

PLANNING INTEGRATION

Parks and Recreation – Local, State and Federal Planning Integration

In addition to current and past planning efforts completed by others within the Coal Creek Canyon Park and Recreation District (CCCPRD or the District) and surrounding area, the consultant team for this Master Plan effort has reviewed pertinent local, state and federal park and recreation planning documents and supporting information as part of the information gathering process. The District is uniquely located in both Jefferson and Boulder Counties (see Map A in the **GIS Mapping and Spatial Analysis** Section of the report) and includes properties owned by various government entities, including the Colorado State Land Board, Colorado State Parks, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Forest Service. There are existing plans and conditions for each of these entities that have been taken into consideration in preparing this Master Plan. Documents reviewed include:

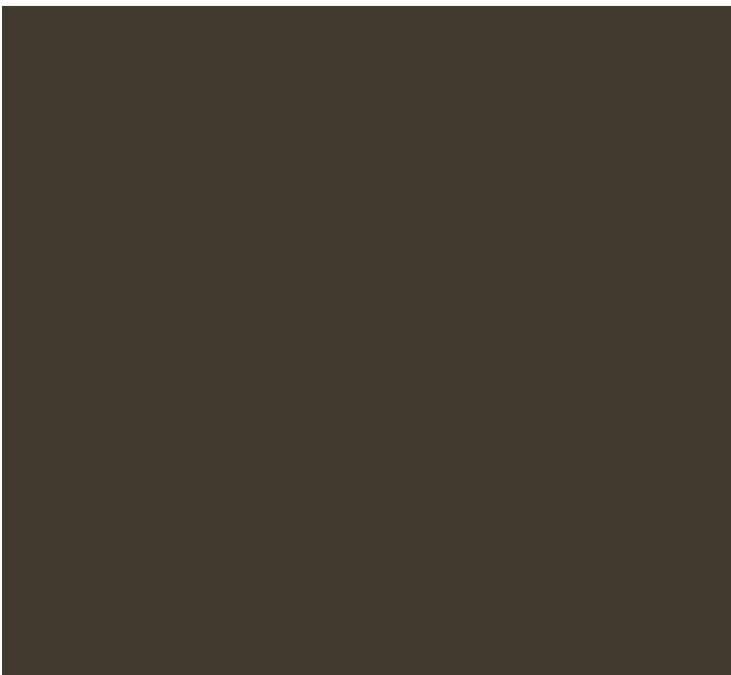
- Coal Creek Canyon Park Management Plan
- Boulder County Parks and Open Space Trails Map, Parks Map and Website
- Golden Gate State Park and Eldorado State Park Maps and Website
- Map and Website for Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forests

Reviewing these documents ensures that the efforts of this Master Plan are consistent with and complementary to the goals and strategies of the current or past planning efforts in the area.

Coal Creek Canyon Park Management Plan (Jefferson County park) – This Plan was prepared by Jefferson County Open Space in 2000, updated in 2010, and is scheduled for another update in the first quarter of 2011. There are eleven properties included in CCCPRD’s boundaries that are included in the Coal Creek Canyon Park area within Jefferson County (please refer to Map B in the **GIS Mapping and Spatial Analysis** Section of the report for the location of this park). Information provided in this document is relevant to this Master Plan because it provides important insight into



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the history, land resource characteristics, park and public lands, as well as planned resource management strategies.

The Coal Creek Canyon Park Management Plan is part of the Jefferson County Open Space system-wide effort to provide for protection and appropriate use of Jefferson County's recreational, natural and cultural resources. The Management Plan is issue-driven and significant management issues are identified at the Park, including uncertainties associated with other publicly owned properties in the area and lack of facilities to accommodate public use. The primary recommended management approach made to respond to these issues is to **postpone any development of park improvements** until land use issues in the area become clearer.

The vision identified for this Park area within Jefferson County incorporates the three primary values for which these properties were acquired: (1) protection and enhancement of critical habitats and designated Conservation Sites, (2) protection of scenic values associated with those areas in the Front Range Mountain Backdrop/Foreground Preservation area and (3) for development of trail opportunities. Another part of the vision for this Park is to construct trails that would accommodate a wide spectrum of non-motorized use where appropriate and create connectivity and linkages to other parks in the area, which include White Ranch Park and Golden Gate Canyon State Park to the south, City of Boulder Open Space and Parks to the north and the Rocky Flats Refuge to the east.

This document states that **none of the eleven parcels that comprise this Park currently have facilities to accommodate public use.** Use of the Park has historically been limited to unprogrammed, informal "social use" by residents or occasional visitors in the area, who park along the road and walk into the property or drive on old roads within the properties. Future visitation to the Park is difficult to predict because the final level of development is uncertain.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space Trails Map, Parks Map and Website – These documents and website provide an overview of existing and planned trails, parks and open space areas located in Boulder County that

are adjacent to the CCCPRD. Walker Ranch is the most significant County-owned property located adjacent to the CCCPRD that is included in Boulder County Parks and Open Space documentation. Walker Ranch is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. The existing management plan for Walker Ranch provides for key conservation strategies to be implemented on the property, including assessment and classification of Ranch resources and determining how each area achieves the goals for the Ranch to provide for low intensity recreation, cultural site preservation and wildlife habitat preservation. Currently, recreational activities existing at Walker Ranch include trails, a group shelter, fishing, preservation of a historical site at the original homestead and preservation of open space areas. Walker Ranch and other Boulder County parks and recreational areas will remain key destinations for the residents of the CCCPRD. The original Walker Ranch Management Plan written in 1985 began its update and public input process in January of 2011.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park and Eldorado Canyon State Park Maps and Website – With these Parks being under the jurisdiction of Colorado State Parks, the documents and website provide an overview of existing and planned trails and park improvement areas in Golden Gate Canyon State Park, which is located adjacent to the CCCPRD (with a small portion of the Park being located in the CCCPRD to the south), and Eldorado Canyon State Park, which is located partially within the CCCPRD boundary on the north.

Currently, Eldorado State Park does not collect fees at its Crescent Meadows trailhead. However, the agency indicated that this could change in the future since users are technically entering the State Park there. Although this facility is currently used by Canyon residents as a "community" recreation amenity, the longevity of this free access is uncertain.

The 1996 Golden Gate Canyon State Park Management Plan generally indicates key goals to protect the quality of the natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations while providing a wide variety of safe outdoor recreational experiences that are appropriate in a mountain setting. Since the visitation to the park reaches and exceeds planned capacity

at times, the 1996 Plan focuses on expansion of both facilities and land, trail management, managing capacity situations, managing vegetation, wildlife management, historical and cultural resources protection and Park interpretive and education programs. Beyond traditional State-provided funding allocations for the annual and seasonal operations of the Park, Golden Gate Canyon State Park employs a “special use permit” fee program. Using this program additional funds are generated by allowing the reserved use of Park facilities and areas for non-traditional purposes (weddings, equestrian events, parties, large gatherings, training exercises, guided hikers, etc.) where fees can be charged beyond standard entrance fees.

Map and Website for Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forests - These documents and website information provide an overview of existing and planned trails and recreation improvement areas located in the adjacent / included National Forest areas within the CCCPRD. Recreational opportunities for the general public and the residents of the CCCPRD are currently provided within this vast forest area, including hiking, camping, picnicking, fishing, scenic viewing and other associated activities.

Key Findings

The previously mentioned documents and websites were reviewed during the information gathering efforts for this Master Plan in order to identify existing and future park and recreation opportunities for the CCCPRD (Please see Map A of the **GIS Mapping and Spatial Analysis** section of the report for the locations of these facilities). Much of the information provided in these documents and websites places the CCCPRD in a parks and recreational context with surrounding providers and is relevant to this Master Plan, as well as helps to identify partnership opportunities and streamline planning efforts. It is important to note that the parks and facilities reviewed in this portion of the report primarily provide individual and passive recreation opportunities. The majority of these facilities do not act as community parks or gathering places for Canyon residents. However, this is not to say that residents of the CCCPRD will not continue to include these parks and public

lands as key destinations in their recreational lives.

Coordinate Partnerships and Fill Gaps in Service

The documents reviewed illustrate a record of several local, state and federal agencies providing various, mostly **nature-based** and passive park and recreation facilities. It is evident that Canyon residents are not provided adequate **developed and active** recreation opportunities in or directly adjacent to the Canyon. This information is insightful in developing policies, capital investment priorities, coordinating efforts for improvements and recommendations for existing and proposed park and recreation facilities for the CCCPRD.

Connect Communities through Recreation and Conservation

Local, state and federal lands and other recreational facilities are currently a **primary** source of recreation for the residents of the CCCPRD. Significant strides have been made by these planning efforts to focus on recreational planning and protecting and conserving natural resources and areas of ecological and historical importance. These documents and websites define open space opportunities, connections and stewardship of resources as ways to provide recreation access and opportunities. Coordination with these agencies to support ongoing implementation and maintenance of these **regional** recreational amenities will help to promote and increase the quality of life for the CCCPRD residents and general public.

Specific **land management techniques** offered in these documents include creating interconnected trail systems to guide public access, establishing public trailheads and picnic areas, and preserving historic or sensitive areas by limiting human access, preserving wildlife habitat by locating visitor improvements in areas removed from key preservation sites. Especially important to the District and its residents (see the **Community Survey** section of the report), is enhancing and creating existing connections and links between and within communities are ways to provide better **access** to recreation amenities. Specifically, recreation **trails** provide an active use

through state parks, federal lands, conservation easements and other recreation areas.

Stewardship of resources is another way to connect the communities. Promoting healthy, green, and sustainable practices and solutions are ways to help conserve ecologically sensitive land areas and to protect wildlife and plant species. Promoting stewardship of resources will increase community awareness and create a better surrounding environment.

Grow and Diversify Recreation Offerings

With an extensive amount of nearby regional parks and recreation opportunities available to the residents of the CCCPRD, ***growing and diversifying the local recreation offerings*** as well as ***increasing access to regional facilities*** will further enhance the recreational lifestyles and increase access for Canyon residents.