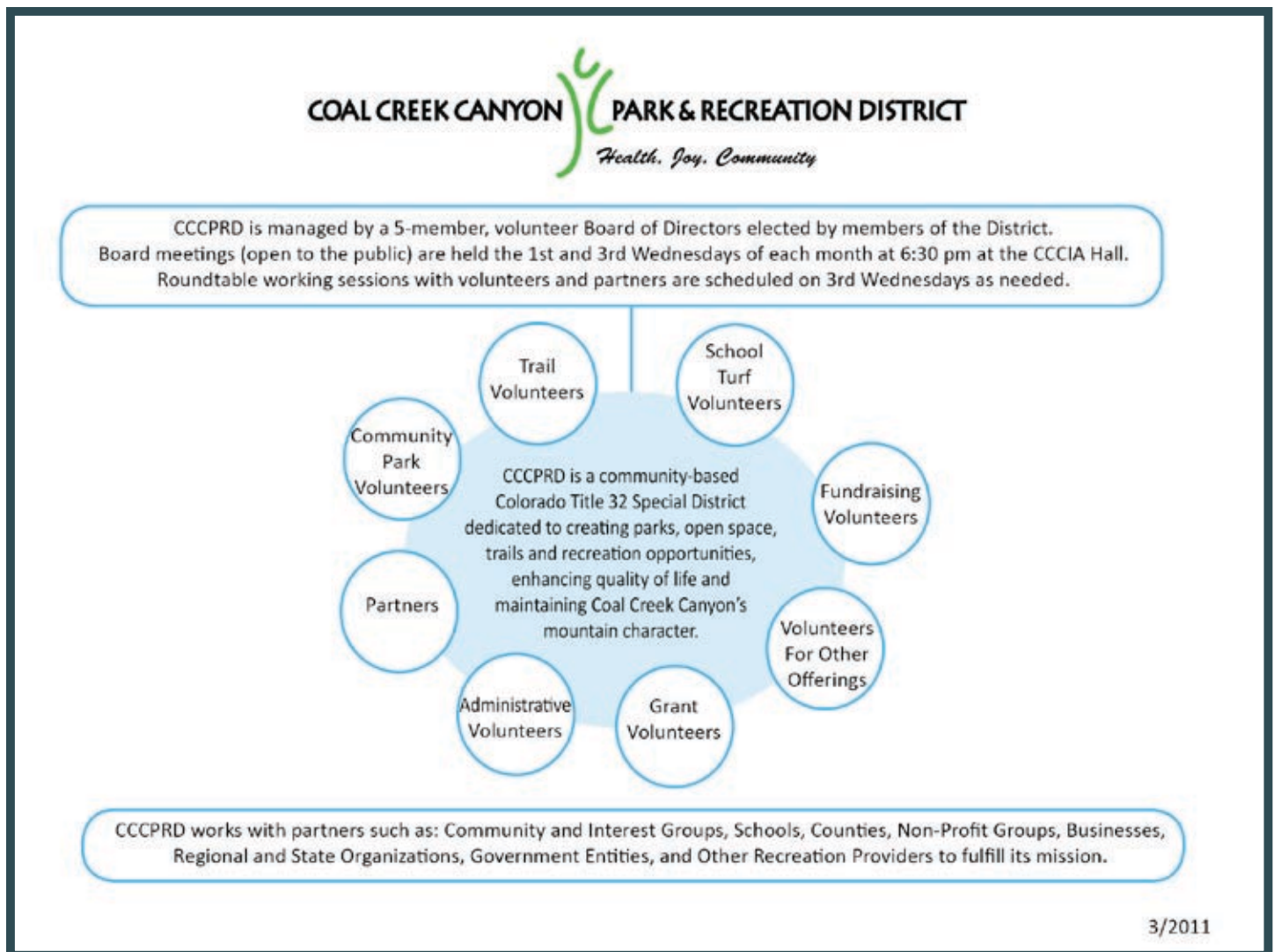
Park and Recreation District Overview

Founded in 2009 through a vote by area residents, the CCCPRD is in its infancy and currently does not own or manage any facilities of its own, with the exception of a 20'x40' tent that was purchased in partnership with Jefferson County and the CCCIA. The District is roughly bounded by the Gilpin County line to the west, Jefferson County Open Space and City of Arvada land to the east, Gross Reservoir and Walker Ranch/ Eldorado State Park Open Space to the north and Golden Gate State Park to the south. State Highway 72 runs through the central area of the rural, mountain foothills District. About two-thirds of the community lies within Jefferson County and about one-third is in Boulder County.

At this time, the District is 100% volunteer-run and led by a Board of Directors of the District which is comprised of dedicated residents, with a variety of professional expertise, from the area (see **Figure 1.1** for more detailed information). Currently, this group of volunteers works across a variety of entities to connect program users and alternative recreation providers (See **Alternative Recreation Providers & Programming** section) with area residents and is working to establish facilities and programs sponsored and supported by the District for residents.



Figure 1.1 - CCCPRD Organizational Chart



The District is approximately 14,000 acres, which is primarily characterized by residential use. There are some gaps within the District where landowners have chosen to exclude themselves from the District. However, generally the District covers land within both Boulder and Jefferson Counties (and is adjacent to Gilpin County) and includes land owned by private entities and public entities such as Colorado State Parks, both Jefferson County and Boulder County Parks and Open Space programs, Jefferson and Boulder School Districts, Colorado State Land Board, Bureau of Land Management and the City of Boulder.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that the District area has many affinity groups such as “Women Over Fifty,” Mountain Mamas (parenting), book clubs, The Environmental Group (TEG), dance, yoga, and quilting groups, Mountain Artisans’ Guild, the Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association

(CCCIA), and church groups that provide residents with recreation programs and activities, which are primarily held at the CCCIA Hall.

Situational Analysis

CCCPRD and the Canyon lack community recreational facilities and amenities. There are no public recreational amenities in the Canyon, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, or a community gathering place that allows for drop-in or social activity. Hiking trails are available at State Parks to the north and south, but often have limited access and are typically not “family-friendly” walking trails. Trails that were once commonly used have been closed with changes in landowners’ trust and attitudes toward informal access. Additionally, walks on the area’s dirt roads are becoming more dangerous with increasing traffic.

Through the voter-approved creation of CCCPRD and the findings of this Needs Assessment, it is evident that the majority of the Canyon residents desire some additional recreation opportunities. This master plan is intended to assist the District in moving forward in the early stages to create a solid foundation in creating facilities and establishing services through a prioritized action plan, recommendations, and to assist with funding options and partnership opportunities.

Project Success Indicators

At project startup, the consultant team worked with members of the CCCPRD Advisory Committee to identify the most important goals and outcomes that are critical to the success of this strategic planning process. These committee members were asked “What processes and results need to be accomplished in order to consider this plan a success upon completion of the project?” The following objectives were identified as project goals for the CCCPRD’s first Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan:



Table 1.1: Coal Creek Canyon – Project Success Indicators

Project Success Indicator	Objective
Create a thorough inventory of the recreation opportunities and amenities throughout the region.	Gain an understanding of what is currently available in the region and the level of service currently provided to the District residents by those opportunities and amenities.
Engage a diverse representation of the community through the public input process and community survey.	Providing ample opportunities through community stakeholder meetings for the public to get involved and have their ideas heard. Energize the District’s residents, so as to gain activist supporters.
Understanding the community’s willingness to pay and support for a mill levy.	Gain community survey results that will provide a clearer understanding of the community’s desires and willingness to support the District through tax dollars.
Identify actions that are achievable in the short-term.	Develop estimated costs for land acquisition, facility development and a prioritized action plan, with potential partnerships and funding sources to make plan priorities a reality.
Create a master plan that acts as a roadmap as well as guides the District’s decision-making.	Establish a prioritized action plan that embodies the values of the community, identifies specific action items, and is a “living” document that allows for any unforeseen opportunities to be taken advantage of as they arise.