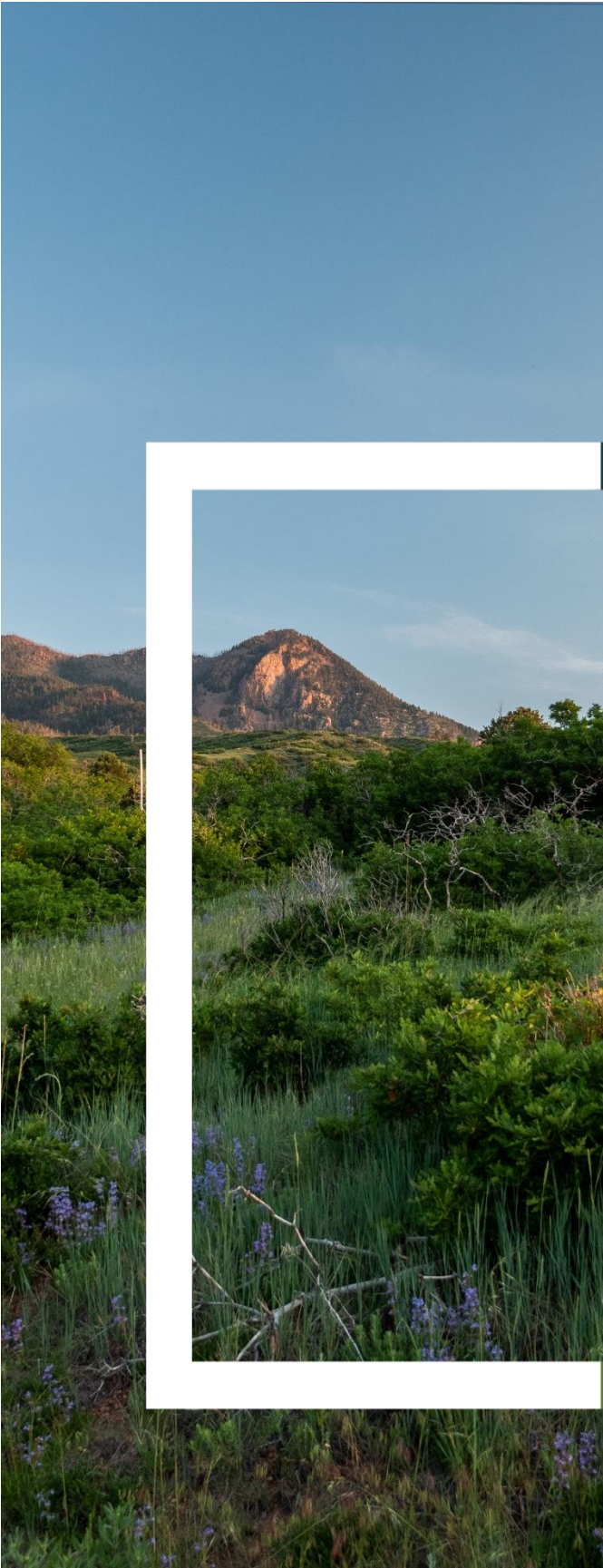


# Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan



Final Plan  
22 April 2024

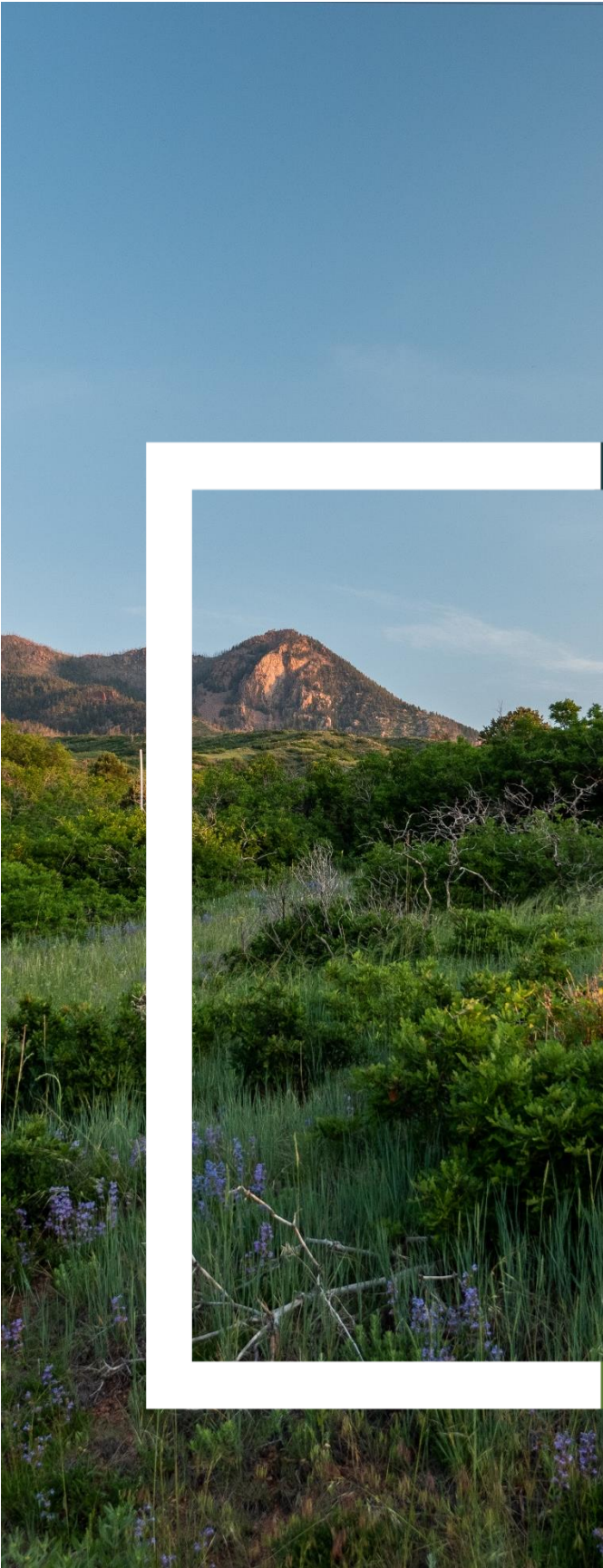


Final Plan  
22 April 2024

Tapis Associates, Inc.  
Chickenango Marketing Solutions  
ERO Resources, Inc.  
Chinook LA







parks · recreation · cultural services





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## Acknowledgements

The community-guided Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan will set the future of this spectacular public Open Space and its connectivity to surrounding public properties.

We acknowledge and are thankful for the committed participation and engagement of the diverse citizen participants. All participants gave valuable input through many public meetings and reviews with the consultant team and the City staff. Their thoughtful ideas have informed and shaped this plan.

We acknowledge and are also thankful to the active Stakeholder Action Committee (SAC). They provided invaluable information that has helped shape this Master and Management Plan.

### Stakeholder Action Committee:

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition (TOSC)  
Bob Falcone, Hiking Bob  
Ron Gowenzen, Live Oak Station Filing No. 2 HOA  
Steve Harris, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board Liaison  
Wendy Howe and Hank Scarangella, TOPS Working Committee Liaison  
Joe Melenfant and Gregg Koch, Colorado Springs Mountain Bike Association (COSMBA)  
Gary Moring and Tom Harris, Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces  
Martin Palmaz, US Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association  
Kristen Peterson, Peregrine Master Association HOA  
Cory Sutela and Harry Hamill, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates (MWTAA)  
Keith Thompson, Council of Neighborhood Organizations (CONO)

The Agency Partners provided input on how they interface with the Open Space. We want to thank the following members for their contributions:

### Agency Partners:

Carl Bauer, District Ranger, Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (USFS)  
Samantha Gouch, Recreation Planner, Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (USFS)  
Corey Adler, Northwest Area Wildlife Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)  
R. Joseph (Joe) Murphy III, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and United States Air Force Academy (USAFA)  
Lisa Walters, Colorado Springs Utilities (Utilities)  
Cory Ashby, Colorado Springs Fire Department



**TOPS Working Committee:**

Bob Falcone, Chair, Wendy Howe, Vice Chair, Emily Danti, Jeff Davis, Chelsea Gondeck, Paula Krantz, Blaze Panariso, Hank Scarangella, Bob Shafer. Alternates: David Bundrick, Randy Courduff.

**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board:**

Sarah Bryarly, Chair, Abby Simpson, Vice Chair, Amandla Atilano-Roque, Larry Bogue, Stephen Harris, Steve Lenzo, Andrea Perry, Julia Sands De Melendez, Greg Thorton. Alternates: Kimberly Sherwood, Mike Sullivan, Debbie Swanson.

The City of Colorado Springs staff played a significant role in the creation of the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan. The following staff members are recognized for their contributions:

**City of Colorado Springs Staff:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Britt Haley, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director                       | Scott Abbott, Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Supervisor |
| Kim King, Assistant Director  | Cody Bear Sutton, Natural Resource Specialist                  |
| Eric Becker, Parks Operations and Development Manager                               | Emily Duncan, Trails Development Coordinator                   |
| Lonna Thelen, Design Development Manager/<br>TOPS Manager                           | Dan Allen, Trail Project Specialist                            |
| Matt Mayberry, Cultural Services Manager  | Anna Bingman, Assistant to the Director                        |
| David Deitemeyer, Senior Landscape Architect/<br>Project Manager                    | Larry Kitt, Senior Park Ranger                                 |
| Cassie Melvin, City Communications  | Madison Peddy, Senior Park Ranger                              |
| Morgan Gray, City Communications  | Mark Tatro, Park Ranger  |
| Stephanie Adams, Community Engagement   | Dennis Will, City Forester                                     |
| Anna Cordova, Regional Parks Manager-Garden of the<br>Gods Park, Lead Archaeologist | Todd Frisbie, City Traffic Engineering Division Manager        |
|   | Officer Brian Corrado, Colorado Springs Police Department      |

The City was also fortunate to have a focused professional consultant team led by Tapis Associates, Inc. We are very pleased with their public engagement, research, professionalism and creativity in developing this plan.

Tapis Associates, Inc.: Priscilla J Marbaker, PLA, LEED-AP  
Chickenango Marketing Strategies: AJ West  
ERO Resources Corporation: Bill Mangle  
Chinook LA: Jon Altschuld, PLA  
Wilson & Company: Vance Fossinger, PE

Once again, we wish to acknowledge the over 1,428 community members who committed time and effort to provide input in the public meetings and work sessions. Their feedback was extremely helpful in ensuring that we addressed the needs of Blodgett Open Space and the community. I especially want to recognize and celebrate the respectful productive manner in which our community provided their thoughts and concerns to our team. This courteous approach goes a long way in balancing diverse interests and values.

Sincerely,  
Britt Haley, Director, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, City of Colorado Springs



## Executive Summary

### Blodgett Open Space Background

Totaling approximately 700 acres, the Blodgett Open Space planning area encompasses an interconnected group of public lands in the northwest corner of Colorado Springs. The parcels include the original Blodgett Open Space, additional properties acquired through the Trails Open Space and Parks (TOPS) program, Peregrine Open Space, Oak Valley Ranch Open Space and United States Forest Service (USFS) lands adjacent to these properties.

In combination, the Blodgett Open Space Master Plan and Management Plan provides recommendations and guidelines to enhance and manage Blodgett Open Space. As the department's first master and management plan with adaptive management strategies, this format provides both

- community guidance during creation of the master and management recommendations, and
- flexibility for the department to respond to changing conditions and community needs over time.

### Master Planning Process and Public Engagement

The community played a critical role by identifying their hopes for and concerns about the short- and long-term future of this well-loved and well-used Open Space.

Twenty-six representatives from all surrounding homeowner associations (HOAs) and recreation representatives were invited to be part of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). Not all chose to participate. The planning team worked closely with the Committee made up of representatives from surrounding neighborhood HOAs, Trails and Open Space Coalition, mountain bike representatives, general recreation advocates, Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces, representatives from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) TOPS Working Committee (TOPS) and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board (PAB), as well as the PRCS Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Division (RPTOS) staff.

The Agency Partners were engaged throughout the process and provided valuable input on how they interface with the Open Space and included representatives from the US Forest Service-Pike National Forest (USFS), Colorado Parks and Wildlife, (CPW), United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Colorado Springs Utilities (Utilities).

Plan Givens and Plan Goals were adopted. The USFS provided specific Givens for their property that established the parameters for timing and scope of future community-desired changes on USFS lands.

The planning process started in March 2023. The extensive public outreach was supported by City Communications. Participation was robust reaching an estimated 1,428 individuals. Engagement included:

- Four (4) Community-wide Pop-up events
- Five (5) Online surveys
- Five (5) SAC meetings
- Four (4) Agency Partner Meetings
- Three (3) Community Workshops in person and available online
- Two (2) Informational updates to TOPS and PAB
- One (1) Neighborhood Informational Meeting
- One (1) Online review of the Public Review Master and Management Plan document
- Two (2) TOPS presentations
- One (1) PAB presentation
- One (1) Action Item for Plan Adoption by the PAB





### Participant Preferences - The major themes expressed by the public input included:

- Integrated and continuous Habitat Protection Areas
- Wayfinding signage
- Paragliding sites
- Multi-use and regional trails
- Single use trails
- Expanded trailhead options
- Nature-based playground
- Integrated forest health and fire management
- Trail system integrating USFS lands and Blodgett Peak with Blodgett Open Space
- Appreciation for the project public process
- Continue as is

### Participant Concerns - The major themes expressed by the public input included:

- Over crowding
- Not enough wildlife protection
- Parking on neighborhood streets
- Trail and general maintenance
- Trailhead visitor use, parking expansion, nefarious activity, security, and maintenance
- Trailhead toilets, parking and visitor amenities
- Existing and potential neighborhood traffic and speeding
- Multi-use trails
- Specific user groups: mountain bikers and paragliders
- Uncertainty on USFS access and privately owned Quarry property
- Disappointment in the project public process

## Site Inventory and Assessment

Early in the master and management planning process, the team conducted an analysis of existing resource conditions within and adjacent to Blodgett Open Space. The purpose of this analysis was to establish a baseline for the planning process from which infrastructure enhancements and resource management concepts were built. Key findings included:

- Over 34 total miles of unsigned designated trails (7.1 miles) and illegal trails (9.4 Blodgett + 17.6 USFS miles) exist. Illegal trails include routes that are non-designated, non-sanctioned, user-created trails, pre-open space acquisition existing trails, and social trails.
- The current quality and integrity of vegetation and wildlife habitat is fragmented and degraded by the creation and use of illegal trails.
- Most of the habitat within the Open Space property has been influenced by previous and current human activity. The Open Space provides habitat to a variety of wildlife species that are typical of the urban-forest transitional zone. The property also contains potentially suitable habitat for the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl, and supports nearby habitat for bighorn sheep, which is a sensitive species of interest in the region.
- Bighorn Sheep habitat and key (high quality) habitat for other species is located in the USFS lands.
- Ten state-listed noxious weed species have been identified on the property.
- Blodgett Open Space and USFS lands are impacted by runoff from the steep slopes impacted by the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire.



## Site Enhancement Recommendations

This plan envisions Blodgett Open Space as an inclusive, regional open space that offers all people the opportunity to experience this unique and beautiful place. The focus is on providing access through a variety of non-motorized trails and limited facilities needed to serve them. Parking areas, trailheads and neighborhood connections are located within and at the perimeter of the Open Space. Multi-use and single-use trails are planned to accommodate a wide range of abilities and interests, and to offer a variety of experiences. The Master Plan map is on page 36. Key recommendations include:

### Commitment to Habitat Protection and Stewardship

The Plan emphasizes natural and cultural resource protection and restoration, while accommodating sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities. Key recommendations include:

- Site enhancement recommendations based on responsible and sustainable practices.
- Continued collaboration with CPW in monitoring, protecting, and enhancing wildlife habitat.
- Policy recommendations to protect natural and cultural resources.
- Context-sensitive design recommendations addressing habitat and drainage restoration, and sustainable trails for visitors.
- Focused management recommendations to guide forest health and synchronize new sustainable trail construction with effective closure of unsustainable trails.

### Trail System Recommendations

The primary recreational feature at Blodgett Open Space is the non-motorized multi-use trail system. The trail system aims to preserve the natural qualities of the land while providing varied access through a network of engaging non-motorized trails. The goal is for visitors to stay on the engaging trails and, together, protect the land. With this in mind, the following categories emerged to organize trails into a system that serves the various (and sometimes contradictory) desires of the public while upholding the PRCS Department's resource protection goals. Key recommendations include:

- Wildlife Corridors within which trail disturbances are minimized.
- Three Trailheads with parking and visitor amenities.
- Neighborhood Connections in major existing locations.
- Wayfinding Nodes at major trail system intersections.
- Chamberlain and Park to Peak Regional Trail corridors.
- Sustainable trail system comprised of multi-use, single use and directional trails.
- Special Use Areas.

### Regional Connectivity Recommendations

Regional connectivity provides non-motorized trail connections to promote and enhance non-motorized community connectivity to Blodgett Open Space and possible future connectivity to USFS lands to the west and north. Key recommendations include:

- Provide non-motorized off-street access options to and from Blodgett Open Space.
- Incorporate the Park to Peak Trail connecting Palmer Park, Austin Bluffs Open Space, Ute Valley Park and Blodgett Open Space.



The USFS collaborated with the City, as part of this planning process, to shape a community vision for the adjacent forest lands. USFS land is subject to a possible future FS NEPA process. Key recommendations include:

- Establish a zone directly west of the city property – a USFS Interface Trail Zone.
- Extend the multi-use Park to Peak Trail to Blodgett Peak.
- Establish a direct and sustainable hiking only route to Blodgett Peak.
- Consolidate currently interrupted habitat areas by decommissioning illegal trails.

## Interpretive and Educational Opportunities

Blodgett Open Space contains unique natural and cultural resources. These are opportunities for interpretation, educational programs and research. There is a rich natural resource and cultural history of the Open Space that could be best conveyed to the visiting public through interpretive displays and programming. Key opportunities identified include:

- Consider interpretive themes.
- Educate visitors about user-created illegal trails.
- Expand interpretive signage and map guides.
- Provide docents and guided hikes.
- Provide wayfinding signs.
- Provide information on Universally Accessible Trail and ADA Trail access.
- Provide information on wildlife encounters.
- Provide educational signage.
- Consider new and emerging technologies.

## Management Plan

Blodgett Open Space's 384-acres is owned by the City of Colorado Springs and managed by its PRCS Department. The department's Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Division (RPTOS) will employ adaptive management strategies in some areas following the recommendations of the 2024 Blodgett Open Space Master Plan and the phasing and thresholds set forth herein. Adaptive management is a structured approach to inform future management decision making that:

- Provides the ability to adjust to changing circumstances over time,
- Builds on existing and enhances formal monitoring networks and processes, and
- Maximizes opportunities to learn from experience.

The Management Plan focused sections include:

- Resource Management.
- Trails and Recreation Management.
- Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management.
- Perimeter Management.
- Regulation and Policy Management.
- Implementation Priorities and Costs.





Each of the Management Plan sections includes a brief introduction that includes strategies to align that specific management actions with the Master Plan and the Management Goals page 46, specific monitoring indicators, and prioritized phased-implementation recommendations. Monitoring results and thresholds will initiate the next implementation stage. While monitoring and phased-implementation contained in each management section will take precedence, PRCS will remain flexible with overall priorities in order to optimize resource and partnering opportunities that may arise. Implementation priorities not listed, or determined in the future, shall be weighted with the Plan Goals as the guide.

## Recommended Blodgett Open Space Priorities

Below are the community-driven implementation priorities for the 2024 Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan.

### High Priority Projects: 1-4 years (in no particular order)

- Implement habitat protection and restoration in conjunction with the sustainable trail system.
- Work with Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces to build capacity and regional participation. Consider if a naming convention to include Blodgett Open Space may be appropriate.
- Design and construct or expand trailheads at the Quarry and North trailheads. Remove derelict barn and storage structures near Orchard Valley Trailhead.
- Reroute or close unsustainable system trails
- Decommission unsustainable system and user-created rogue trails following sustainable trail construction.
- Design and construct the Chamberlain Trail, Park to Peak Trail, Mountain bike area with multi-use (uphill for bike only) and downhill only bike routes, Hiking only trails and the North/south connector on eastern edge
- Install and modify wayfinding signage on all new trail segments and intersections.
- Initiate trailhead management strategies including those to improve security.
- Initiate and continue monitoring and data recording of recommended Monitoring Indicators.
- Initiate integrated Forest Health and Fire Management.
- Pursue a possible future USFS partnership for trail connections to enhance Blodgett Open Space trail system within the interface zone.

### Medium Priority Projects: 2-7 years (in no particular order)

- Design and construct the entire master planned trail system.
- Design and construct or expand trailheads and neighborhood accesses.
- Design and construct paragliding launch and landing sites.
- Mitigate drainage and erosion challenges and initiate drainage improvements in the Drainage Observations in Appendix F.
- Pursue possible future USFS partnership for sustainable trails to Blodgett Peak.

### Low Priority Projects: 5-10 years (in no particular order)

- Design and construct Special Use Areas.
- Design and construct trail connections to neighborhood schools, parks and open spaces.
- Remove and restore encroachments.
- Initiate noxious weed management.
- Establish sustainable Park system-wide trail construction and rating standards.
- Establish sustainable Park system-wide trail maintenance standards.

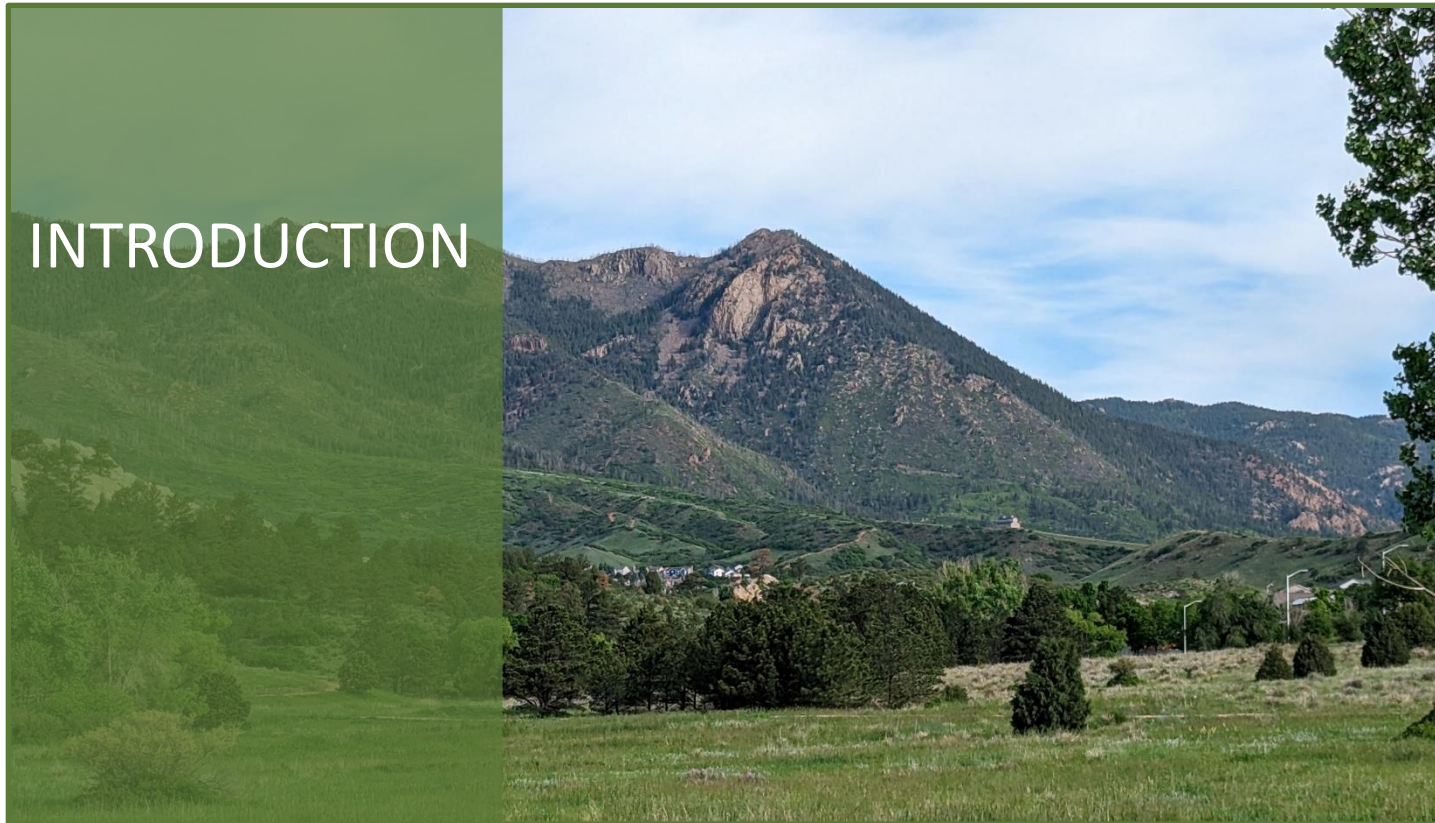












Nestled in the City of Colorado Springs’ northwest foothills, Blodgett Open Space offers diverse foothills ecosystems, year-round flowing water, outstanding views, access to the Pike National Forest, and multiple recreational opportunities.

## Background

The original portion of this regional Open Space was purchased by the City in 2001. Over the decades, additional parcels have been acquired through the City’s Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) program growing it to 384 acres. To cohesively guide enhancement and management, the adjacent portions of the Peregrine and Oak Valley open spaces are included in this Master and Management Plan. Together these properties preserve mountain viewshed, plant and animal habitat, geological and cultural history, and recreational opportunities for Colorado Springs residents and visitors.

Some land parcels included in this plan are protected by up to three conservation easements. The parcels include the Blodgett Open Space parcels in the 2002 master planning process, additional properties acquired through the TOPS program (384 acres), Peregrine Open Space (5.07 acres), Oak Valley Ranch Open Space (9.97 acres) and United States Forest Service (USFS) lands adjacent to these properties. This planning area encompasses 700+ acres. The City-owned properties in combination are referred to as Blodgett Open Space. See the text box on page 3 for the history of land acquisitions.



# Reason for the 2024 Plan

The Blodgett Open Space Master Plan and Management Plan process was initiated by the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department (PRCS) to establish a comprehensive new plan for the long-range enhancement and management of the combined Blodgett Open Space properties. The combination of these plans will guide efforts to enhance and appropriately manage the Open Space over the next 10 to 20 years to meet current and future conservation and recreation needs for the Colorado Springs community and Pikes Peak region.

Throughout this Plan Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department is referred to as "PRCS," Colorado Springs Utilities is referred to as "Utilities," the Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands leadership is referred to as "USFS," Colorado Parks and Wildlife is referred to as "CPW," and the United States Air Force Academy is referred to as "USAFA."

Throughout this Plan the term *illegal trails* includes routes that are non-designated non-sanctioned user-created trails, pre-open space acquisition existing trails, routes created by users unconcerned with sacrificing conservation for convenience, and "social trails."

# Master Plan and Management Plan Organizational Overview

In combination, the Blodgett Open Space Master Plan and Management Plan provide recommendations and guidelines to enhance and manage Blodgett Open Space.

As the departments first master and management plan with adaptive management strategies, this format provides both

- community guidance during creation of the master and management recommendations, and
- flexibility for the department to respond to site-specific changing conditions and community needs over time.

The plans reference and support each other. The Master Plan, created and refined with extensive community and adjacent land manager's input, reflects the desire for balancing wildlife habitat protection and community recreational access; the Master Plan also sets a vision for neighborhood connections, and possible future Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (USFS) connectivity.

The Management Plan's adaptive management strategies outline resource and community conditions, or thresholds, for implementing the master plan recommendations. While many conditions currently require action, other anticipated conditions will benefit from a measured approach as circumstances or conditions and usage evolve over time. The Management Plan also provides flexibility for PRCS to adapt to and address currently unforeseen conditions over the 20-year anticipated life of the plans. The Appendix is a reference for both plans; it contains details pertaining to the property and the planning process.

### Blodgett Open Space Acquisition History

Blodgett Open Space, located on the northwest side of Colorado Springs, consists of multiple parcels acquired by the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) program over the past 20+ years. The entirety of Blodgett Open Space is 384 acres. Blodgett Open Space Study area consists of the following:

**Original Blodgett Open Space (TOPS Funded):** The original Blodgett Open Space was purchased by the City TOPS program in 2001. The parcel consists of 167 acres and has a small network of designated trails, user-created illegal trails, a utility access road, and a designated trailhead along Woodmen Road. The property was master planned in 2003 and has a forest management plan dated 2006.

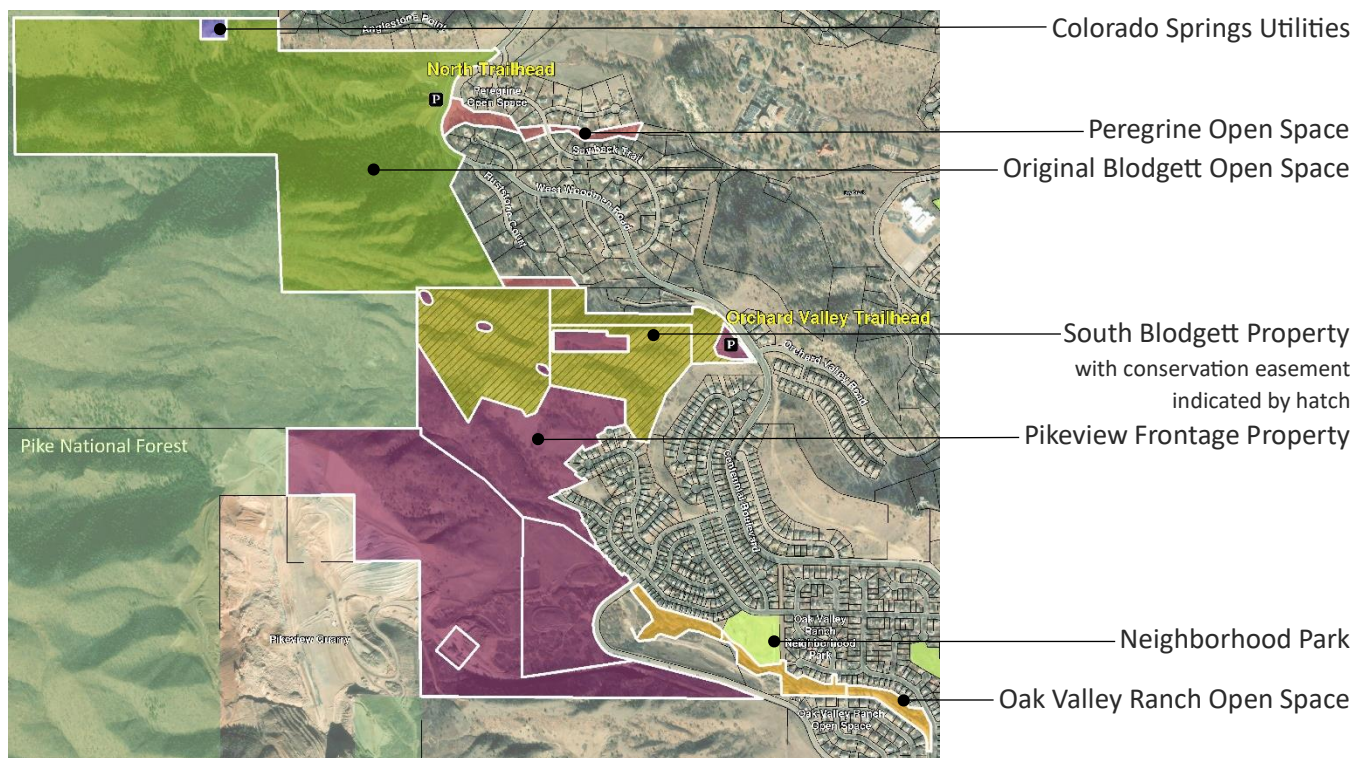
**“South Blodgett” Property (TOPS Funded):** The portion of property, just south of the original open space was acquired by the TOPS program in 2018. The parcel contains 64 acres of open space and includes designed trails mainly on previously constructed gravel access roads, user-created illegal trails, a small gravel trailhead parking lot as well as a private easement for communications infrastructure. The property is encumbered with 3 conservation easements held by El Paso County. The easements conserve the Scenic, Open Space Connection, Trail Connections, Wildlife and Ecological conservation values on the property. An interim use plan was developed in 2019 to open the property to public access prior to this larger master and management plan opportunity.

**“Pikeview” Frontage Property (TOPS Funded):** In 2020 and 2021, the City purchased through the TOPS program an additional 153 acres of open space in two phases. The new parcels are south and contiguous to the Blodgett Open Space and just west of the Oak Valley Neighborhood. The property includes a series of user-created illegal trails, previous disturbance from required stormwater management facilities from the Pikeview Quarry operations and portions of the property are subject to approved, agreed upon, and permitted reclamation requirements by Riverbend Industries; this impact is immediately adjacent to the quarry site and accounts for approximately 31 acres of the open space. This parcel does not include the active reclamation site of the 100-acre Pikeview Quarry.

**Peregrine Open Space (Dedicated to the City):** 5.07 acres of open space just east of the North Blodgett Trailhead on Woodmen Road and Sawback Trail. This small, narrow, elongated parcel has moderately steep slopes with a drainageway, heavy scrub oak and residents in close proximity.

**Oak Valley Ranch Open Space (Dedicated to the City):** 9.97 acres of open space along the North Douglas Creek Corridor and adjacent to Oak Valley Park and White Buffalo Road. The open space has a network of user-created illegal trails and a concrete line drainage way and provides important regional connectivity.

See Appendix H for a larger map





# PLANNING and PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



Consistent with the values and practices of the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and of the Tapis Associates team, public engagement played a central role in the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan. Responses received through the public engagement process guided the decision process and will help ensure the City's ability to successfully implement the Plan. All summary and verbatim responses received through the process may be found in Appendix E.

## Goals of the Public Process and Process Design

The public participation process was designed and conducted to accomplish the following goals:

- To conduct a transparent process that is open, inviting, and comfortable for all;
- To identify and mitigate issues and conflicts;
- To provide a range of options for public participation;
- To create a plan that combines the experience of residents with the technical expertise of City staff and the consultant team;
- To assist in creating informed review and feedback by providing information about the Open Space and conducting a process that encourages community deliberation; and
- To produce a Master and Management Plan that is both responsible and responsive to the community.

## Project Givens

The givens identify those elements of the Master and Management Plans that are not negotiable. They represent the responsibilities of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and provide the parameters for the decisions that will be made through the Blodgett Open Space master planning process.

- The properties will be collectively named and managed as Blodgett Open Space. The South Blodgett, Pikeview Frontage, and westernmost segment of the Peregrine Open Space properties are collectively within the Blodgett Open Space. The other uniquely acquired properties will remain named and signed Peregrine Open Space, Oak Valley Open Space, and Woodmen Valley Open Space for the purposes of this master plan.
- The City’s Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department is legally responsible for design, maintenance, operations, and management of all resources for Blodgett Open Space.
  - The Master and Management Plan must conform to provisions in the City of Colorado Springs Trails, Open Space and Parks Regulations and Ordinance.
  - The Plan must honor conservation easements and utility easements currently in place.
  - The City PRCS Department’s stewardship and recreation decisions will be based on collected data, changing conditions, and industry best management practices.
- All decisions regarding USFS lands are under the jurisdiction of the USFS. The USFS lands - interlocking property boundary and parts of their property including Blodgett Peak – will be considered during this planning process.
- Decisions regarding sensitive and federally protected wildlife management, habitat and protection will be made with guidance from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and US Fish & Wildlife Service, when applicable.
- Many groups and individuals are interested in and encouraged to help create the best possible Master and Management Plans; all voices will be equal in the decision-making process.
- Implementation of the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan will occur as funding allows.
- The recommended Master and Management Plan will be submitted to the TOPS Working Committee for recommendation and to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board for approval.

In support of the planning process, the USDA US Forest Service-Pikes Peak Ranger District established a set of Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan USFS Givens for their property. They represent the responsibilities of the USFS to follow federally mandated procedures for all land related management.

### General

- The USFS has agreed to participate in this effort to work with the City of Colorado Springs for the single purpose of receiving public input on a potential sustainable route to the summit of Blodgett Peak. All other public input not directly associated with this is outside the scope of what the USFS will consider. The USFS has not agreed to implementing such a route. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and further planning would be required in the future for a proposed potential route.



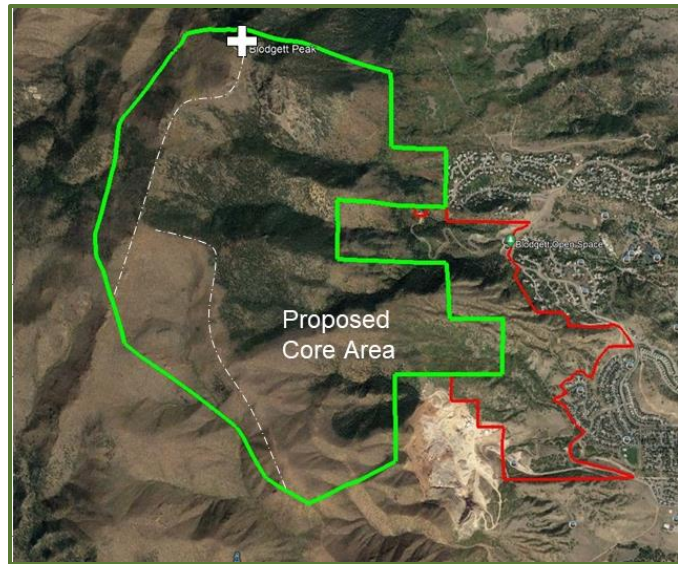
# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- The USFS will need to conduct NEPA analysis, Section 106, US Fish & Wildlife Service Consultation for Threatened and Endangered Species, and any other required compliance required by law on National Forest System Lands.
- The USFS cannot commit resources to performing the above stated compliance within the City’s Blodgett Open Space Master and Management timeframe.
- The Blodgett Peak USFS Trail project is a low priority compared to the Wildfire Crisis Strategy and other higher priority work for at least the next five years, from 2023 through 2028.

### Recreation Use Impacts

- Initiate more discussion regarding accessing potential USFS trails via City of Colorado Springs (CS) lands (those that are only open sunrise to sunset). There are already several well-defined, non-system user-created routes extending from CS lands to the ridgeline and summit of Blodgett Peak. In addition, well-defined non-system routes extend from the summit of Blodgett Peak to Ormes Peak and Forest Service Road 302 and return to the more southern areas of CS lands.
- Establish a geographically defined “core” area for discussion.
- Bighorn Sheep habitat is of highest concern for protection, in consultation with CPW.
- The USFS can only commit to trailheads on National Forest Service lands.
- Proposed trails should avoid riparian areas, limit stream crossings, and minimize soil erosion.
- After eventual trail implementation, non-system routes should be decommissioned.



## Stakeholder Group Roles

The Colorado Springs community participated in creating this Master and Management Plan.

The **community** played a critical role by identifying their hopes for and concerns about the short- and long-term future of this well-loved and well-used Open Space. They also provided valuable guidance as various park elements were considered, options were narrowed, and the final Master and Management Plan came into focus.



PRCS builds relationships with representatives from surrounding neighborhoods prior to the start of any parks property planning process; for the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan, this relationship building is called the **Stakeholder Action Committee** (SAC). The SAC provided an invaluable interface between the community and planning team. Their broad community view is a great benefit to the planning team. Twenty-six representatives from all surrounding HOAs and recreation representatives were invited to be part of the SAC. Not all chose to participate. The team collaborated closely with the Committee made up of representatives from surrounding neighborhood HOAs, Trails and Open Space Coalition, mountain bike representatives, general recreation advocates, Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces, representatives from PRCS TOPS Working Committee and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board, as well as several members of the Planning Team. At key points in the process, the SAC served the following roles:

- Engaged with each other and the planning team on challenging topics;
- Communicated with their constituents to encourage engagement in the process;
- Reviewed and advised the Planning Team on possible Plan approaches based on knowledge gained through the site analysis and community process;
- Reviewed the draft reports, and
- Participated in the community process to create the Master and Management Plan.

The **Resource Experts** provided technical perspectives and were managed by the City. The planning team reviewed the work completed by the experts and incorporated it in the process when it became available. The experts included the City Forester coordinating with CS Fire Department, the City Traffic Engineer, and historic and archeological resource experts retained by the City.

The **Agency Partners** engaged throughout the process and provided valuable input on how they interface with the Open Space. The planning process provided the opportunity to identify common goals, communicate them to the community and gather input to enhance their understanding of community desires. The Agency Partners included representatives from the Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands (USFS); Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW); US Air Force Academy (USAFA); and Colorado Springs Utilities (Utilities).

The **Planning Team** (Team) was comprised of staff from the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and members of the Tapis Associates Team (Consultant Team). The Consultant Team's role included the design and oversight of the community engagement process, providing community support to encourage participation and transparency in the process, and the review and use of results of that process in the Recommended Master and Management Plan. Consultant Team members also coordinated the work of the SAC and Agency Partners. At the project outset, the Team identified the non-negotiable elements of the Master and Management Plan and communicated those through the Project Givens. A critical role of the Consultant Team was the initial assessment of conditions on the Park property; they then used their professional expertise and applied "best practices" in creating possible approaches for the Master and Management Plan for review by the SAC, Agency Partners and the community.

Each role was integral to the success of this planning effort. The time, attention and guidance provided by every single participant is acknowledged and very much appreciated.

# Planning and Public Engagement Process

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan



## Process Steps and Community Responses Overview

The public participation steps described below alternate between conducting technical analysis, guided by the City staff, city hired experts and the consultant team, and gathering the hopes, concerns, interests, and ideas of individuals and groups who care about Blodgett Open Space. Each step informed the next and the focus topics moved from broad to specific.

### Inform

February – June 2023

The consultant team gathered and analyzed information about the property for review by City staff and the SAC and Agency Partners.

In order to provide a range of options for public engagement, the following initial engagement methods were used to solicit the community’s issues of interest and concern about the Open Space. To identify issues and community preferences, five in-person pop up events including one onsite Community Open House were hosted. Simultaneously, the City-hosted project website offered a general survey, community visual preference activity and a GIS-based survey to gather specific ideas and concerns on the property. Online Surveys were open from April 27<sup>th</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>. In all, 761 individual citizens participated representing a varied demographic matrix.





A summary of the General Survey and GIS-based survey responses included

### Preferred Experiences

- Views
- Trail Variety/ Challenging Terrain
- Peaceful/Less Crowded
- Blodgett experience meets my needs
- Proximity to Home
- Access to USFS
- Wildlife Encounters
- Undeveloped/ Natural Landscape
- Hiking/Biking/Trail Running

### Anticipated Opportunities

- Use Areas
- Preserving Natural Character and Pine Forest
- Signage
- New Trailhead Parking
- Additional Biking Trails
- Protect Existing Drainages, Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat
- Paragliding Launch and Landing Sites
- Additional Trails with Varied Challenge Levels
- Additional Trailheads and Parking
- Sustainable Trail to Blodgett Peak, its Ridgeline, Ormes Peak and surrounding neighborhoods

### Respondents Concerns

- User Conflict/ Overcrowding
- Trail and General Maintenance
- Blodgett users traversing private property
- Neighborhood impacts
- Lack of Parking
- Loss of Challenging Trails
- Erosion
- Lack of Enforcement
- Dogs (off leash, waste, conflict of off leash with bikes)
- Uncertainty about Plan recommendations

### General Survey Demographics

- Respondents' visits range from daily to never with most visited twice a week to 3 times per month.
- More than ½ of the respondent's hike to top of Blodgett Peak. Accents range from 2/week to 3-8 /year.
- Respondent age evenly spread 19-65 years with 10% over 66 or under 18.
- Respondents predominately live in 80919 with representation from all regional zip codes.

### Key Engagement Highlights

**761** **Directly Engaged Citizens.** The total number of community members reached included 150 people in-person and 611 individual responses from the online input opportunities.\*

**5** **In-Person Public Events.**

**3** **Project Surveys.** (General, Visual Preferences, Geo-based)





# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

The Visual Preference activity provided photos of 16 possible activities that could be included at Blodgett Open Space. It was available in person and online. By placing red or green dots on the images, participants indicated a preference to include or desire not to include the experiences in the plan. An example of the visual preference board activity, as well as a summary of the results are below.

**Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan**

9 Picnic Areas and Shelters

10 Nature-based Playground

11 Restrooms

12 Habitat Protection

13 Winter Sports Trails

14 Paragliding and Hang-gliding Launch and Landing Sites

15 Visitor / Regional Trail

16 Adaptive Management

**Tell us what you want to see!**

- Place a green sticker on the features you want to see in the open space.
- Place a red sticker on the features you are not interested in seeing in the open space.

**Stay Informed!** 719-799-6662 Blodgett coloradosprings.gov/Blodgett

**Visual Preference Engagement to Date by the Numbers**

**Top five features the community would LIKE to see in the plan**

- Advanced Single-Use Mountain Biking Trails
- Multiseuse Trails
- Advanced Single-Use Hiking Trails
- Paragliding Launch and Landing Sites
- Habitat Protection

**Top feature the community would NOT like to see in the plan**

- Accessible Trails for Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices

**Features with no clear preference (equal yesses and noes)**

- Chairlift Access to Upper Elevations
- Off leash Dog Area
- Visitor/Regional Trailhead/ Interpretative Center

\*Participants (407) were in favor of all other images.

The data gathered from respondents regarding Blodgett Open Space reveals valuable insights about the public's perceptions, preferences, and concerns related to the area. Blodgett Open Space is appreciated for its natural beauty, tranquility, and abundant wildlife, providing visitors with opportunities for various outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, and paragliding. Respondents mentioned that the Open Space allows them to escape urban life and experience the unique terrain it offers.

Along with appreciation, there are concerns about the current use of Blodgett Open Space. The most common concerns include erosion and trail maintenance, conflicts between different user groups (such as hikers, bikers, and paragliders), off-leash dogs, fire safety, and potential impacts on wildlife. Overcrowding and increased traffic are additional worries, particularly with the potential creation of a mountain bike park at Pikeview Quarry.

Regarding improvements, respondents expressed a desire for more sustainable trails, better signage, and access to the summit of Blodgett Peak with marked trails. There were varied opinions on the addition of a mountain bike park and a paragliding launch sites: some citizens viewed them as opportunities to enhance recreational options, while others raised concerns about safety, user conflicts, and potential negative effects on the environment and wildlife.

To enhance connectivity, respondents suggested creating new trails that connect Blodgett Open Space with neighboring trail systems, such as Ute Valley Park, Austin Bluffs Open Space, and the Pike National Forest. The emphasis was on providing diverse trail options for different user groups, including hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

The data also revealed that respondents' frequency of visits to Blodgett Open Space varied, with the most common being "1-3 times per month" and "1-2 times per week." Some respondents visited the area daily, while others mentioned visiting "1-5 times per year." A few respondents expressed interest in visiting more frequently, with frequencies mentioned as "6-8 times per year." However, there were also some who stated that they had never visited the Open Space.

In conclusion, the data reflects the community's strong connection to Blodgett Open Space and its appreciation for the natural amenities it provides. As the area's popularity increases, thoughtful planning and stakeholder involvement will be crucial in preserving its ecological integrity while accommodating the diverse interests of visitors.

**How responses were used:** All pop-up events and survey responses were summarized into a draft list of Master and Management Plan Issues for the planning process. The Planning Topics summary can be found on the following page. This input shaped the two Alternative Concepts presented at the August Community Worksession. Full Responses and results can be found in Appendix E.

# Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan



## Planning Topics: Concerns to be addressed in the Plan

### Access and Parking

Quarry road alignment and disturbance  
Parking overflow to street  
After hours use of parking  
Designated neighborhood access points  
Crosswalk at Woodmen Rd and Orchard Valley Rd  
Dispersed parking/trailheads throughout

### Adjacent Properties

Concerns with traffic/parking, specifically neighbors to south  
USAFA concerns with fence cutting  
Numerous property encroachments  
Build partnerships

### Prohibited Behaviors

Vandalism: signs, fences  
Illegal trail building  
USAFA fence cutting  
Dogs off leash  
Non-compliance of open space rules (dogs off leash bigger issue to south than north)  
Conflict with high-speed bikes and dogs off leash

### Drainage Issues

Peregrine Trail/Dry Creek Trail culverts  
Quarry road drainage issues  
French drain at quarry  
Weed management  
Perennial waterways (three on property) and a seep on the south parcel  
Highly erosive soils

### City Policy

e-bikes  
Leave No Trace  
Adopt-a-Trail  
Encroachments

### Forest Health and Fire Mitigation

City priority area – Tabor 2D Funds phased approach  
wider trails for fire and emergency access (Hummingbird Trail for fire and SAR access)  
Forest health focus on coniferous overstory  
Create natural mosaics in scrub oaks

### Interpretation

Woodmen Sanitorium water works  
Fire and regeneration  
Wildlife Habitat  
Trail etiquette and damaging behaviors  
Quarry history and reclamation  
Conservation of historic sites (cistern)

### Adaptive Management/Maintenance

Closing for muddy trails  
Reroute unsustainable authorized trails

### Recreation Opportunities

Disc golf  
Accessible trails and other facilities  
Nodes for interpretive programs (including track trail programming with Therapeutic Recreation)  
Off leash dog area  
Paragliding launch and landing sites

### Safety

Excessive old, barbed wire  
Removal of old horse barn and shed (condemned condition)

### Trails

Illegal trail building  
Unsustainable trails  
Desire for more technical bike trails - 'Fenceline' or similar to it  
Directional, single use trails, and multiuse – possibly by zone  
Accessible loop – aMTB, Track Chair, OPDMD  
Define accessible  
Trails accessing USFS destinations  
Connectivity to neighborhoods  
Regional Trail connectivity:  
Chamberlain, Parks to Peak  
Self-contained to Open Space boundary trails vs. crossover with USFS  
Replace 'old road trails' with sustainable single track

### Utility Facilities

CS Utilities tank, discharged for maintenance, buried electrical at tank site  
Buffer trails from tank site  
Overhead power line on south parcel – protect from access and fire  
Telecommunications building – not maintained  
Buried waterline across south parcel.

### Vegetation and Habitat

Weed management: myrtle spurge  
Streamside vegetation zone buffer  
Sheep Habitat and lambing areas

## Involve

**April – August 2023**

During the Involve period, the project team met several times with both the SAC and the Agency Partners. The groups continued to meet throughout the remainder of the planning process.

Each SAC meetings began with committee members sharing their constituents' concerns about and opportunities seen for Blodgett Open Space. The project team presented the findings of the site assessment and the initial input gathered from the online surveys and in-person community pop-ups. The SAC added items to the Planning Topics list. Prior to the August Community Workshop, the SAC previewed the presentation and small group exercises. Their input guided the final workshop presentation. Throughout the process, SAC members utilized their networks to invite, encourage and inform constituents of input opportunities and upcoming events.

The Agency Partner meetings began with an agenda to establish decision goals for each meeting. The actual meetings followed a fluid discussion format with each representative sharing their agency perspective on the Blodgett Open Space planning process. The USFS established a set of givens for their property to frame community inputs and expectations. CPW provided valuable information on the Bighorn Sheep habitat and herd that helped shape the plan. Utilities maintains a water tank, access road, underground gas, and electric lines (both buried and overhead). Partners collaborated on workable options to address erosion that could impact tank maintenance, the access to maintain Utilities' facilities and alternatives to overhead electric lines. The USAFA contributed their fire mitigation plan and collaborated with the SAC's paragliding representative to ensure safe air space for all users; almost all of the property lies outside the USAFA's FAA-defined airspace.

**How responses were used:** The input received from the SAC and Agency Partners directly influenced information relayed to the public, the Alternative Concepts and the Draft, Recommended, and Final Master and Management Plans.

## Collaborate

**August – November 2023**

Two public workshops and multiple SAC and Agency Partner meetings were held during the Collaborate period. The SAC and Agency Partner meetings followed a similar pattern as described above. The SAC members continued to invite, encourage and inform constituents of input opportunities and upcoming events through their networks.

The August 22nd Community Workshop was held at Flying W Ranch, also the site of the October session. Attended by about 112 people, the workshop first focused on presenting mapped natural resource and user created non-designated route network information gathered by the Consultant Team. It then moved to providing information gathered from the community to-date in the planning process. The presentation concluded with how the two Alternative Concepts reflected the natural resource data and community input to date. Working in 14 small groups, the participants discussed the two alternative concepts, and indicated their preferences about the Open Space, preservation, wildlife, trails, trailheads, USFS access, and other features. At the end of the evening, each small group reported out their preferences to the larger group. The presentation, material and an online survey were open from September 5<sup>th</sup> to October 9<sup>th</sup>. Full results can be found in Appendix E.



# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

**How responses were used:** The written and map input provided by the 14 small groups and the follow-up online survey responses were collated and analyzed. The responses were used by the consultant team in creating the Draft Master Plan that was presented on October 17, 2023.

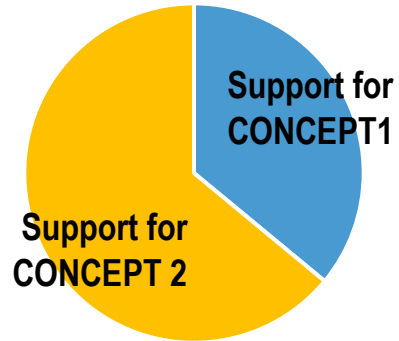
### Summary of the August Community Workshop Responses

#### Highly Preferred Elements and Experiences

- Integrated and contiguous habitat protection areas
- Buffering neighborhoods from open space uses – trails and trailheads
- Wayfinding Signage
- Use Areas
- Trail Hubs
- Paragliding Sites
- Dog run area
- Trails
- Use-Designated Trails
- Uphill bike only
- Downhill bike only
- Hiking only
- Trail Variety/ Challenging Terrain
- Trail Connectivity
- North/South trail options
- Chamberlain Trail higher in BOS
- Surrounding neighborhood connections
- Blodgett Open Space Trail system optimization thru USFS lands
- Sustainable Multi-Use Trail to Blodgett Peak, its ridgeline, Ormes Peak - Access to USFS lands with protections for sheep habitat
- Trailheads
- Expand North and Orchard Valley
- Add Quarry Trailhead

#### Concerns

- User Conflict/ Overcrowding
- Trail and General Maintenance
- Lack of Enforcement
- Dogs off-leash
- Nighttime undesirable activities
- Existing traffic and high speeds on Centennial and Allegheny
- Uncertainty about future USFS access and trail continuity

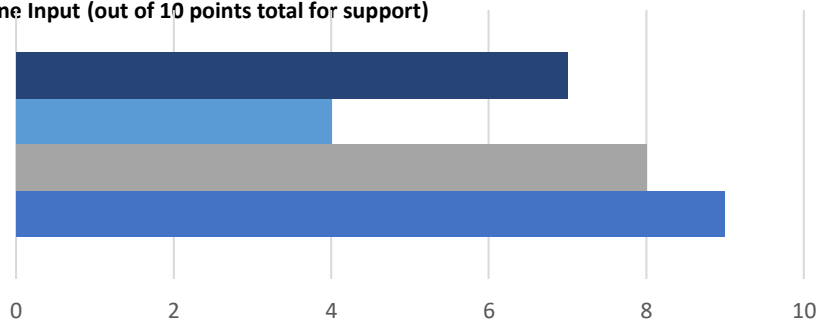


#### USFS Preferences from Event and Online

- **For sustainable systems to the top of Blodgett Peak:**
  - 42 responded yes they would support
  - 11 said no they would not support
  - 16 preferred hiking only
  - 34 Preferred multiuse
- **For stabilizing the current direct route in the drainage just south of Blodgett Peak:**
  - 29 said yes with stone stairs
  - 18 said yes with some reroutes
  - 8 said no
- **For support for limiting system routes accessing Blodgett Peak and the ridgeline to consolidate wildlife habitat to reduce impact on these and all species:**
  - 29 said yes
  - 21 said no
- **For supporting limited access to Blodgett Peak and the Ridgeline for Bighorn Sheep:**
  - 5 said yes at all times
  - 30 said yes during lambing season only
  - 17 said no

#### Trailhead Options Results from Event and Online Input (out of 10 points total for support)

- Average level of support for Expanded North Trailhead A was 7
- Average level of support for Expanded North Trailhead B was 4
- Average level of support for Orchard Valley Trailhead was 8
- Average level of support for New Quarry Trailhead was 9



The Community Workshop to review the Draft Master Plan was held on October 17th with 160 people in attendance. The workshop presentation overviewed the mapped natural resource and user created non-designated route network data, previous community input focusing on the responses from the August community meeting and associated online responses. The presentation concluded with how the Draft Master Plan reflected the natural resource data and community input to-date. Working in 18 small groups of 8-9 people, the participants discussed the draft master plan, connectivity plan, and trailhead plans. Groups recorded what they liked, and their concerns about the plan. They also considered, discussed, and recorded their priorities for implementing the plan. At the end of the evening, each small group reported out their preferences to the larger group. The presentation, material and an online survey were open from October 27<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>. Process participants also submitted responses via the project email; emails submitted directly to City leadership were captured when forwarded to the project team. Full results can be found in Appendix E.

**How responses were used:** The written and map input provided by the 18 small groups and the follow-up email and online survey responses were collated and analyzed. The responses were used by the consultant team in creating the Public Review Master and Management Plan that was posted online on 17 January 2024.

City staff and consultant team members reviewed each community workshop, email, and online response submitted regarding the Draft Plan. Based on responses received, the Draft Plan was amended in the following ways:

- Comments and/or questions received about meaning or intent were clarified, or additional language was added to the Plan. An example is the addition of information regarding Blodgett Open Space as a regional open space and the role regional parks and open spaces serve in the Colorado Springs community. Another example is the revision of language regarding the intent of the hiking only and downhill bike only trails illustrated in the Draft Plan;
- Addition of language citing the City coordination with Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) protected species monitoring. This includes following CPW's recommendations for protecting and enhancing habitat;
- Addition of map on page 28 illustrating the extensive user created non-system route closures and reroutes to create wildlife corridors;
- Recommendation to initiate a public process prior to relocating Orchard Valley Trailhead. The need and thresholds for improvements and expansion will be monitored as the Quarry and North trailheads become available for Open Space users;
- Clarification of the language regarding Orchard Valley Trailhead visitor amenity's location, parking space expansion phasing, and additional public process;
- Addition of Trailhead Management with a focus on security options for the three trailheads;
- Removal of paragliding landing sites in neighborhood parks and nature-based playground;
- Recommendation for additional seasonal staff positions assigned to the Open Space;
- Clarification of PRCS's commitment to include an appropriate public process for conditions not foreseen by the Master and Management Plan;
- Additions/amendments to the Open Space trail system including designating difficulty rating for all proposed trails, adding a hiking trail connection to the USFS illegal "fenceline" trail at the City boundary; addition of hiking only trails to connect North Trailhead to Program Area; and designating a difficult (black rated) trail as part of the hiking only loop;

# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- Addition of a public meeting to “check in “ with process participants as master plan is implemented; and
- Addition of a neighborhood informational meeting to review changes to the plan.

### Summary and Highlights from the October-November Email Input\*

\*Please note that some of the 96 emails were duplicates sent by the same sender with the same content and therefore, were only considered once.

#### Top Themes

- **Security/Crime/Enforcement Issues:** Many are hopeful for security measures to help eliminate some of the issues before more people come to the open space. Respondents would like the City to make this a priority for the plan and provide more detailed information on how they will address these issues that are already happening before making improvements that will attract more people.
- **Quarry Trailhead and Land Purchase:** Most respondents that answered this question were happy that the City bought this land back but would like to see it restored into a wildlife area and not a bike park. Many also feel that too much influence from the biking community and outside developers is shaping this plan.
- **Wildlife:** Most want to keep Blodgett Open Space underdeveloped and would like further studies done on the impact to wildlife before moving forward with changes.
- **The toilet placement at Orchard Valley:** Most respondents expressed displeasure in the location of the toilet in relation to the neighborhoods.
- **Traffic (both vehicle and foot)/Congestion as it relates to increased noise and trash:** Most respondents expressed deep concern over an increase in traffic and congestion a better trail system will attract to Blodgett Open Space and many respondents pressed the importance of the echo chamber in the area and that most activities can be heard over long distances right into their backyards.

#### Common Themes

- **Stop Sign at Woodmen and Orchard Valley/Speeding:** These two elements seem to be related. With some thinking a stop sign would curb speeding behavior and others expressing safety concerns, especially in the winter with a downhill momentum making it hard to stop.
- **Parking:** There is a split between having too much parking that brings worry of increased traffic, crime, and a “paved paradise.” Others voiced concern about overflow parking and that allowing an increase in street parking will bring other unsafe and unmonitored conditions.
- **Designated Hiking Only and Biking Only Trails:** Most expressed excitement about the distinction between biking and hiking only trails instead of multiuse trails that put users in direct conflict with each other.
- **Paragliding:** Respondents expressed great concern for a landing site within the community parks. Reasons varied from turning Blodgett Open Space into a theme park and attracting outsiders to the area to safety and privacy concerns.
- **Blodgett turning into a theme park:** While many support increased or expanded trails, many are worrisome that other features such as the bike park and paragliding elements will turn Blodgett Open Space into an attraction instead of an open space that prioritizes wildlife and conservation.
- **Trail Maintenance:** Many respondents would like to know how the City plans to maintain the trails; expressing concerns about the damage that all users (singling out mountain biking) can do to trails in addition to erosion.
- **Fire Mitigation/Management:** Many respondents would like to see a detailed plan on fire evacuation. There are many fears and concerns from the last Waldo Canyon Fire that have not been addressed and will only increase with more people in the open space.
- **Property Values:** Many expressed the drop in property values if Blodgett Open Space is overdeveloped. Noting that the bigger selling points of their homes and properties were the fact that they back up to undisturbed nature area and that some of the neighborhoods do not allow for fences.



## Summary of the October Community Workshop Responses

### What was liked about the Draft Plan

- **Wildlife considerations** - Consideration of wildlife in trail planning. Wildlife corridors. The plan's prioritization of wildlife and sheep protection. Habitat protection. Protecting the bighorn sheep. Consideration of wildlife interface. Increased area for wildlife. Attempts to conserve wildlife corridors and habitat.
- **Trail Diversity and Design** - Multi-use trails and activities. Hiking only trails. Loop trails. Option of downhill-only bike trail. Chamberlain Trail connectivity. The plan breaks down trail types by usage (Single use, multi-use, etc.). Park to peak trails and interconnectivity.
- **Mountain Biking Considerations** - Dedicated bike trail areas to reduce bike-pedestrian interaction. Uphill and downhill MTB trails. Purpose-built mountain biking trails. Separate biking only trails. Directional mountain bike only trails.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure** - Expansion of quarry trailhead parking. Moving the Orchard Valley parking lot with traffic control at Orchard Valley and Centennial. The new plan expands access to all users. The parking lot for Quarry Trailhead is not directly off Allegheny. Ability to maximize usage in small areas.
- **Community Engagement** - Good public process to include a wide range of input. Ability for the public to give input and see adjustments. Meeting the needs of everyone.
- **Safety and Maintenance** - Trail upkeep and maintenance. Replacing unsustainable trails. Trail mapping system. Reduction of user created illegal trails.
- **Special Use Areas and Additions** - Like the looping trails. Training hill for paragliding. Collaboration with USFS. Add Quarry Trailhead

### Concerns about the Draft Plan

- **Traffic and Parking Concerns:** Increase in neighborhood traffic due to parking lots, congestion at Orchard Valley and Centennial, insufficient parking, concerns with the gate locking system, potential of homeless using the parking lots, concerns about large parking lots not being managed or closed on time, and the proposed idea of using automatic gates and cameras to monitor after-hours usage. Continuation of existing street racing.
- **Environmental and Wildlife Concerns:** Impact on wildlife due to expansion, potential damage caused by hikers and bikers, concerns for local wildlife like bears, mountain lions, wild turkeys, deer, bobcats, and the effect on them.
- **Safety and Security Concerns:** Security issues with current parking lots, potential for parties and loitering, safety and security near the Orchard Valley Trailhead, safety concerns with larger parking lots, concern with unknown problems presented by paragliding and drones, and reports of parties, littering, and racing at Orchard Valley parking.
- **Trail Maintenance and Management:** Erosion control management, preservation of technical and challenging trails, maintaining the character and difficulty of existing trails, the need for better maintenance of current trails, and the creation of a volunteer trail maintenance system.
- **Public Communication and Feedback:** Desire for clear communication from the City, concerns about slow timelines and realistic expectations, and the need for more public integration into the decision-making process.
- **Miscellaneous Concerns:** Impact on neighborhood dynamics, potential accidents on Woodmen Road due to winter weather, preservation of specific trails like the Red Squirrel trail, potential conflicts with paragliders and AFA Gliders, ratios of parking spots to port-a-potties, and potential issues during evacuations for fires. Uncertainty about future USFS access and trail continuity

### The HIGHEST priorities for implementation identified by the small groups were

- Habitat protection and restoration - closing user-created illegal trails, native revegetation, manage noxious weeds, address erosive drainage issues both natural and human caused, utilize decommissioning techniques to encourage native ecosystem regrowth
- Mountain bike area with multi-use/uphill only and downhill only bike routes
- Hiking only loop

### The HIGH priorities for implementation identified by the small groups were

- Quarry Trailhead
- Expand North Trailhead
- Integrated Forest Health and Fire Management
- Decommissioning unsustainable system trails and user-created illegal trails following sustainable trail construction
- Chamberlain Trail and Park to Peak Trail
- Wayfinding signage
- Universally built trails to accommodate otherly mobile individuals and adaptive modalities (examples: hand cycles, trac-chairs)
- Paragliding launch and landing sites
- Possible future USFS partnership: sustainable trails to Blodgett Peak and close illegal trails - continue conversation
- Possible future USFS partnership: trail connection to enhance Blodgett Open Space trail system in interface zone - continue conversation

# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

### Summary and Highlights from the October-November Survey\*

\*The survey was open for 30 days with 599 submissions. Please note that not every respondent answered each question and only the top and most common responses were considered. Roughly 300+ submissions appeared mechanically submitted, did not respond to the survey questions, or contain exact duplicate entries – their authenticity cannot be verified. All are included in Appendix E.

#### We particularly LIKE these things about the draft plan

##### Top Themes

- **No Response:** Most participants skipped this question or expressed various forms that there was nothing they liked about this plan.
- **Designated Hiking Only and Biking Only Trails:** Most expressed excitement about the distinction between biking and hiking only trails instead of multiuse trails that put users in direct conflict with each other.
- **Quarry Trailhead and Land Purchase:** Most respondents that answered this question were happy that the City bought this land back but would like to see it restored into a wildlife area and not a bike park.
- **Wildlife:** Most were happy to see a balance between recreation and wildlife habitat

##### Common Themes -

- **Public Process:** Many thanked the City and the project team for considering their opinion and enjoyed the process for public input thus far.
- **Greater Accessible Recreation Citywide:** Many users are excited to see more opportunities for recreation instead of having to make a longer drive to other open space areas near Colorado Springs.
- **Future Connection to USFS Trails:** Many are hopeful that these will come to fruition with the USFS as part of this plan.
- **Moderate Expansion of Parking:** Respondents were happy and relieved to see a scaled back parking plan.
- **Stop Sign at Orchard Valley:** Many think a stop sign is needed to dampen the speeding and racing along this area.
- **Nature based playground:** Most are in favor of this for their families.
- **Security:** Many are hopeful for increased security measures to help eliminate some of the issues before more people come to the open space.
- **Paragliding:** Many expressed excitement over the possibility of a paragliding landing site.

#### We have the following CONCERNS about the draft plan

##### Top Themes -

- **The toilet placement at Orchard Valley:** Most respondents expressed displeasure in the location of the toilet in relation to the neighborhoods.
- **Traffic (both vehicle and foot)/Congestion as it relates to wildlife and fire evacuation:** Most respondents expressed deep concern over an increase in traffic and congestion this will bring, and impact fire evacuation should there need to be one.
- **No Bike Park:** Many respondents expressed that the City should restore the Quarry but not turn it into a bike park.
- **Too Much Parking:** Many feel the scaled back parking is still too much expressing fears of increased crime and security issues in addition to more traffic in an area that has little oversight or enforcement.
- **Wildlife Conservation:** Many are concerned that more use will further impact the wildlife.

##### Common Themes

- **Public Process:** This was a split topic for many respondents. Many mentioned they are appreciative of the process and the many opportunities there have been for input, while others expressed a need for it to slow down and requested that the City have more input opportunities for residents to voice their concerns.
- **Speeding:** Some respondents expressed concern over speeding and racing in the area due to lack of stop signs present.
- **Not Enough Hiking Only Trails:** Many expressed concerns that the plan is prioritizing biking over hiking and would like to see it be more equitable between the two groups.
- **Not Enough Parking:** Respondents expressed concern that parking might still not be enough to address overflow street parking and several noted instances of accidents or close calls due to this element.
- **Blodgett turning into a "theme park:"** While many support increased or expanded trails, many are worrisome that other features such as the possible future bike park and paragliding elements will turn Blodgett into an attraction instead of an open space that prioritizes wildlife and conservation.
- **Stop Sign at Orchard Valley:** Many respondents expressed safety concerns, especially in the winter with a downhill momentum making it hard to stop.
- **Use of Multiuse Trails:** Many express concerns that these will cause conflict with users and should be avoided.
- **Paragliding:** Respondents expressed great concern for a landing site within the open space. Reasons varied from turning Blodgett into a theme park and attracting outsiders to the area to safety and privacy concerns.

#### The HIGHEST priorities for implementation identified by the survey respondent were

Quarry Trailhead - Expand North Trailhead - 3-way Stop at Orchard Valley - Nature-based Playground - Hiking only loop  
Habitat Protection and Restoration - Integrated Forest Health and Fire Mitigation.



## Empower

## November 2023 – April 2024

Based on the project team’s technical analysis and the community responses received through the process steps described above, the Review Master and Management Plan was shared with the staff and SAC members for review. The SAC, staff and consultant team met to discuss content clarifications and revisions.

The Plan was revised and shared with the community for review and response. The Public Review Master and Management Plan was posted on the project web site from January 17, 2024 to February 18, 2024 so that people could explore the document at their leisure and submit their responses to City staff via an online comment card. The City also hosted a Blodgett Neighborhood Focus Meeting on January 22, 2024 to directly address the adjacent neighbors’ concerns. Seven hundred and sixty-seven (767) responses to the Public Review Plan were received.

**How responses were used:** The written comment card input, the follow-up emails, neighborhood focus meeting responses were collated and analyzed. The responses were used by the consultant team in refining the Proposed Master and Management Plan that was presented to the TOPS Working Committee and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board in March 2024.

City staff and consultant team members reviewed each email, and online response submitted regarding the Public Review Plan. Based on responses received, the Proposed Plan was amended in the following ways:

- Reduced North Trailhead from 51 to 41 parking stalls. Added text “If at any point more than 41 spaces are considered at the North Trailhead, an additional public process will take place; the format will be determined by PRCS leadership;”



# Planning and Public Engagement Process

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- Additional information about the existing conservation easement on the South Blodgett Property.
- Added current Red Squirrel Trail alignment (with some adaptations) to the trail system with a black-rated hiking-only designation. This addition increases the human impact in the northern wildlife corridor, increases the hiking-only trail length from 1.1 miles to 1.5 miles, and decreases the trail closure from 11.8 to 11.4 miles;
- Realigned the bike-only downhill route on the southern edge of the property so it directly returns to the Quarry Trailhead and redesignated the trail along the southern edge of the property to multi-use. This realignment/redesignation decreases the bike-only trails from 2.7 to 2.3 miles and increases the multi-use trails from 9.7 to 10.4 miles;
- Approached wildlife concerns with adaptive management strategies that will implement seasonal trail closures, restricting dogs, close trails, etc. if impacts arise; decommissioning 11.3 miles of unsustainable trails in wildlife corridors to restore open space and habitat areas;
- Changed distribution of signage to concentrate signage at trailheads;
- Added bike racks and lighting to trailhead potential trailhead amenities;
- Moved Integrated Forest Health and Fire Management from medium to High Priority;
- Moved “Remove Derelict Barn and Storage Structures at Orchard Valley Trailhead” from medium to High Priority;
- Added provisions for native plant transplanting and propagation as part of trail construction and habitat restoration;
- Redesignated *rogue* trails to *illegal* trails for consistency with USFS terminology; and
- Added list of projects targeted for completion in the first year after plan approval.

### Summary of the January 22, 2024 Neighborhood Focus Meeting Responses

During the meeting, a presentation was given by Lonna Thelen, Trails, Open Space and Parks Manager and David Deitemeyer, Sr. Landscape Architect about the public engagement and feedback to date, specific neighbor concerns and modifications that were made to the draft plan to reduce those concerns. Attendees were given the opportunity to engage with PRCS staff and the project team following the presentation to ask any additional questions. Some participants wrote comments and left them with the project team.

#### Reoccurring themes from the Neighborhood Focus Meeting (in no particular order)

- No paragliding.
- Concerns regarding native cacti and yucca.
- Nefarious activity in the parking lots.
- Would like to see collaboration with the USFS now to begin planning the trail to Blodgett Peak.
- Concerns regarding light pollution if lights are installed at the trailheads.
- Not advertising neighborhood access points and keeping bikes from riding down neighborhood streets.

## Summary and Highlights from the January - February Public Review Draft Responses

The Public Review Draft report was posted on the project website on 17 January 2024. This was the first opportunity for the public to review the written master and management plan. The Online Comment Card was open from Jan. 17 to Feb. 18, 2024. Six hundred eighty (680) responses were submitted plus an additional 29 emails During this time period. In addition, 17 emails were submitted following the Feb 18 deadline. Roughly 428+submissions appeared mechanically submitted, or contain exact duplicate entries – their authenticity cannot be verified. All are included in Appendix E.. The Online Comment Card asked one question: “After reviewing the Blodgett Open Space Public Review Plan, do you have any considerations that have yet to be addressed?”

### Reoccurring Top Themes

- Bike-only trail concerns: Support for more hiking access and concerns the plan is too bike-focused.
- Hiking-only trails: Desire to expand hiking only trails in the open space, especially in the north area.
- Multi Use Trails - Many expressed concerns that the multi-use trail trails are really being planned for mountain bikers. This will increase the number of biker interactions and create a situation of the current tails in the north portion of the open space being overrun by mountain bikers. Residents are fearful of mountain bikers speeding through the open space, the safety risks, and the less peaceful hikes due to the increase in mountain biking activity.
- Wildlife concerns: The plan will have negative impacts on wildlife and essential habitat. Many expressed they would like Blodgett Open Space to be a “Nature Preserve” for the bighorn sheep in the area as well as the deer, bears, mountain lions and birds.
- Property value concerns: The “over-development” and impacts on property values.
- Law enforcement and maintenance concerns: Want to know if there will be future funding to support security/enforcement as well as maintenance.

### Reoccurring Common Themes

- Traffic concerns: The plan will create increased traffic, congestion, and speeding.
- Trail concerns: Changes to Fenceline Trail and bikers having limited access on the north side due to hiking-only trails.
- Restroom concerns: The bathroom near residential homes at Orchard Valley will negatively impact homeowners.
- Paragliding concerns: expressed toward adding a paragliding landing site, topics: safety, privacy, and concern for insurance rates.
- Trailhead parking capacity concerns: Many emails expressed concerns regarding too much parking being provided at the trailheads. Specifically, there was concern the North Trailhead as proposed is too large, would be an “eye-sore” and is not needed. It was expressed there is sufficient parking along Woodmen Rd. Concerns with potential lighting for security reasons.
- Fire mitigation support: Believe the plan provides proper fire mitigation and evacuation planning.

### New Themes Identified

- Support for the plan and the positive impacts on local recreation and/or the economy.
- Support for the plan, especially the changes to the Orchard Valley parking lot.
- Concern that the master plan and improvements at Blodgett Open Space is a waste of TOPS tax funds.
- Concern that dogs may be restricted to protect wildlife.
- Desire to keep the current alignment and conditions of Red Squirrel Trail for a hiking trail.

City staff and the consultant team provided an informational presentation of the Blodgett Open Space Recommended Master and Management Plan to the Colorado Springs TOPS Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at their March 2024 meetings.. Based on the Committee and Board input, the Master and Management Plan was revised in the following ways:

- Clarified language for additional public process requirements and format;
- Clarified definition for illegal trails; and
- Added permanent closure of system trails to actions requiring additional public process.



## Planning and Public Engagement Process

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

City staff presented the Recommended Master and Management Plan to the TOPS Working Committee and Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at their April 2024 meetings. The presentation included a recap of the changes made to the Plan in response to public engagement, and review of the modifications to the Plan requested at the March Working Committee and Parks Advisory Board meetings.

Following questions from the Working Committee and Board members responded to by City staff and the consultant team, public comments were received from individuals. The Master and Management Plan was approved as presented with the revision:

- Modify the North Trailhead parking spaces from 41 to 51. Revise a public process will take place if parking above 51 spaces at the North Trailhead is required.

Responses gathered during this process step can be found in the TOPS Working Committee minutes for April 3, 2024 at <https://coloradosprings.gov/parks/page/tops-working-committee>. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board minutes for April 11, 2024 can be found at [www.coloradosprings.gov/parks/page/parks-and-recreation-advisory-board](http://www.coloradosprings.gov/parks/page/parks-and-recreation-advisory-board).



# EXISTING CONDITIONS AND SITE ASSESSMENT

Early in the master and management planning process, the team conducted an analysis of existing resource conditions within and adjacent to Blodgett Open Space. The purpose of this analysis was to establish a baseline for the planning process from which infrastructure enhancement and resource management concepts were built.

Existing resource conditions are summarized below and are included in detail in Appendix C.

## Topography

Blodgett Open Space defines the interface between neighborhoods and the mountain front in northwest Colorado Springs. The property is characterized by multiple ridgelines, three main drainages, and multiple dry gullies. Elevations range from about 6,800 feet in the southeast corner to about 8,200 feet at the northwest corner. This dramatic elevation change has a significant influence on vegetation communities, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for trail connectivity.

## Vegetation Communities

Vegetation communities on Blodgett Open Space include the following:

- Mixed conifer forest, dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and Rocky Mountain juniper occurring on north-facing slopes.
- Mixed conifer-scrub/shrub, consisting of pine, fir, and juniper with an understory of Gambel oak, mountain mahogany, and chokecherry.
- Scrub/shrub, dominated by Gambel oak, juniper, mountain mahogany and rabbitbrush on lower elevation and south-facing slopes.
- Mixed grassland of crested wheatgrass, sand dropseed, smooth brome, and blue grama in forest openings and south facing areas.
- Riparian communities along major drainages include cottonwood, oak, sumac, willow and grasses.
- Disturbed or developed areas including a mix of native species, introduced species, and noxious weeds.

Ten state-listed noxious weed species have been identified on the property.

## Drainage and Erosion

Blodgett Open Space is significantly impacted by runoff from the steep slopes impacted by the Waldo Canyon Fire on it and USFS lands. The average gradient of the waterways and drainages ranges from 7 percent to 45 percent. Most drainage areas have sections that are steeper than the average slope of the surrounding land because of erosion.

## Cultural Resources

Blodgett Open Space contains cultural resources associated with the prehistoric and historic contexts of the region, including road and water supply infrastructure associated with the Modern Woodmen Sanatorium in the early twentieth century.

## Wildlife and Habitat

Blodgett Open Space provides habitat to a variety of wildlife species that are typical of the urban-forest transitional zone, including common mammals and over 80 bird species. The property also contains potentially suitable habitat for the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl, and supports nearby habitat for bighorn sheep, which is a sensitive species of interest in the region.

Most of the habitat within the Open Space property has been influenced by previous and current human activity. While key, undisturbed wildlife habitat occurs in patches on nearby USFS land, habitat patches on the Open Space are limited to smaller, scattered areas as a result of existing trails and extensive user-created illegal trails.

### Key Habitat Areas

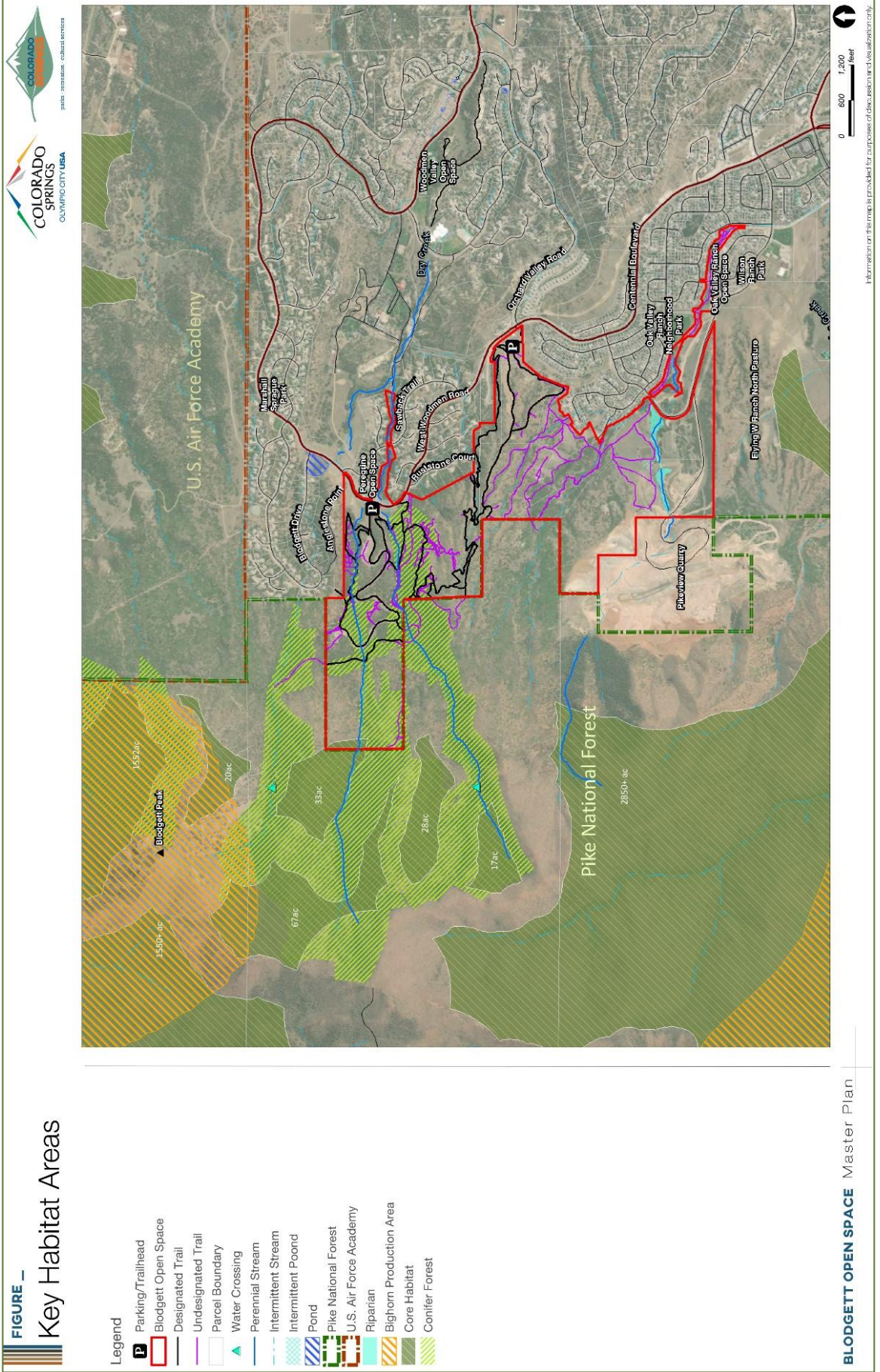
Key habitat types important for wildlife include:

- Riparian habitat – Riparian corridors along the three principal drainages support sensitive vegetation communities that are important for many wildlife species in an otherwise arid environment.
- Mixed conifer forest – The mixed conifer forest communities along the north-facing slopes provide specific habitat for some wildlife species, and serve as a regional island of conifer habitat in the wake of the Waldo Canyon Fire, which burned most of this forest community to the south.
- Waldo Canyon Fire Burn Area – The burn area has transitioned into an early successional shrubland habitat post-fire. This unique habitat type offers improved visibility, habitat trees, perches, and abundant herbaceous vegetation, fostering an environment conducive to the needs of various species.
- Other key habitat types that occur nearby, but off the property to the west includes habitat that supports bighorn sheep production on the rocky slopes around Blodgett Peak, and several patches of unfragmented core habitat on USFS land west of the Open Space.

Protection and enhancement of these habitat types are priorities for the master and management plan recommendations.



See Appendix C for larger map image.







# SITE ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan envisions Blodgett Open Space as an inclusive, regional open space that offers all people the opportunity to experience this unique and beautiful place. The focus is on providing access through a variety of multi-use trails and limited facilities needed to serve them. Parking areas, trailheads and neighborhood connections are located within and at the perimeter of the Open Space. Multi-use trails are planned to accommodate a wide range of abilities and interests, and to offer a variety of experiences that will make multiple visits to Blodgett Open Space worthwhile.

## Commitment to Habitat Protection and Stewardship

The PRCS Department is committed to safeguarding Blodgett Open Space's natural and recreational resources for this and future generations. The Plan emphasizes natural and cultural resource protection and restoration, while accommodating sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities.

The plan offers all people the opportunity to experience this place in harmony with wildlife. The resulting master plan is grounded in the community desire to consolidate and enhance habitat that is currently bisected by numerous user-created and system trails. Throughout the planning process, the commitment to habitat protection and stewardship is evident. Selected specific examples include:

- A public process informed by and grounded in the inventory and assessment of the Open Space's physical, biological, cultural, and political attributes;

- Site enhancement recommendations based on responsible and sustainable practices including: bioswales adjacent to sensitive riparian areas; careful consideration to protect the perennial drainages with sustainably-designed trail access, and context-sensitive adjustments to address parking impacts in the Open Space and surrounding neighborhoods;
- Policy recommendations to protect the natural and cultural resources by continued collaboration with Colorado Springs Police enforcement of existing rules to end after hours activities, illegal uses, campfires, and resource degradation;
- Context-sensitive design recommendations addressing habitat and drainage restoration, and sustainable trails for visitors; and
- Focused management recommendations to guide forest health and synchronize new sustainable trail construction with effective closure of unsustainable trails.

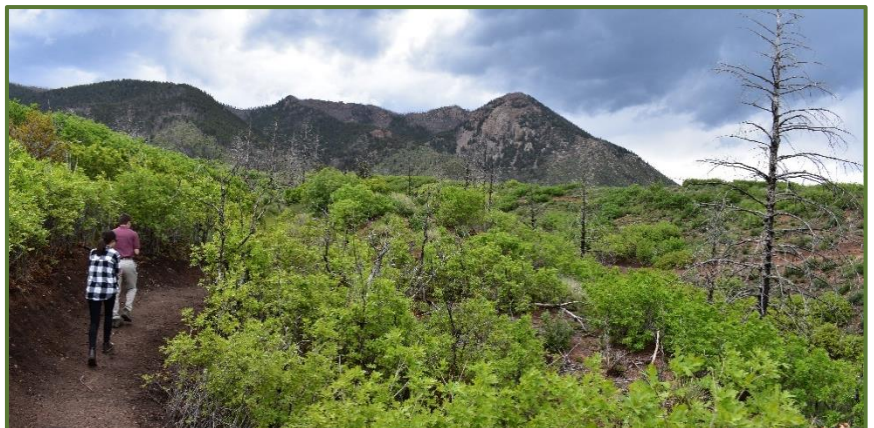
The Master and Management Plan effectively strikes a balance between the need to protect and maintain the Open Space’s natural resource integrity with the need to serve the ever-expanding base of current and future users. Wildlife Corridors are identified for the purposes of managing, maintaining and protecting land, vegetation, water, wildlife habitat, wildlife travel refuges, and/or historic or archeological resources in their natural, scenic or open condition. These corridors of limited human disturbance are described below.

## Trail System

The primary recreational feature at Blodgett Open Space is the non-motorized multi-use trail system. It is the Open Space’s defining and organizing element. The trail system is designed to accommodate concerns and opportunities identified by the public in the master planning process (refer to pages 9-22) and the natural systems discussed in Existing Conditions and Site Assessment.

The trail system aims to preserve the natural qualities of the land while providing varied access through a network of engaging non-motorized trails. The goal is for visitors to stay on the engaging trails and, together, protect the land. With this in mind, the following categories emerged to organize trails into a system that serves the various (and sometimes contradictory) desires of the public while upholding the PRCS Department’s resource protection goals and Leave No Trace principles. The trail system organizing elements descriptions are below; their locations are indicated on the master plan map on page 36.

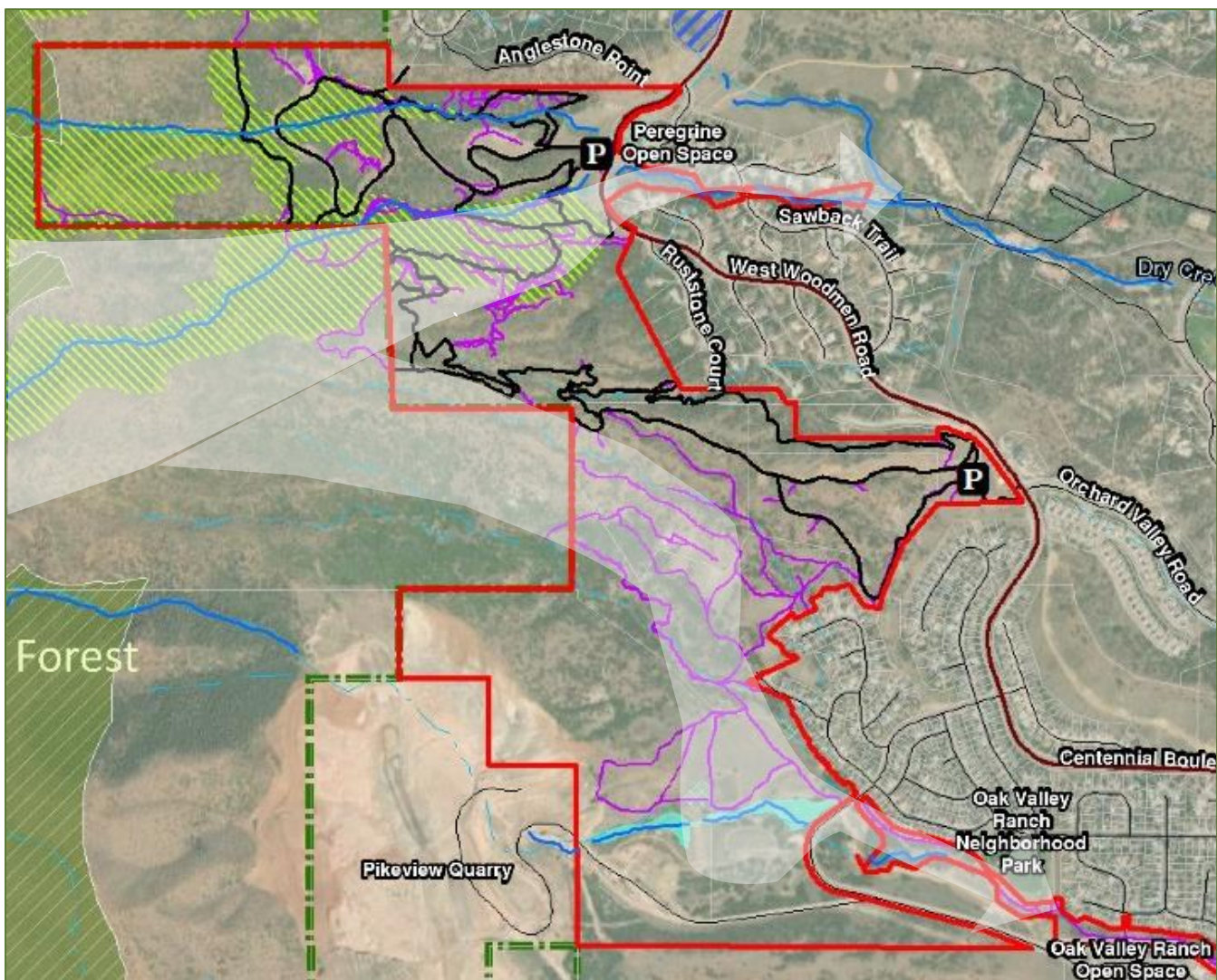
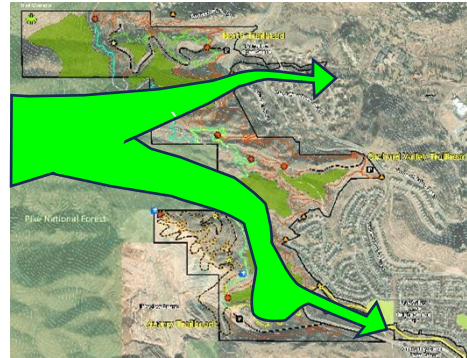
This Blodgett Open Space trail system strives to protect the land and provide engaging experiences for all visitors.





## Wildlife Corridors

This Plan reflects the community's strong commitment to habitat protection by integrating two main wildlife corridors within Blodgett Open Space that connect neighborhood open spaces to USFS lands. The two corridors shape and influence the resource protection and trail system. See enlarged diagram below with the wildlife corridors overlaid on the Key Habitat Area map from page 25. Within the corridors, trail disturbances are minimized by re-aligning existing routes, closure of numerous illegal trails (purple lines), and minimizing trail crossings by both reducing the number of crossings and the length of each crossing (black lines). The northernmost corridor follows a perennial stream corridor with its adjacent north-facing conifer forest connecting into the linear Peregrine Open Space. The more southern corridor connects oak scrubland habitat with riparian areas and the North Douglas Creek corridor.



## Trailheads with Parking

The public master plan process identified three (3) trailheads with parking locations. From the data and input gathered, improving facilities at the two existing trailheads, and an additional trailhead with parking and facilities near the Pikeview Quarry are recommended. Within this plan, the term trailhead will be limited to "trailheads with parking;" neighborhood connections and access points via the regional trail system (without parking facilities) are discussed within the Trail System portions below.

Trailheads are visitors' first experience at the Open Space and should reflect the qualities of Blodgett Open Space and the City's park system while providing facilities to enhance each visitor's experience. All trailhead areas are to be implemented according to environmentally-friendly design principles including the harvesting of stormwater runoff, landscape islands, retaining walls, berms, and native plantings that integrate the trailhead parking areas into the surrounding park context. Parking areas may be paved or un-paved with delineated spaces to maximize parking lot efficiency while minimizing total disturbed area. Each trailhead shall be appropriately designed to include nighttime closure gates, accessible parking, parking lot lighting (as needed), and access to at least one trail designed to meet universally accessible trail standards. Signs and furnishings will conform to City Park standards.

The trailheads are indicated on the Master Plan map and each trailhead's recommended visitor support facilities are indicated in the table below. Trailheads will be implemented and improved in accordance with the accompanying Management Plan. See page 64.

| Trailhead location | parking facilities | restrooms** | waste and recycling | pet waste station | rules of use and trail map | equestrian parking | seating | interpretive signage |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------------|
| North              | 51 spaces          |             |                     |                   |                            |                    |         |                      |
| Trailhead          | + 3H, bike rack    | X           | X                   | X                 | X                          | -                  | X       | X                    |
| Orchard Valley     | 15 spaces*         |             |                     |                   |                            |                    |         |                      |
| Trailhead          | + 1H, bike rack    | X           | X                   | X                 | X                          | X                  | -       | X                    |
| Quarry             | 160-180 spaces     |             |                     |                   |                            |                    |         |                      |
| Trailhead***       | +6H, bike rack     | X           | X                   | X                 | X                          | X                  | X       | X                    |

H indicates handicap parking space where feasible.  
 \* Re-evaluate additional parking facilities at the Orchard Valley Trailhead after the new Quarry Trailhead is in use.  
 \*\* Restrooms may be port-a-let facilities, public full-service restrooms or composting toilet facilities.  
 \*\*\* A gateway trail bridge may be incorporated near the Quarry Trailhead.

### Universally Accessible Trail Design

Universally Accessible Trail design is a different way to think about how you build a trail to allow for special equipment, without changing the character, challenge, and designation. Universally accessible trails consider minimum design standards (outslope, trail width, clearance zone and ride arounds, trail radius, and, off camber). It allows individuals of all abilities to have an opportunity to enjoy the trail. Universally accessible trails provide:

- Inclusion in outdoor recreation for everyone; people with disability, families with strollers, and people with walkers.
- Line choice for differently abled individuals. An example is some adaptive mountain bikers (aMTB) prefer more difficult trails, riders can choose the best route over the technical sections that offer alternative routes or are wide enough to pick lines.
  - Does not mean it needs to be simple. Double black trails can be universally accessible trails.
- A choice of trails. Not all trails need to be universally accessible, some can be narrower, but the goal is to provide alternative routes through the Open Space that are available for all users.
  - The whole trail system wherever possible, something that works for everyone.
  - Look at the trail differently to make it work for everyone.
  - Some spots of the trail need to be considered for the equipment used.

Trackchair program access is slightly different, and would be more traditional green rated wider paths (36-48”), with minimal obstacles. Additional information on universally accessible trail design can be found in Appendix I.

### Neighborhood Connections

The public master plan process identified six designated neighborhood connections. While not considered trailheads, neighborhood connections provide rules of use and trail map signage, and should reflect the qualities of Blodgett Open Space and the City's park system. PRCS may pursue a grade-separated neighborhood connection at Allegheny Drive to provide safer access for visitors and wildlife; this will be in conjunction with City Public Works and Traffic Engineering.

All neighborhood connection areas are to be implemented according to environmentally friendly design principles. Facilities should be selected and tailored to each connection and may include rules of use and trail map signage. Staff will discuss neighborhood access signage with the adjacent HOA representatives prior to installation. Signs and furnishings will conform to PRCS Park System standards. See the map on page 36.

### Wayfinding Nodes

The Blodgett Open Space trail system offers numerous interconnected trails over varied terrain. The system can be challenging to navigate for frequent users and overwhelming for new visitors. For this reason, Wayfinding Nodes are proposed at seven (7) key trail intersections. All Wayfinding Nodes are to be implemented according to environmentally friendly design principles. Facilities should be selected and tailored for each node and at a minimum may include rules of use and trail map signage. Wayfinding signs and benches will conform to PRCS Park System standards. See map on page 36.



## Chamberlain and Park to Peak Regional Trails

Both the Chamberlain and Park to Peak regional trails traverse Blodgett Open Space as identified in the 2014 Colorado Springs Park System Master Plan. This Plan integrates both regional trail corridors within the Open Space's trail system. The Park to Peak Trail is planned to connect Palmer Park to Blodgett Open Space. The Chamberlain Trail is planned to connect Cheyenne Mountain State Park to Blodgett Open Space. Within the Open Space, the Park to Peak Trail between Oak Valley Ranch Park and the Quarry Trailhead will be designed, constructed, and maintained to the PRCS Tier Two Natural Surface Trail standard (eight-foot breeze gravel). All other portions of the Chamberlain and Park to Peak trails within the Open Space will be designed, constructed and maintained to the PRCS Tier Three Natural Surface Trail standard. See map on page 36.

## Sustainable Multi-Use, Single Use and Directional Trails

The concept of **multi-use trails** is strongly supported by the public and a key tenet in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department's philosophy and leadership directive. The Blodgett Open Space trail system will be open to all legitimate user groups. It is important that visitors utilizing multiple mobility modalities (such as hiking, mountain bikes or handcycles) have access to multi-use trails from all trailheads. The appropriateness of a particular trail for a particular use (hiking, running, cycling, equestrian) is dependent on each individual's skill and experience level. Because of this, mandating or designating particular uses on most system trails is not

desirable. To accommodate the varied speeds of some users, designating some downhill bike only and one multi-use (uphill only for bikes) trails has proven a successful strategy in other city properties. The public planning process revealed a community desire for single use trails that will be discussed later in this section.

The proposed trail system provides the opportunity for **loop trails** of varying distances from each trailhead. The loops vary from about a 1/4-mile universally accessible designed loops at two trailheads to a 14-mile loop connecting all trails. The addition of several north/south trails, sustainable traversing trails, and decommissioning of unsustainable system and non-system trails facilitate this improved connectivity.

The master plan process identified the desire for a **hiking-only trail** loop in the northern portion of the property. The single use hiking loop's, easy (green) and challenging (black) sections and can be accessed directly from the expanded North Trailhead. The loop along with all the connecting trails will be signed hiking only.



## Site Enhancement Recommendations

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

The master plan process also identified the desire for varied biking only trails focused on the southern portion of the property where this use has historically occurred along the “fenceline” route. Because of the steep terrain and heavy Open Space use, single-use and directional trails are recommended to minimize user conflicts.



One **multi-use trail that is multi directional for all users except bikes which are only permitted uphill** is designated to access the highest point in the southern property; this trail designation mirrors the existing successful Red Rover Trail in Ute Valley Park. Hikers and equestrians can travel both directions on this trail so all users can enjoy the spectacular view from a knoll midway along this trail. Two downhill-only bike routes are accessed from the top of the multi-use/uphill only for bikes trail. A **downhill flow trail** characterized by intermediate (blue) banked turns and jump options, with ride arounds for novice riders (green), is envisioned south of the multi-use/uphill only for bikes trail. The rock terrain north of the multi-use/uphill only for bikes trail is suitable for a challenging **rock-stabilized downhill trail**; this alignment has the added opportunity for a steeper more challenging (double-black)rock-stabilized alternate route. The deep drainages in the area offer the opportunity for grade-separated crossing to limit trail conflicts adding to the trail experience. Challenging features should be integrated in the downhill routes.

## Trail System Recommendations

The following recommendations, resulting from the public process, reflect how Blodgett Open Space is currently used and will influence the way it is preserved and enjoyed in the future. They include recommendations for preserving habitat areas, creating a sustainable trail system, and coordination with volunteer groups and other agencies. The lines illustrating the trail corridors on the maps are subject to on-site trail design considerations. Based on past experience, it is anticipated that the designed trail lengths may vary slightly based on terrain, slope, and final alignment.

| Trail Type  | Estimated Trail Mileage | Estimated Travel Time                              |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Master Plan Recommended System Trails<br>(excludes roads) | 14.2 miles              |  |
| Multi-use Trails  | 10.4 miles              |  |
| Hiking-only Trails  | 1.5 miles               | travel time at 3-4 miles/hour 30 to 22.5 minutes   |
| Downhill Biking-only Trails                               | 2.3 miles               | travel time at 15-20 miles/hour 9.1 to 6.9 minutes |
| Existing roads to be retained                             | 1.5 roads)              |  |
| Existing system & illegal trails and roads to be closed   | 11.4 miles              |  |

## Trail System Design

- Balance trail difficulty to accommodate a wide range of visitor abilities and recreational interests. Visitor recreation activities vary by individuals' interests, physical capabilities and the intensity of the activity. They range from walkers seeking solitude, to families biking together, to competition-level trail runners, to expert mountain bikers.
- Design the system with the intent to preserve and protect the natural qualities and cultural resources of the land.
- Provide a variety of trail experiences within various loop opportunities.
- Integrate interpretive opportunities.
- Facilitate inclusion and access to the larger regional trail system and recreational opportunities.
- Design trailheads to integrate with the natural Open Space, to consider adjacent houses, to consider community surveillance for safety and security.
- Retain access for natural resource, wildlife and forest management.

## Trail Standards

- Follow well-tested trail construction standards for trail system construction and maintenance until system-wide standards are adopted.
- Adjust existing routes with new trail construction to create clear trail intersections and loop options.
- Continue annual review of potential projects with volunteer groups to identify problem areas and reroutes, and to set priorities.
- Continue monitoring activity impact on park resources in partnership with volunteer groups to identify changes needed to conserve resources.
- Pursue system-wide single-track trail standards in partnership with stakeholders. These standards should consider but not be limited to general intent, design parameters, trail design process, construction details, and trail maintenance.
- Future maintenance solutions should consider the effects of changes on all legitimate park users. Any changes affecting these legitimate uses should be effectively communicated to the public.
- Reduce trail/ access road width to a minimum of 12' on gravel access roads requiring vehicle traffic for emergency access or utility maintenance. The Water Tank access road shall have a 16' feet wide obstruction-free corridor (12' road, 4' wide grass shoulder(s)). Correct drainage concentrations. Remove debris.
- Decommission trail/old roads which no longer require vehicle traffic. Restore roadbed and provide a singletrack option in the corridor identified in the Master Plan.
- All trail signs and structures will conform to PRCS Park System standards. See map on page 36.

## General

- Host a public meeting with process participants of this master planning process to “check in” on progress and to address concerns based on completed improvements. Schedule after many of the improvements and management adjustments have been in place for at least 1-2 years.

Trail system regional connectivity is discussed in the next section.



## Special Use Areas

During the planning process, the community voiced its strong desire to retain the natural undeveloped character of Blodgett Open Space. For this reason, concentrated use is limited. Within the Master Plan these are identified as Special Use Areas. The area descriptions are below; their locations are indicated on the master plan map on page 36.

### Program Area

Nestled in the tall evergreen grove, a program area is envisioned for PRCS Department use. It may have a couple of picnic tables that will be accessible to all Open Space users. The existing vehicular access is ideal for supporting program participants of all abilities including the PRCS Department's OPDMD program participants. This area is just south of the Utilities water tank.

### Paragliding Sites

Two paragliding launch sites and one landing site are identified on the plan. All sites are accessed and located adjacent to multi-use trails. As at other regional sites, these sites have been thoroughly coordinated with the USAFA. The launch sites provide a safe environment for beginner pilots to launch and land within the property. More advanced pilots may launch from the site or other legal launch properties and land on site. Signs and furnishings will conform to PRCS Park System standards. The paragliding sites will be implemented and managed in accordance with the accompanying Management Plan.

### Pre-Hike Dog Run

A pre-hike dog run area, a fenced area is a place where dog owners can let their dog run free to get some energy out before leashing them to take it out on the trails, was supported during the public engagement process. The pre-hike dog area is envisioned to be smaller and anticipated to exhibit less vegetation destruction than a full dog park with a maximum size is anticipated to be 10,000 sf. The pre-hike dog run area recommendation will be postponed with this Plan and may be considered as part of the future planning process with the donation of the reclaimed Pikeview Quarry.

### Nature-Based Playground

A nature-based playground, a play area featuring natural elements that feel integrated with the surrounding landscape, was supported during the public engagement process. The nature-based playground recommendation will be postponed with this Plan and may be considered as part of the future planning process with the donation of the reclaimed Pikeview Quarry.

The City of Colorado Springs has established OPDMD Guidelines that can be found at <https://coloradosprings.gov/document/opdmdguidance-final6-4-20.pdf>. Individuals can apply to use their personal OPDMDs in this and other opens spaces at <https://coloradosprings.gov/document/opdmdnotification-final6-4-20.pdf>. Parks' newly launched Trackchair program will be available in the spring of 2024.

## Special Use Area Recommendations

The following recommendations, resulting from the public process, reflect how Blodgett Open Space is currently used and will influence the way it is preserved and enjoyed in the future.

- Limit facilities at the Program Area to seating via picnic tables and/ or benches. Consider accessibility and ADA improvements that are compatible with the natural area such as crusher fines instead of paving and accessible picnic tables that can be used by visitors when day camps are not in session. Utilize context-sensitive design and construction techniques to protect the tree roots and surrounding vegetation.
- Continue coordination with US Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association as sites are signed and designated. Consider informational/interpretive opportunities for visitors to learn about the sport and a windsock installation at the landing site. Consider an annual review to identify best practices and/or areas of concern.
- Continue monitoring all Special Use Area impacts on park resources in partnership with volunteer groups to identify opportunities or changes needed to conserve resources.



### Wondering about Paragliding? Here's some clarifications...

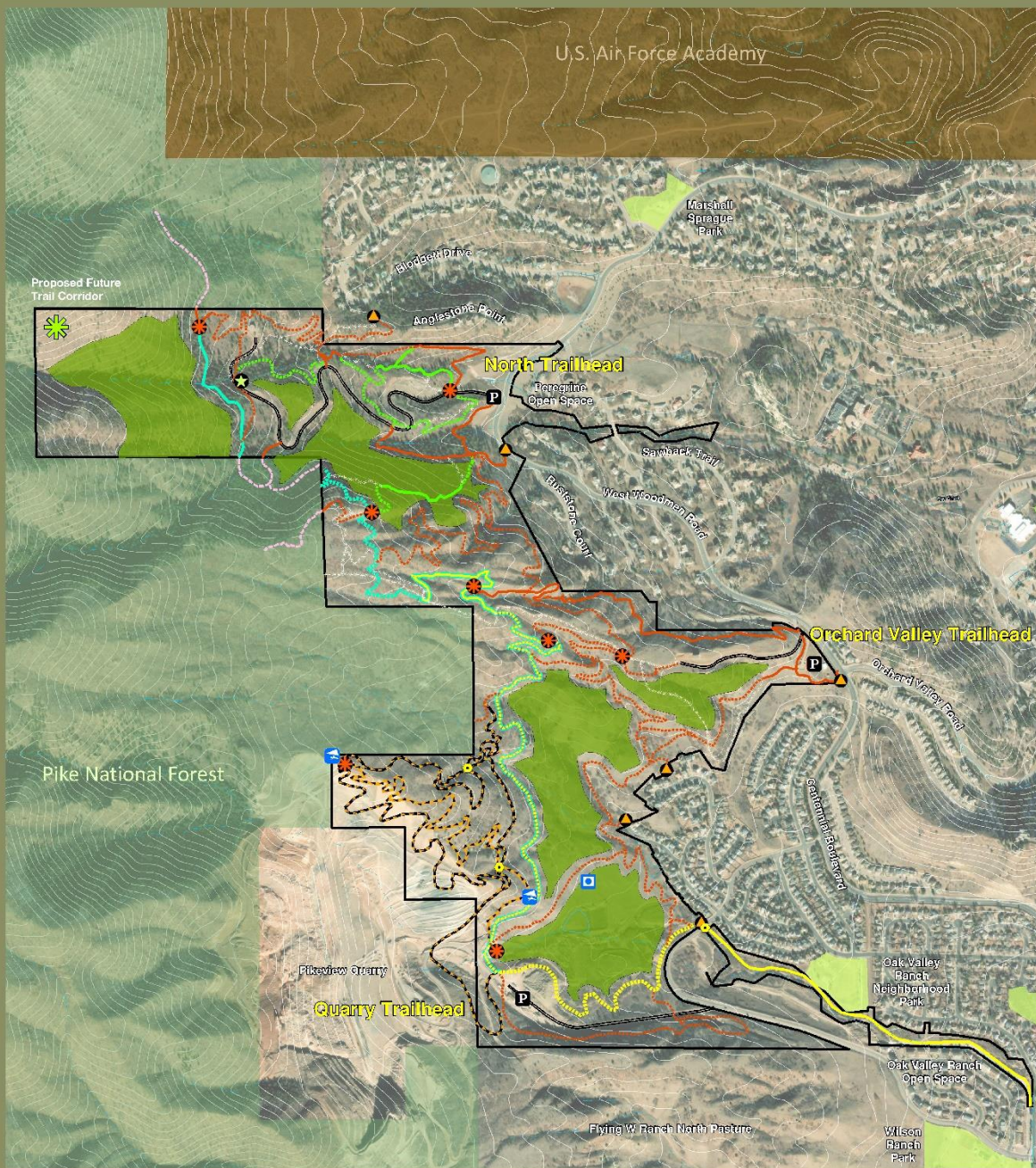
- Paragliders are small fabric wings that fit in a backpack.
- Paragliding aviation is UNPOWERED and will not be a source of noise.
- This form of aviation has minimal impact on the environment.
- Since paraglider pilots fly down, the impact on the environment is generally half that of normal hiking activity.
- Launch, landing and flight considerations are being closely coordinated with the USAFA.
- Due to the limitations of paraglider equipment and related regulations, flying over congested areas is not allowed.
- Paragliders will not be towed up like Air Force Academy gliders.
- Similar to USAFA gliders, most of the opportunities for lift will occur over the mountains and ridgelines.
- Paragliders launching from the higher elevation will thermal up and try to leave the area.
- Flights from the launch a few hundred feet above the landing zone will be restricted to that area due to natural limitations of the wing.
- Paragliders would only be near houses when setting up for landing and they would remain over Open Space.
- Hang Gliders (rigid frame) are not currently being proposed since they require a larger landing zone due to the increased glide ratio.
- Paragliders (soft parachute material) are considered ultralights and follow FAR Part 103 regulations in link below.  
<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-1/subchapter-F/part-103?toc=1>



# Master Plan



See Appendix H for larger map image.



### Legend

- |                        |                          |                                     |   |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Blodgett Open Space    | Special Use Area         | Existing Designated Multi-Use Trail | Proposed Park to Peak Trail                         |
| Neighborhood Park      | Neighborhood Access      | Proposed Multi-Use Trail            | Existing Park to Peak and Chamberlain Trail         |
| Pike National Forest   | Wayfinding Node          | Existing Hiking Only Trail          | Proposed Park to Peak and Chamberlain Trail         |
| U.S. Air Force Academy | Grade Separated Crossing | Proposed Hiking Only Trail          | Cycling Only - Downhill Only, Proposed              |
| Parking/Trailhead      | Paragliding Launch Area  | Existing Chamberlain Trail          | Multi-Use - One Way Uphill Only for Bikes, Proposed |
|                        | Paragliding Landing Area | Proposed Chamberlain Trail          | Access Road   |
|                        | Protected Habitat Area   | Existing Park to Peak Trail         | Designated Trail to be Closed                       |
|                        |                          | User-Created Illegal Trail*         | <b>Note: All illegal trails to be closed</b>        |

\*subject to possible future Forest Service NEPA process

BLODGETT OPEN SPACE Master Plan

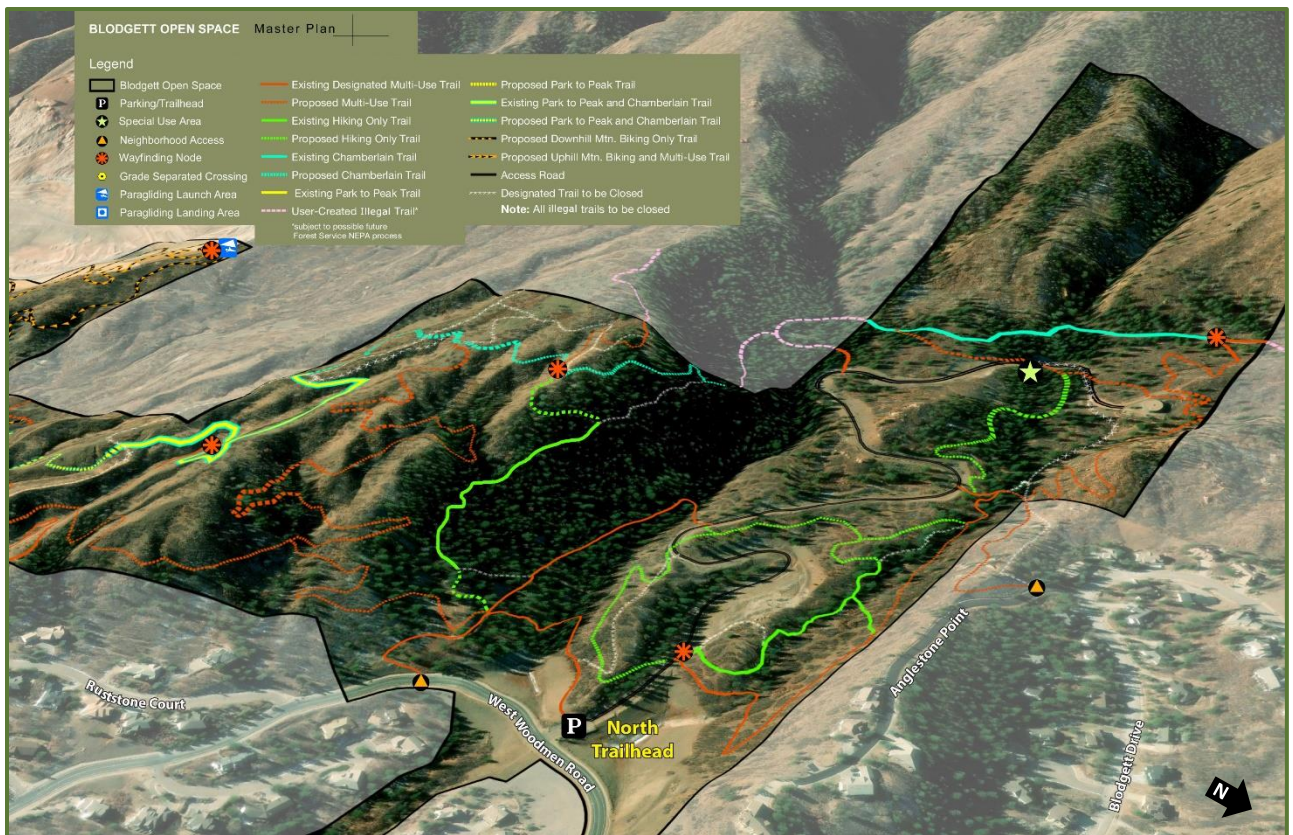
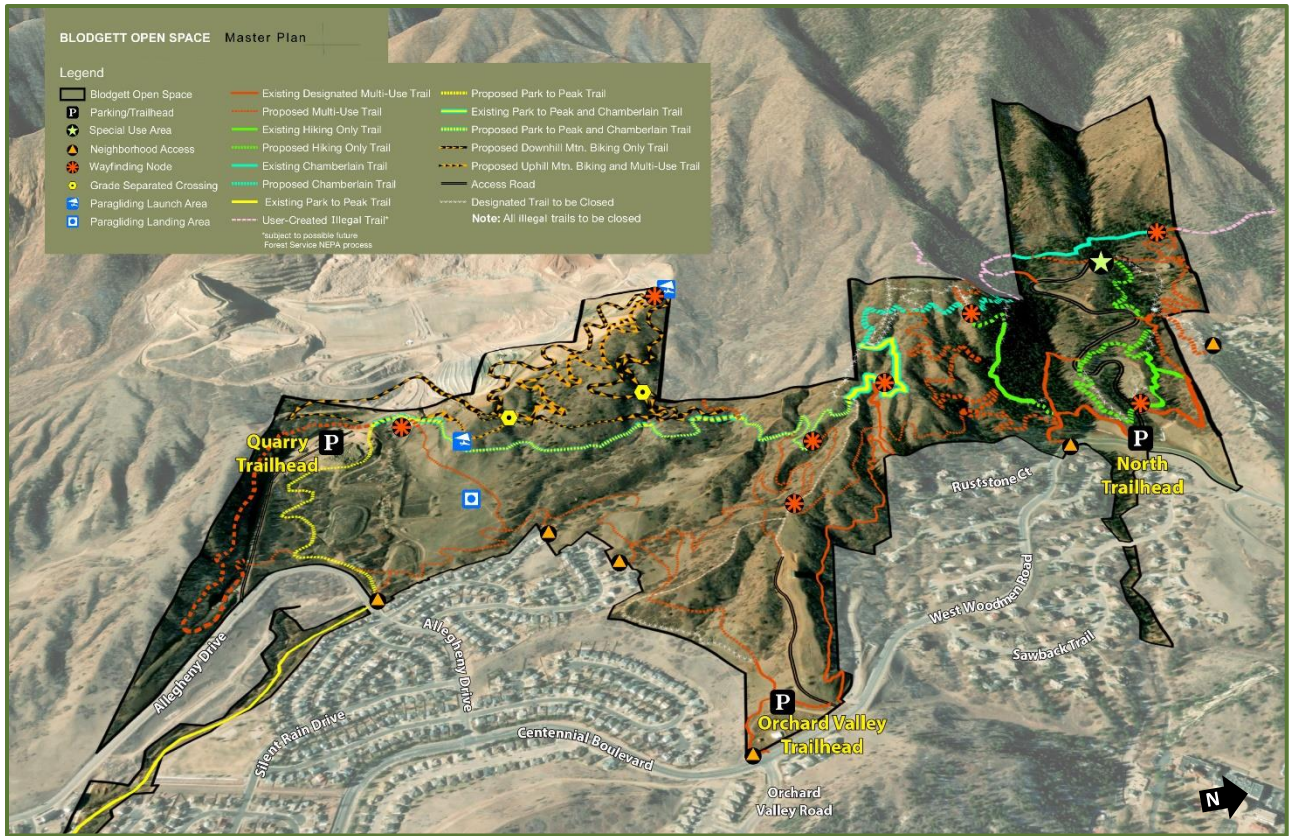


Information is not provided to persons of decision-making authority only





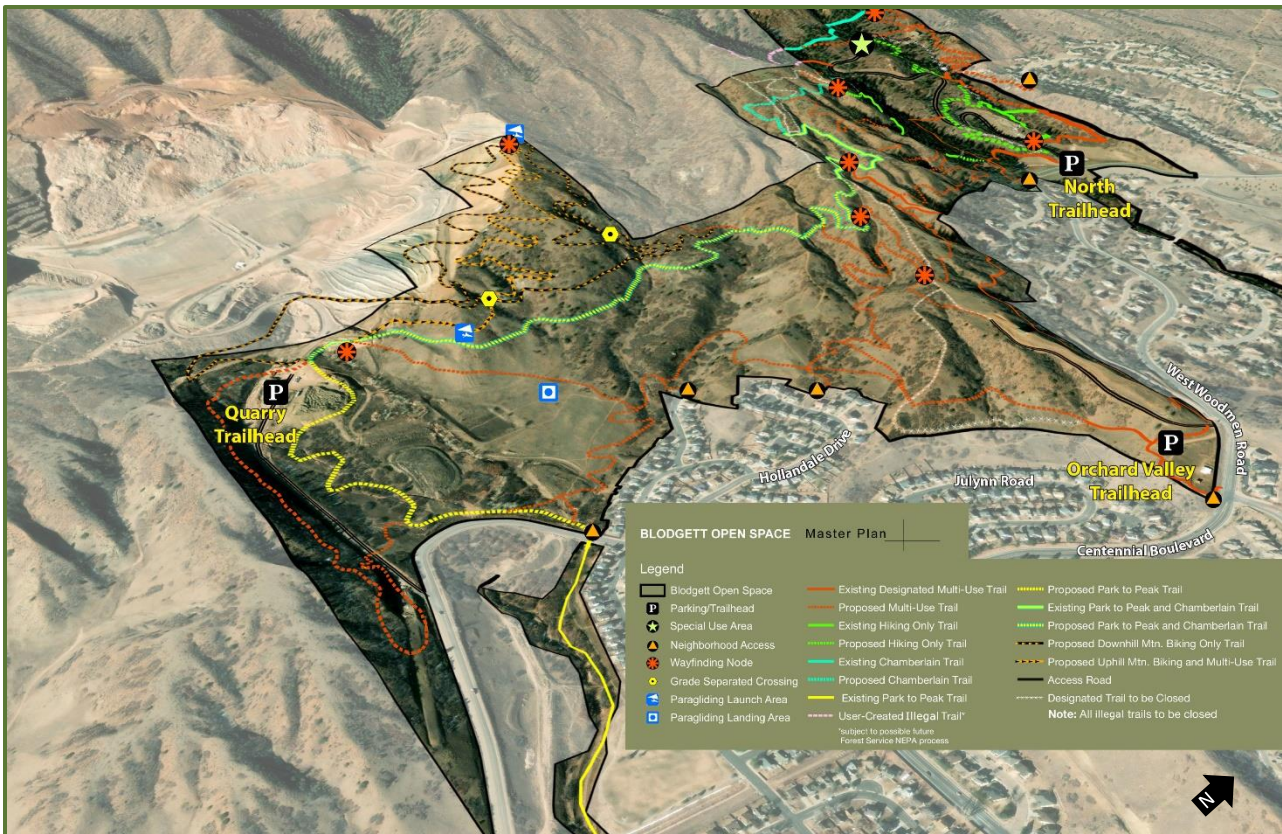
See Appendix H for a larger map images.





# Site Enhancement Recommendations

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan



See Appendix H for a larger map images.





The Regional Connectivity Plan is part of the master plan. It establishes goals for connectivity around the perimeter of Blodgett Open Space. The connectivity descriptions are below; their locations are indicated on the Regional Connectivity Plan map on page 41.

## Connectivity Goals

Along the eastern Open Space boundary are opportunities to promote and enhance neighborhood connectivity to Blodgett Open Space. The Goals of the neighborhood connections are to:

- Provide non-motorized access options to and from Blodgett Open Space
- Incorporate the Park to Peak Trail connecting Palmer Park, Austin Bluffs Open Space, Ute Valley Park and Blodgett Open Space
- Provide off street trail connectivity to the neighborhood elementary and middle schools
- Provide connectivity to other neighborhood parks and open spaces

The western Open Space boundary is primarily shared with the Pike-San Isabel National Forest. The USFS collaborated with the City, as part of this planning process, to shape a community vision for the adjacent forest lands. USFS leadership has been consistent in communicating that any change on USFS land is subject to a possible future USFS NEPA process.

The community vision identified four strategies to:



## Regional Connectivity Recommendations

### Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- Establish a zone directly west of the city property – a USFS Interface Trail Zone - that is envisioned to include multi-use and single-use trails that enhance connectivity and use options in the City’s Open Space. This interlocking interface area is envisioned to reflect the trail quality, variety and density of the city property
- Extend the multi-use Park to Peak Trail to Blodgett Peak
- Consolidate currently interrupted habitat areas by decommissioning illegal unsustainable trails
- Establish a direct and sustainable hiking route to Blodgett Peak

See Appendix H for a larger map image.



## Regional Connectivity Recommendations

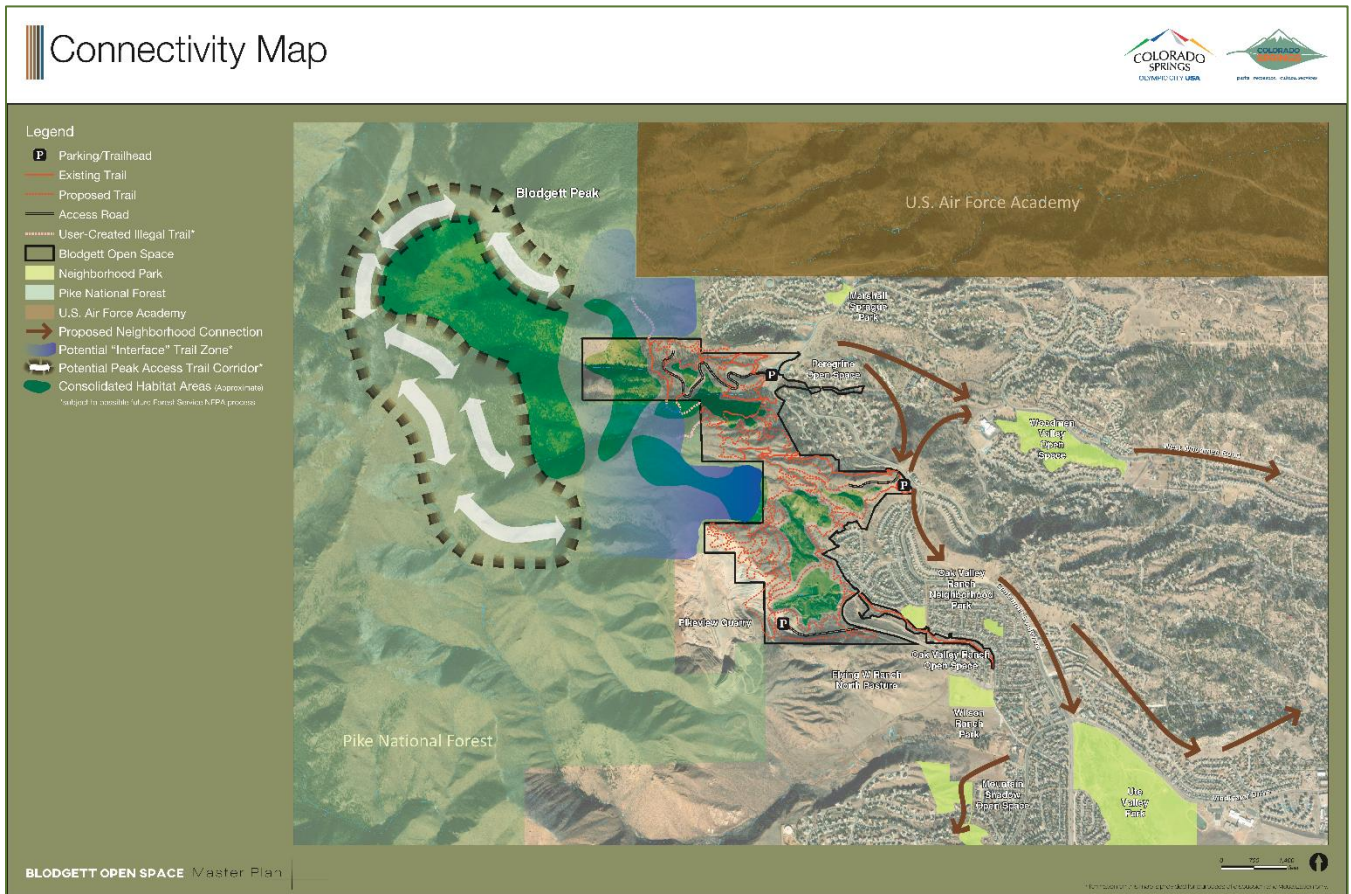
The following recommendations, resulting from the public process, reflect how Blodgett Open Space is currently connected to the surrounding lands and neighborhoods and will influence the way it is connected in the future.

- Pursue partnerships or agreements with the USFS for trail connectivity to enhance the Open Space’s trail system and a sustainable multi-use trail route to Blodgett Peak and consolidating habitat areas. This is designated on the map as the *Potential Interface Trail Zone*. Carefully consider additional commitments regarding the hiking-only route.



- Pursue agreements with private landowners to secure sustainable trail access easements from the eastern edge of the property to neighborhoods, schools, and open space systems. Schools include Woodmen Roberts, Rockrimmon, Foothills, Trailblazer elementary schools; and Eagleview Middle School. Parks and open spaces including Marshall Sprague, Woodmen Valley, Woodstone, Oak Valley Ranch, Wilson Ranch, and Ute Valley parks, and Peregrine, Woodmen Valley, Rockrimmon, Oak Valley Ranch, Mountain Shadows, and South Face open spaces.
- Pursue safe trail connections with City Traffic Engineering to the adjacent on-street bike lanes, existing regional trails and future neighborhood and regional trail connections.
- Pursue safe connections in collaboration with the City of Colorado Springs Traffic Engineering Department to the adjacent on street bike lanes, existing regional trails, future neighborhood and regional trail connections, and trailheads.
- Design and construct the “Chamberlain Trail” and “Park to Peak Connector” trail identified in the 2014 Colorado Springs Park System Master Plan within the corridors identified in the Blodgett Master Plan Map.
- Explore trail connections to North Douglas Creek, Foothills, West Woodmen and Rockrimmon trails.
- Continue coordination with public transportation providers on improved connectivity. Pursue City acquisition of adjacent properties that will be beneficial to protecting and/or enhancing Blodgett Open Space current holdings.

See Appendix H for a larger map image.





# INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Blodgett Open Space contains unique natural and cultural resources. These are opportunities for interpretation, educational programs and research. Most of the historical and archaeological resources in the Open Space are invisible to the general public – an attribute that affords them the greatest level of protection from vandalism and theft. However, there is a rich cultural history of the Open Space that could be better conveyed to the visiting public without endangering individual sites. This can be achieved through the design and installation of interpretive displays.

Regulatory signage, along with most interpretive and wayfinding signage, will be located at the trailheads. Only for unique, site specific conditions will trailside interpretive signs be considered. Wayfinding signage will be located both at the trailheads and designated wayfinding nodes. All signs, trail markers, and furnishings will conform to City Park System standards.

Below are the interpretive, educational, and etiquette ideas and concepts discussed during the planning process.

## Interpretative and Educational Suggestions

- Consider interpretive themes including:
  - Historic Woodmen Sanitorium and waterworks
  - Wildlife and high value habitat areas
  - Ongoing natural resource restoration, forest health and fire mitigation
  - Views
  - Fire and landscape regeneration
  - Plant communities and historic uses of plants (edible, wildlife uses, textile dye, introduced or native)
  - Wildflower identification
  - Invasive weed identification
  - Quarry history and reclamation
- Educate visitors about non-system trail closures. Content may include graphic illustrations, resource values, resource damage caused by foot traffic, and direction to, and advantages of, the designated route.
- Expand interpretive signage and map guides for possible themed trails: history, natural resource management.
- Provide docents and guided hikes.
- Provide park rangers with the dual responsibilities of resource information and rule communication.
- Engage and train volunteers to engage owners regarding leashed dogs.
- Engage volunteers to research and document recent history including owners, their uses of the property, land transactions and their relationship to region's history.

## Wayfinding, Trail Etiquette and Safety Suggestions

- Provide wayfinding signs including trail maps, trail length, distance to key destinations and difficulty level.
- Provide information on Universally Accessible Trail and ADA Trail access.
- Provide information on wildlife encounters.
- Provide educational signage addressing trail etiquette including:
  - Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethic
  - Trail etiquette and yielding right-of-way for passage
  - Dog etiquette, including on-leash and pet waste cleanup and pet waste bag dispensers

## Additional Opportunities

- Consider new and emerging technologies for interactively communicating interpretive and educational information. The advantages of new technologies must be weighed against the reality that total reliance on QR codes and smart phone technology excludes some trail users, thus making printed informational signs necessary.









# MANAGEMENT PLAN INTRODUCTION

The Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan represents the continued commitment by the PRCS Department to simultaneously create the master plan and management plan for their regional open space properties. This joint document improves the resulting plans by capitalizing on the close relationship between the two plans. In addition, this management plan benefits from the public engagement process and the input gathered as part of the master and management planning process.

The Blodgett Open Space Management Plan emphasizes natural and cultural resource protection and restoration while accommodating sustainable recreational and interpretive opportunities. The TOPS conservation mandates cover the entire property. An additional easement, held by El Paso County, mandates specific stewardship on one portion of the property through annual monitoring and reporting of the conservation values; copies of the conservation easement can be found in Appendix D.

Ultimately, the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan aims to protect this regional Open Space for future generations.

### **Mission Statement for Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Division**

Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space is an experienced and diverse team of passionate individuals. We are dedicated to each other in our pursuit to preserve and steward world-class natural resources, enhance the quality of life in the Pikes Peak Region, and provide appropriate recreational opportunities.

Throughout this Plan Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department is referred to as “Parks,” or “PRCS,” Colorado Springs Utilities is referred to as “Utilities,” the Pike-San Isabel National Forest & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands leadership is referred to as “USFS,” Colorado Parks and Wildlife is referred to as “CPW,” and the United States Air Force Academy is referred to as “USAFA.”



## How the Plans Work Together

As part of the 700-acre planning area, Blodgett Open Space is a 384-acre property located in the northwest corner of the City of Colorado Springs. It is owned and managed by the PRCS Department. The department’s Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space Division (RPTOS) will employ adaptive management strategies in some areas following the recommendations of the 2024 Blodgett Open Space Master Plan and the phasing and thresholds set forth herein. Adaptive management is a structured approach to decision making that:

1. Provides the ability to adjust to changing circumstances over time,
2. Builds on existing and enhances formal monitoring networks and processes, and
3. Maximizes opportunities to learn from experience.

Adaptive management is a tool to inform future management decision making. It will not result in policy decisions or substantial changes to the Blodgett Open Space Master Plan. Utilizing adaptive management, strategies can be considered, assessed, evaluated, and adjusted as conditions/use/resources change over time.

**Blodgett Open Space Management Goals**

The following goals were drawn from consistent responses received during the public engagement and planning process. They are intended to serve as guideposts during implementation of the Master and Management Plan.

**Preserve and Protect the Open Space’s Natural Character**

- Maintain the rustic nature
- Preserve the natural beauty
- As good stewards, preserve the Open Space for future generations with sustainable use today

**Manage the Trail System**

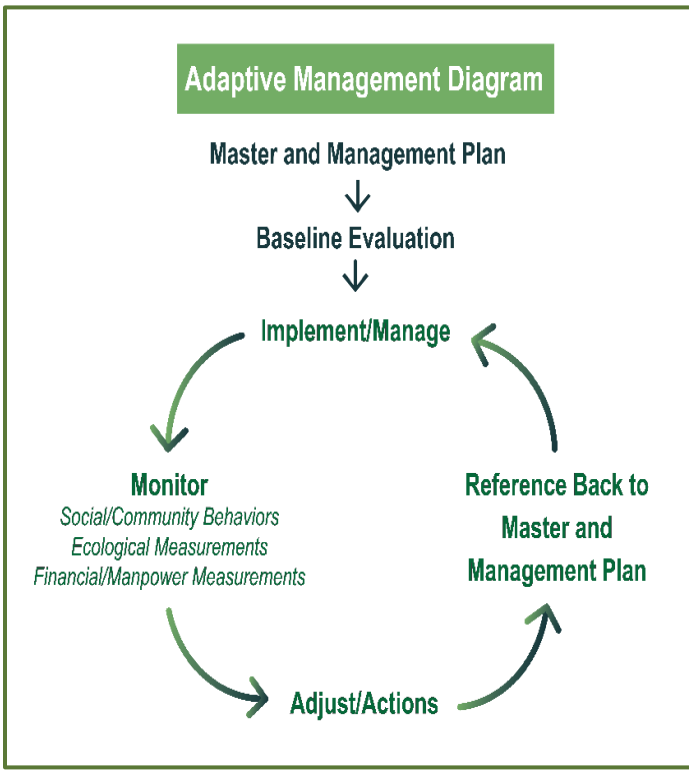
- Establish a well-defined and well-maintained trail system
- Using sustainable design and decision-making principles, establish a trail system that supports current and future recreation
- Meet a variety of users’ needs that promote use and compliance of designated trails
- Connect to the regional trail system
- Pursue connections with the USFS lands
- Plan for appropriate recreational uses that complement the natural environment

**Manage and Sustain the Open Space**

- Implement the Master and Management Plan
- Enhance and implement a monitoring and maintenance plan
- Manage and mitigate erosion throughout the Open Space
- Establish forest restoration and forest health strategies including long-term wildfire mitigation
- Enforce Open Space rules
- Create a safe Open Space where all users can get along
- Anticipate and manage increased use
- Provide adequate parking

**Involve the Public**

- Solicit and value public input
- Support the Open Space with volunteers and partnerships focused on preservation and recreation



This is PRCS's first master and management plan incorporating adaptive management strategies. The plans reference and support each other. The Master Plan, created and refined with extensive community and adjacent land manager's input, reflects the desire for balancing wildlife habitat protection and community recreational access. The Master Plan also sets a vision for neighborhood connections, and possible future USFS connectivity. The Management Plan's adaptive management strategies outline resource and community conditions, or thresholds, for implementing the master plan recommendations. While many conditions currently require action, other anticipated conditions will benefit from a measured approach as circumstances or conditions evolve over time. The Management Plan also provides flexibility for PRCS to adapt to and address currently unforeseen conditions over the 20-year anticipated life of the Plan. The Appendix is a reference for both plans; it contains details pertaining to the property and the planning process.

## Collaboration with the Community

Open space management often includes collaboration with friends, advocacy, and volunteer groups, tribal representatives, research entities, community members and agency partners for assistance in monitoring trail safety issues, maintaining the Open Space, and improving the visitor experience. Strategies may include:

- Collaborating with Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces to build capacity and regional participation. Consider if a naming convention to include Blodgett Open Space may be appropriate.
- Collaborating with the community on rehabilitating and enhancing the habitat areas and sensitive resource areas, and constructing and maintaining Open Space improvements.
- Considering Open Space or individual trail closures when trail conditions exist where visitor use causes trail damage and widening.
- Utilizing fencing to establish and maintain some closures. Locate long sections that extend from natural barrier to natural barrier (stone, topography or dense vegetation). Fencing may be used to block access that is: unsafe (along gullies); unlawful (private property); along well-established illegal trails; in open areas with little topography; and to protect natural and cultural resources.

## Catastrophic or Unpredictable Events

Events can occur that may change the need or appropriateness of a particular trail or recreational activity. Fire, flood and heavy rainfall can dramatically change the landscape's ability to support sustainable recreation. In addition, unpredictable events, such as the return of a nesting raptor or other protected wildlife, can alter the long-term access to or construction of trails in the affected area. Such catastrophic or unpredictable events require Park staff to determine the actions that best protect Blodgett Open Space's natural resources and, if appropriate, provide safe and environmentally-responsible recreational opportunities. Strategies to consider include:

- Create, monitor, and assess an Event Response Plan to protect life, public safety, and resources.
- Implement Plan actions and closures, as needed.
- Communicate with public for education regarding the event, issues, response, and approach moving forward.

Throughout this Plan the term *illegal trails* includes routes that are non-designated non-sanctioned user-created trails, pre-open space acquisition existing trails, routes created by users unconcerned with sacrificing conservation for convenience, and "social trails."





Natural and cultural resources management and stewardship is an ongoing process in Blodgett Open Space, which is well-suited to a management strategy with adaptive strategies. As described in the existing conditions section, there are multiple known and ongoing resource management issues that remain to be addressed, require continued monitoring, or require ongoing vigilance. In the meantime, changing conditions and circumstances will continue to influence resource conditions and challenge our assumptions around balanced stewardship. These changes may stem from drought, flooding, or climactic changes, increased or altered public use patterns, wildfire or pest outbreaks, or changes to nearby or regional land uses. A proactive management strategy that is based on monitoring, evaluation, and pragmatic actions is necessary to adapt to changing conditions while keeping Blodgett Open Space on track toward ecological health. The Plan incorporates the ongoing resource monitoring conducted and recorded annually by RPTOS staff including noxious weed monitoring and mapping, habitat mapping, avian surveys, trail assessments, and forest health assessments.

The following discussions outline management objectives, indicators for monitoring, and ongoing management strategies for several key topics. The objectives, monitoring, and strategies incorporate the ongoing efforts by the RPTOS Staff while enhancing and expanding those efforts throughout the Open Space.

Monitoring programs, designed to track ecosystem and user behavioral changes in response to both stressors and disturbances, use repeated observations of ecosystem attributes. This monitoring program will increase

PRCS's understanding of how interactions - between disturbance including management actions - influence resource conditions (or status) and trending outcomes of recreation, conservation, and restoration actions. This type of monitoring information provides the basis for adaptive management.

## Management Strategies

To facilitate comprehensive resource management, it is recommended that the RPTOS staff create, manage and update a Management Action Plan for the management of Blodgett Open Space. This Action Plan will use the Management Plan goals and recommendations to establish specific actions items with assigned priorities and implementation timelines. The Action Plan will be revisited annually and updated every 5 years.

### Noxious Weed Management

Prioritizing specific non-native and noxious weed management efforts is needed since attempting to control all non-native and noxious weeds on the property can be unrealistic and unsuccessful. A recommended strategy for noxious weed management is to minimize the spread of existing weed infestations and reduce, over time, the extent of noxious weeds on the property. It is important to implement a strategy that includes the following principles:

- (1) promote the health and persistence of desired native or stable nonnative species;
- (2) focus weed control and management on new infestations;
- (3) prioritize efforts based on the State of Colorado's priority species list (A, B, and C); and
- (4) integrate weed management into all ground-disturbing projects.

A successful weed management strategy incorporates annual monitoring (as currently executed) and integration of a variety of tools including:

- Mechanical – Physical removal by mowing, mulching, tilling, prescribed burning, or hand pulling.
- Cultural – Enhancement of the native plant community using fertility management or revegetation.
- Biological – Releasing a weed's natural competitors using insects, grazing animals, or disease.
- Chemical – Strategically killing plants using herbicides in a manner that does not impact non-target species or the native community.

Routine monitoring of weeds is a critical component of a long-term weed management plan, and should focus on existing trails and roads, closed trails or reclaimed sites, and sensitive habitats. Generally, addressing smaller infestations of highly invasive species is recommended rather than larger infestations of species that are easier to control.

Additional design and management principles to prevent noxious weeds include:

- Minimize disturbances beyond what is necessary from trails and facilities.
- Actively restore and revegetate closed trails and unused disturbance sites.
- Wash construction or maintenance equipment before moving from weedy areas to weed-free areas.



## Management Plan Resource Management

### Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- Monitor both new disturbances and restored areas for new weed infestations.
- Implement weed management strategies utilizing departmental priorities.

## Forest Health Management

The overall objective of forest management recommendations presented below is to create and to perpetuate a healthy resilient forest. To create a landscape that is resilient to high severity fire, understory vegetation will be removed in mature conifer stands, and ladder fuels will be reduced across the property. By increasing the vertical and horizontal heterogeneity amongst the vegetation, forest management will create a resilient forest that can adapt in the quickly changing environment of atypical climate patterns.

Additionally, monitoring is recommended to establish a baseline of current conditions and to inform future management decisions. Abiotic and biotic disturbances are static and dynamic, and each event can have varying scale and extent. Forest monitoring of vegetation and stand types is recommended every 4 to 6 years. Empirical evidence of insects, diseases, and other abiotic disturbances should also be monitored. Simple forest monitoring such as fixed plots and variable plots may be used to quantify vegetation trends or changes.

The City intends to improve the natural condition of the Open Space by eliminating invasive plants and noxious weed species, minimizing conifer and scrub oak encroachment, reducing wildfire risks, and promoting regeneration of desirable species while incorporating best management practice for wildlife management and habitat protection and enhancement. Due to steep slopes, erodible soils and limited access across the Open Space area, low impact mechanical equipment (e.g., Ponssee, tracked chipper) and hand thinning (such as chainsaws and brush saws) will be used. Contour felling will be required for soil erosion control, and lop and scatter may be appropriate for soil protection and biomass recycling and for creating or enhancing wildlife habitat. Biomass should be left on site where appropriate for soil horizonation development and increased organic layers.

Overall forest management goals for Blodgett Open Space are described below, while specific implementation tasks are on page 55.

### Gambel Oak

General goals of this forest type will focus on thinning to reduce ladder fuels and mitigate wildfire risks. Forest management recommendations for the Gambel oak vegetation community include the following:

- Thinning will focus on smaller diameter stems, dead or dying stems, or diseased groups.
- Up to 50% of Gambel oak will be cut and either chipped or masticated.
- Thinning will reduce the size of existing groups and will increase the separation from other groups.
- Oak will not be cut on areas that are clearly defined by a cut bank or loose soil.
- Thinning of scrub oak will be prioritized in zones closer to communities or high value infrastructure.
- Treatment will be conducted based on a 5 – 10-year re-entry cycle.

## Ponderosa Pine / Gambel Oak

General goals of this forest type will focus on removal of dwarf mistletoe, conifer and oak encroachment mitigation, ponderosa pine regeneration, and wildfire risk reduction. Forest management recommendations for this vegetation community include the following:

- **Invasive species/noxious weeds:** Removal of moderate to high severity dwarf mistletoe ratings (DMR) will be prioritized. Overstory trees with a DMR greater than or equal to 3 will be targeted for removal as this will affect all future cohorts. Midstory to understory trees with DMR of 2 or greater will also be targeted for removal.
- **Conifer and oak encroachment:** Coniferous species that are encroaching to the area will be removed, unless they are part of an older cohort. Thin from below for trees from 1' in height to 10" diameter at breast height (DBH) is recommended. Gambel oak removal will be prioritized around existing Ponderosa pine to promote regeneration and reduce encroachment. Re-entry for oak brush management will be done on a 3 to 10-year cycle based on the health and moisture levels of the site. Healthy regeneration of ponderosa pine will be kept to promote ponderosa pine stand continuity and to enhance habitat quality for wildlife.
- **Wildfire mitigation:** Thinning will focus on Gambel oak and smaller trees in zones closer to communities or high value infrastructure. If closer zones are treated, priority may shift to oak thinning further away from the communities at risk of high severity fire. Earlier entry return intervals would focus on oak management (5 – 15 years) while later entry return intervals would focus on mixed conifer management (> 15 years).

## Douglas Fir / White Fir

General goals of this forest type will focus on removal of dwarf mistletoe, reducing vertical and horizontal continuity to mitigate wildfire risk, and promoting growth for trees of greater overall health and vigor. Forest management recommendations for the Douglas fir / white fir vegetation community include the following:

- **Invasive species/noxious weeds:** Removal of moderate to high severity DMR will be prioritized. Overstory trees with a DMR greater than or equal to 3 will be targeted for removal as this will affect all future cohorts. Midstory to understory trees with DMR of 2 or greater will also be targeted for removal. Multiple entries may be required to eliminate the infection due to steep slopes, fragile soils and the extent of the infection. A minimum of 3 to 5 years of treatment is recommended.
- **Conifer and oak encroachment:** Fir species that are encroaching to the area will be removed, unless they are part of an older cohort. This will contribute to promoting the growth of other coniferous species that will enhance ecosystem value for wildlife habitat. Thin from below for trees from 1' in height to 10" DBH is recommended. Some larger trees may be removed to focus on the reduction of canopy continuity, but a few dominant trees will be retained for aesthetics. Oak management will focus on the removal of the majority stems per acre as it is encroaching into the fir vegetation type. Douglas-fir and white fir are better at regeneration in these vegetation types and frequent monitoring is recommended in this stand type. Where aspen/cottonwood exists, the coniferous stand will be thinned to create openings for sunlight-filled openings and regeneration opportunities. The soil will be scarified to stimulate sucker sprouting where appropriate.
- **Wildfire mitigation:** Wildfire risk reduction within this vegetation community will focus on understory removal of stems that are smaller than 4 inches, while retaining seedlings of desirable species (e.g., ponderosa pine). Thinning will focus on trees in zones closer to communities or high value infrastructure. If closer zones are treated, priority may shift to thinning further away from the communities at risk of high severity fire. Larger cut trees would be recommended for removal off site to reduce fuel accumulation. Smaller vegetation will be left in areas that are extremely steep with increased areas of exposed soils or decayed granite. Contour felling of larger trees may be left to supplement soil stabilization while achieving the goal of lessened overstory fuel continuity.



### Drainage and Erosion Management

Blodgett Open Space is significantly impacted by runoff from the steep slopes impacted by the Waldo Canyon Fire. The average gradient of the waterways and drainages are steep, ranging from 7 percent to 45 percent. Most drainage areas have sections that are steeper than the average slope of the surrounding land because of erosion. The management objective is to identify areas of erosion and degradation and provide appropriate remedies to protect the resources. Drainage and erosion control shall be evaluated and considered during infrastructure improvements, trail design and when enacting trail closure methods. Erosive and potentially erosive point sources should be evaluated for short- and long-term impacts. Drainage to and from adjacent USFS lands, quarry lands, and neighborhoods should also be evaluated.

#### Drainage and Erosion Management Guidelines

- Evaluate drainages and point source locations and establish solutions – engineer solutions as needed
- Restore degraded drainages
- Improve riparian habitat

Refer to Appendix F: Drainage Observations for additional information.

### Trail Management and Habitat Integrity

See Trails and Recreation Management page 57.

### Sensitive Habitat Protection

Blodgett Open Space contains and supports key habitat elements that are important for vulnerable species and overall ecosystem health. These habitat elements include riparian habitat, and mixed conifer forest, and directly relate to other aspects of this plan including trail system design, illegal trail management, noxious weed management, and forest health management.

Sensitive habitat protection begins with the design and implementation of the proposed trail system. The proposed trail system is designed to minimize new impacts to sensitive habitat areas, while increasing the size and number of undisturbed habitat blocks and the connectivity of habitat within and through the Open Space. Integration of these principles into trail and infrastructure construction and management is important over time as PRCS adapts the master plan to changing circumstances.

With the desired trail system in place, implement open space restoration principles to close user-created illegal trails, restore impacted habitats, manage noxious weeds, and enhance the biodiversity of native species of flora. Ongoing monitoring and management measures will be necessary to ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of these resources. This will include the management of existing and new user created illegal trails, vegetation management measures, and habitat enhancement opportunities.

## Cultural Resource Protection

Blodgett Open Space contains historical and archaeological resources related to the prehistoric period and historical agriculture and development activities. These resources are an important asset for the community and may contribute to our understanding of the natural and cultural history of the region. To the typical visitor, however, these resources and their value are unknown and unseen.

All known significant archaeological sites have already been impacted by modern recreation in the area. Therefore, the best management practice is to preserve sites that are threatened and avoid significant sites during any future ground-disturbing construction activities. Threats to archaeological sites can include looting, dismantling, vandalism, and modern uses such as camping or human waste disposal. While most known sites have already been discovered and disturbed over time, additional protections are still warranted to preserve the integrity of remaining features. These measures could include:

- Minimize direct identification or interpretation of archeological sites and resources. These are best protected in place by being relatively unknown to the general public.
- Plan trails and other visitor facilities to avoid direct impacts to archeological sites, and to avoid impacts resulting from additional exploration and looting.
- Monitor all known sites on a routine basis to identify resource degradation, vandalism, or new opportunities.
- Interpret the history and historical features on the property at the trailhead or other destination that is away from the actual features.

## Cultural Resource Project Planning and Implementation

The implementation of this master plan will include many ground-disturbing projects including trail construction and closures, drainage improvements, and forest management. As these projects are planned and implemented, the following management practices should be considered to minimize impacts to cultural and archaeological resources:

- Future ground-disturbing construction activities should avoid all known features within significant archeological sites.
- Monitor construction in areas known or suspected of containing cultural material, including meadows and areas with high soil deposition, to ensure that projects do not inadvertently damage or destroy previously unidentified features or subsurface cultural material.

It should be noted that without a state or federal nexus (e.g., funding or permitting), future projects will not legally require compliance with the Colorado State Register Act or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (as amended 1966, NHPA). Until the involvement of a state or federal nexus, all cultural resource management is considered due diligence and best practices, and the City is not obligated to complete cultural resource investigations or consultation on project effects with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer.



## Resource Monitoring Indicators

### Indicators

#### Noxious Weed Management

- Continue to survey, monitor and map noxious weed infestations on an annual basis
- Evaluate and track the effectiveness of weed management treatments

#### Forest Health Management

- Measure the percent cover or record presence/absence of noxious weeds and invasive species, and of forest insects and diseases on a bi-annual basis.
- Record the number of species found and the extent of cover to examine against future monitoring efforts within the first year of plan implementation.
- Record oak cover annually as an indicator of past disturbance and to determine encroachment within the tree stands.
- Determine tree community composition as an indicator of diversity and potential forest resilience by inventorying tree species present at the site within the first year of plan implementation.
- Measure Douglas fir and white fir density within the ponderosa pine and conifer stands within the first year of plan implementation, and every 10 years after implementation.
- Determine cone or seed production potential of seed trees to predict long-term regeneration of desirable species within the first 1 to 3 years of plan implementation, and every 5 -10 years after implementation.
- Record seedling density for desirable species to predict short-term regeneration of desirable species every 3 to 5 years.
- Determine the presence of ladder fuels and density of deadwood and other ground fuels, and measure tree density to predict the potential for wildfire spread within the stand and to inform management strategies on an annual basis.

#### Drainage and Erosion Management

- Monitor and evaluate drainages and point source locations and establish solutions – engineer solutions as needed
- Clarify and monitor jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional dams, outfalls, ponds, and outfall infrastructure on the Open Space.

#### Sensitive Habitat Protection

- Identify and track management goals and implementation actions for noxious weeds, forest health, and user created illegal trails within sensitive habitat areas.
- Evaluate and document wetland and riparian composition (native species) and condition on an annual basis
- Collaborate and, when feasible, follow CPW species research to determine partnership opportunities to support CPW initiatives with population, habitat diversity and viability for indicator and special status species.
- Monitor and evaluate changing weather and climate conditions impact on vegetation, soils and sensitive habitat.

#### Cultural Resource Protection

- Evaluate archaeological sites on at least a bi-annual basis for resource degradation or vandalism.

## Resource Management Implementation Action

### Phase 1 Implementation

Create, implement, manage and update the natural resource focused Management Action Plan.

Consider native plant transplanting and/or propagation when implementing open space improvements and habitat restoration.

#### Noxious Weed Management

- Expand and enhance the existing weed management strategy for the property.
- Prioritize weed-control treatments based on species present and overall vegetation management objectives.
- Implement the weed management strategy, including a variety of tools, focused on List A and B species along trails and other disturbed areas.

#### Forest Health Management

- Conduct biannual monitoring of common forest insects and diseases (Mountain Pine Beetle, Western Spruce budworm, and tussock moth infections) and of noxious weeds/invasive species.
- Conduct annual inventories of forest community types to provide current baseline existing conditions. Baseline conditions will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the management actions in the long term.
- Sample soil and biomass layer during the first year of plan implementation within the three vegetation communities to establish baseline conditions.
- Thin oak in zones closer to communities or high value infrastructure within all vegetation community types, except in areas that are clearly defined by a cut bank or loose soil. Thinning will be done to increase separation between vegetation groups and will clear all scrub oak within the dripline of all remaining trees. Up to 50% of scrub oak may be cleared, then chipped or masticated.
- Remove moderate to high severity dwarf mistletoe ratings (DMR) trees within ponderosa pine and Douglas fir/white fir vegetation communities. Overstory trees with a DMR greater than or equal to 3 will be targeted for removal as this will affect all future cohorts. Midstory to understory trees with DMR of 2 or greater will be targeted for removal.
- Remove other noxious weeds and invasive species using herbicide or other treatment methods.
- Remove Douglas fir trees which are at least 1 foot in height and up to 10 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH). Larger trees may be removed to reduce canopy continuity and reduce the risk of wildfire spreading within the stand.
- Within the Dry Creek drainage area, hand select larger and healthier ponderosa pine and Douglas fir trees when thinning to enhance aesthetics and provide drainage protection.
- Where aspen and cottonwood exist, thin the coniferous stand to create openings for sunlight-filled openings and regeneration opportunities. Creating openings and scarifying the soil will also stimulate aspen sucker sprouting and enhance overall stand community composition.
- Expand on previous clone work initiated in 2018.
- Create and present forest health outreach materials every 3 – 5 years and post it on the Open Space website.
- Continue to support the City of Colorado Springs Community Wildfire Protection Plan and communities that participate in the City of Colorado Springs Fire Department Wildfire Ready Plan.

#### Drainage and Erosion Management

- Restore degraded drainages and improve riparian habitat.
- Armor the entire Douglas Creek waterway with riprap in accordance with the 1981 Douglas Creek Drainage Basin Planning Study to stop deep (9') incising. See Appendix F.
- Stabilize the secondary, or southern, waterway that conveys water from a small watershed, approximately 8 acres that includes a portion of the quarry access road as well as the lower quarry office building into a large gully that is an incised channel 2 to 4 feet deep. Upstream of the confluence with the primary channel, sediment from the eroding channel falls and has created a small alluvial fan along the north side of Allegheny Drive out of the flow. See Appendix F.



# Management Plan Resource Management

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

- Determine current status, jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional of the Southern Pond (Quarry Pond 517). Manage and mitigate in accordance with findings and detailed recommendations in the Appendix. Monitor rust and replace corrugated metal pipe (CMP) standpipe risers and 42" CMP outlet pipes. See Appendix F.
- Remove dam structures and embankments that no longer serve the Open Space.
- Perform regular inspections and maintain as needed.

### Sensitive Habitat Protection

- Prioritize resource management strategies (e.g., weed, forest health, and illegal trail management) within sensitive habitat areas.
- Identify long-term opportunities for riparian and wetland habitat enhancement.

### Cultural Resource Protection

- Implement resource protection measures as part of trail planning and construction.
- Establish cultural and historical interpretation themes for the Open Space.

## *Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

### **Phase 2 Implementation**

#### Noxious Weed Management

- Adapt weed management strategies annually based on new or expanded infestations, new disturbances, or lessons learned from initial treatments.

#### Forest Health Management

- Continue biannual (or annual after 10 years) monitoring of common forest insects, diseases, and noxious weeds/invasive species.
- Conduct follow-up inventories of vegetation every 4 to 6 years within the three vegetation community types.
- Examine/analyze the results of the forest insects and diseases, noxious weeds/invasives species, and vegetation inventories against the baseline to inform future management actions.
- Thin oak in remaining zones that are closer to communities or high value infrastructure within all vegetation community types, except in areas that are clearly defined by a cut bank or loose soil. Thinning will be done to increase separation between vegetation groups and will clear all oak within the dripline of all remaining trees. Once treatments have been completed closest to communities or high value infrastructure, thinning will focus on those areas with more limited access, and which are farther from those priority areas. The return interval to thin will range from 3 to 10 years depending on slope, aspect, soils, moisture availability, and other site conditions.
- Remove Douglas fir trees which are at least 1 foot in height and up to 10 inches in DBH. Larger trees may be removed to reduce canopy continuity. The return interval for re-entry will be approximately 15 years.
- Sample soils and biomass layer 10 to 15 years after plan implementation to examine against baseline conditions and to inform future management decisions.

#### Sensitive Habitat Protection

- Once priority issues are addressed, establish strategies for wetland and riparian habitat enhancement.
- Expand resource management actions in sensitive habitats based on success in other parts of the Open Space.
- Evaluate City and CPW wildlife data to determine if additional action would better protect wildlife and wildlife habitat. Actions discussed in this planning process included seasonal or complete prohibition of on- and off-leash dogs, similar to Bluestem Prairie Open Space and most state park areas.
- As data indicates, consider season closures and/or restricting dogs for habitat protection.

#### Cultural Resource Protection

- Implement cultural and historical interpretation themes and infrastructure as part of the overall programming.

## *Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

### **Phase 3 Implementation**

- As data indicates, consider reducing trail density or use for visitor experience enhancement.
- As data indicates, consider restricting public access for habitat protection or visitor experience enhancement.
- As data indicates, consider other strategies for habitat protection or visitor experience enhancement.



Sustainability may be simply defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” A more explicit definition of sustainability is “a condition of existence which enables the present generation of humans and other species to enjoy social wellbeing, a vibrant economy, a healthy environment, and to experience fulfillment, beauty and joy, without compromising the ability of future generations of humans and other species to enjoy the same.”<sup>1</sup>

Land stewards and managers want to be careful that management efforts are monitored over time and do not have unintended consequences on the very things those efforts aim to protect. They can achieve this by:

- Maintaining a high-quality and desirable trail system that provides visitors with the access and experiences that they are seeking, to ensure open space users stay on designated trails;
- Focusing new trail opportunities on existing corridors, reroutes, and rebuilds to reduce or minimize new corridors resulting in additional habitat fragmentation; and
- Minimizing new trails or fragmentation in core habitat and secondary habitat areas.

The following section is intended for use by the PRCS staff to guide long-term and short-term sustainable trail system management decisions.

<sup>1</sup> Arizona Policy Choices, "Sustainability For Arizona, The Issue of Our Age" (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2007).



## Trails and Recreation Planning and Implementation

The implementation of this master plan will include many ground-disturbing projects, including trail construction. Used effectively, adaptive management strategies provide resource managers with the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to changing resource and user conditions. Changes in management actions are based on site-specific resource monitoring and evaluation. The intent of adaptive management strategies is to allow future management actions, as applied through resource management, rules, regulations, and departmental policies and guidelines, to fully incorporate the knowledge and experience gained up to that time from monitoring, evaluation and experimentation.

### Trail System Management

The concept of multi-use trails is supported by the public and is a key tenet in PRCS's philosophy. The majority of Blodgett Open Space trails are recommended to remain multi-use with a slope no more than 1/3 of the existing cross slope with a maximum slope up to 10% - preferably less than 8% - (except for designated challenging trails where slopes may exceed 1/3 of the cross slope) with the proper design to facilitate drainage. Coupled with proper alignment, aspect orientation, grade reversals, and construction techniques, the majority of the trails will be sustainable for generations.

The planning process revealed a strong public desire to retain and create several existing steep and challenging trail segments for the unique trail experiences they provide. In order to balance resource protection with the desire for public access, challenging trails will be sustainably designed with limited impact on the natural and cultural resources. Steep challenging segments will initially require a significant number of stabilization structures and braiding route closure and restoration; the challenging segments also may require continual, ongoing maintenance into the future. Challenging trail segments are included in both the Blue and Black trail categories in the Master Plan.

Blodgett Open Space and surrounding public lands have been affected by multiple user created illegal trails. While these user created illegal trails provide desired access and experiences, they also fragment wildlife habitat, increase erosion, and proliferate noxious weeds. While the "key" habitat areas are off of the property, Blodgett Open Space still contains (and has the potential to expand) multiple smaller blocks of "secondary" undisturbed habitat. These habitat blocks are critical to the health and survival of many wildlife species, ranging from migratory songbirds to large mammals, providing areas where they can persist without recurring human disturbance. Conservation and expansion of these habitat blocks is beneficial to wildlife species, while additional habitat fragmentation will further degrade the quality of wildlife habitat.

The proposed master plan includes a total of about 14.2 miles of designated sustainable trails within the Open Space. Compared to current conditions, this would be a net reduction in total trail mileage by 22.6% or 4-miles. Currently there are about 17.7 miles of designated and known user-created illegal trails. Specific tools to manage, close, and reclaim user created illegal trails are included in Appendix G.

## Special Use Area Management

The planning process confirmed the public desire for several special use areas. They included

- Program Area for City youth and OPDMD programming, and
- Paragliding Launch and landing sites.

Special Use areas establish areas and minimal facilities to support unique and legitimate activities. The design recommendations for these limited areas are included in the Master Plan. The management desire for limiting resource impact is shared with the goals for trail disturbance. A few specific monitoring and management implementation actions are identified.

## Trails and Recreation Monitoring Indicators

| Indicators   |
|--|
| <p>Trail and Land Health – Continue and enhance monitoring and assessment of the following indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trail Corridor and Trail Tread – width and height</li> <li>▪ Erosion in the Tread – depth, width and length of erosive incised channels, concentrated flows off tread</li> <li>▪ Trail Structure – condition</li> <li>▪ Erosion/Resource Damage Associated with Roads - depth, width and length of erosive incised channels, concentrated flows off road</li> <li>▪ User-Created Illegal Trails – monitor and map user-created routes on an annual basis. Update user-created route mapping on an ongoing basis based on site observations, monitor illegal trail closures regularly (at least twice per month) in the first year after closure or until revegetation occurs, monitor emergence of illegal routes, success of closure methodologies</li> <li>▪ Corridor Vegetation Composition – vigor and structure in the trail corridor vegetation, encroachment, concentrations of invasive species</li> <li>▪ Riparian – stable crossing, if applicable quantitatively measure water quality</li> <li>▪ Natural resource impacts such as wildfire, flood and/or major erosion events</li> <li>▪ Consider the use of trail counters when the information will contribute to maintenance and management decisions</li> <li>▪ Monitor and evaluate changing weather and climate conditions’ impact on vegetation, soils and sustainable trail surfaces</li> </ul> <p>Recreation and Visitor Experience - indicators to monitor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visitor reported incidents and conditions - including reported trail conflict incidences</li> <li>▪ Adjacent Neighbor complaints</li> <li>▪ Search and Rescue Incidents – number and location</li> <li>▪ Wildlife Encounters – number and location by species</li> <li>▪ Resource Damage Associated with Recreational Special Use Areas – track and document area of vegetation disruption, number of visitor uses, length of erosive incised channels, impacts to surrounding areas</li> <li>▪ Compliance –visitor adherence to temporary Open Space and/or individual trail closures, pet owner adherence to leash and waste, track and document visitor reports, complaints, and anecdotal accounts regarding user-created route use and overall trail system effectiveness, collect qualitative and quantitative impact measurements</li> </ul> |



## Trails and Recreation Management Implementation Action

While implementing and managing the trail network approved in the Master Plan, adopting the recommended considerations will lead to sustainable trail system decisions. This section anticipates full implementation of the Master Plan recommendations, contains management recommendations and where applicable adaptive management thresholds for phasing and/or anticipated changing conditions.

### Phase 1 Implementation

- Pursue construction of new trails or trail re-routes only when the associated intentional trail closure workforce and resource commitment is in place and closure/restoration work is scheduled. This will avoid extensive resource disruption and the construction of new trails (resource disruption) without the associated resource restoration. When rerouting trails, new routes should be open prior to closures to enhance compliance.
- Consider native plant transplanting and/or propagation when implementing open space improvements and habitat restoration.
- Prioritize closures, reroutes and trail stabilization on system and user created illegal trails crossing high value habitat areas mapped as part of this Master Plan. Close all trails (illegal or otherwise) not in the approved trail system.
- Rename trails and consolidate intersections to create an understandable trail naming protocol prior to installing wayfinding signage and maps.
- Coordinate with Utilities regarding existing utilities, infrastructure locates, access roads and future modifications to utilities. See Appendix J.
- Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations.
- Create Park system-wide trail design, closure, and maintenance standards. Include standards for universal design. Until Park system trail standards are approved, utilize trail standards set forth in Appendix G.
- Wayfinding Nodes: Construct trail wayfinding nodes as indicated in the Master Plan. Monitor and maintain signage and seating options. Optimally, trail maps should contain a "you are here" notation, trail names and the trail etiquette triangle; node signs may possibly include additional etiquette notation. Consider additional wayfinding nodes as needed.
- Special Use Area: Construct facilities for Program Area and Paragliding Launch and Landing sites. Coordinate paragliding sites and signage with USAFA and paragliding representatives. Launch and landing sites will be sized to accommodate one pilot at a time. A windsock will be considered at the landing site.
- Resolve overhead electric line location/burial/removal with Utilities. See Appendix J.
- Temporarily close and enforce Open Space or individual trail closures when trail conditions are such that visitor use causes damage and widening to the trails (wet, muddy, etc.). Include information at closures telling visitors of other locations or trail options.
- During and after system completion, observe and monitor user-created illegal trail creation. Consider options for closure.
- Continue to work with Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) to enforce and ticket violators of Open Space rules.

### *Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

**Phase 2 Implementation**

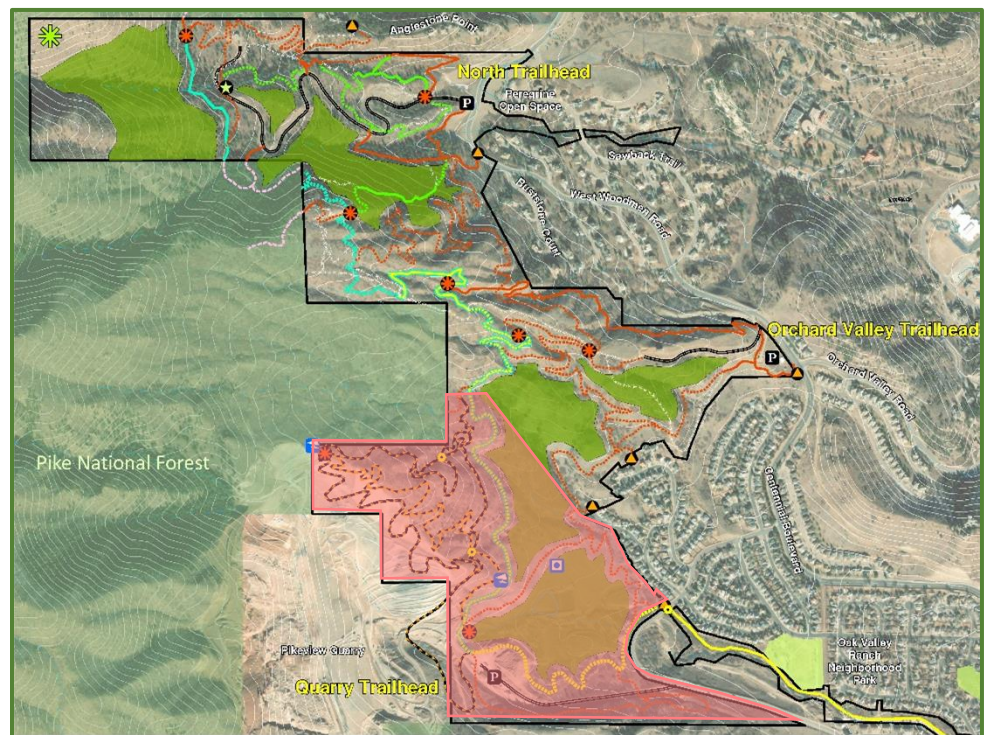
- During and after system completion, observe and monitor visitor patterns, trail congestion, (both indicated by trail widening and tread wear) and special use areas. Adapt trail and area maintenance requirements to changing use patterns, weather and climate influences.
- If legal trails on USFS lands are considered, participate in the USFS trail design to enhance the City Open Space trail system. Concept designs explored in August 2023 illustrate potential cross-boundary trail alignments – see Appendix E. The City will participate in the USFS NEPA public process and is not required by this management plan to host a separate public process.
- During and after system completion, observe and monitor illegal trail creation. Consider options for closure. Monitor and aggressively close and reclaim user created illegal trails and illegally constructed trails that are not intended to be part of the trail system. Monitor trail closures for effectiveness and violations, and modify tools as needed. Educate visitors about the reason for closures and their importance to protect wildlife habitat.
- Temporarily close and enforce Open Space or individual trail closures when trail conditions are such that visitor use causes damage and widening to the trails (wet, muddy, etc.). Include information at closures telling visitors of other locations or trail options.

*Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

**Phase 3 Implementation**

- Based on past experience, It is anticipated that the designed trail lengths will be up to 15% longer than the trail corridors shown on the Master Plan. If at any point the cumulative onsite designed overall trail system length varies by +/-2,500 lf from 115% of that shown in the Master Plan, an additional public process will take place; the format will be determined by PRCS leadership.
- If the City accepts the Pikeview Quarry, a separate planning process will be undertaken. At that time, the southern area of Blodgett Open Space (see illustration below) may be reconsidered as part of that planning process.

*Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

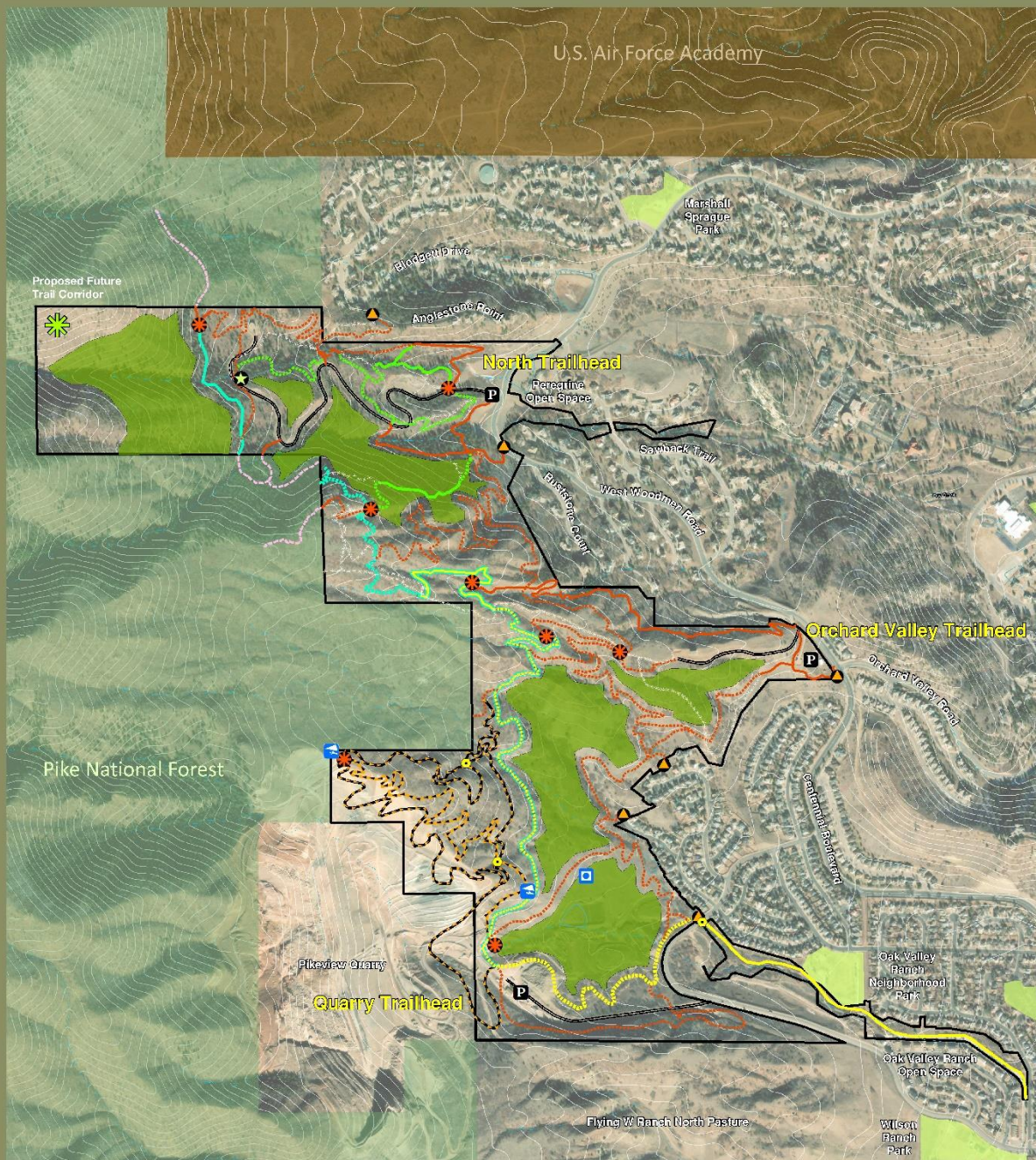




# Master Plan



See Appendix H for larger map image.



### Legend

- |                        |                          |                                     |   |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Blodgett Open Space    | Special Use Area         | Existing Designated Multi-Use Trail | Proposed Park to Peak Trail                         |
| Neighborhood Park      | Neighborhood Access      | Proposed Multi-Use Trail            | Existing Park to Peak and Chamberlain Trail         |
| Pike National Forest   | Wayfinding Node          | Existing Hiking Only Trail          | Proposed Park to Peak and Chamberlain Trail         |
| U.S. Air Force Academy | Grade Separated Crossing | Proposed Hiking Only Trail          | Cycling Only - Downhill Only, Proposed              |
| Parking/Trailhead      | Paragliding Launch Area  | Existing Chamberlain Trail          | Multi-Use - One Way Uphill Only for Bikes, Proposed |
|                        | Paragliding Landing Area | Proposed Chamberlain Trail          | Access Road   |
|                        | Protected Habitat Area   | Existing Park to Peak Trail         | Designated Trail to be Closed                       |
|                        |                          | User-Created Illegal Trail*         | <b>Note: All illegal trails to be closed</b>        |
- \*subject to possible future Forest Service NEPA process

BLODGETT OPEN SPACE Master Plan



Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only.

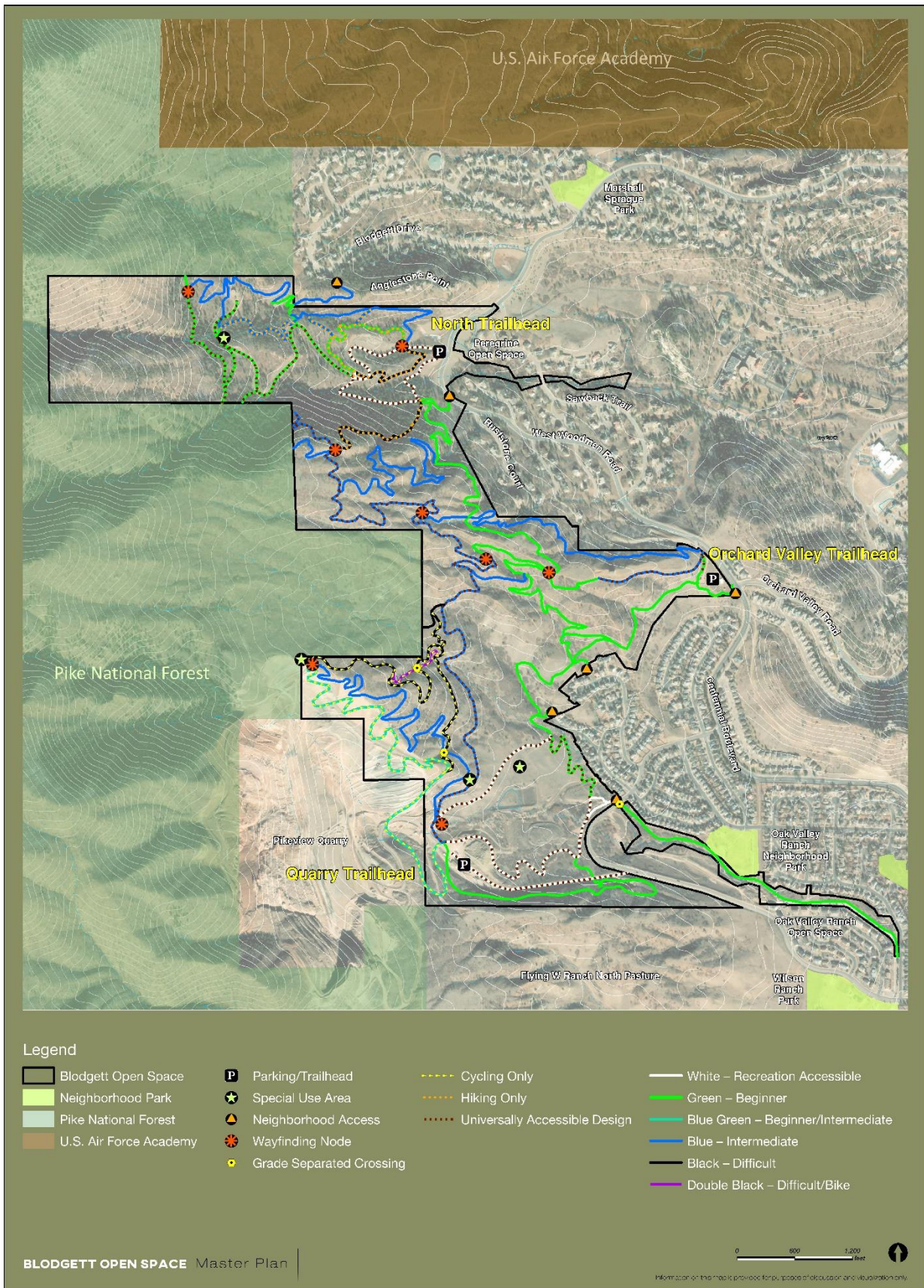




# Trail Difficulty Ratings



See Appendix H for larger map image.







# MANAGEMENT PLAN NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS AND TRAILHEAD MANAGEMENT

The public process revealed conflicting desires and concerns surrounding the trailheads to serve Blodgett Open Space. Conflicting neighborhood input (limit trailhead size and facilities / no visitor parking on neighborhood streets) and clear community input for expanded trailhead parking and facilities has led to a phased implementation and adaptive management strategy for each of the three trailheads. Neighborhood Accesses provide sustainable trail access from adjacent neighborhoods into the Open Space.

## Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Planning and Implementation

The objective for the Neighborhood Access is to provide sustainable trail access from adjacent neighborhoods into the Open Space. These accesses do not provide designated parking for general users.

The objectives for all the trailheads are to:

- Provide onsite Open Space user parking;
- Minimize user parking on collector, public, and private streets; and
- Provide user facilities to enhance stewardship, user safety and public health.

# Management Plan Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management

## Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

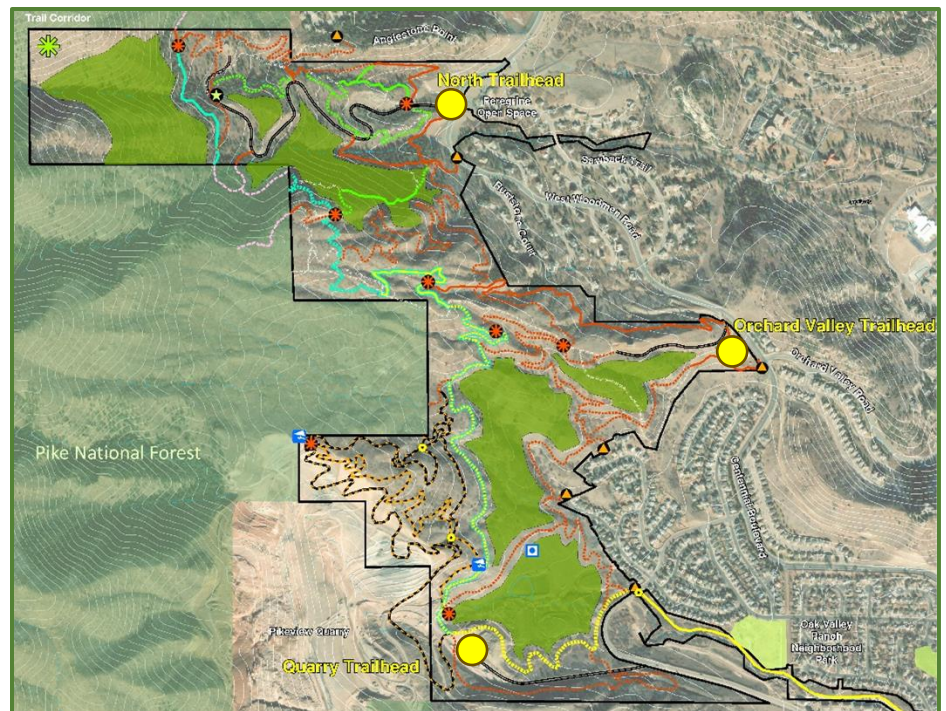
PRCS is committed to trailhead management at all Park properties. PRCS will continue, as budget allows, to sub-contract nighttime closure with a security company for all its properties through the City Purchasing procurement process.\* PRCS staff solicited recommendations from the Colorado Springs Police (CDPD) for improving nighttime security at Blodgett Trailheads. CSPD can provide a security audit if requested. The following options may be considered as funding becomes available:

- Lock gates earlier\*\*. Consider earlier closure than Department’s standard closing time for Blodgett Open Space when security problems are documented in the final hours official park hours
- Blodgett Open Space to follow Park Open Space Hours as defined in City Code 4.2.102 (5am to 9pm from Nov - April, and 5am to 10pm all other times). Trailhead gates may be closed as early as 9pm year round (subject to staff/contractor scheduling to close gates nightly).
- Improve site visibility and opportunities for public surveillance
- Add parking lot lighting
- Consider cameras if lighting is available
- Consider in-person security presence from 10pm-2am for specific periods of time
- Consider automatic gates\*\*\*
- Neighborhood participation: Some neighborhoods HOAs utilize their fees to hire a security company to patrol open space parking lots. PRCS is open to considering other privately funded security service proposals to support security efforts. Peregrine Master Association has a history of working closely with City agencies to collaboratively address neighborhood traffic and security concerns.

\* The 2023 Park closure contract was approximately \$200,000. The security company utilizes several crews throughout the City with each crew rotating which property is attended to first (closing gates and restrooms) so that all properties, on rotation, are “closed” first.

\*\*The City cannot guarantee a specific closure time at any property. Gates are opened by the rangers between 4:30 and 5:30 am. Throughout the City, the current open space hours are 5am to 9pm in the winter, and 5 am to 10 pm in the summer.

\*\*\* In 2023 manual gate installation cost is \$5,000 and requires little maintenance. Automatic gate installation is \$160,000 (power \$35,000, foundations and hardscape \$25,000, gate \$25,000, camera \$50,000, annual maintenance \$25,000). Because of vandalism to the automatic gates, the City requires lighting and a camera at all automatic gates.





# Management Plan Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

| North Trailhead Objectives  | Orchard Valley Trailhead Objectives   | Quarry Trailhead Objectives   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>The North Trailhead expansion is needed to provide additional public access to the open space and to accommodate current use and parking demand. This trailhead is closest to the open space's single-use hiking-only trails and to the illegal route on USFS lands to the summit of Blodgett Peak. Any modifications to the on-street parking will be determined by City Traffic Engineering.</p> <p>Trailhead illustrations below are diagrammatic only.</p> | <p>The existing Orchard Valley Trailhead provides the most direct and closest access to USFS lands. Improvements are needed to provide Open Space visitor amenities, to minimize or eliminate overflow parking along the adjacent private street and Woodmen Road, and to address future anticipated parking capacity needs to minimize user parking in adjacent neighborhoods. Non-motorized safety will be determined by City Traffic Engineering. If desired in the future, Orchard Valley Trailhead is the best situated location for equestrian trailer parking because of its smaller park user size, non-bike focus, and possibility for a loop turnaround option.</p> <p>Trailhead illustrations below are diagrammatic only.</p> | <p>The Quarry Trailhead offers the opportunity for a trailhead that is remote from current residential areas. This trailhead is anticipated to alleviate parking demands at the other two trailheads. This trailhead is closest to the single-use mountain bike trails, the Chamberlain Trail and the Park to Peak Trail.</p> <p>Trailhead illustrations below are diagrammatic only.</p> |
| Adaptive Management Strategy  | Adaptive Management Strategy  | Adaptive Management Strategy  |
| <p>If at any point more than 51 spaces are considered at the North Trailhead, an additional public process will take place; the format will be determined by PRCS leadership.</p>   | <p>If at any point more than 15 (13 +2) spaces or a relocation of the trailhead are considered at the Orchard Valley Trailhead, an additional public process will take place; the format will be determined by PRCS leadership.</p>   | <p>If at any point more than 180 spaces are considered at the Quarry Trailhead, an additional public process will take place; the format will be determined by PRCS leadership.</p>   |



### North Trailhead

1. Potential future parking includes Utilities access, landscape islands and possible retaining walls
2. Utilities Access Gate
3. Trailhead Amenities: Restroom, Signage, Maps, Bike rack
4. Nighttime Closure Gate.



### Orchard Valley Trailhead

1. Existing Parking with up to 2 additional spaces
2. Nighttime Closure Gate
3. Telecommunications Access Gate
4. Trailhead Amenities: Restroom, Signage, Maps, Bike rack
5. Potential future trailhead area includes landscape islands and landscape berms - subject to additional public process
6. Potential Future Trailhead Driveway and Nighttime Closure Gate - subject to additional public process



### Quarry Trailhead

1. Quarry Access Gate
2. Trailhead Amenities: Restroom, Signage, Maps, Bike rack
3. Limit of public vehicle gate
4. Initial Parking Area includes landscape islands
5. Potential Future Parking Expansion
6. Nighttime Closure Gate at Allegheny

## Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management Monitoring Indicators

| Indicators  |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor Vehicle/Pedestrian Accidents – determine departmental tolerance for safety of visitors traveling to the Open Space</li> <li>▪ Monitor Public Health – evidence of human waste, dog waste</li> <li>▪ Monitor Parking Capacity– utilization of available parking, congestion in and around trailhead parking, visitor parking on public and private streets, assess overflow on-street parking and congestion at each trailhead in conjunction with parking availability at the other two trailheads.</li> <li>▪ Monitor Parking Condition – Area of impact, erosion, degradation, maintenance requirements, permeability</li> <li>▪ Monitor Vandalism – number of acts and level of severity, including vehicle break-ins, visibility for streetside community surveillance</li> <li>▪ Consider vehicle counters when the information will contribute to maintenance and management decisions</li> <li>▪ Monitor Visitor reported incidents and conditions</li> <li>▪ Monitor adjacent neighbor complaints</li> <li>▪ Trail and Recreation monitoring indicators overlap with this section</li> </ul> |

## Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management Implementation Action

| Phase 1 Implementation   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage permissible neighborhood accesses to sustainable trail standards.</li> <li>• North Trailhead: Expand North Trailhead to add 15-20 additional parking spaces for a total of 31 spaces. May include landscape islands, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coordinate with Utilities and Colorado Spring Public Works regarding extending the retaining wall and parking west of the existing parking area to ensure access to facilities and utilities. Include turnaround space at west end of parking. Relocate Utilities gate. Rehabilitate Trailhead amenities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Quarry Trailhead: Construct Quarry Trailhead parking to a total of 50-55 spaces. May include landscape islands, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls. Coordinate with Utilities regarding existing overhead, underground, and future electrical service. Install Trailhead amenities that may include trailhead kiosk, restrooms, trash receptacle, bike rack, and seating. Coordinate Quarry access gate. Install nighttime closure gate at Allegheny Drive. Construct trail connections prior to opening trailhead. See Appendix J.</li> <li>• Orchard Valley Trailhead: Consider additional means to designate parking spaces to optimize capacity within existing disturbed area.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rehabilitate Trailhead amenities. Remove derelict barn and storage structures. Coordinate with Utilities regarding underground gas, and overhead, underground, and future electrical service. See Appendix J.</li> <li>○ Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations at trailhead.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pursue timely closure and opening of gate.</li> <li>• Adjust trail alignments to better serve existing, new or expanded parking.</li> <li>• Consider native plant transplanting and/or propagation when implementing open space improvements and habitat restoration.</li> <li>• Support action warranted or initiated by City Traffic Engineering to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety along the Woodmen/Centennial/Allegheny corridors.</li> <li>• Recommend HOA's continue or initiate neighborhood dialog with Colorado Springs Police and City Traffic Engineering to address speeding and nighttime disturbances.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i></li> </ul>  |



# Management Plan Neighborhood Access and Trailhead Management

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

## • Phase 2 Implementation

- Install regulatory and informational signage as needed to protect the resources. Coordinated with the adjacent neighborhood.
- Consider additional or closure of neighborhood accesses in response to resource conditions or visitor behaviors.
- Pursue public transportation options including Pike Ride station.
- North Trailhead: Expand North Trailhead to add 15-20 additional parking spaces for a total of 51 spaces. Include landscape islands, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls.
  - Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations at all trailhead locations.
- Quarry Trailhead: As needed, to alleviate on-street overflow, driveway overflow, illegal parking blocking maintenance access to restrooms or port-o-lets, or trash receptacles, or natural resource impacts such as wildfire, flood and/or major erosion events, or as determined by the PRCS Director, expand parking to add up to a total of 100 spaces. Include landscape islands, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls.
  - Coordinate with Utilities regarding existing overhead, underground, and future electrical service. See Appendix J.
- Orchard Valley Trailhead: Assess public need for equestrian parking as USFS access is considered.
- Orchard Valley Trailhead: PRCS will initiate the trailhead relocation in accordance with the Master Plan if any of the following occur: non-motorized user conflict or injury crossing Woodmen/Centennial into the Open Space, users parking along collector or neighborhood streets, security concerns continue, neighborhood off-street connection trails initiated, illegal parking blocking maintenance access to restrooms or port-o lets, or trash receptacles, natural resource impacts such as wildfire, flood and/or major erosion events. Relocate parking area and entrance allowing expanded parking. Include landscape islands, landscape berms, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls. Adjust trail alignments to better serve expanded parking. Restore previously disturbed areas. Relocate Nighttime closure gate. Relocate telecommunications access gate. Coordinate with Utilities regarding underground gas, and overhead, underground, and future electrical service. See Appendix J.
- Adjust trail alignments to better serve existing, new or expanded parking.
- Support action warranted or initiated by City Traffic Engineering to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.

## • *Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback*

|  |
|--|
| <b>Phase 3 Implementation</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider City acquisition of adjacent properties that will be beneficial to protecting and/or enhancing Blodgett Open Space current holdings and neighborhood connections.</li> <li>▪ Quarry Trailhead: Expand Quarry Trailhead to 180 stalls.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations at all trailhead locations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i>  |
| <b>Phase 4 Implementation</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Orchard Valley Trailhead: Following the specific public process, PRCS will initiate the trailhead relocation in accordance with the Master Plan if any of the following occur: non-motorized user conflict or injury crossing Woodmen/Centennial into the Open Space, users parking along collector or neighborhood streets, security concerns continue, neighborhood off street connection trails initiated, illegal parking blocking maintenance access to restrooms or port-o lets, or trash receptacles, natural resource impacts such as wildfire, flood and/or major erosion events. The public process may result in relocating parking area and entrance allowing expanded parking for the required spaces to alleviate the concerns. Include landscape islands, landscape berms, rain gardens and Open Space compatible retaining walls, adjusting trail alignments to better serve expanded parking, restoring previously disturbed areas, relocating Nighttime closure gate, and relocating telecommunications access gate. Coordinate with Utilities regarding underground gas, and overhead, underground, and future electrical service. See Appendix J.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations at all trailhead locations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i>  |



# Management Plan Perimeter Management

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan



## MANAGEMENT PLAN PERIMETER MANAGEMENT

Perimeter management for Blodgett Open Space encompasses Encroachments, trail connections to Neighborhood Schools, Parks, and Open Spaces, USFS Gateway Considerations, and possible beneficial expansion of the Open Space.

- **Encroachments:** Encroachments into Blodgett Open Space can have long-term impacts and require sensitive, often personal communication. Access points from backyards or places not designated in the Master Plan will be systematically identified, recorded and closed. Private encroachments into Blodgett Open Space are recommended for removal. Examples include landscape areas, yard debris dumping and invisible pet fences. PRCS should address and resolve all private property encroachments from the Open Space to assist in defining a clear public/private boundary on the perimeter.
- **Trail Connections:** The goals for trail connections into neighborhoods are outlined in the Master Plan on page 41. Construction, management and monitoring should follow the criteria set forth in the Trails and Recreation Management chapter of this management plan.
- **USFS Gateway :** Most of the west and north boundary of the Blodgett Open Space abuts public lands owned and managed by the federal government within the USDA Forest Service, Pike National Forest. While the ownership and management priorities are distinct, this 2.3-mile boundary is indistinguishable to wildlife and visitors. Many visitors and community members knowingly or unknowingly access USFS land across the Open Space to reach destinations including Blodgett Peak, Ormes Peak, and non-system illegal trails. This access has resulted in many miles of non-system illegal trails on USFS land, many of which interface with or cross into Blodgett Open Space. There are currently no system trails or routes on USFS land in the vicinity.

The City is currently working with the USFS to identify opportunities for improved coordination around trail and visitor access, illegal trail management, and resource protection. Over the long-term, it is imperative that this coordination continues and expands so that visitor and resource management practices across this shared boundary are compatible and complimentary. Long-term goals of this collaboration may include:

1. Formalize existing illegal trails and old “roads” on USFS land that function as part of the traditional Open Space trail system.
2. Establish and manage sustainable and desirable route(s) to access the summit of Blodgett Peak.
3. Establish and manage sustainable and desirable route(s) to provide access and experiences that are currently heavily used by the public (such as the “Fenceline Trail”).
4. Establish and manage necessary connections and reroutes to support a logical and intuitive trail system.
5. Aggressively close and revegetate illegal trails that are not part of a desired cross-boundary trail system.
6. Coordinate resource management efforts including noxious weed management, forest health management, wildlife habitat protection.

This cross-boundary coordination will require additional planning and discussion between the City and the USFS to establish a long-term strategy that includes (but is not limited to) trail system design and construction, illegal trail closure, habitat protection, resource management, visitor education, monitoring, and enforcement. Following the completion of this Master and Management Plan, the next steps include:

- Creation of a preferred trail access, resource management strategy, and potential alternatives
- Creation of preferred agreements and mechanisms to coordinate resource management activities (e.g., Special Use Authorization or Memorandum of Agreement)
- Evaluation of potential effects of the proposed strategies on resources under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Ongoing monitoring and coordination
- **Beneficial Expansion:** When opportunities exist, the TOPS Working Committee and City should pursue City acquisition of adjacent properties that will be beneficial to protecting and/or enhancing Blodgett Open Space current holdings. With the exception of the Pikeview Quarry property, if and when, all other adjacent property acquisitions under 10 acres will be incorporated and managed as part of this Plan, unless determined otherwise by PRCS Leadership.

Direct trail connections to adjacent neighborhoods are addressed in the Trail System Sustainability and Management chapter of this management plan.

## Perimeter Management Monitoring Indicators

| Indicators   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Map, monitor, and assess perimeter encroachment.</li> <li>■ Establish, monitor and assess education and outreach effectiveness.</li> <li>■ Identify beneficial adjacent properties.</li> <li>■ Planning needs of acquired adjacent properties.</li> <li>■ Communicate with the USFS staff issues observed on, or impacting City property from, USFS lands.</li> </ul> |



## Perimeter Management Implementation Actions

|   |
|---|
| <b>Phase 1 Implementation</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Expand and enhance monitoring of encroachments.</li><li>▪ Employ education and outreach efforts to inform adjacent property owners, HOAs and the public of property boundaries and the negative impacts of encroachments.</li><li>▪ Encroachment removal shall follow existing City protocol for notification. The notification process is as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Assess the situation</li><li>○ Confirm land ownership</li><li>○ Determine the ordinance infraction</li><li>○ Map and document encroachment</li><li>○ Send a letter to adjacent property owner</li></ul>The letter identifies the infraction and asks the property owner to remove all of the encroachments within a stated time frame. If not removed within the time frame, PRCS Staff will potentially remove and reclaim the site with the property owner potentially incurring the costs.</li><li>▪ Establish a consistent policy to evaluate and effectively manage the expected increase in use and minimize encroachments from surrounding developments. See Regulations and Policy Management on page 74.</li><li>▪ Close trails and accesses that are not designated in the master plan. Consider additional or closure of neighborhood accesses in response to resource conditions or visitor behaviors.</li><li>▪ Pursue agreements and/or easements to secure sustainable trail access on private land holdings that block potential trail connections to neighborhood schools, parks and open spaces.as outlined in the Regulations and Policy Management section of this management plan.</li><li>▪ When opportunities exist, the TOPS Working Committee and City should pursue City acquisition of adjacent properties that will be beneficial to protecting and/or enhancing Blodgett Open Space’s current holdings. as outlined in the Regulations and Policy Management section - page 74.</li><li>▪ Establish an access and management strategy, and potential alternatives, with USFS.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Establish preferred agreements and mechanisms to coordinate resource management with USFS.</li><li>○ Complete resource studies to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed strategy.</li><li>○ Coordinate and partner with USFS to conduct a NEPA analysis, documentation, and decision(s).</li></ul></li></ul> |
| <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i>   |
| <b>Phase 2 Implementation</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ When necessary, install fencing and signage in key areas to control the perimeter and reduce encroachment of users to and from private property.</li><li>▪ If the City accepts the reclaimed Pikeview Quarry, a separate planning process will be undertaken. At that time, the southern area of Blodgett Open Space (see illustration on page 61 may be revisited.</li><li>▪ Coordinate and partner with USFS to design and implementation of an access strategy on USFS land</li></ul>  |
| <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i>   |
| <b>Phase 3 Implementation</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Currently, there are no Phase 3 implementation actions outlined.</li></ul>  |
| <i>Monitoring, evaluation, and feedback</i>   |







# MANAGEMENT PLAN REGULATION AND POLICY MANAGEMENT

Blodgett Open Space is owned by the City of Colorado Springs and managed by the City's PRCS Department. The City of Colorado Springs City Code and PRCS Department's policies and practices are specifically intended to protect and manage the system's parks and open spaces. The master plan process sought to identify areas of concern and solicit specific recommendations to refine the City regulations and policies to further protect the natural resource and visitor experience at Blodgett Open Space.

## Legal Arrangements

A variety of legal agreements can enhance visitor access at Blodgett Open Space, benefit Open Space visitors, enhance Open Space functionality and provide maintenance partnerships. Initial discussions with the USFS, Utilities, and The USAFA have taken place at the time of this writing.

## Legal Arrangement Recommendations

- Pursue City MOU clarifications with Utilities for maintenance of the service road accessing water tank and discharge impacts: water line and gas line easements and access; and relocation/removal of overhead power lines servicing the Pikeview Quarry. Refer to Drainage Observations in Appendix F for drainage recommendations and Appendix J for overhead electric information.
- Pursue partnerships or agreements with the USFS for trail connectivity to enhance the Open Space's trail system, a sustainable multi-use trail route to Blodgett Peak, and consolidating habitat areas.

- Execute current and appropriate revocable permits to clarify access and maintenance (building and roadway) permitted through the Open Space for the telecommunications facility. Integrate the roadway drainage concerns and suggestions outlined in the Drainage Observations in Appendix F.
- Pursue agreements with private landowners to secure sustainable trail access easement from the eastern edge of the property to neighborhoods, schools, and open space systems. Schools include Woodmen Roberts, Rockrimmon, Foothills, and Trailblazer elementary schools; and Eagleview Middle School. Nearby parks and open spaces include Marshall Sprague, Woodmen Valley, Woodstone, Oak Valley Ranch, Wilson Ranch, and Ute Valley parks, and Peregrine, Woodmen Valley, Rockrimmon, Oak Valley Ranch, South Face, and Mountain Shadows open spaces.
- Pursue City acquisition of adjacent properties that will be beneficial to protecting and/or enhancing Blodgett Open Space's current holdings.

## Departmental Policies, Practices and Supporting Documents

According to the City Code, the PRCS Director can promulgate park rules – not every rule and regulation must be found in the City Code. Departmental policies and practices are specifically aimed at protecting and managing the system's parks and open spaces.

Departmental policies and practices include Passive Recreation Criteria for special events, multi-use trail philosophy, the Trail Etiquette yield protocol and the supporting document - 2014 Park System Master Plan. The Department must also comply with federal and state regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Other-Powered Driven Mobility Device (OPDMD).

Several areas that would benefit from Departmental guidance were identified in the Master Plan process. They are listed in the recommendations below.

## Departmental Policy and Practice Recommendations

- Increase the number of full-time rangers and trail staff at RPTOS and PRCS.
- Increase the number of seasonal rangers and conservation technicians assigned to the Open Space.
- Establish a written, multi-use trail philosophy to guide future master plans.
- Pursue creation of system-wide trail design and maintenance standards.
- Establish Park system-wide universally accessible trail standards to accommodate otherly mobile individuals and adaptive modalities (examples: hand cycles, track-chairs).
- Adapt Blodgett Open Space signage and trail designations as appropriate to comply with changing departmental policies. At this writing, a system-wide e-bike policy is under consideration. This Open Space's interface with USFS lands will require clear signage to make varied policies along jurisdictional lines clear to users and possible to enforce.
- Establish an enforceable policy or promulgate a rule outlining specific measures to protect natural and cultural resources. The enforcement methods and consequences for non-compliant behavior should be established simultaneously. The rule/policy may include compliance with single use and directional trail designations; degradation of natural resources including unauthorized trail construction, trail closure in muddy conditions, disturbance of cultural and historical sites, area closure during safety and resource related fire concerns, wildlife concerns, seasonal wildlife closures; and others as appropriate.
- Schedule annual departmental review of design and management successes and challenges – adapt as appropriate to meet the Master and Management Plan intent.



## Enforcement

Although adequate and appropriate rules of use are in place, the natural resources and visitor experience are degraded by non-compliant behaviors and actions. One key is consistent enforcement. It is recognized that appropriate, fiscally-sustainable and implementable recommendations will require a collaborative inter-departmental and funding approach. With this in mind, the planning process participants identified the following areas of enforcement concern.

### Areas of Enforcement Concern

- Nighttime use
- Parking lot security
- Campfires
- Unleashed dog use
- Dog waste
- Human waste
- Vandalism
- Utility infrastructure security
- City/USFS boundaries cause unclear first-responder boundaries
- Trail closures ignored
- Litter
- Off-trail travel
- Illegal trail building
- E-bike use
- Property encroachments
- Lack of on-site enforcement

## Enforcement Recommendations

- Install and utilize gates to allow timely nighttime closure of the Open Space. Proposed nighttime closure gates are located at each of the trailhead entrances. Gate mechanisms must accommodate emergency responders and easement holders including Utilities, the telecommunications provider, and Pikeview Quarry.
  - Create understanding with neighbors regarding management and timely closure and opening of nighttime gates.
- Work collaboratively with the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) to re-establish Park Police Division with a focus to enforce general rules, regulations, and all City ordinances within the Open Space. Until the Park Police Division is established, pursue implementable strategies resulting in consistent rule enforcement in Blodgett Open Space.
  - Pursue sustainable allocation of funds for consistent enforcement officer presence.
  - Pursue onsite enforcement after hours on weekends and other times of peak visitation.
  - Pursue Colorado Springs Police Department site security audit. Current options include lighting parking lots, security cameras (require lighting) and enhanced police presence from 10pm-2am.
  - Continue TOPS Stewardship Patrols to hire off-duty CSPD police officers at TOPS acquired properties like Blodgett Open Space.
  - Continue to work with the CSPD, the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region and animal control organizations to address dog off-leash and uncollected dog waste issues. The Humane Society has a free public service card from the American Dog Owners Association: "Ten reasons for leashing your dog."
- Create a First Responder Map representing corresponding signage at Park trailheads to ensure Park visitors and first-responders can communicate Park locations clearly. This map should be similar to existing First Responder Maps for the Garden of the Gods and Memorial Park. Distribute maps to first responders.

- Citizen concern regarding dogs off-leash surfaced early in the planning process. Domestic animal control (dog on-leash) is a citywide governance issue. Management practices and enforcement in Park properties and throughout the City follow current City Ordinances 9.9.301 and 9.9.302 pertaining to domestic animals. Should the City ordinance be revised, and funding allocated for implementation, the PRCS Department may modify dog leash management in Blodgett Open Space within the parameters of the revised ordinance.
- Continue PRCS support of the City of Colorado Springs Community Wildfire Protection Plan and communities that participate in the City of Colorado Springs Fire Department Wildfire Ready Plan.
- Review the existing encroachment policy and update as needed. Enforcement of the encroachment policy is also recommended as part of the Blodgett Management Plan. At the time of this plan, the City uses ordinances to guide encroachment policies. The current City of Colorado Springs ordinance as adopted by City Code states:
  - Per City Code 9.9.101, "It is unlawful for any person to construct or erect any building or structure, whether permanent or temporary, or run or string any utility into, upon or across any park except upon special written permission issued by the Park Manager (Ord. 89-97; Ord. 01-47)."
  - In addition, per City Code 9.9.102, "It is unlawful for any unauthorized person to injure, deface, destroy, sever or remove any park property (Ord. 89-97; Ord. 01-42)."
- Educate visitors about user created non-designated route closures. Content may include graphic illustrations, resource value, resource damage caused by a footfall, and directional signs to the designated route describing its advantages.
- Provide educational signage promoting the "Leave No Trace" Outdoor Ethic.





# IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND COSTS

This Master and Management Plan provides a blueprint for high quality and integrated facilities, trails system, and management for Blodgett Open Space. Implementation of this Plan will require thoughtful, strategic consideration of individual components to make the most efficient use of existing financial and human resources. This Plan preserves flexibility for the PRCS Department to seek out and take advantage of funding and partnering opportunities as they arise.

As the Master and Management Plan is implemented, land stewards and managers must be careful that efforts do not have unintended consequences on the very things those efforts aim to protect. The following list of considerations is intended for use by the PRCS to guide long-term and short-term implementation priority decisions.

## **Recommended Priority Considerations**

- Follow the Management Goals that serve as the foundation design intent for implementing this Master and Management Plan. See page 46.
- Consider prioritizing work that protects natural or cultural resource areas.
- Remain flexible with annual and long-term priorities in order to optimize resource and partnering opportunities that may arise. Incorporate a balanced approach to consider geographic location, user groups, and equitable opportunities for recreation in the community.
- Consider the benefits of work dispersed throughout the property versus an annual focus on one defined area.

- Pursue construction of new facilities, trails, and programs only when the associated workforce and resource commitment is in place for resource protection, further study (as needed), and associated restoration.
- Consider recommendations from El Paso County annual conservation easement monitoring report for Blodgett Open Space for implementation priority guidance.
- Comply with the PRCS Department's procedures for establishing shared annual priorities between the City, Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces, and other user group representatives. Consider expanding this to longer-term implementation priorities.

## Implementation Schedule

The Master and Management Plan implementation is subject to available funding, requested and allocated on an annual basis. While exact projects and implementation schedules are difficult to confirm, it is anticipated that within the first year, Parks will seek to begin construction of the sustainable trail system, closure of rouge trails, open space/wildlife habitat improvements, trailhead management strategies, the first phase of the Quarry and North trailheads, and fire mitigation/forest restoration.

Each of the previous management plan sections includes specific monitoring indicators and prioritized phased-implementation recommendations. Monitoring results and thresholds will initiate the next implementation stage. While monitoring and phased-implementation contained in each management section will take precedence, PRCS will remain flexible with overall priorities in order to optimize resource and partnering opportunities that may arise. Implementation priorities not listed, or determined in the future, shall be weighted with the Plan Goals as the guide. See page 46 for Plan Goals.

### Additional Public Process

The Master and Management Plan identifies several conditions or thresholds which will require an additional public process to take place with the public process format to be determined by PRCS leadership. These conditions include:

- If the City accepts the Pikeview Quarry. At that time, the southern area of Blodgett Open Space may be reconsidered as part of that planning process.
- If at any point, more than 51 spaces are considered at the North Trailhead.
- If at any point, more than 15 (13 existing +2) spaces or a relocation of the trailhead are considered at the Orchard Valley Trailhead.
  - PRCS will initiate the trailhead relocation in accordance with the Master Plan if any of the following occur: non-motorized user conflict or injury crossing Woodmen/Centennial into the Open Space, users parking along collector or neighborhood streets, security concerns continue, neighborhood off-street connection trails initiated, illegal parking blocking maintenance access to restrooms or port-o lets, or trash receptacles, natural resource impacts such as wildfire, flood and/or major erosion events.
- If at any point, more than 180 spaces are considered at the Quarry Trailhead.
- If conditions arise that mandated permanent closure of a system trail.
- Based on past experience, It is anticipated that the designed trail lengths will be up to 15% longer than the trail corridors shown on the Master Plan. If at any point, the cumulative onsite designed overall trail system length varies by +/-2,500 If from 115% of that shown in the Master Plan.
- The City and PRCS will participate in the USFS NEPA public process and are not required by this management plan to host a separate Parks led public process.



## Recommended Blodgett Open Space Priorities

### High Priority Projects: 1-4 years (in no particular order)

- Implement habitat protection and restoration in conjunction with the sustainable master-planned trail system. Work may include closing user-created illegal trails, restoring native revegetation, managing noxious weeds, addressing erosive drainage issues both natural and human caused, utilizing decommissioning techniques to encourage native ecosystem regrowth, and realigning Red Squirrel Trail and closing historic fenceline route on City property once alternative routes are in place.
- Collaborate with Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces to build capacity and regional participation. Consider if a naming convention to include Blodgett Open Space may be appropriate.
- Design and construct or expand trailheads at
  - Quarry Trailhead
  - North Trailhead
- Remove derelict barn and storage structures near Orchard Valley Trailhead
- Reroute or close unsustainable system trails
- Decommission unsustainable system and illegal trails following sustainable trail construction.
- Design and construct the following specific trails:
  - Chamberlain Trail
  - Park to Peak Trail
  - Mountain bike area with multi-use trail (uphill only for bikes) and downhill only bike routes
  - Hiking only trails
  - North/south connector on eastern edge
- Install and modify wayfinding signage on all new trail segments and intersections.
- Initiate trailhead management strategies including those to improve security.
- Establish and implement a Blodgett Open Space Management Action Plan.
- Initiate and continue monitoring and data recording of recommended Monitoring Indicators.
- Initiate integrated Forest Health and Fire Management.
- Pursue a possible future USFS partnership for trail connections to enhance Blodgett Open Space trail system within the interface zone.

### Medium Priority Projects: 2-7 years (in no particular order)

- Design and construct the entire master planned trail system.
- Design and construct or expand trailheads and neighborhood accesses at
  - All designated neighborhood accesses
  - Quarry, North, and Orchard Valley trailheads based on monitoring data
- Design and construct paragliding launch and landing sites.
- Mitigate drainage and erosion challenges and initiate drainage improvements in the Drainage Observations in Appendix F.
- Pursue possible future USFS partnership for sustainable trails to Blodgett Peak.

## **Low Priority Projects: 5-10 years** (in no particular order)

- Design and construct Special Use Areas.
  - Program Area
  - Paragliding launch and landing sites
- Design and construct trail connections to neighborhood schools, parks and open spaces.
- Remove and restore both private encroachments onto public land and public encroachments onto private land.
- Initiate noxious weed management as recommended.
- Establish sustainable Park system-wide trail construction and rating standards.
- Establish sustainable Park system-wide trail maintenance standards.



## Implementation Costs and Cost Estimate

The Master Plan outlines facility locations, trail corridors, and areas of habitat conservation. Site specific design decisions in compliance with the Master Plan will be made at time of implementation. The cost estimates provided are shown as a range in 2023 dollars; project costs will be updated at the time of implementation.

### Trail Elements

Depending on the trail design, different features can be included in the design. The following is a list of typical features seen in trail design and the associated costs for those features. The costs may vary based on material and ease of mobilization to the trail construction/improvement area. The large cost range is primarily due to the required mobilization over narrow trails or steep terrain to deliver building materials to the work site.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Sustainable Trail Construction**     | \$8,000-\$35,000 per mile  |
|                                      | **Trail construction costs vary widely with existing trail condition and terrain and contributions by City Staff and volunteer builds. |
| Native Stone Steps                   | (125#) \$300-\$500 per step  |
| Imported Stone Steps                 | (125# to match surrounding) \$250-\$500 per step   |
| Rolling Crown Switchback             | \$1,500-\$2,500 each   |
| Dry-laid Stone Wall (native stone)   | \$40-\$60 per square foot  |
| Dry-laid Stone Wall (imported stone) | \$90-\$120 per square foot   |
| Stone Armoring (native stone)        | \$20-\$35 per square foot  |
| Stone Armoring (imported stone)      | \$40-\$70 per square foot  |
| Switchbacks                          | \$2,000-\$3,500 each   |
| Large Bermed Turns/Corners           | \$1,000-\$2,500 each   |
| Culverts                             | \$2,000-\$3,000 each   |
| Trail Closure/Decommissioning        | \$2-\$4/ linear foot or \$11,000-\$20,000/mile   |

### Site Elements

Costs for site elements will depend on quantities. The larger the quantity, the better the price. When possible, all known elements shall be ordered at one time.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Engineered Pedestrian Bridge                 | \$175,000-\$275,000 each                                      |
|  | ** Pedestrian Bridge cost is length dependent                 |
| Fiberglass Pedestrian Bridge                 | \$75,000-\$150,000 each                                       |
| Benches                                      | \$1,500-\$3,000 each  |
| Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage**        | \$1,500-\$4,000 each  |
|  | **Signage depends on size and if custom elements are required |
| Smooth Post and Dowel or Buck and Rail Fence | \$25-\$45 per lineal foot w/ installation                     |

## Revegetation and Restoration

|                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Native Seeding                     | \$800-\$1,200 per acre   |
| Riparian Seeding                   | \$1,800-\$2,800 per acre |
| Weed Management                    | \$1,200 per acre         |
| Site Preparation                   | \$4,500-\$6,500 per acre |
| Soil Amendment (3 CY per 1,000 SF) | \$4,000-\$6,000 per acre |

## Forestry

Mistletoe Removal/Tree Trimming/Tree Removal\*\* \$5,000-\$12,500 per acre  
\*\*slopes reduce ability for mechanical work

## Parking Lots

|                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Aggregate Base Course Class 6 | \$50-\$65 per square yard |
| Parking Stops                 | \$250-\$400 each          |

## Maintenance

Sustainable Trail \$2,000-\$6,000 per mile per year

## Planning and Engineering

Detailed planning and engineering are needed for all aspects of the master plan implementation. Some areas where the site conditions easily accommodate the improvements may require less design and engineering than other areas. As a result, no specific costs for planning and engineering were included. Generally, design costs are 10%-15% of the projected project construction cost.

## Staffing

This Plan recognizes that staffing within Blodgett Open Space is a key component to long term success. However, staffing must fit into the larger context of the PRCS department and budget. Staffing for the Open Space may include full-time, part-time and/or seasonal staff. Established and trained volunteer groups may supplement some of the staffing needs. No specific costs are included, but the need for additional staffing must be considered moving forward.



# Management Plan Implementation Priorities and Costs

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

## Estimated Quantities and Implementation Costs

The following estimate is based off of conceptual level planning efforts and quantities. Implementation costs of trail segments throughout Blodgett Open Space will vary based on existing trail condition, need for new trail, drainage considerations, terrain, time of construction, and other factors.

|   |                     |             |
|---|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>Site Implementation</b>  | <b>\$ 2,569,100</b> |             |
| Tier 2 Parks to Peak(white rated) +/- .6 miles x \$45,000                                   |                     | \$ 27,000   |
| Tier 3 Regional Trail Construction (blue and green rated) +/-3.3 miles x \$35,000           | \$ 115,500          |             |
| Multi-use and Hiking Trail Construction +/- 9.4miles x \$35,000                             | \$ 329,000          |             |
| Bike-Optimized Trails (excludes multi use (uphill only for bikes)) +/- 3.1 miles x \$50,000 | \$ 155,000          |             |
| Bridges for grade-separated crossings in Bike-Optimized Area                                |                     | \$ 40,000   |
| Trail Closure +/- 13.2 miles x \$11,000   | \$ 145,200          |             |
| Trail Drainage Features/Switchbacks/Culverts +/-40 x \$4,000                                | \$ 160,000          |             |
| Native and Imported Stone Steps on Hiking only trail +/-30 x \$400                          |                     | \$ 12,000   |
| Dry-laid Stone Wall +/-200' x 2' x \$80   |                     | \$ 32,000   |
| Blodgett Weed Management (OS wide) 384 x 0.66 acres x \$1,200                               | \$ 304,100          |             |
| Benches 12 x \$2,500  |                     | \$ 30,000   |
| Signage Open Space-wide and kiosks at trailheads  |                     | \$ 200,000  |
| Fencing at Trailheads and Neighborhood Accesses 9 x 60 lf x \$45                            |                     | \$ 24,300   |
| Fencing to block closures 1,000 lf x \$45   |                     | \$ 45,000   |
| Quarry Trailhead Improvements and Amenities   |                     | \$ 300,000  |
| Bridge at Quarry Trailhead connecting to Chamberlain Trailhead                              |                     | \$ 500,000  |
| North Trailhead Expansion, Improvements and Amenities                                       |                     | \$ 200,000  |
| Orchard Valley Trailhead Expansion, Improvements and Amenities                              |                     | \$ 50,000   |
| <b>Forestry</b>   | <b>\$ 595,000</b>   |             |
| Estimate 70 acres x \$8,500/ac  |                     | \$ 595,000  |
| <b>Drainage</b>   | <b>\$ 2,050,000</b> |             |
| Telecommunications Access Road Improvements 1,300 LF (includes regrading)                   |                     | \$ 50,000   |
| Quarry Meadow Drainage Improvements   |                     |             |
| 25 acres (dam inspection, regrading and revegetation)                                       |                     | \$2,000,000 |
| <b>Design Costs</b>   | <b>\$ 782,100</b>   |             |
| Design Costs (assume 15% of the project implementation total of \$ 5,214,100)               |                     |             |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS**</b>  | <b>\$ 6,895,630</b> |             |

\*\* Estimated cost is based on a conceptual level of planning and costs in 2023 dollars plus a 15% contingency. ((5,214,100+782,100) \$5,996,200 + 15% contingency)

## Funding Opportunities

The City of Colorado Springs is experienced in finding funding through many sources. As such, some of the programs that are listed in this Master Plan may be familiar to Staff and may have funded past projects.

### Major Grant Agencies And Programs

Oftentimes, these major agencies are responsible for a large portion of available funding within the State or for trails and open space projects. These major agencies generally provide large funding amounts. Several grant agencies and programs exist that may help fund projects in ABOS. These agencies and programs include:

#### Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

Local Park and Outdoor Recreation (LPOR) Grants help build or improve community parks, outdoor recreation amenities, outdoor athletic facilities and environmental education facilities. Funding is also available for land acquisitions. Youth Corps Grants employ Colorado Youth Corps Association crews on projects like building trails, erosion control after forest fires and eradicating invasive species. Habitat Restoration Grants improve and restore Colorado's rivers, streams, wetlands and critical habitats on permanently conserved land.

#### Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW)

The Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program (Non-Motorized Trails) funds projects for large recreational trails, small recreational trails, trail planning and trail support grants.

#### Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)

The Department of Local Affairs distributes Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) dollars quarterly, on a per capita basis, to over 470 eligible local governments, including counties, cities, towns and Title 32 special districts that provide park and recreation services in their service plans.

#### PeopleForBikes

The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling and from city or county agencies or departments.

#### Colorado Health Foundation (CHF)

Activating Places and Spaces Together supports locally defined, place-specific efforts to get people outdoors and actively engaged in their neighborhoods. The goal of the funding opportunity is to help activate existing infrastructure that contributes to a community's overall health through residential usage and positive experiences. Foundation grant funds support costs associated with project/program planning and/or implementation for up to one year. Funding for technical assistance for community engagement, communications and marketing is available.



# Management Plan Implementation Priorities and Costs

Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan

## **El Pomar Foundation**

El Pomar Foundation is a private, general-purpose foundation established in 1937 by Spencer and Julie Penrose. With a mission to "enhance, encourage and promote the current and future wellbeing of the people of Colorado," El Pomar Foundation provides more than \$22 million annually in grants and programs throughout the state.

## **Colorado Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Fund**

In 1997, the Colorado Legislature established the Colorado Noxious Weed Management Fund to provide additional financial resources for on-the-ground noxious weed management. Organized private interests, conservation districts, municipalities and counties are eligible to apply for assistance, provided that awarded funds are used to enhance weed management efforts within the State of Colorado.

## **Smaller, Specific Grant Programs**

Smaller, more specific grants programs and funding are also available that may be beneficial for Blodgett Open Space. These grants are more likely to serve one specific need, such as signage, as the requirements may be stricter, and the funding amount may be small. Additionally, many of these grants are only available to nonprofit agencies, not municipalities, so the City may be required to partner with a nonprofit to apply.

## **History Colorado State Historical Fund Grant**

Education grants fund eligible projects that concern historic preservation such as interpretive signage. Projects must be directly tied to historic preservation and focus on historic sites. Project content must incorporate an understanding of the significance of the historic place as well as preservation efforts. Grants vary in size up to \$200,000.

## **Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF)**

The purpose of the EIAF Program is to assist political subdivisions that are socially and/or economically impacted by the development, processing, or energy conversion of minerals and mineral fuels. Funds come from the state severance tax on energy and mineral production and from a portion of the state's share of royalties paid to the federal government for mining and drilling of minerals and mineral fuels on federally owned land. This grant program promotes sustainable community development, increase livability and resilience of communities through strategic investments in asset-building activities.

## **Anschutz Foundation**

Founded in 1984, the Anschutz Foundation was created by Philip F. Anschutz as a private charitable foundation. Over three decades, the foundation has given substantially to hundreds of nonprofit organizations primarily concentrated in Colorado. The Anschutz Foundation currently makes more than 500 grants annually. The foundation's giving emphasizes social and cultural organizations which work in areas larger than local communities; support for media projects, projects that support the underprivileged, public policy and traditional family values.

## **Gates Family Foundation**

The Gates Family Foundation is one of Colorado's oldest private foundations, having committed more than \$400 million to philanthropic activities since 1946. The Gates Family Foundation has both Strategic and Capital Grants with an emphasis on natural resources and building vibrant communities.

### **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)**

In 2005, Walmart and NFWF joined forces to establish the Acres for America program as a groundbreaking effort to support and catalyze the conservation of lands and wildlife habitat of national significance, and to benefit local communities and local economies.

### **Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)**

Rewilding Our Cities — Three years ago, REI launched the first of their Rewilding Projects as part of a long-term strategy to help provide millions of people easier access to nearby outdoor places. The goal is to reshape how people in large urban and suburban areas connect with the outdoors.

### **Patagonia**

Through their Corporate Grants Program, Patagonia funds environmental work within the United States and is either national in scope or not located near one of their U.S. retail stores.

### **Foundation for Free Flight (United States Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association -USHPA)**

The Foundation for Free Flight collaborates with pilot communities to enhance, protect, and acquire land that supports free flight activities in the US. In the past 20 years, they have provided seed money to save landing zones, worked to ensure safe and effective access, and buried power lines. Site Preservation is the core mission of the Foundation. The headquarters of the USHPA is based in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

### **Xcel Energy Corporation**

Environmental Grants support organizations that protect and enhance the natural environment:

- Programs or projects that provide hands-on environmental education experiences and curricula that foster an ethic of stewardship and conservation
- Habitat and park partnership efforts between nonprofit entities and Xcel Energy that preserve, restore, conserve and improve wildlife habitat, open lands, wetlands, parks, trail systems or recreational areas
- Natural resource conservation projects that help protect natural resources, or build awareness for natural resource conservation, including interactive exhibits and displays at museums and other public facilities, with an emphasis on water conservation.

### **Cornell Douglas Foundation**

Provides small grants to organizations that promote the vision of advocating for environmental health and justice, encouraging stewardship of the environment and furthering respect for stability of resources.

### **Local organizations, Advisory Groups and Friends Groups**

Funding information was sourced from Blodgett process information and the North Cheyenne Cañon, Ute Valley Park, and Austin Bluffs Open Space master and management plans.









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