



ALTERNATIVE
RECREATION
PROVIDERS &
PROGRAMMING



ALTERNATIVE RECREATION PROVIDERS & PROGRAMMING

Introduction

Coal Creek Canyon's geographic location in the foothills, just west of the Denver metropolitan area makes it central to many amenities, but requires vehicular transportation to attend events or access many recreation services and facilities. However, while formalized recreational amenities are not present in the Canyon for many team sports, indoor recreation or classes, many of the Canyon's residents move to the area to be close to outdoor amenities and tend to spend time hiking, biking, boating, rock-climbing and other outdoor recreational pursuits. Alternative providers for both formalized and informal recreation are important to evaluate through this Master Planning effort in order for the District to understand how and who to build relationships with, in order to maximize the recreation opportunities for District residents. In all cases, exploring joint-use or reciprocal agreements with the recreation facility and/or managing district or agency may be worth exploring.

The historical lack of a managing jurisdiction and the topography of Coal Creek Canyon have not been conducive to the establishment of formalized recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, including community gathering places and activity-based recreation destinations (private or public). Currently, based on public input, Coal Creek Canyon residents use a variety of alternative providers and their associated facilities, which are primarily located outside of the Canyon, including facilities located in Arvada, Boulder, Golden, Gilpin County and Nederland. The following are six indoor recreation facilities evaluated by the Norris Design team, based on selection by the District as primary recreation facilities used by Coal Creek Canyon residents. All information noted here is current as of November 2010.

APEX Center - This facility, located at 13150 W. 72nd Avenue in Arvada is operated by the Apex Park and Recreation District. This district is not affiliated with the City of Arvada or Jefferson County, but a stand-alone Title 32 Park and Recreation district serving the northern part of Jefferson County. The center, built in 2000, is one of the most extensive facilities in the Denver Metropolitan Area, as well as nationally

renowned. The building includes a leisure pool area (including vortex pool, slides, hot tub and picnic spot) and lap pool with four lanes, three gymnasiums, running track, workout/cardio room, climbing wall, various class/rental/event rooms, an indoor playground (Clubhouse Adventure) and two ice skating rinks. The Apex Park and Recreation District also has other indoor facilities and runs Indian Tree Golf Course.

Programs and Services

- *Aquatics* – programs include youth swim lessons, swim team, drop-in aquacise classes, lifeguard training, as well as open swim times.
- *Enrichment programs* – primarily occur at other Apex District facilities, including art, pottery, dance, painting, music, computer and game programs for adults and youth.
- *Fitness* – adult and youth weight room orientation classes, drop-in group fitness classes including bosu, cardio kickbox, and yoga, cycling classes, adult basketball, boot camp classes, personal training, and Pilates are offered at the Apex Center. Additional classes are held at other district facilities.
- *Inclusive Programs* – includes an Adapted Aquatics program at the Center. Other classes and events occur at other Apex District facilities and include, fitness, tennis, and nights out, to name a few.
- *Senior Programs* – includes Silver Sneakers Fitness programs and drop-in classes, cooking club, weight room orientation class, and Pilates.
- *Special Events* - include frequent Bonfils blood drives, Halloween Carnival, parent's night out, kids night out, story times, as well as the opportunity to customize a birthday party (including options such as bounce house, ice skating, swimming, or rock climbing). The District also offers various trips, hikes and clubs for adults through their other facilities.
- *Sports Leagues* – ice hockey leagues and basketball are offered at the Center, with other leagues also offered through the District.
- *Wellness* – the Apex Center includes a small spa that offers massage and other spa treatments. The

Center also offers information classes on nutrition, self defense, and personal training.

- *Youth Programs* – an extensive selection of classes occur throughout the District, while Apex Center offers youth yoga programs, young weight lifters, and various climbing wall classes.
- *Other Programming* – ice skating programs including public skating sessions, adult drop-in hockey, learn to skate lessons, and ice hockey programs.

Fees and Use Agreements

In order to receive resident rates or to receive priority on registration, users must be within the Apex Park and Recreation District. Typically, Non-resident use fees run approximately 12-35% more. Daily rates are closer to 35%, while a family annual pass and public skating fees are closer to 12-20% more. Ice spectators wishing to sit in the arena are required to pay a daily fee, but can watch from the upper galleria for free. The Center includes a variety of rooms for rental; however, non-resident fees are 30% more.

Currently, Apex PRD offers another small recreation district, Prospect Recreation and Park District, resident discounts on all offerings except Apex Center annual passes. CCCPRD is currently in discussions with the District to create a similar arrangement for Canyon residents.



Gilpin County Community Center - As the sole facility for Gilpin County Parks and Recreation, the Gilpin County Community Center, centrally located at 250 Norton Drive outside of Blackhawk, provides a space for community meetings and events, for teens to gather, and residents to exercise and swim. Completed in 2003 with 100% gaming impact fees, for the residents of Gilpin County, the 43,000 square foot facility includes an art studio/wet crafts room, senior area, teen room, multi-purpose rooms, kitchen, lounge areas, gymnasium with running track above, fitness studio, free weights area, cardio area, locker rooms, activities pool with a slide and a 6-lane lap pool with a diving board.

Programs and Services

- *Aquatics* – programs include swim lessons for both youth and adults. Adult lap swim, open swim times, and Dive-in Movies. Youth Swim tests are also available to allow children ages 10-12 to be in the pool without adult supervision.
- *Enrichment programs* – include adult classes such as Celtic music ensemble, dog agility, language classes, hunter education, and pottery classes and open lab times. Youth enrichment classes include dance classes such as Mommy & Me Movement, Ballet/Hip-hop, and martial art classes.
- *Fitness* – classes include body circuit, ski conditioning, Pilates, aquacize, kickboxing, and yoga. The center also offers personal training.
- *Senior Programs* – include senior lunches on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, free transportation and various tours to nearby attractions.
- *Special Events* - includes various seasonal festivals, including a Family Fun Halloween Night and a Winter Arts Festival. Birthday parties, including use of the pool and activity room are also available.
- *Sports Leagues* – youth basketball, adult co-ed volleyball, pick-up basketball and leagues are held at the Center, as well as adult softball, kickball and tennis in other locations in and around Golden.
- *Youth Programs* – include programs specifically for teens, including classes in babysitter train-

ing, Guitar Hero nights, the teen room, teen only times, Teen Trips, such as to go bowling, seasonal events and shopping trips into Lakewood. For younger kids, After School Youth Camps are provided four days a week with activities including arts & crafts, children's choir, children's theatre, and swimming.

- *Other Services* – includes times available for babysitting during parent's workout and self-defense for women. The Gilpin County CSU Extension office adjacent to the Community Center and offers classes on treating pine beetle trees, as well as forest, plant and environmental education sessions.

Fees and Use Agreements

Proof of Gilpin County residency must be provided to receive resident rates. For both residents and non-residents, children under age 5 are free, and residents under 18 and seniors are free. Typically, membership rates for non-resident adults are 35-55% more, with the 10-visit punch cards and drop-in rates being 35% more, while 3-month and annual memberships are closer to 50%. Individual class registration rates are 20-30% more for non-residents. Family membership rates are also available and any individual who is a full-time employee of any Gilpin County employer is eligible to receive resident membership rates.



Golden Community Center - Located at 1470 10th Street in the heart of Golden, Colorado, the Golden Community Center provides a comprehensive facility for recreation programs and community events for the residents within incorporated areas of Golden. The Community Center includes an indoor leisure pool with slide, indoor lap pool, hot tub, dry sauna, gymnasium with running track above, free weight area, cardio and circuit training areas, climbing wall, community room, pottery and dry craft rooms, meeting rooms, a child care area with indoor tot lot, the Front Porch for seniors, and a daycare program. Golden also has Fossil Trace Golf Course, an outdoor aquatics park, soccer and ball fields and a batting cage available seasonally located on a different site in the Golden area.

Programs and Services

- *Aquatics* – programs include youth swim lessons, private and semi-private lessons, infant swimming resource, kayaking and open pool classes, water fitness, youth swim team, and lifeguard training, as well as open swim and adult lap swim times.
- *Enrichment programs* – include vocal music theater for kids, dance classes for youth and adults, computer tutoring, adult hoop, Spanish for travelers, and hunter education.
- *Fitness* – options include youth, women's, and family climbing classes and clubs, personal training, weight room orientation, body composition testing, Body Fit and Line Dance classes, yoga, Pilates, and jazzercise.
- *Senior Programs* – includes Silver Sneakers programs, including aqua aerobics, line dancing, Fitball and Spinning classes. Other offerings at the center include Pottery, AARP Driver's Safety Program, Bridge, Mah Jongg and billiards clubs, softball, volleyball, basketball, and a walking group.
- *Sports Leagues* – CARA youth volleyball and inline hockey.
- *Wellness* – Celebrate Health! Program on the first Friday of every month - includes chair massage, foot care, reflexology, and free blood pressure screenings.

- *Youth Programs* – include a variety of dance classes including ballet, tap, hip-hop, and jazz. Offerings for kids under 6 include tumbling, Dino Dig, Fun-gineering, music, and art. Other offerings for youth of all ages includes Art Camp, Family Art Night, Pottery classes, JumpNrope, Hula Hooping, SPYBOTICS, Junior engineering using LEGO, Babysitting, CPR and First Aid classes, Kids Nite Out and Hunter Education.
- *Other Programming* – Community and meeting rooms are available for rent, as well as various packages for birthday parties that include use of the swimming pool. A Child Care Center is available for those working out or participating in programs.

Fees and Use Agreements

"Per Visit" admissions to the Community Center are the same for residents and non-residents. However, stamp cards, annual passes and household member discounts include different rates for resident and non-resident users. Non-resident rates are approximately 11 to 14% higher than resident rates, with the 20-visit stamp cards 11-12% higher, while annual passes are 13.5% more. Fields throughout Golden as well as the batting cage can also be rented on an hourly or daily basis.



Nederland Community Center - The Nederland Community Center, located just northwest of the heart of town at 750 Colorado Highway 72, provides a gathering place and recreation facility for the residents of the Nederland area. Originally built as a school, the town repurposed the building into a community center in 1997. After the roof collapse in 2002, which required the entire facility to be brought up to code and revealed hidden problems during renovation, the facility was remodeled using LEED green building parameters and reopened in 2007. Currently, approximately two thirds of the building is being used by the public, while the 1960's west addition awaits remodeling. The building includes a weight room, cardio deck, dance and yoga studio, gymnasium, meeting rooms, a kitchen, theater with a stage, concession stand, and a few private business offices. A teen center is located in a different building. "The Fitness Place" includes access to the gymnasium, cardio deck, weight room and dance/yoga studio (when not in use). Public input and efforts to develop a plan to reopen the west wing of the center are currently underway. The Community Center Foundation was also established to work on behalf of the Center to advise the Nederland Board of Trustees on capital projects and pursue grants and other funds for Center improvements and programming. Another important group is the Backdoor Theater Group, a non-profit operating movies on Fridays and Saturdays in the theater.

Backdoor Theater shows first-run movies in the theater.

- *Other Programming* – public meetings, including Planning Commission meetings are held in the large community room. Local artists display their art in the halls of the center. The large community room, kitchen and gymnasium can be rented for large gatherings or birthday parties, and the theater is often used for local music performances and live theater, in addition to the Backdoor Theater movie events.

Fees and User Agreements

The Nederland Community Center currently only charges for Fitness Place access, including yoga and dance sessions, with "regular" and "senior (65)" rates. There are no rate differentials for resident and non-resident users and children can be added to the annual membership for an additional fee. Backdoor Theater Movie events cost \$6 for adults and \$3 for kids under 12. The center is currently only offering "drop-in" programs to eliminate liability issues and requires all users of the gym and fitness facilities to sign a waiver. This type of model may be one for the CCCPRD to consider if it is to ever manage an indoor recreation facility.

Programs and Services

- *Enrichment programs* – include programs like Love and Logic parenting classes, as well as the dance classes noted in the fitness category.
- *Fitness* – classes include fitness circuit, tai chi, modern dance, international folk dancing, tap, ballet and creative movement, and yoga for both youth and adults. Fitness activities in the gym include adult tennis, drop-in adult floor hockey, and pick-up basketball.
- *Senior Programs* – includes senior lunches by the Nederland Area Seniors on Mondays and Wednesdays. Most other events by the group are held elsewhere.
- *Special Events* – every Friday and Saturday, the



South Boulder Recreation Center - One of three City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department Recreation Centers, the South Boulder Recreation Center, located at 1360 Gillaspie in a neighborhood on the south side of Boulder provides a small facility for residents to exercise and swim. The facility, originally built in 1974 was renovated in 2007 to better accommodate the needs of the community. The building includes a cardio and weight area, hot tub, dry sauna, a 6-lane 25-yard lap pool with diving board, gymnasium, racquetball court, meeting room and a dance room. The Center is also surrounded by a park that includes multi-purpose fields, sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, Frisbee Golf course, inline hockey area, playground and trails. Due to the Center's small size, many of the City's classes and programs are offered at other facilities around Boulder; however, this facility is convenient for Coal Creek Canyon residents commuting in and out of Boulder for work or school.

Programs and Services

- *Aquatics* – primarily available for open lap swimming, the South center also has a few drop-in water fitness classes. Additionally, all or part of the pool is often reserved for water polo; scuba diving and Fairview High School swim practice. All other registration classes are held at North and East.
- *Enrichment programs* – the department offers pottery and gymnastics at other facilities.
- *Fitness* – programs held at South include adult ballet, youth ballet, Kinder Tap, adult kickbox, bootcamp fitness, Nordic walking, Parent/Child Nia (ages 2-5), Mat and Reformer Pilates, yoga, personal training, F.I.T. workout, Lift for Life, Women's weight training
- *Inclusive Programs* – the EXPAND program offers a wide selection of programs at facilities around Boulder, including Friday Night Dances at the South Boulder Recreation Center.
- *Sports Leagues* – Adult basketball (men and women's) and co-ed dodgeball.
- *Wellness* – classes at South include a variety of First Aid classes, including Sport Medic, Wilderness and various Red Cross First Aid and CPR/

AED classes.

- *Youth Programs* – Teen Weight training, Sports Sampler for 3-4 year-olds, Gym Jam and Music with Dinah classes for those under 4, and middle school volleyball.

Fees and User Agreement

Boulder Parks and Recreation Department charges fees based on resident and non-resident rates. The rates for non-residents range from 2.5 to 27% above resident rates, with punch card rates being between 2.7 and 7.8% higher and annual passes being around 25% higher. The City also offers some Boulder area employers discounts, such as on annual pass rates (i.e. University of Colorado employees save 20% off the resident rate on annual passes). Businesses that are part of the Chamber of Commerce also provide their employees a savings of 10% off of punch cards.



Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association (CCCCIA)

- Coal Creek Canyon Improvement Association was originally founded in 1947 to bring infrastructure and services to the Canyon, including the Volunteer Fire Department, getting Coal Creek Canyon Road (Highway 72) paved and other key utilities and services for the residents of the Canyon. However, more recently the Association has served as the primary provider for activities within the Canyon, and its Community Center Hall is the primary destination for classes, community events and meetings (whether held by the Association or a private sponsor), as it is one of the largest community facilities in the Canyon for bigger events and gatherings. It is important to note that this is strictly a rental facility and does not provide for “drop-in” type activities.

Programs and Services

- Special Events such as the Pancake Breakfasts, July 4th Festival, Santa Brunch, St. Patrick’s Day Celebration, Spa Day, Fish Fry, Fall Flea Market, Easter Eggstravaganza, and Thanksgiving Feast
- Classes including CPR and Pine Beetle Information
- Scholarships for canyon students under age 21 continuing their education
- Services provided at the Hall through rentals by other groups include scheduled yoga classes, circuit training, school special events, religious services, health screenings, game nights, scout meetings, dance practices and classes, kids clothing swap, concerts, and spaghetti dinners, to name a few.

Fees and User Agreement

In order to reserve the hall for a meeting or event, an individual or group must also be a member of the Association. Annual membership fees are range from \$10 for seniors to \$40 for businesses, and \$500 for a life membership. Facility rental rates are \$10 per hour for weekly rentals (such as yoga classes), and \$25 per hour for events, with a maximum fee of 8 hours and a refundable cleaning deposit.

Trails

Currently, there are no formalized trails owned, managed or maintained by the District, however, informal trail alignments do exist within the District. These trails are located within corridors that provide access to public lands within and surrounding the District. These trails are unpaved, primitive single tracks - often crossing rugged and complex terrain. Access is limited to those willing to accept the demands of the topography and lack of coordinated maintenance efforts. These unmapped trails provide access to various scenic locations including Walker Ranch Open Space along the northern edge of the District and Thorodin Mountain – a 10,540’ peak located 1.5 miles west of the District. Both of these trails have informal parking along roadways. The trail to Thorodin Mountain crosses a very short section of private property prior to accessing land owned by the National Forest Service (Arapaho National Forest).

Large, formal trail networks exist beyond the District within the public lands owned by the Colorado State Parks, Boulder County, Jefferson County and the City of Boulder. Again, due to the complex terrain common to this area, many of these trails are narrow single tracks that access various topographic features and vistas. However, these external networks benefit from organized maintenance, trailheads and additional amenities. Users of these formal networks also benefit from detailed mapping showing destinations, topography and connections.



Outdoor Recreation Destinations

The Coal Creek Canyon Recreation District is surrounded by Bureau of Land Management, National Forest, State Land Board, State Park, Jefferson and Boulder County Open Space and City of Boulder Park lands. This conglomerate of lands provides a buffer around the District, limiting development and encroachment into the community, as well as provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation within proximity to the Canyon. Within the District, except for key trail connections noted previously and biking or walking on area roadways, there are limited developed recreational opportunities on public lands, and leisure activities in the Canyon tend to occur on residents' private property or they choose to drive out of the Canyon to recreate. The following is summary of the public outdoor recreation areas located in proximity to Coal Creek Canyon (please refer to Map B in the **GIS Mapping and Spatial Analysis** section of the report for a visual reference of these properties).

BLM, National Forest and State Land Board

Bureau of Land Management – a piece of land located south of the Boulder-Jefferson County line in the northeast part of the District. It is assumed that hiking and gold panning may be allowed in this area, per the allowed activities list on the BLM's website; however, a portion of it is impacted by the railroad that cuts through it as it winds up the slope.



Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest – primarily located west of the District, these areas are part of the Boulder Ranger District of the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest. Activities allowed within the Forest include bicycling, camping, climbing, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, nature viewing, target shooting and winter sports.

- **Gross Reservoir** – Built for water storage and overseen by Denver Water, the perimeter of the reservoir is within the Arapaho Roosevelt National Forest. Activities in and around the reservoir include canoeing, kayaking, fishing, ice fishing, hiking, camping, and picnicking. No water contact activities such as swimming or scuba diving are allowed, as it is a public drinking water supply.

State Land Board – One parcel named Blue Mountain (a separate property from the Blue Mountain subdivision), within the boundaries of the District is noted as a Designated Stewardship Trust, with surface ownership. According to the State Land Board's website, this category is land which is to "receive special stewardship attention, and are protected from sale or development unless four of the five Land Board members vote to take them out of the trust." This parcel of land is **not open to the public**. The Board's "first responsibility is to its beneficiaries, [therefore] state trust lands are not "public" in the same way that lands owned by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are. Unless a local of state agency or a private individual has come forward and offered to pay for the right to have recreational use of a particular piece of state trust land-and taken responsibility for managing that recreation, the land is just as off limits to the public as a piece of private land."



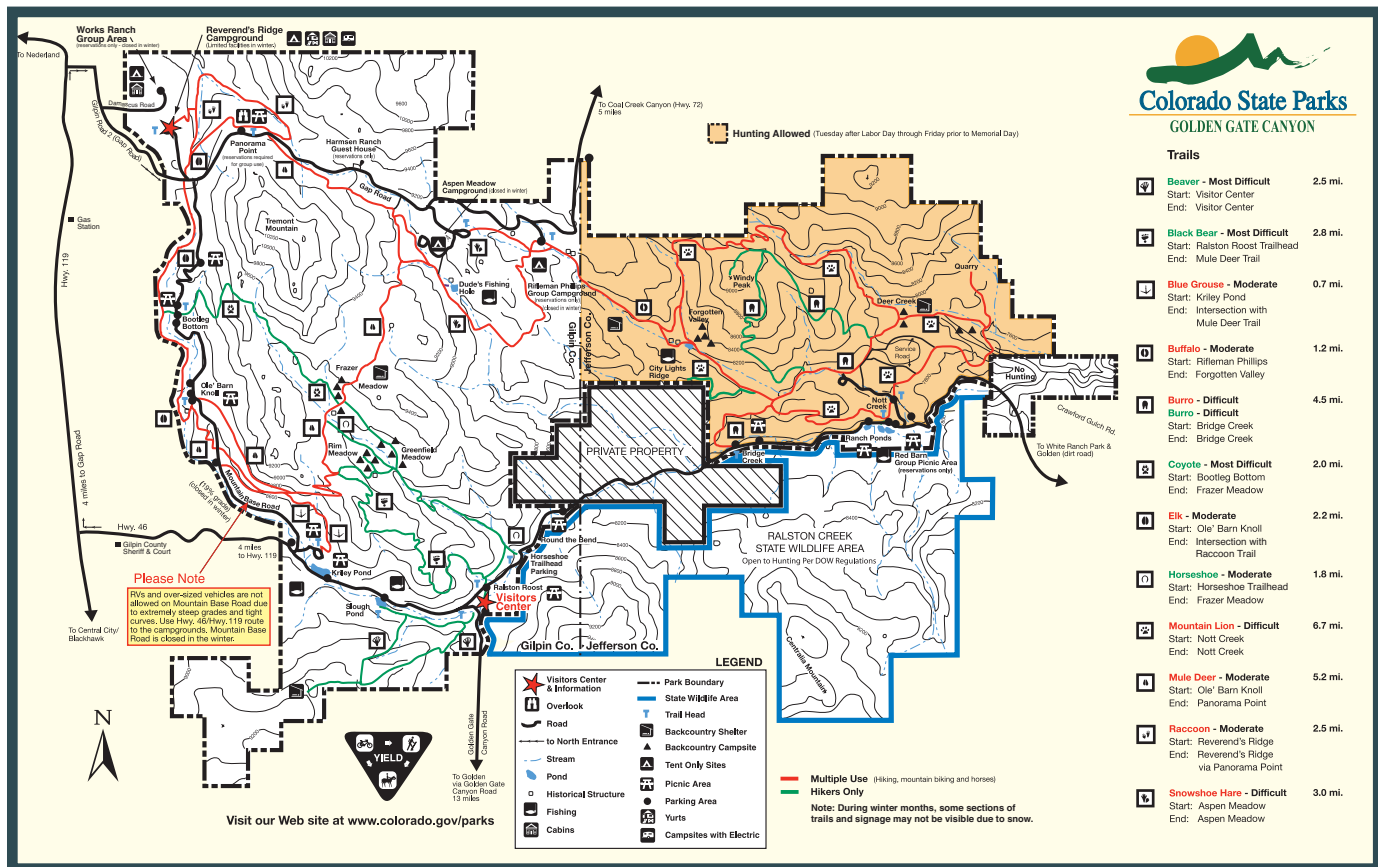
Fees, Access and Restrictions – Generally, some areas on national lands may require a fee to be paid at the entrance; this is typical of campgrounds or activity areas. Activities on BLM land typically do not require fees or permits, except gold panning, which requires a permit for mining. Some activities within the National Forest require fees and permits, including camping in campgrounds (fees) and harvesting firewood (permit), however, most lands are free to activities for day use. Fishing licenses are required for all fishing activity within the State of Colorado. The State Land Board parcel is not open or accessible to the public.

State Parks

Sandwiched between Golden Gate Canyon State Park on the southwest, and Eldorado Canyon State Park on the north (in the District), residents in Coal Creek Canyon have convenient access to State Park Lands for a variety of recreation activities. Golden Gate Canyon is more easily accessible because Gap Road, goes to the campground areas of the park and connects to Highway 72. Part of Eldorado Canyon State Park (Crescent Meadows area) is accessible from Gross Dam Road.

Golden Gate Canyon State Park – From the District, Golden Gate Canyon is most easily accessible from Gap Road, which enters the park in the central-north side and is just a short distance from all of the campgrounds. The Park includes a large variety of facilities, miles of trails and many opportunities for year-round outdoor recreation. Facilities include campgrounds, picnic areas, trails, a visitor's center, cabins, yurts, a guest house, ponds, and scenic overlooks. Activities available in the park include camping (campgrounds, backcountry and group facilities), biking, winter activities, educational programs, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, ice fishing, ice skating, picnicking, rock climbing and sledding. Some areas of the park, primarily those in Jefferson County (see **Figure 7.1**), during specific timeframes are also open for hunting. Except for the Gap Road access, there is not currently any trail or dirt road connections into the Coal Creek Canyon Recreation District.

Figure 7.1: Map of Golden Gate Canyon State Park



Eldorado Canyon State Park – Divided into two parcels, with a Boulder County Open Space parcel and BLM lands between, Eldorado Canyon State Park includes the Crescent Meadows parcel on the west and the Inner Canyon area on the East. The Crescent Meadows parcel is directly accessible to the District via Gross Dam Road. This area includes trails for hiking and mountain biking, and trail connections that extend into Boulder County's Walker Ranch Open Space. The primary part of the park and the primary draw for visitors is the Inner Canyon, where rock climbing is very popular. This area also includes a visitor's center, areas for hiking, picnicking, and fishing (along South Boulder Creek). This parcel has limited access from a spur off of the Walker Ranch loop trail, and residents have expressed the desire for additional hiking and mountain biking access points.

Fees, Access and Restrictions – Colorado State Parks require an entrance fee (\$7) to enter the park either via vehicle or while on-foot or horseback. They offer an annual pass (\$70) and the Aspen Leaf Pass (for those Colorado residents over age 64), as well as daily passes for vehicles, and walk-in passes. Golden Gate Canyon State Park also has additional fees for camping sites, (which varies between backcountry and sites with Electric hook-ups for RV's), conference room rentals, cabins and yurts. Eldorado Canyon State Park also has fees for conference room rental.

Jefferson County Open Space Parks

Jefferson County has acquired a variety of parcels throughout the Coal Creek Canyon area, including some new acquisitions labeled as Coal Creek Canyon Open Space, both inside and adjacent to the District. Also, within a hour drive from the Canyon to the southeast is White Ranch Park.

Coal Creek Canyon Park - there is currently a management plan in place for this land, but the Park has no recreation facilities and is not open to the public. The management plan classifies the park as including the following land-types, Parkland Recreation Area, Natural Area and Sensitive Area. It appears that the park will eventually include trailhead facilities in proximity to Highway 72 and trails that are designed to

minimize visual impacts of the mountain backdrop within the Parkland Recreation Area and potentially some trail opportunities in the Natural Area. The two western parcels, because of their topography will likely not include trails, but Jefferson County Open Space believes that the location of all of the parcels will offer opportunities to provide connections to adjacent public lands, including state park and county open space facilities. According to Jefferson County Open Space's website, this land was primarily acquired for the "protection of critical wildlife habitat areas in general and the Coal Creek riparian corridor in particular."

White Ranch Openspace – access into this park is approximately an hour drive, off of Highway 93 and 56th avenue on the east, or from the west/south from Golden Gate Road and Crawford Gulch Road. The east access provides only a parking lot area and trail easement, while the west side includes two parking areas and closer proximity to more trailheads and other amenities. Facilities at White Ranch include two hike-in and horse-friendly campgrounds, a picnic area, picnic shelters, and multi-use trails (hiking, biking and equestrian use). The northern-most boundary of White Ranch Park touches the southeast corner of the Coal Creek Park and Recreation District, however in the maps and management plan for the park, this area is noted as a Sensitive Area (because of its proximity to Ralston Creek) and does not include any trails nor is it open to the public.

Fees, Access and Restrictions – Access to all Jefferson County Open Space properties is free, but permits are required for various activities. Permits are required for special activities such as weddings or large group picnics for \$50, camping permits are free, and stays are limited to a maximum of 12 days in a 30 day period. Some seasonal closures may occur, either due to weather, wildlife (nesting or hunting seasons) or for maintenance, including to restrooms, water pumps or public access areas within the parks.

Boulder County Open Space Parks

Boulder County has a wide assortment of open space lands, including many in the mountain areas outside of the City of Boulder, including two within close proximity to the District, including Walker Ranch and the Eldorado Mountain parcel.

Walker Ranch Park – Walker Ranch Park is located north of the Crescent Meadows portion of Eldorado Canyon State Park, and can be accessed via multi-use trail from the State Park. It can also be accessed on the north side of Flagstaff Road. The Park includes a group picnic shelter and multi-use trails, as well as parking and restrooms near the north entrance areas. Fishing is also allowed in South Boulder Creek. Special events are held each season at the Walker Ranch Homestead, including history tours and historic homestead activities, such as butter churning and shingle making. No camping is permitted in the park.

Eldorado Mountain Open Space – This area is located between the two areas of Eldorado Canyon State Park and falls within the north end of the Coal Creek Canyon Park and Recreation District. While this area is not clearly defined as a Boulder County Open Space park, it is under the ownership of the County. However, there is no public access, except where trails from Eldorado Canyon State Park connect into the open space.

Fees, Access and Restrictions – It is free to park and use trail facilities in all Boulder County Open Space parks. Some seasonal closures may occur, either due to weather, wildlife (nesting or hunting seasons) or for maintenance, including to restrooms or public access areas within the parks. However, it is important to note that access to Walker Ranch Park via the Crescent Meadows trailhead could in the future have an associated fee, as users are technically entering the State Park there.

City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

The City of Boulder owns a substantial network of approximately 45,000 acres of open space and park areas with an extensive trail network northeast of the Coal Creek Canyon Park and Recreation District. East of the northeast corner of the District, a large open space area south of Eldorado Springs Drive includes two major trailheads, and miles of trails. Doudy Draw trailhead is accessed off of Eldorado Springs Drive and is across from the South Mesa Trailhead. The Flatirons Vista trailhead is located off of Highway 93 across from the Greenbelt Plateau trailhead. These trailheads link to multi-use trails winding through this area as well as a single hiking-only trail on the west end of the City's property and the area is popular with equestrians as well as mountain bikers and hikers.

Fees, Access and Restrictions – Special Use permits are required for events drawing more than 25 people, however general access to this open space area is free. Parking fees do apply in some of the other City of Boulder sites, but not the one noted above.



Facilities and Programs Key Findings

Indoor Facilities

With the exception of Nederland, the facilities all include aquatic facilities of some shape or size. All facilities included cardio and weight rooms as well as a gymnasium, dance/yoga room and at least one room for community meetings. However, individual amenities make each stand apart from the others. Apex is the only facility to include indoor ice, while Nederland has an outdoor ice rink, tennis courts and a theater, Golden has a room dedicated to seniors, South Boulder includes an extensive park with outdoor fields and courts adjacent to the center, and Gilpin and Nederland have Teen facilities. Many of the facilities included “green” technologies within the facilities, from solar panels for energy to motion-sensor lighting in classrooms and gymnasiums, with Nederland following LEED requirements to achieve Gold status. Apex, Golden and South Boulder are all part of a larger recreation center system while Gilpin and Nederland are the sole facilities for their smaller communities. Apex and Gilpin are 10 or less years old, while Golden has recently expanded their facility, and Nederland and South Boulder have been renovated.

Generally, there appears to be sufficient facilities for aquatics and cardio/weight training in the region. However, there is a significant drive to reach them, which according to the Community Survey ranked #3 in barriers to participation (i.e. - locations not convenient/easily accessible – 47%). Based on community input, and the lack of facilities provided by alternative providers, additional facilities and programs for youth and teens within the Canyon would likely be successful and should be explored.



Recreation Programming

All of the indoor recreation facilities included dance, yoga and Pilates programs, as well as opportunities for visitors to familiarize themselves with the weight rooms and cardio equipment, through either staff tour or a programmed class. Apex and Boulder districts/departments include programs for people with disabilities in their programming, and both Apex and Golden are part of the Silver Sneakers program for seniors. CCCPRD can partner with these agencies to meet the needs of district residents with disabilities. Due to limited space, both Nederland and South Boulder did not have an extensive list of classes and programs, or any art or culture classes at their facilities. However, Nederland has a theater and displays local art in the hallways. Golden and Gilpin both had pottery studios and Apex's focus was recreation with most of their enrichment programs occurring at the District's other facilities. Primarily, the focus at all of the facilities are more on fitness, exercise and group classes, and each of the districts/departments programming guides are mostly filled with recreation, rather than arts or cultural activities. The lack of immediate access to art and culture activities and classes may be a gap that can be filled by CCCPRD or an alternative provider within the District through programming and special events. The District should evaluate further, whether residents would support such programming.

Though many of the centers include similar amenities, each facility provides a unique set of amenities and programs which exude their own special character and style. This diversity of amenities in proximity to the Canyon allows Coal Creek Canyon residents to choose from a variety of programs and amenities to match their interests and needs. However, based on public input, there is significant demand for providing services (i.e. – indoor gathering space and fitness) within the Canyon in order to facilitate a greater sense of community, create a gathering place, as well as avoid driving to these facilities all together.

Trails and Outdoor Recreation

Trails within the District are limited to a few informal alignments that do not have any additional support amenities such as formal trailheads with parking facilities, restrooms, mapping, ADA access, etc. Residents within the District have historically understood where these alignments are and have used them recreationally to access various public and private locations in and out of the District. However, these are informal trails with a mix of public and private ownership. Trails that were once commonly used have been closed with changes in land-owners' trust and attitudes toward informal access.

The District is surrounded by an extensive collection of Federal, State, County and City lands designated as park and open space areas. This collection of lands is indicative of the community and local government's desire to sustain mountain and foothill lands for the enjoyment of the public and the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Options available to Coal Creek Canyon residents in surrounding jurisdictions is extensive, however, very few trail and roadway connections exist into these facilities, which in part may be due to topography, as well as a significant amount of private ownership in the Canyon. Additionally, it is important to note that these facilities support individual, passive recreation opportunities and have fees associated with their use, but do not facilitate community gathering and active recreation opportunities such as a community park does. It appears that generally the jurisdictions do have a history of working together to weave trail networks between facilities where possible, but this recently has become more of a challenge due to limited funding and resources. Yet, this bodes well for the District as the economy rebounds and they move forward with identifying key trail connections and working with the jurisdictions to make those connections a reality.

While this collection of publicly owned lands surrounding the District provides an extensive collection of trails, the area is not only lacking connections into those spaces, but based on Community and Stakeholder Input is also lacking paved, multi-purpose trail facilities that can accommodate a wider variety of users. Currently, residents use local roads

for walking and biking, which is a safety concern. Based on public input and the Community Survey, there is also high demand for soft-surface, multi-purpose trail facilities that can accommodate hiking, walking, mountain biking and cycling, which should be considered by the District, as these activities are the primary activities both desired and being participated in by District residents. Outdoor play facilities for the youth of the community are also considered important by District residents.



