



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2022





TOP OF FISHERS PEAK

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Boulder Mountainbike Alliance
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City of Trinidad
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City of Trinidad Office of Outdoor Recreation

City of Trinidad Tourism Board / Colorado Welcome Center
Cloud City Wheelers Bike Club
Colorado Correctional Industries / Department of Correction
Colorado Department of Public Safety - Division of Fire Prevention and Control
Colorado Department of Transportation
Colorado Division of Water Resources
Colorado Farm Bureau
Colorado Mountain Bike Coalition
Colorado Mountain Club
Colorado Natural Heritage Program
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Colorado Partners in Amphibians and Reptiles
Colorado Search and Rescue Association
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado State Land Board
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Colorado Watershed Workgroups
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Continental Divide Trail Coalition
Corazón de Trinidad Creative District
CPW State Trails Committee
Culebra Range Community Coalition
Curly's Bead and Gifts Emporium
Denver Audubon Society
Fremont Adventure Recreation
Friends of Greenhorn Mountain Trails
Frontier Archery Club
GALS Inc. / The Girls Athletic Leadership Schools
Great Outdoors Colorado
GreenLatino
HECHO (Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors)
High Mountain Institute
History Colorado
Hoehne Fire Protection District
Inclusive Journeys
Indigenous Roots
International Mountain Bicycling Association
Kip Hampden, LLLP

Kit Carson Riding Club

La Veta Trails
Las Animas County
Las Animas County Search and Rescue
Latino Outdoors
Legacy Core Scanning, LLC
Local World Journal
Marchetti Cattle Ranch
Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates
Milordo Farms
Moltrer Brothers LLC
Mt. Carmel Health, Wellness & Community Center
National Park Service
National Wild Turkey Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
New Mexico State Parks
Next 100 Colorado
Outdoor Buddies
Overland Mountain Bike Association
Phil Long Toyota
Pueblo Archaeological & Historical Society
Purgatoire Valley Const Inc.
Purgatoire Valley Foundation
Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
Rising Routes
Rising Sun Distillery
Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen
Rocky Mountain Elk foundation
Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI)
San Isabel Electric Association
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Sangre de Cristo Group Sierra Club
Santa Fe Trail Association
Sierra Club
SIFT Visuals LLC
Singletrack Trails Inc.
Southern Colorado Trail Builders
Sportspersons Roundtable
Sugarite Canyon State Park
The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society

Tourism Board

TPA / COHVCO
Trinidad Ambulance District
Trinidad Carnegie Library
Trinidad Downtown Development Group
Trinidad Entertainment District
Trinidad Fire
Trinidad Lounge & Hotel
Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Trinidad Public Library
Trinidad State College
Trinidad Trails Alliance
Trinidad Youth Club
Trinidaddio Blues Fest
Trust for Public Land
Visit La Junta (City of La Junta)
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HIKING TOWARDS FISHERS PEAK ON THE LONE CLUB TRAIL



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





OLD EXIT 8 ENTRANCE GATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) began as a partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Trust for Public Lands (TPL), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the City of Trinidad. From the onset, the two project pillars established by the partners were to guide master planning for the Park: 1) Provide world-class recreational opportunities in a way to protect and promote 2) Long-term ecological conservation.



Fishers Peak

1. About the Plan

The FPSP Master Plan is intended to be used as a guiding document to ensure that the comprehensive vision for the Park is not lost over time. The Plan also provides infrastructure development guidance and implementation strategies. The Master Plan includes seven (7) key sections.

1. A project introduction providing the history and background of the project, along with the purpose of the Plan and a summary of the planning process
2. The Visioning and Goals for the Plan, as developed by the Partner Organizations, in concert with the Stakeholders
3. A description of the Stakeholders and public involvement process, including Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) outreach
4. A description of the existing site conditions including natural resources, cultural resources and physical site conditions
5. Project infrastructure development recommendations including recreational, park management and habitat enhancement opportunities
6. Implementation recommendations including phasing and capital expenditure estimates
7. An appendix with interim master planning reports and deliverables, such as the Opportunities and Challenges Memo, natural resource support documents and the planning concept alternatives

CPW will prepare a Stewardship Plan to synthesize existing information about the Park's natural and cultural resources including current and future desired conditions and prioritized management recommendations to protect these natural assets. A Management Plan will then follow as the framework for setting management priorities and providing specific management direction for park resources.

FPSP is over 19,200-acres in size and approximately 30 square miles of very rugged terrain. While the steep ridges, tight canyons, rock outcrops and dense vegetation make for challenging park development, they also allow for trail and park infrastructure configurations that provide a backcountry feel, while minimizing habitat impact. FPSP has more than enough high-quality habitat to support a backcountry/wildland experience for park users, while also conserving several very large habitat blocks for wildlife.

Rising 3,000-feet in elevation from west to east, FPSP transitions through five (5) life zones, within 4 miles, that will provide visitors with multiple settings and experiences within a single outing. Trails can traverse open meadows, tall forests and dense shrublands, which will provide a constant sense of transition and discovery.

The Park is wild, but as a former working ranch it is not pristine. As a result of past land uses, there are multiple existing disturbances including over 90 miles of ranch roads, corrals, human-made ponds and pastures. These existing disturbances provide opportunities to site and cluster new park infrastructure in a manner that will reduce new ecological impacts. Most of these existing disturbances are located along the western edge of the Park, adjacent to the Interstate 25 (I-25) corridor. Some of the existing roads are desirable for administrative or recreational use,



Aspen Grove Base of Fishers Peak Mesa Cliffs



Grey Fox

2. Project Goals

CPW, working with the Partner Organizations and stakeholders, developed the following project goals that will be emphasized in the Master Plan. These goals were supported by stakeholders as being important across all engagement phases and activities:

- Emphasis on protecting natural resources and unique landscapes of the Park
- Desire for varied types of recreation opportunities that do not significantly impact existing nature (e.g., trail to the peak, backcountry opportunities, skills courses and connection to public lands in New Mexico)
- Interest in unique experiences that are not found elsewhere in the region (e.g., lookouts, wildlife viewing, challenging recreational trails and climbing)
- Interest in connecting park operations to the community (e.g., community economic benefit, education partnerships and community opportunities to learn and give back)
- Desire for unique education, interpretation and creative experiences (e.g., ongoing research and science activities and connection to arts and art community, such as painting and photography)
- Interest in the preservation and recognition of history and culture of the Park (e.g., tribes, grazing and agriculture)
- Emphasis on inclusive and equitable recreation and visitation opportunities (e.g., Spanish translation and mobility access issues)
- Recognition of challenges related to park management and operations (e.g., managing high visitation rates, timeline for Master Plan implementation and the Park should not be “everything to everyone”)
- Recognition for phasing of infrastructure and programming over time. Ensuring adequate budget and staffing to support and manage visitation and respond to community/visitor needs and interests (education and volunteer coordination)
- Importance of having guidance and clarity between what is in the Master Plan and what is in future management plans (e.g., policy guidance around front country and backcountry recreational opportunities vs. specific decisions about seasonal closures)



Backcountry Hiking



Front Country Toad Stools



Fishers Peak Mesa as Seen from Fishers Peak

3. Vision for FPSP

One of the most frequent comments made by the community was the desire to maintain the natural environment and landscape of FPSP, with as little human impact as possible. Based on the initial biological assessments of FPSP, the two pillars and the community’s desires for the Park, FPSP is being planned and designed as a largely backcountry recreational experience focused on wild land and wildlife conservation.

Vision Statement

Vision for Property: As it has for eons, Fishers Peak continues to provide for the life that thrives there and serves as a destination for those inspired by all that nature offers for generations to come

Blueprint to Achieve Vision: Fishers Peak State Park offers a unique and synergistic blend of resource conservation, recreation, education, economic benefit and cultural significance to the City of Trinidad, Las Animas County and the State of Colorado.



4. Management Zones

Based on CPW’s Management Zoning Scheme for State Parks, biological resources, topography and the vision for FPSP informed establishment of Protection, Natural, Passive Recreation and Development zones. While trail development and park administrative road access will occur in all management zones to some degree, there is very little development proposed for the “Protection” zone that is seen as prime habitat to be largely protected for wildlife use. The level of development increases through each subsequent management zone with the “Development” zone being the zone with the greatest level of development. The “Development” zone includes the public roads, trailheads, visitors’ center, developed camping, skills courses, cabins and a higher density of trail development. The “Protection” and “Natural” zones make up approximately 90% of the Park area. The “Passive Recreation and Development” zones occur along the western edge of the Park and in the northwest corner of the Park, which are the areas with the greatest levels of existing disturbances from previous land uses. Going from west to east and north to south, FPSP becomes progressively more wild and natural. This condition is driven by existing habitat quality, roughness of the terrain and levels of disturbance.

Within the “Protection” zone, some habitat areas will require seasonal closures to protect critical breeding periods, including the peregrine falcons that nest on Fishers Peak and elk calving areas in the southern parts of FPSP. The importance of protecting and maintaining the function of these habitats limits areas that are available for trails, infrastructure and visitor use.



Work Groups Site Visit



Work Groups Site Visit

5. Stakeholder Engagement

Since its launch in April 2020, the FPSP Master Plan has maintained a strong emphasis on stakeholder and public engagement. With a dual focus on local (Trinidad and Las Animas County) and statewide engagement, the Planning Team has developed multiple avenues for receiving input from individuals and organizations interested in the planning process.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: BY THE NUMBERS	
Partner Engagement	6 Project Partner Organizations (CPW, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, GOCO, City of Trinidad and Las Animas County) 1 Kick-off Visioning Workshop Weekly Leadership/Partner Meetings Regular Communication Between Partners at Key Intervals Purpose: Project partners have been integral to making Fishers Peak State Park a reality and shaping the Master Plan. They have provided essential input at each phase of the process.
Work Groups	3 Work Groups (Science and Recreation, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication, City of Trinidad and Las Animas County) 45 Total Members 6 Rounds of Meetings (5 virtual, 1 onsite tour and workshop) Purpose: Provide technical and local expertise throughout the process at critical milestones
Equity and Inclusivity Panel	15 Members (local and statewide representatives) 1 Workshop 1 Member Survey Purpose: Provided review of the project Engagement and Communication Plan focusing on equity- and inclusivity-related issues
Interest Groups	15 Interest Groups 134 Participants 2 Rounds of Meetings (1 virtual, 1 onsite tour and workshop) Purpose: Representatives of organizations provide input related to specific project domains (e.g., conservation, recreation, hunting, local businesses, etc.)
Tribal Consultation	48 Tribes Contacted via Letter 4 Onsite Tours and Consultations
Public Survey	1 Round 518 total responses (conducted June and July 2021)
Public Meetings	4 Meetings (2 virtual, 2 in-person with virtual options) 175+ Total Attendees
Comment Form	278 Total Online Comments (All documented and responded to)



6. Summary of Recommended Park Improvements

The main Park entrance will be located at the northwest corner of the Park, adjacent to I-25 about one (1) mile south of Exit 11. The Park entrance road will provide access to three (3) major trailheads including the existing trailhead, the existing Park Headquarters Complex, the Visitors Center/camping services facility and approximately 100 developed camping sites.

FPSP is set up into four (4) unique access zones based on access to the Park from I-25 Exits 11 and 2, the existence of unique experience areas, parking availability and development phasing. These access zones include: 1) the Park entrance trailhead, 2) existing "First Look" Trailhead, 3) Headquarters and Visitors Center Trailheads and 4) the Exit 2 Trailhead. As a result, each access zone has its own experiences and destinations that will require their own functional trail system for access.

The Park entrance trailhead will likely be most heavily used by local residents and connect directly to the City of Trinidad by a city-planned trail connection from downtown.

To accommodate many different hiking skill levels, the Headquarters/Visitors Center Trailheads will provide access to several shorter trail loops in the lower Clear Creek drainage. These trail loops provide close-in opportunities for environmental education, access to nature and views. Trails will connect the Headquarters, Visitors Center, developed camping and larger park trail system. A beginner-level mountain bike downhill-only trail from the campground will be provided as well.

The Exit 2 trailhead will be controlled by permit access only for all recreational users. Mountain bikers and hikers will have access to the larger park trail system, as well as regional trails connecting to Sugarite Canyon State Park in New Mexico. A hunting and equestrian campground will also be developed with access to an equestrian skills course and access for backcountry hunting.

The FPSP trail system will include about 85-100 miles of trails within the Park. To provide a quality visitor experience and avoid conflict and congestion, the trail system deliberately includes multiple hiking-only and biking-only trails in the front country areas. Additionally, there are equestrian-only trails and multi-use trails throughout the larger parkwide trail system. The larger park trail system uses a series of efficiently designed stacked loops with backcountry camping to access the upper elevations of the Park and accommodate longer hikes and rides, including multiple day hikes for backpackers.



First Look Trail Construction



1

INTRODUCTION





NORTH FACE FISHERS PEAK

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the community was founded in 1862, Fishers Peak has towered over the City of Trinidad. Fishers Peak's profile is one of the most iconic sights in southern Colorado fueling the hopes of those adventurous enough to want to scale its 9,633-ft. peak. However, the access has always been long restricted to the property's owners and a handful of lucky visitors until the Crazy French Ranch was purchased in 2019.

1.1 Context and Background (History and Partnerships)

In 2017, Jay Cimino, a well-known community member and philanthropist, approached Mayor Phil Rico in Trinidad about the potential of purchasing a portion of Fishers Peak's property as a park for Trinidad residents. Knowing the former property owner, Mayor Phil Rico was intrigued by the idea and agreed to accompany Cimino and others on a tour of the property. After confirming the property was indeed for sale, the "Gang of 14" (Cimino, Mayor Rico, Tom and Linda Perry, the Trinidad City Manager and additional friends and family) visited the property for a tour and lunch. Over lunch, the group discussed the potential to purchase about 4,600 acres of the property just south of Trinidad, including the area that contained Fishers Peak. Following this tour and conversation, Mayor Rico asked Trinidad City Council for approval to pursue the purchase of Fishers Peak and this permission was granted. In the fall of 2017, Mayor Rico connected with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to partner on the property purchase and management.

Not only were TNC and the TPL supportive of the land acquisition, but they also proposed buying the entire 19,200 acres to help protect the area's rich natural assets. To help complete the purchase, the three partners engaged Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO, a lottery-funded organization that provides funding for outdoor recreation and conservation) for funding and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) for property management.

Just over a year after the initial idea to purchase 4,600 acres of property, the TPL, TNC, CPW, GOCO and the City of Trinidad agreed to a plan to see the property become Colorado's 42nd state park to be owned by CPW. On February 28, 2019, the 30 square mile property was purchased by TNC and the TPL for approximately \$25.45 million.

In September 2019, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed an executive order officially paving the way for CPW to purchase the property and designating it as Colorado's 42nd state park.

On April 2, 2020, a little over a year after the initial purchase, CPW purchased the property from The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land. By using a combination of open space and outdoor recreation funding from Great Outdoors Colorado and CPW Habitat Stamp funds, as well as over \$2 million contributed by TPL, TNC and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. Habitat Stamp funds are generated by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and are designated to conserve important fish and wildlife habitat.

On July 16, 2020, the CPW Commission formally approved naming the property, Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP).

Because FPSP has been under private ownership for so long, much of the area remains as it was when used for ranching, which will provide significant opportunities to conserve and protect natural resources. While some areas in FPSP will provide first-class outdoor recreation, all activities will be balanced with the goals of preserving areas of natural habitat and providing stewardship opportunities that will connect humans to nature.



Front Country Rock Outcrops



Meadow View

1.2 Planning Process

The approach to developing the Master Plan encompassed onsite data collection and analysis, local community involvement and outreach, stakeholder engagement at the regional and state-wide levels and collaboration and guidance from a variety of subject-matter experts (largely from partner organizations). Through a collaborative and iterative approach, the Master Plan was informed by both science and public sentiment and in doing so, worked to find the right balance between the necessity for protecting the Park with the opportunity for meaningful human access and recreation.

When the Planning Team was established, the first task was to work with the partners (CPW, City of Trinidad, TNC, TPL and GOCO) to articulate the importance and inner workings of the partnership. Together, the Planning Team developed operating protocols and decision-making processes which identified key values of each partner, project leads, partner roles and responsibilities, a decision-making protocol in which all voices could be heard and communications and consensus building mechanisms. The development of these operating protocols laid a foundation for the partnership and formulated how communication and engagement would work moving forward. The partners also agreed early on to formally bring Las Animas County into the partnership to ensure regional interests were incorporated.

With an effective partnership structure in place, the partners turned their focus to the property itself. Fishers Peak, a property and not a park at the time, was already an important aspect of the partner's work. By spring of 2020, significant activity was already underway on the property, including efforts to understand its biology, ecology, geology and history. The partners had developed a deep understanding of the property itself and through developing Vision and Focus Areas were able to further articulate the importance of the space.

The Planning Team embarked on a large undertaking to further understand the landscape as well as gather input and information from the local and statewide community. The following graphic outlines key phases of the Master Plan process as well as check-in points with stakeholders.

FISHERS PEAK MASTER PLAN PROCESS

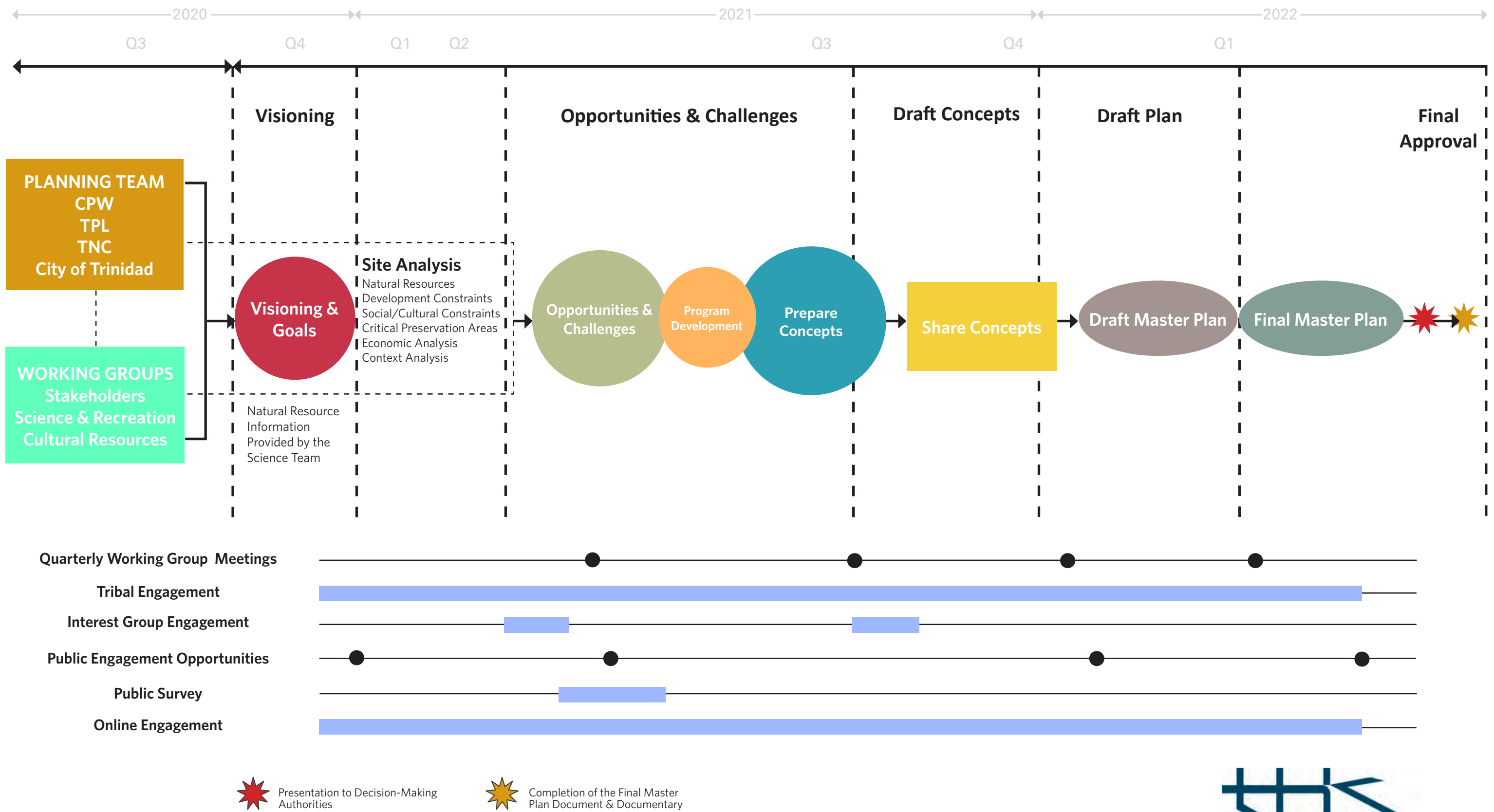


Figure 1



While subsequent sections of this document will further detail the facets of the Master Plan, a few highlights include:

Listening to the Community: One of the most successful ways the Planning Team found to engage stakeholders was to bring them on to the property. The Planning Team spent three days in the fall of 2021 taking participants around the site, Tribe site visits and gathering information on the proposed plan—leading to greater relationships with stakeholders as well as increased community buy-in for the Park framework.

Listening to the Landscape: In addition to listening to stakeholders, the Planning Team spent over 100 days over the course of the project getting to know the landscape, geography, ecosystems and looking at opportunities for both recreation and conservation. This was a crucial tenet to the planning process to better understand viable options from a landscape-focused perspective.

These input sources were main drivers of the Master Plan, as the Planning Team sought to weave together findings from the landscape and stakeholder interests. Input was gathered at key points in the planning process and that input helped inform key tenets of the plan: the Vision and Focus Areas, strategies for achieving the Park vision, interest groups involvement, development of the Park framework, identification of recreation types and needs on the Park and drafting of the schematic design.

COVID-19: The Master Plan began just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit the US. The entirety of the master planning project occurred during varying COVID restriction phases, providing both challenges and opportunities. Many events shifted to virtual, allowing for greater flexibility and participation around the state, while challenging the Planning Team to build relationships with stakeholders on the ground. The Planning Team adapted to be nimble, but also to achieve progress under timeline constraints. Overall, the project was able to stay on schedule and engage a wide variety of stakeholders both virtually and in-person.

1.3 Purpose of Plan (Master Plan vs Management Plan)

The FPSP Master Plan is an overarching infrastructure development guide that will help identify the desired future park conditions and help determine long-term physical development of the Park. The FPSP Master Plan will be used as a guiding document to ensure that the comprehensive vision for the Park is not lost over time. The Master Plan also provides a mechanism to define phasing and development strategies for implementation. At this point in time, the document reflects the sentiment of CPW staff and stakeholders, but will allow for adaptation and development of ideas throughout the duration of the project's life.

Another important purpose for developing this Master Plan is to attract and engage Project Partner Organizations with FPSP. Whether it is building and maintaining trails, developing recreation programs or simply making a donation to the Park, partnerships will be critical to the realization of the Park. The Master Plan will ensure that there is a system set up to receive this assistance and it will be directed to the appropriate phase or project.

The Master Plan developed an all-encompassing theme for the Park as a backcountry, wildland experience, much different than other state parks. This theme provides the framework for this Master Plan and for the forthcoming FPSP Management Plan that is being prepared by CPW. The ultimate purpose of developing a park management plan is to plan for both the public enjoyment and for protection of the Park's resources. The FPSP Management Plan provides a conceptual planning framework for setting management priorities and providing specific management direction for park resources.



On the Top of Fishers Peak



CONSULTANT TEAM SITE VISIT



② VISION /GOALS





TOP OF BARTLETT MESA

2 VISION / GOALS

2.1 Vision and Focus Areas

As a first step in defining the vision for the Park (previously property), the partners refined the initial “pillars” that were foundational in guiding the purchase and initial development steps. Prior to the property being named a State Park, partner organizations identified world-class recreation as well as habitat conservation as the two main tenets of property development. Upon the property becoming a state park, the conversation expanded to include additional vision elements and focus areas to help guide the Planning Team throughout the Master Plan development process.

Process for Identifying Vision and Focus Areas:

1. The Partner Organizations took the Community Vision Report and identified main themes as a springboard to the Master Plan visioning effort. The Community Vision Report was conducted pre-Master Plan and identified strategies, themes and ideas for the property from community members, youth, elected and appointed officials, among others in the local community.
2. The Planning Team facilitated a large group visioning session, bringing together work group members from all project partners to discuss and refine visioning elements.
3. The Planning Team, representing each partner organization, refined the large group input into six concise focus area elements and a vision statement.
4. During the first outreach to the community under the Master Plan, the Vision and Focus Areas were presented to the general public in order to gather additional feedback for final refinement.

Vision and Focus Areas

Vision for Property: As it has for eons, Fishers Peak continues to provide for the life that thrives there and serves as a destination for those inspired by all that nature offers for generations to come

Blueprint to Achieve Vision: Fishers Peak State Park offers a unique and synergistic blend of resource conservation, recreation, education, economic benefit and cultural significance to the City of Trinidad, Las Animas County and the State of Colorado.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife Are Maintained, Conserved and Protected

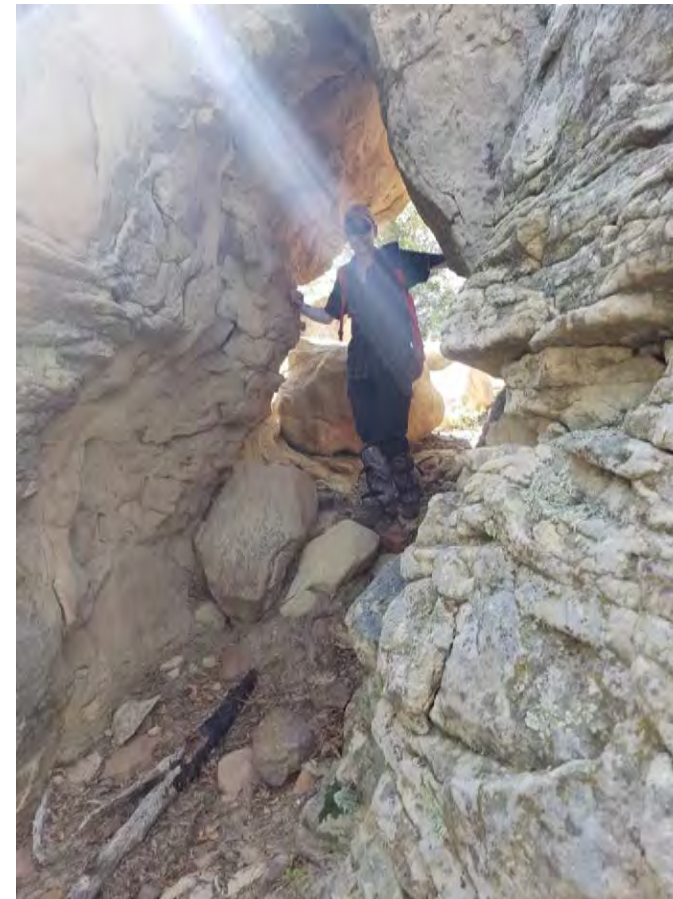
Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

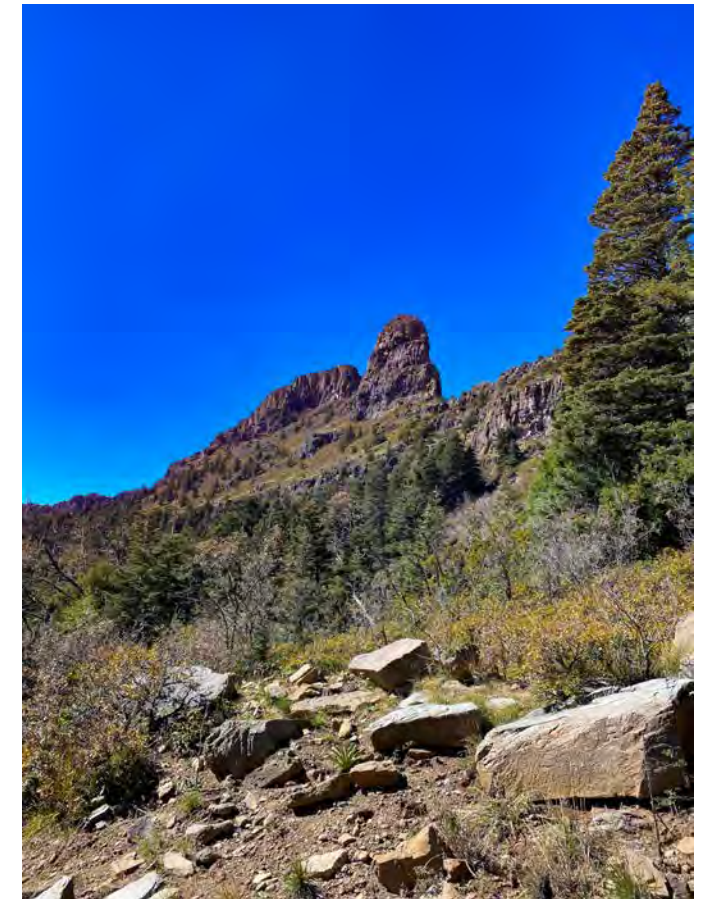
Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context of the Qualities and Character of the Local Community

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along With Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives
From All Vision and Focus Areas



Nature and Light



East Face of Fishers Peak

The Vision and Focus Areas guided all subsequent outreach and analysis on the property. For example, the Vision and Focus Areas were the foundation for both the categorization and recruitment for the Interest Group conversations, underpinned the development of questions guiding interest group discussion and provided structure for developing criteria to evaluate various park concepts and success of the Master Plan.

2.2 Evaluation Criteria

Based on the Vision and Focus Areas as well as public input around themes for the Park, the Planning Team identified key evaluation criteria when considering specific development components, including the campground location, visitors' center location, trail system, among other infrastructure. The Planning Team used these criteria to make decisions based on the tradeoffs. (see the Appendix, B.1.)



PRICKLY PEAR



3 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC PROCESS





SOUTH CLIFF FACE OF FISHERS PEAK

3 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC PROCESS

3.1 The Importance of Engagement

Fishers Peak has been a cherished symbol of home for Indigenous Tribes, the City of Trinidad and Las Animas County for decades. Throughout the public involvement process for the Master Plan, the Planning Team was often reminded of the significance of the iconic peak to the local community. Many local residents took the time to share stories of grandparents and great grandparents living, working and playing on or around the 19,200-acre property. This long-standing significance to the nearby communities served as the foundation and impetus for robust Stakeholder Engagement throughout the planning process. In addition, the opportunity to create both a conservation haven and recreation destination made the Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) Master Plan an important project for statewide and regional stakeholders. From the project’s launch, ensuring an inclusive and diverse range of voices was emphasized as a priority for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and Partner Organizations.



Interest Group Presentation

Table 1

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: BY THE NUMBERS	
Partner Engagement	6 Project Partner Organizations [CPW, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Trust for Public Land (TPL), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), City of Trinidad and Las Animas County] 1 Kick-off Visioning Workshop Weekly Leadership/Partner Meetings Regular Communication Between Partners at Key Intervals Purpose: Project partners have been integral to making FPSP a reality and shaping the Master Plan. They have provided essential input at each phase of the process.
Work Groups	3 Work Groups (Science and Recreation, Stakeholder Engagement and Communication, City of Trinidad and Las Animas County) 45 Total Members 6 Rounds of Meetings (5 virtual, 1 onsite tour and workshop) Purpose: Provide technical and local expertise throughout the process at critical milestones
Equity and Inclusivity Panel	15 Members (local and statewide representatives) 1 Workshop 1 Member Survey Purpose: Provided review of the project Engagement and Communication Plan focusing on equity- and inclusivity-related issues
Interest Groups	15 Interest Groups 134 Participants 2 Rounds of Meetings (1 virtual, 1 onsite tour and workshop) Purpose: Representatives of organizations provide input related to specific project domains (e.g., conservation, recreation, hunting, local businesses, etc.)
Tribal Consultation	48 Tribes Contacted via Letter 4 Onsite Tours and Consultations
Public Survey	1 Round 518 total responses (conducted June and July 2021)
Public Meetings	4 Meetings (2 virtual, 2 in-person with virtual options) 175+ Total Attendees



Work Group Onsite



3.2 Engagement Process Overview

The Fishers Peak Engagement and Communication Plan (Appendix, E.5.) was developed based on the Community Vision Report and themes elicited from the Partner Visioning Workshop. The Plan relies on principles from the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, which recommends increasing levels of engagement across different stakeholder groups depending on their level of interest, expertise and the extent to which they will be impacted by the project. To ensure the necessary stakeholders were engaged at the appropriate level and a clear mechanism was in place for applying public input toward project decisions, CPW and the Planning Team developed a structure that included several interconnected levels of engagement (see graphic below).

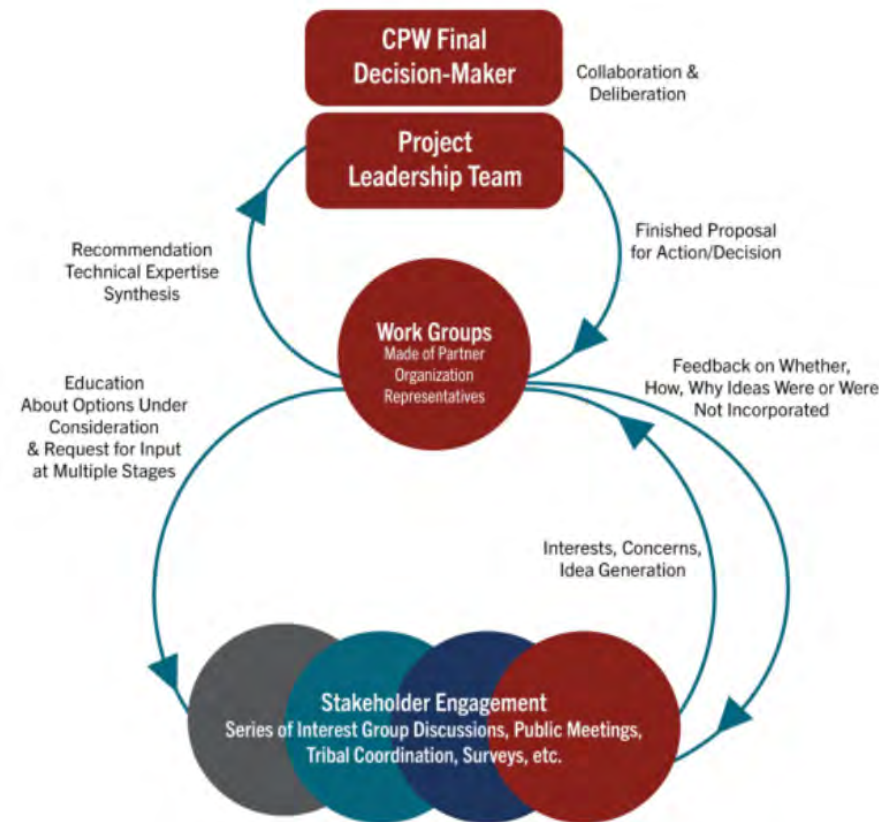


Figure 2

- **CPW**, as ultimate steward of the property, was responsible for all final decisions.
- **Partner Organizations** (City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, TNC, TPL and GOCO) were heavily involved throughout the project and helped bring the State Park from idea to reality. Partner Organizations were responsible for developing concepts, providing strategic guidance and identifying critical decision points.
- **Work Groups**, made up of representatives from Partner Organizations with specialized expertise, were responsible for analyzing findings from the onsite analyses and public input, while also providing process suggestions.
- **The general public and stakeholder groups** provided input through a variety of engagement opportunities (both virtual and in-person), which was then considered by the Work Groups and Partner Organizations and brought to CPW for final decision making.

3.3 Timeline and Phasing

Phase 1 Visioning: The first phase of the master planning effort focused on developing a shared Vision for the property and key Focus Areas (see Section 2.1). These concepts served as the foundation for guiding all future engagement initiatives and developing opportunities, challenges and success criteria for the Master Plan. The Visioning Phase was anchored by a kickoff Visioning Workshop among Partner Organizations, followed by Work Group meetings and a public meeting wherein stakeholders further refined and eventually finalized the concepts for approval by CPW. Project Work Group membership and communication protocols were also identified during this phase.

- The Visioning Phase took place during the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) quarters of 2020 and the first (1st) quarter of 2021 and included the following engagement activities:
 - Partner Organizations Visioning Workshop
 - Work Group Kickoff Meetings
 - Drafting of the Engagement and Communications Plan
 - Review of the Engagement and Communications Plan by Equity Advisory Panel
 - Public Information Session #1
 - Ongoing online engagement through the project website.

Phase 1 Stakeholder Input: Stakeholder Input during the Visioning Phase resulted in the Park’s Vision and Focus Areas (see Section 2.1). Additionally, potential phasing strategies were developed for implementing the Focus Areas (see Section 6.2) and diversity, equity and inclusion recommendations were also elicited during this phase and throughout the planning process.

Phase 1 Input included in the confirmation of the Vision and Focus Areas.

Table 2

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS	
CPW, Project Partners and stakeholders expressed interest in ensuring that FPSP is a place welcoming and inclusive for all who visit. Over the course of the engagement process, several specific recommendations were developed focused on promoting equity, inclusion and accessibility, including:	
Spanish Translation	Ensure signage, informational and educational material and other communications are available in both English and Spanish.
Focus on Tribal and Indigenous History	Preserve and share the rich tribal history through education, memorialization and partnerships.
Accessibility for People with Physical Limitations	Create opportunities and facilities accessible to those with physical limitations.
Youth/Education Opportunities	Ensure FPSP offers a variety of education opportunities for local and visiting youth.





Looking North from Bartlett Mesa



Community Engagement at Park Grand Opening

Phase 2 Opportunities and Challenges Identified by Stakeholders: Building on the Vision and Focus Areas, the second phase of engagement sought to gain a deeper understanding of stakeholder interests related to Fishers Peak. The objective during Phase 2 was to identify and refine opportunities, challenges and success criteria for the Master Plan.

The Opportunities and Challenges Phase took place during the second (2nd) and third (3rd) quarters of 2021 and included the following engagement activities:

- Virtual Interest Group Discussions
- Public Survey
- Work Group Meetings
- Public Information Session #2
- Engagement Gaps Analysis
- Ongoing online engagement through the project website

Phase 2 Stakeholder Input: Key opportunities and challenges elicited from stakeholders are listed below. [Note: More detailed information and input from Phase 2 is available in the Interest Group Report Summary (see Appendix) and Public Survey Report (see Appendix).]

Table 3

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General appreciation to be engaged with the Master Plan • Emphasis on protecting natural resources and unique landscape of the Park • Desire for varied types of recreation opportunities that do not significantly impact existing nature • Interest in unique experiences that aren't found elsewhere in the region (lookouts, wildlife viewing, challenging recreational trails, etc.) • Importance of tying the Park operations to the community (community economic benefit and community opportunities to learn and give back) • Opportunity for unique education, interpretation and creative experiences • Desire for inclusive and equitable recreation and visitation opportunities • Preservation and recognition of history and culture of the Park (tribes, grazing and ag) • Quality trails for easier maintenance • Opportunities to partner with local, regional and state organizations and agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the challenge of the park management and operations— opportunities to collaborate regionally (emergency services, businesses, volunteer groups, etc.) • Need for appropriate infrastructure and staffing to manage visitation and respond to community/visitor needs and interests (education/volunteer coordinator) • Landscape challenges and opportunities that may drive recreation and land use • Differing recreational interests and needs • Community's desire for economic benefit may drive over-development of the Park • Visitor management across state park lines • A Sugarite Canyon State Park connection to FPSP
<p>*See proposed Evaluation Criteria in the Interest Group Report Summary (see Appendix).</p>	



Phase 3 Draft Concepts: Having amassed significant input throughout the first two phases of engagement, while also building strong relationships with stakeholders, the Planning Team began drafting detailed park concepts during Phase 3. The Draft Concepts were then presented to Interest Groups, Work Groups and the public for comment and further refinement.

- The Draft Concepts Phase took place during the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) quarters of 2021 and included the following engagement activities:
 - Combined Interest and Work Group Onsite Tours
 - Public Information Session #3
 - Ongoing online engagement through the project website

Phase 3 Stakeholder Input: Stakeholder input throughout all engagement activities during the Draft Concepts Phase was divided into categories relevant to further refinement of the Master Plan, including: General Input, Main Park Entrance, Developed Camping, Trailheads, Visitors Center Location, Backcountry Camping, Recreational Use, Habitat Conservation and Stakeholders. High-level themes in these categories are listed below.

Table 4

GENERAL INPUT
Appreciation for integration of stakeholder input into the draft Plan
Overall excitement about the concepts presented during Draft Concepts Phase
Support for Data-Driven Decision-Making
Interest in further discussion and information around seasonal closures
Interest in Master and Management Plan differentiation

MAIN PARK ENTRANCE
General support for location of the Park entrance

DEVELOPED CAMPING
General support for selected campground locations
Preferences for amenities included running water, electrical capabilities and accommodation of larger vehicles
Interest in ensuring the number of sites will accommodate capacity needs

TRAILHEADS
Enthusiasm for potential connection to Sugarite State Park, New Mexico
Interest in a trail connection to the City of Trinidad

VISITORS CENTER LOCATION
Appreciation of the location selected for the Visitors Center
Emphasis on developing accessible trails near the Visitors Center for families and individuals with varying abilities

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING
Interest in understanding amenities for backcountry campsites, including the use of bear boxes and water access
Potential concerns related to the proximity of one backcountry campsite to a more developed camping location

RECREATIONAL USE
Equestrian - Interest in as few trail closures as possible, requests to consider if opportunities to allow additional access along other trail corridors in the Park
Mountain Biking - Interest in mountain biking from the top of the Raton Pass to the Park entrance (though the landscape makes this kind of ride challenging) and additional trail options for single-use mountain biking
Hunting - Interest in more information on types and number of hunters, desire to maintain a backcountry feel means hunters should not have motorized access
Motorized Access - Interest in motorized access and a potential OHV (off-highway vehicle) course in the northern portion of the Park
Large Events - Interest in how the space can accommodate larger events (races, ranger talks, etc.)
Dogs - Interest in bringing dogs to the Park, even if only on designated trails.

HABITAT CONSERVATION
Excitement to maintain habitat, appreciation for emphasis on conservation in Master Plan
Interest in learning more about how wildlife corridors were considered as part of the planning process

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
Interest in ensuring additional tribal consultation would occur prior to the finalization of the Master Plan (Note: Further tribal consultation did occur during subsequent phases)
Interest in ensuring facilities were accessible to elders, people using wheelchairs and other interested individuals
Interest in language access for Spanish speakers, encouragement for the Park management team to consider signage and other communications in both English and Spanish
Interest in maintaining historical integrity through ongoing analysis to better understand the history of the Park, emphasis on inclusion of all facets of the history (indigenous, grazing, etc.)



Phase 4 Draft Plan: The Draft Plan phase involved finalizing schematic designs for park features and drafting the Master Plan. These were brought to the Work Groups during a joint Work Group session for review and discussion. The Draft Plan phase took place during the first quarter of 2022 and involved the following engagement activities:

- Combined Work Group Meeting
- Public Information Session #4 (in-person)
- Ongoing online engagement through the project website

Over 125 people attended the final Public Information Session held in Trinidad to provide feedback on the Plan. The Project Team gave a presentation focusing on the schematic designs followed by an open house for participants to review the materials and ask questions. The public expressed a lot of support for the Plan and appreciation for being engaged in the discussions. Specific feedback included:

Community Support: Elected officials, community members, and partners expressed excitement about the outcomes of the plan. Many appreciated the speed of completion, and the partners expressed their enthusiasm that the plan reflected many of their initial ideas, concepts, and goals for the property.

Conservation and Recreation: Partners and public alike were encouraged to see information about the percentages of the Park that will be in protected and managed zones. Many thought the plan struck the right balance between conservation and recreation.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The planning team received positive feedback regarding tribal engagement and consultation throughout the process. Some expressed ongoing interest in accessibility opportunities on the Park once it is built.

Trails and Connectivity: Many remain hopeful the connections between Fishers Peak and Sugarite Canyon in New Mexico will come to fruition. The proposed access to the Park was exciting for many, and some indicated interest in exploring opportunities for potential other community connection points.

Phasing: Recognizing build-out will last many years, members of the public were anxious to begin the Management Planning phase to better understand some specific management decisions in the Park (dogs, trail rules and regulations, etc.). Ongoing coordination and interpretation around the Park's history is an important way to continue to engage the local community.

Phase 5 Final Approval: The Final Approval phase involved finalizing the Master Plan, posting it for public comment on the project website and submitting it for approval by CPW.

The Final Approval phase took place during the first and second quarters of 2022 and involved the following engagement activities:

- Public Comment Period
- Ongoing online engagement through the project website

3.4 Input and Application

The Fishers Peak Draft Master Plan was released for public review and comment from September 9th - October 9th, 2022. 306 comment submissions were received. Input received during the comment period will inform future decisions for the park and the eventual Management Plan. Comments received were generally aligned with perspectives expressed by the public and stakeholder groups throughout the Master Planning process, and many of the comment themes are addressed in the Master Plan. Specific recommendations will be reviewed by CPW and considered for implementation.

CATEGORY	COMMENT THEME
Conservation	Recommendation to conduct ongoing habitat analysis, for hunting and wildlife closures to occur, and for monitoring to happen prior to infrastructure development
Conservation	Perspective that grazing is not conducive to maintaining the Park's ecological integrity
Recreation	Requests for a mix of green and blue level difficulty mountain bike trails, and gravel riding access on Park roads.
Recreation	Request for hike-to-yurt camping
Recreation	Request for opportunities for an ongoing trail restoration and clean-up program
Recreation	Requests for ample camping capacity and campgrounds that are adequately spaced
DEI	Requests for more opportunities for Hispanic/Latino engagement, including programs and facilities
DEI	Requests for more access for people with disabilities (including backcountry access)
Infrastructure	Recommendation to conduct building inspections of the habitable structures in the Park (especially the Low Star Lodge) prior to considering public use
Infrastructure	Requests for larger RV camping, with hookups
Infrastructure	Requests for RV electrical, water, and sewer facilities
Historic Preservation	Request to add historic plaque denoting the history of the Adobe structure at Exit 8
Historic Preservation	Support for preserving historic resources on the Amato property
Community Access	Requests to further consider and analyze additional trail access from downtown Trinidad
Cost	Questions about the viability and necessity of the total project cost, given other priorities
Misc.	Request to change references throughout the plan from "fire" to "wildfire"
Misc.	Many compliments and expressions of gratitude for the Master Plan and engagement process

Equestrian Specific Themes (Note: The survey link through which public comments were received was shared via Facebook with the group Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen leading to a significant number of comments focused on equestrian issues.)

CATEGORY	COMMENT THEME
Equestrian	Requests for expansion of equestrian-focused trail network
Equestrian	Requests to provide horse trailer parking and infrastructure (e.g. corrals, water access, camping sites)
Equestrian	Educational signage focused on best practices and trail etiquette for sharing trails with horses
Equestrian	Concern that seasonal hunting closures in the southern portion of the Park will preclude the best time for equestrian use

3.4 Input and Application

The goal of the stakeholder and public engagement process for the FPSP Master Plan was twofold: 1) elicit meaningful input with tangible application to the development of the Master Plan; and 2) to apply that input to decisions and final concepts in the Plan itself. Below are the key interests from stakeholders obtained throughout all phases of the engagement process and a description of how they inform the final Master Plan

Table 5

RELEVANT FOCUS AREA	STAKEHOLDER INTEREST	APPLICATION IN MASTER PLAN
Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife Are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected	Emphasis on protecting natural resources and unique landscape of the Park	The Master Plan reflects deliberate efforts to avoid or minimize impacts to natural resources and to integrate habitat restoration opportunities. Developed infrastructure and higher-intensity recreation is planned to occur in less than 10% of the Park, while the remaining 90% is slated for lower-intensity backcountry recreation and habitat conservation (See Sections 4.2.1, 5.2.2 and Appendix).
Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience	Desire for varied types of recreation opportunities that do not significantly impact existing nature (e.g., trail to the peak, backcountry opportunities and skills courses)	The Master Plan includes opportunities for hiking or trail running, backpacking, mountain biking, climbing, equestrianism and other recreation activities. Skills courses are included for biking and equestrianism. A backcountry experience is inherent to many of the proposed recreation opportunities (See Sections 5.2.2 and 5.4).
Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource	Interest in the preservation and recognition of history and culture of the Park (e.g., tribes, grazing and ag)	The Master Plan identifies and preserves cultural and historical resources in the Park and sets a framework for protection, interpretation and integration of those resources and the heritage that they represent (see Sections 4.2.2 and 5.6.1).

RELEVANT FOCUS AREA	STAKEHOLDER INTEREST	APPLICATION IN MASTER PLAN
Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors	Desire for unique education, interpretation and creative experiences (e.g., ongoing research and science activities, connection to arts and art community—such as painting and photography)	The Master Plan includes a variety of opportunities for education, interpretation and creative experiences. The Visitors Center may serve as a hub for these activities. The trail system includes interpretive signage. Future education and/or creative programming is anticipated, including ongoing onsite research and potential citizen science opportunities.
	Emphasis on inclusive and equitable recreation and visitation opportunities (e.g., Spanish translation and mobility access issues)	The Master Plan recommends multiple opportunities for inclusive and equitable recreation, including diverse trail and interpretive experiences that are accessible to a broad range of visitors.
Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context of the Qualities and Character of the Local Community	Interest in unique experiences that aren't found elsewhere in the region.	The Master Plan provides unique and rewarding destinations and experiences (including high peaks, rugged canyons and backcountry trails) that are new to the region, will improve the quality of life for local residents and create a destination for visitors from beyond the local community.
	Interest in connecting park operations to the community (e.g., community economic benefit, education partnerships and community opportunities to learn and give back)	Through the planning process, strong relationships have been developed between CPW, the City of Trinidad and Las Animas County communities that can be leveraged for specific partnering opportunities such as events and programs.
Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas	Recognition of challenges related to park management and operations (e.g., managing high visitation rates, timeline for Master Plan implementation and Park should not be "everything to everyone")	The Master Plan anticipates infrastructure and management needs, provides guidance regarding future management and operations and sets a phasing strategy for implementation (see Section 6.2).
	Recognition for phasing of infrastructure and programming over time. Ensuring adequate budget and staffing to support and manage visitation and respond to community/visitor needs and interests (education/volunteer coordination)	The Master Plan includes a proactive phasing strategy and a realistic estimate of costs to facilitate ongoing implementation as funding is available (see Sections 6.2 and 6.3).
	Importance of having guidance and clarity between what is in Master Plan and what is in future management plans (e.g., policy guidance around front country and backcountry recreational opportunities vs. specific decisions about seasonal closures)	The Master Plan provides guidance on areas related to public use and infrastructure management that will be further covered by the Management Plan (see Section 5.3).





4

EXISTING CONDITIONS





OLD GROWTH PONDEROSA

4 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1 Previous Plans and Studies

As discussed in Section 1.1, Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) was privately owned and named Crazy French Ranch from 1986 until February 28, 2019, when it was purchased by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Trust for Public Land (TPL). Up until the property was put under contract in December of 2018, no planning or analysis of the property as a public property had taken place.

After the purchase of the property, several planning and analysis efforts were initiated in 2019. These plans and studies were provided to the Planning Team, as they became available. This section provides a brief description of the previous plans and studies, along with a brief discussion of what the previous plans and studies contributed to the Master Plan process.

March 2019 - A Community Vision for Fishers Peak Ranch

After putting the Crazy French Ranch under contract in December 2018, the TPL and TNC, in partnership with the City of Trinidad, launched the “Fishers Peak Ranch Visioning Project.” This project aimed to build awareness of the ranch purchase and its eventual transfer to public ownership and to solicit the community’s ideas for how to shape the future use and protection of Trinidad’s beloved peak and property. Over 400 people shared their vision for the future of Fishers Peak Ranch.

This visioning report reflects the Trinidad community’s ideas, hopes and dreams for Fishers Peak Ranch and how it would be managed by project partners Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). A community’s vision that establishes a foundation for future planning efforts.

The report identified community goals, potential recreational uses, programming ideas and park facility desires. The community visioning project became the starting point for the FPSP Master Planning Process. All ideas and desires identified in the visioning project were considered in the Master Planning Process, with many of the ideas and desires becoming a part of the final Master Plan. The key theme or concept from the visioning process was the community’s desire to “Balance recreational use of the Park with natural resource conservation.”

Spring 2020 - Preliminary Recreation Assessment of Crazy French Ranch

TNC secured a Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) grant from the State of Colorado. The grant provided for the technical assistance of six (6) master’s candidate students from the University of Colorado Boulder’s Masters of the Environment (MENV) and Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs. These students were to help design and initiate an outdoor recreation industry engagement effort that laid the groundwork for continuing stakeholder engagement surrounding recreation and the high-quality natural resource benefits of the property.

A report was created to inform the Rapid Recreation Assessment being done by the Partner Organizations as part of the ‘open standards’ process for the future state park at Fishers Peak. This report included the findings of research conducted over a four-month period via literature review, site visits and interviews. It reviewed best management practices for seven (7) classes of recreation: hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, equestrian use, hunting, birdwatching and developed recreation, as established by this research. This report also examined the possible recreational uses in light of the three (3) overarching pillars of this project, which included protecting the Park’s natural and biological values, creating accessible and high-quality recreation opportunities and leveraging the State Park to benefit the cultural and educational future of the region.



Showing Dry-laid Stone Retaining Wall on the First Look Trail

The assessment identified overarching best practices that would apply to design and management of any outdoor space being used for recreation, including:

- Design for specific recreational uses and variety of abilities
- Provide an option for solitary experiences as much as possible
- Ensure adequate parking and trailhead amenities
- Provide camping opportunities to make the state park a destination
- Minimize compounding fees
- Keep diversity, equity and inclusion at the forefront of planning and management

Beyond these higher level best practices that are included in the final FPSP Master Plan, each class of recreation was scrutinized in depth, including background on the activity, opportunities for the activity at the Crazy French Ranch property, potential infrastructure needs, accessibility concerns and best management practices specific to each activity. These were intended to inform the larger Master Plan for the Park and were considered by CPW and the Planning Team in evaluating potential recreational amenities in the Park.

July 2020 - Livestock Grazing Assessment for FPSP

The purpose of the grazing assessment for FPSP that was conducted by TNC was to determine the economic, ecological and management viability of establishing a grazing operation on the Park. The Assessment found: “Based upon the limited quality of the forage, condition of the water and fence infrastructure and potential management constraints of the property, it is clear that a grazing lease is going to be a marginal economic proposition, at best, to any potential future lease.”

The assessment’s final recommendations were to defer a final grazing assessment until more biological studies and recreational use management plans have been completed. Please see section 5.3.2 of this Master Plan for a discussion on grazing as a potential management tool for the Park.

September 2020 - Economic Analysis of FPSP

The report prepared by the TPL provides an economic analysis of FPSP. The report is broken into three (3) sections. The first describes the current Trinidad economy, including general economic conditions and quantifying the recreation economy. The second section summarizes the recreational and tourism use that is expected for FPSP. The third and final section describes the case studies that highlight the impact that other similar sites have had on their surrounding communities. Overall, the economic analysis report provides a perspective about the potential impact FPSP could have on the surrounding community. The report estimated \$14,359,000 in annual non-local visitor spending, due to FPSP, at build out of the Park (Note: This analysis report was done before the Master Plan was completed).

May 2021 - Guidance for a Resilient Park. Conservation Priorities and Recreation Opportunities at FPSP (An Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation Assessment)

The Open Standards Planning Team for FPSP completed an assessment of key steps to ensure that two (2) of the pillars of success for the project – conservation success and meaningful recreation – were included in the comprehensive planning process that produced the FPSP Master Plan. These steps identified the highest priority biological resources, while also identifying a subset of priority potential recreation opportunities and factors that could seriously limit the ability of managers to achieve desired conservation and recreation outcomes for the Park.

The term “Open Standards” refers to the “Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation” planning method, which originated within TNC and has been embraced and enhanced by the Conservation Measures Partnership (<http://www.conservationmeasures.org/>). Open Standards and conservation planning science identify the following planning steps as crucial to ensuring that conservation and recreation outcomes were identified successfully:

Targets: Name and describe what you want to conserve (e.g., species, ecosystems, resources, values and opportunities). The intent is that the conservation targets represent the full suite of significant biodiversity. For FPSP, key components of feasible recreation development were added.

Viability: Understand current and desired conditions – i.e., what does success look like?

Limiting Factors: Identify and rank conditions, actions and situations that could interfere with the ability to achieve success.

Strategic Guidance for potential approaches to reduce conflict – identify what the managers, planners and stakeholders can do to achieve desired conditions and reduce or eliminate the limiting factors to levels that achieve success (or progress towards success in a meaningful timeframe), as defined by measurable indicators in viability criteria.

The information from this report became much of the foundational data and information used to develop the FPSP Master Plan. Section 4.2 of this Master Plan provides more information on how data and information was used to understand the existing conditions found on the Park and guide park design strategies.

July 2021 - FPSP and its Potential Effects on the Economy of Trinidad and Las Animas County

The Regional Economic Development Institute at Colorado State University prepared the report. The report outlines the current situation regarding FPSP, the positive economic impacts and the effects it could have and how those impacts can be maximized and sustained.

The report estimates annual visitation to FPSP to potentially be between 162,000 and 174,000 visits annually, at build-out. The report also points out that researchers estimate spending, per person per trip, to be between \$15 to over \$100 per person, with an average between \$20 to \$40 per person, per trip. These estimates assume a fully-opened and sufficiently developed FPSP. At a minimum, the Park needs several dispersed trailheads and over 25 miles of trails to achieve its potential as a developed State Park.

4.2 Site Conditions and Analysis

4.2.1 Natural Resources

FPSP contains exceptional ecological diversity, resulting from its geographic location, rugged topography, hydrology and elevational gradient. Since acquisition of the Park property in 2019, ecologists with CPW, TNC, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) and other organizations conducted extensive surveys and field work to characterize the ecological values of the Park.

While this work and data collection is ongoing, a baseline understanding of ecological targets was used to guide the master planning process towards a park design that minimizes ecological impacts while providing high-quality outdoor recreation. Existing resource data was supplemented with extensive site reconnaissance to identify key destinations, understand sensitive habitat areas and document the overall opportunities and challenges to park development. Throughout the planning process, two primary ecological planning principles emerged:

1. **Protect Sensitive Ecological Targets** – Avoid or minimize impacts to location-specific habitats or features that support unique or otherwise sensitive species or communities
2. **Maintain or Expand Undisturbed Habitat Blocks** – Minimize new impacts to large blocks of undisturbed wildlife habitat and where possible, increase the size and connectivity of habitat blocks

Ecological Attributes

Based on existing resource data and knowledge of the property, CPW and the Planning Team identified ecological targets and attributes to illustrate the biological diversity of the Park and the relative sensitivity of certain areas to park development and use. Ecological targets include the following:

- New Mexico meadow jumping mouse habitat
- Golden eagle nesting habitat
- Rare plant occurrences
- Peregrine falcon nesting habitat
- Elk production/calving habitat and severe winter range
- Ovenbird habitat
- Wildlife movement corridors
- Riparian habitat, wetlands and springs
- Old growth forest
- Undisturbed habitat blocks
- Native vegetation communities

These and other ecological attributes are described in greater detail in the Appendix.



West Facing Slopes of Fishers Peak



Forest Fire Burn Area Northwest of Fishers Peak



Pinyon Juniper Forest



Ponderosa Forest



Old Growth White Fir

Habitat Sensitivity Analysis

To facilitate the Master Planning process, the Planning Team developed a Composite Sensitivity Map to illustrate the areas that have the highest concentration of sensitive ecological attributes and those areas with lower sensitivity. Areas with the highest sensitivity or multiple co-occurrences of sensitive resources are shown with the darkest shade (dark purple), while those with the lowest sensitivity are shown with the lightest shade (light purple or white) – Habitat Sensitivity Composite Map. This map provides a visual illustration of the areas with the highest relative sensitivity and conservation priority. As a general rule, trails and other park infrastructure are more suitable in areas with lower overall habitat sensitivity, while areas with higher sensitivity should be avoided as much as possible.

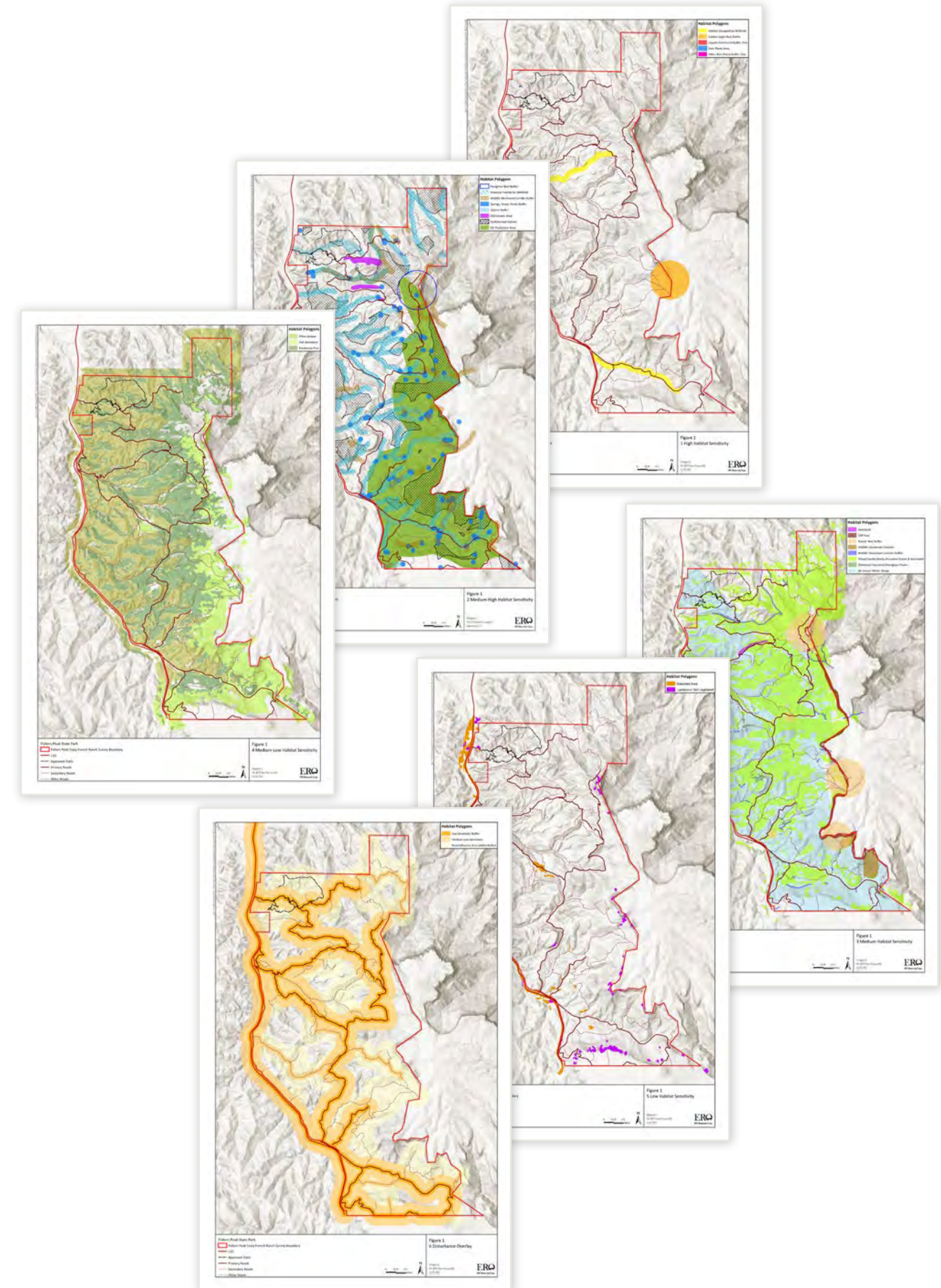
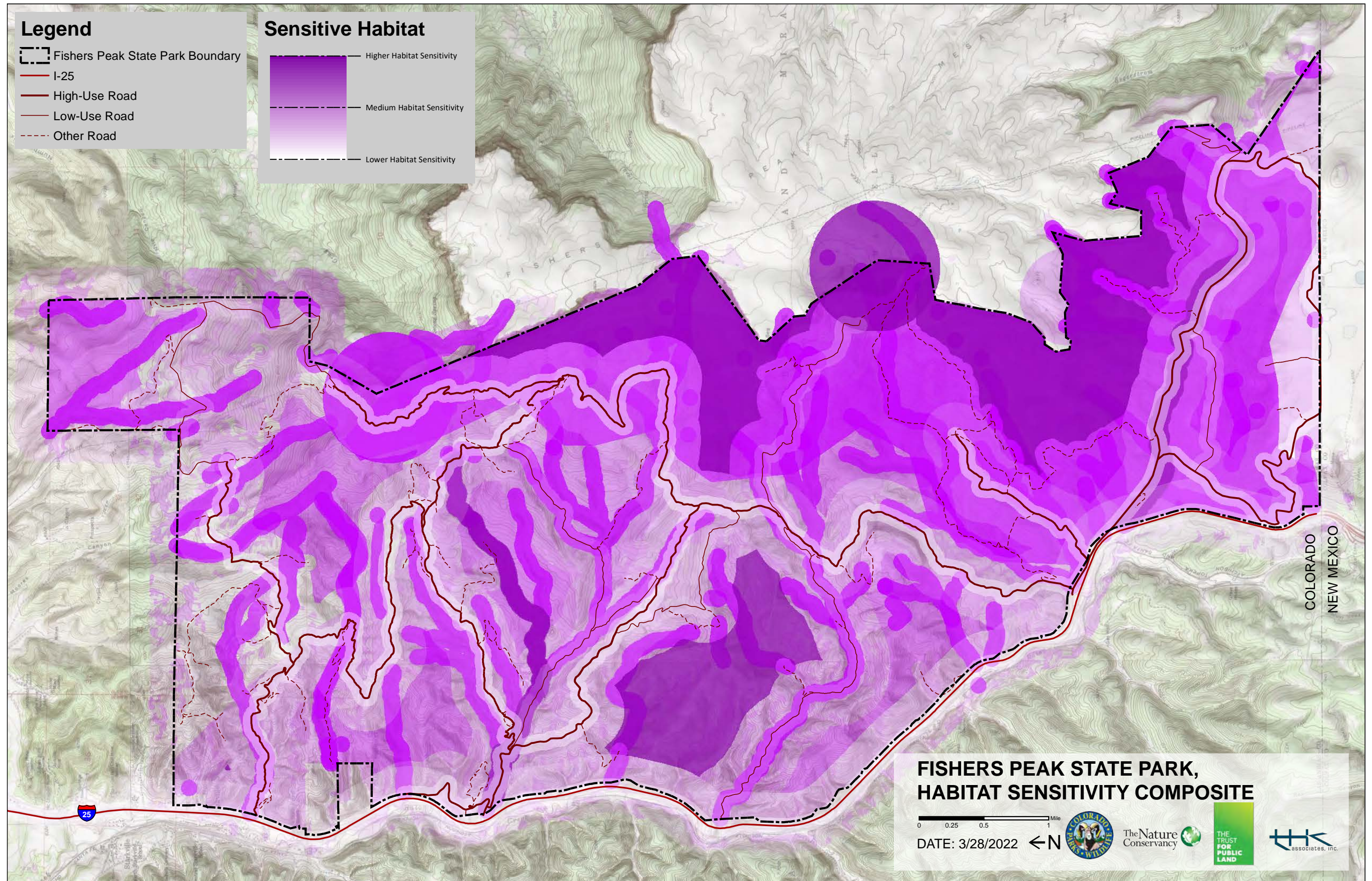


Figure 3



Undisturbed Habitat Blocks

In any natural landscape, the proliferation of roads and trails fragments wildlife habitat by facilitating human disturbances that displace animals and degrade habitat quality. Habitat fragmentation reduces the size and overall integrity of habitat areas and is detrimental to many species. Currently, as a result of past land uses, there are over 90 miles of ranch roads that have been identified within the Park, which has already created a fragmented landscape. Considering this threat to wildlife, a key component of the conservation planning strategy at FPSP is the protection and establishment of large, undisturbed blocks of habitat.

Under existing conditions, about 5,969 acres of habitat (31% of the Park) is impacted by existing roads, while 13,231 acres remains undisturbed. With full implementation of this Master Plan (future conditions), a total of 12,825 acres (67% of the Park) will remain undisturbed by park management roads and recreation trails (Table 6).

Table 6
Existing and Future Habitat Blocks

	Existing Conditions (Acres/Percent)	Future Conditions (Acres/Percent)	Change (Acres/ Percent)
Disturbed Areas*	5,969 31%	6,375 33%	406 2%
Undisturbed Habitat	13,231 69%	12,825 67%	-406 -2%

* An impact buffer of 100 meters was used to analyze disturbance areas for roads and trails

Compared to existing conditions, implementation of the FPSP Master Plan will result in a decrease in the total acreage of undisturbed habitat by 406 acres (2%), through the construction of trails, trailheads and other infrastructure and the closure and reclamation of existing roads.

While the total area of undisturbed habitat will decrease slightly, the design of the future road and trail system to cluster disturbances and minimize impacts, combined with the closure and reclamation of roads, will result in a net benefit in the overall size and configuration of large habitat blocks. This benefit is based on the following:

- The largest undisturbed habitat blocks (5,227 acres and 2,207 acres) will encompass most of the southern portion of the Park and will be adjacent to each other, separated by a single trail corridor and park management road.
- These large habitat blocks will include significant habitat areas, including numerous springs and seeps, occupied New Mexico meadow jumping mouse habitat along McBride Creek, known and potential nest sites for golden eagle and other raptors, elk calving habitat and several major wildlife movement corridors.
- These two areas, encompassing 7,434 acres, will create a large conservation area that is larger than most other state parks.
- When combined with the State Wildlife Areas that are adjacent to the east, it will support a regional conservation area encompassing over 20,000 acres.

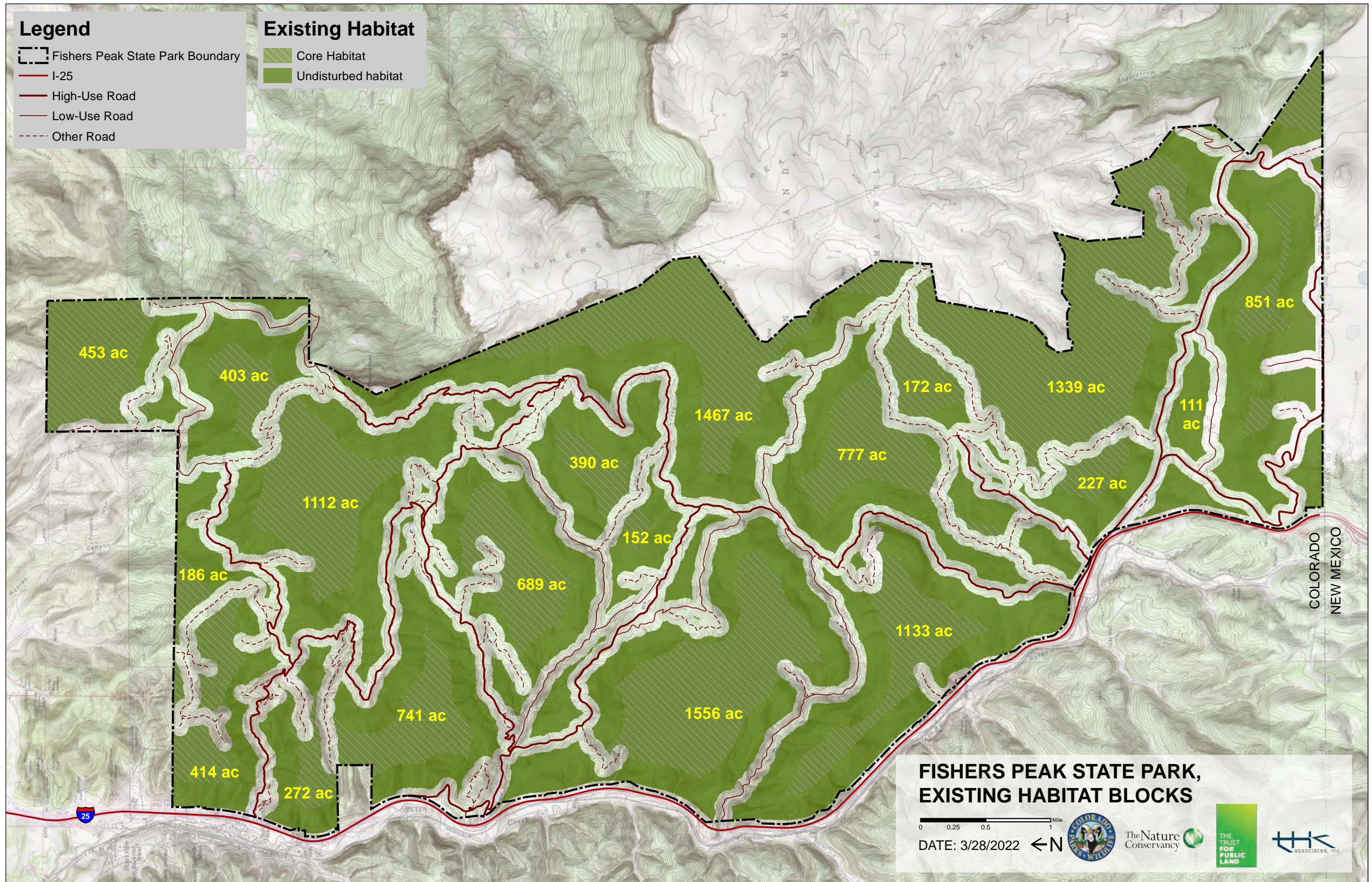


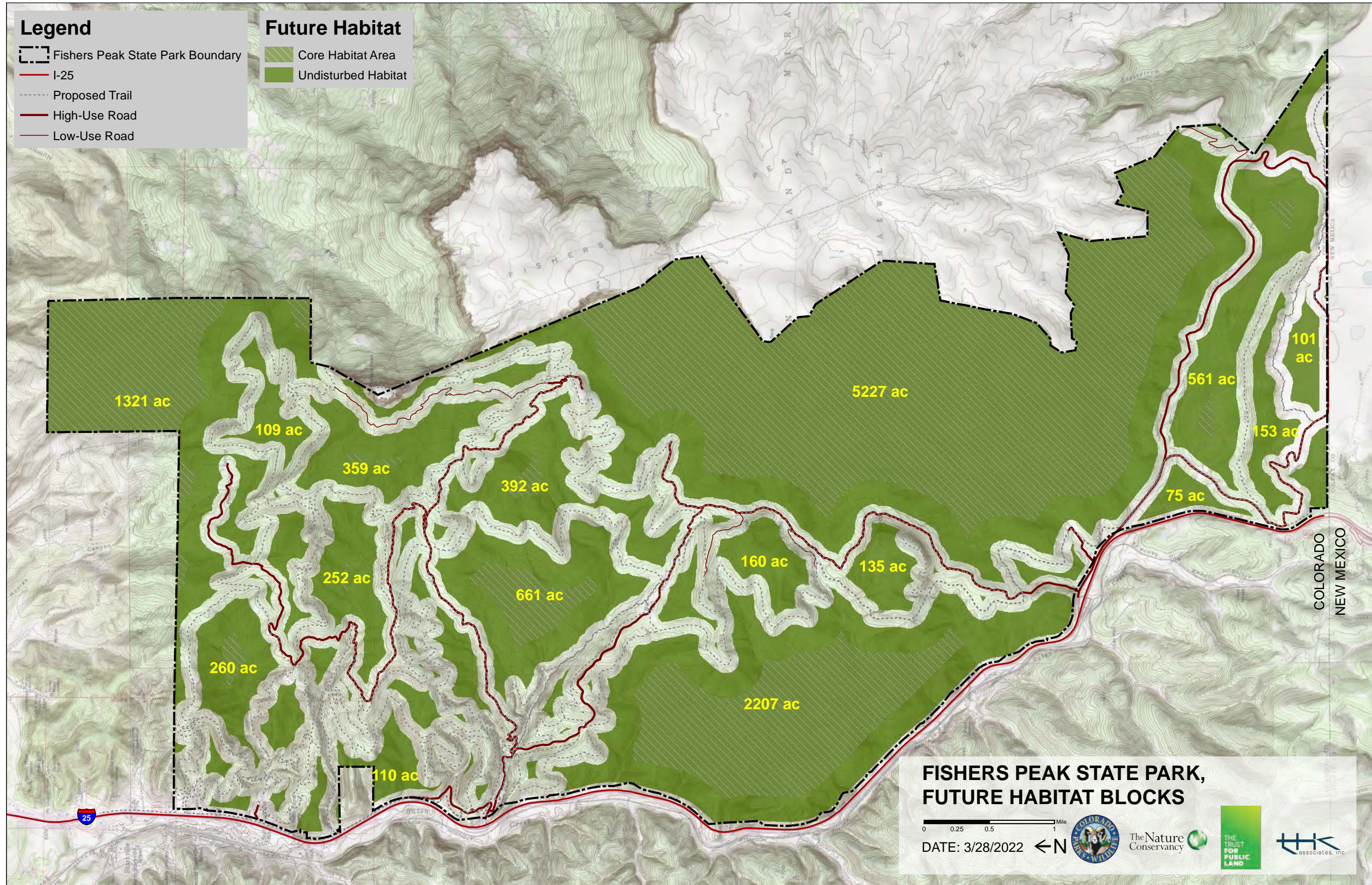
Top of Bartlett Mesa



Aspen Forest







4.2.2 Cultural Resources

Park History and Cultural Resources

FPSP has a long, storied history and people were likely living in the rugged valleys as long ago as the Paleo period between 11,500 to 7,800 years before present (B.P.) (Zier and Kalasz 1999). Much remains unknown about the past use of the landscape, but a story of the Park's history is beginning to emerge through cultural resource surveys undertaken for the Park development projects and consultation with indigenous Native American Tribes. In the written record, the history of the Park is framed by the 1841 Beaubien-Miranda Land Grant of which the original boundary forms the eastern edge of the Park. Five (5) years later in 1846, Captain Waldemar (also Woldemar) Fischer (now Fisher) allegedly summited the peak when he and his party of soldiers became lost (Conrad 1890:21). Fischer captained an artillery company of German immigrants during the U.S -Mexico War. The company was apparently "particularly inept" and "all thumbs" (De Voto 1950:253, 259). Fischer was discharged a year later in 1847.

Prior to FPSP, the only cultural resource survey and excavation that had taken place in the Park boundary was for the I-25 expansion project in the 1960s. During the I-25 project, multiple sites dating to the "Developmental Period" (between 1900 to 950 B.P.) and "Diversification Period" (between 950 to 550 B.P.) were excavated (Baker 1965; Zier and Kalasz 1999). These sites indicate people along Raton Creek lived in rectangular, square, or semi-circular houses with stone foundations and likely wood and mud (wattle and daub) walls with thatch roofs. Family groups would have grown maize along the floodplains and hunted and gathered a wide variety of wild animals and plants from the surrounding areas.

To date, archaeologists and Traditional Cultural Specialists from the Northern Arapaho Tribe have completed four cultural resource surveys across the Park to gather information about the presence or absence of cultural resources. "Cultural resources" can refer to anything older than roughly 50 years including the remains of ranching camps from the 1920s, petroglyphs carved by indigenous peoples, or the remains of indigenous food processing locations. CPW completed the surveys so that Park development would not impact cultural resources that are significant to the Park, regional, or Native American history. For instance, if a cultural resource was identified during a trail survey, the trail would be routed around the resource. Additional surveys would be completed prior to future project development.

Since 2020, cultural resource surveys have been conducted to support park planning and preliminary infrastructure development in the Park. These intensive and reconnaissance level surveys have covered 411 acres and 8,000 acres, respectively, across the Park resulting in the documentation of 55 cultural resources. A broad variety of resources have been documented, including areas where indigenous peoples processed plants and wild game, manufactured stone tools and camped. CPW, in conjunction with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe also identified group of peeled ponderosa trees where Ute, Jicarilla Apache or possibly other groups harvested inner bark from ponderosa pine trees that would have been used for a variety of food, medicinal, or practical uses (Figure 1) (Martorano 1981). Other resources include rock alignments that could represent tent platforms associated with historical surveyors, the US military, or possibly indigenous camps.

At each of these sites, different kinds of artifacts tell archaeologists different stories. Obsidian debitage (waste debris from making stone tools) left at one indigenous camp was sourced using X-ray-fluorescence analysis which indicates the material originated at the Jemez caldera in New Mexico (Figure 3). Other stone tools or waste debris are made of local materials indicating that people used both stone material available at the Park as well as traded or carried material from more than 120 miles away.

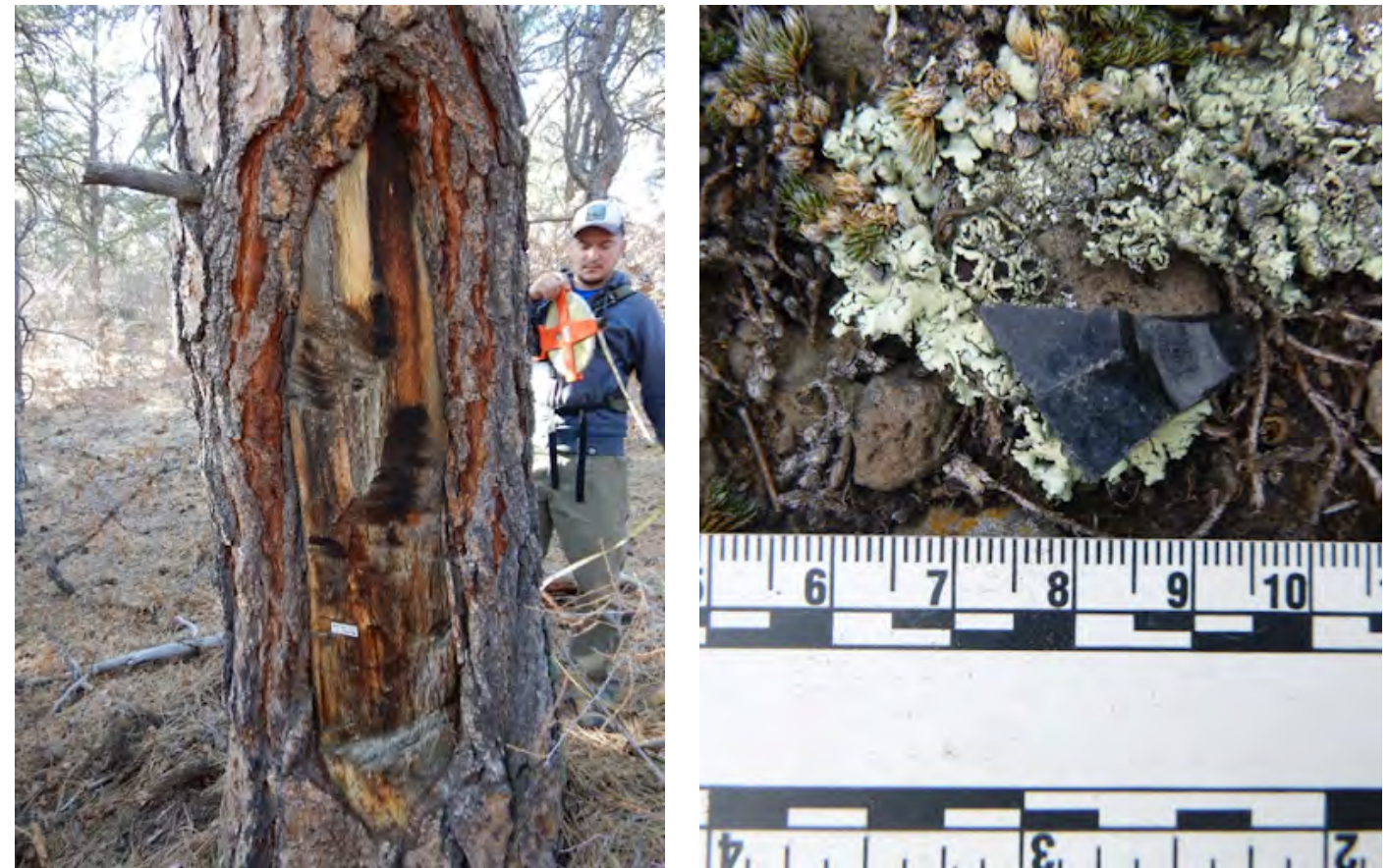


Figure 3

Left: ERO Resources Corporation (ERO) archaeologist measuring the diameter of a peeled tree.
Right: Obsidian artifact sourced to the Jemez caldera in New Mexico.

Many of the more recent sites that contain industrial goods can be dated to different time periods ranging from the late 1800s to the 1950s. Indigenous sites can be much harder to date to periods of time, but ethnographic studies, oral history and tribal consultation indicate southeast Colorado was inhabited by Native American Tribes such as the Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee and Ute. The origin history of the Jicarilla Apache is centrally located in southeast Colorado and the Colorado area has been Ute homeland since the beginning of the world (Tiller 2000:3). Ethnographic studies indicate that Raton Creek was important trail used by the Jicarilla Apache for accessing hunting and gathering north of Trinidad (Nordhaus 1995:65) and oral stories from railroad workers and Richard Wooten suggest Ute chiefs visited the Park area at one or more occasions (Collins 1991; Conrad 1890). Many of the documented sites may therefore be associated with one or more of the aforementioned tribes.

The results of CPW's cultural resource studies indicate the Park contains archaeological sites and cultural resources that are significant to the history of the Park, the region and sacred to many Native American Tribes who lived in the area until they were forcibly removed in the 1800s. Cultural resources are finite and once they are disturbed or collected, they are gone forever. CPW intends to continue completing cultural resource surveys and tribal consultation to ensure that cultural resources are appropriately identified and protected.



Narrow Rocky Canyons are Typical at Lower Elevations



Rugged Brushy Slopes are Typical



Interesting Rock Outcrops Can be Found Throughout the Park



Steep Talus Slope at the Base of Little Baldy



East Facing Cliffs of Fishers Peak

4.2.3 Physical Site Conditions

Due to the extreme physical conditions of the property, FPSP is an extremely varied natural landscape. The Park is 19,200 acres, approximately 10 miles north to south, by 3 miles east to west. There is about 3,000 feet of elevation difference between the western boundary of the Park, adjacent to I-25 and the top of Fishers Peak at the eastern boundary of the Park. The Park is very rugged with a series of ridges and valleys running from east to west. The valleys drain the Park west to Raton Creek that runs south to north parallel with I-25 and the western boundary of the Park.

Fishers Peak Mesa is just outside the Park, along the eastern boundary of the Park. While most of the rock cliff faces of Fishers Peak Mesa are within the Park boundaries, the top of Fishers Peak Mesa is outside the Park. Bartlett Mesa is located in the very southern end of the Park. The southern boundary of the Park, same as the Colorado-New Mexico state line, is on top of Bartlett Mesa, with the northern portion of Bartlett Mesa extending northward into the Park.

Slope

On the Slope Analysis Map you can see the flatter areas, 0% to 20% slope, are in the warmer colors. The tops of the previously discussed mesas are the flattest areas, both inside and outside the Park boundaries. Within the Park, flatter areas with slopes of 0% to 20% make up less than 20% of the surface area of the Park. The flattest areas, with slopes less than 7%, are less than 10% of the surface area of the Park. The ruggedness of the Park can be seen on the Slope Analysis Map, which indicates how the development of the Park infrastructure could be difficult and expensive. Additionally, development of Park infrastructure that does not respect the rugged terrain would have huge impacts to the landscape. The steep slopes of the Park limit responsible development of the Park. During the stakeholder engagement process, all interest groups recognized the development restrictions created by the rugged conditions and steep slopes found in the Park. So much so, that the desire to protect the natural landscape helped lead to support for establishing a backcountry, wildland theme for the Park.

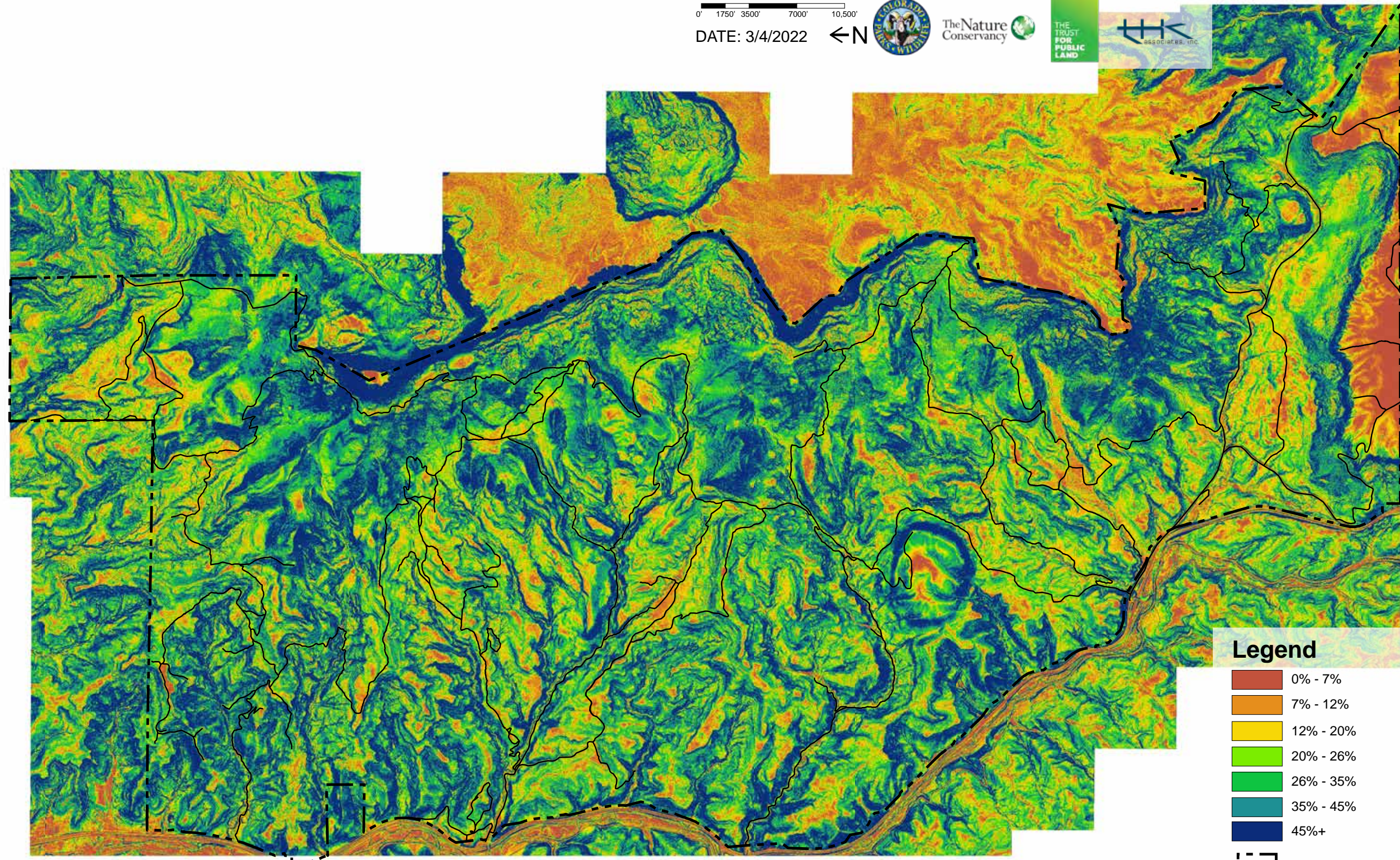
Aspect

The ruggedness of the Park required the need to understand the aspect of the many slopes and hillsides within the Park. The semi-arid climate of the region causes there to be dramatically varying temperature differences on south facing slopes versus the north facing slopes during the same time of day. These temperature differences can be as much as 10 degrees or more between north and south facing slopes. South facing slopes are impacted much more by solar gain than north facing slopes. This fact also results in the southern slopes being dryer than the north facing slopes all leading to different plant community types growing on south slopes versus north facing slopes. South facing slopes tend to have shorter scrubby growth, while north facing slopes tend to have taller and denser plant growth. Therefore, north facing slopes provide more shade while south facing slopes are more open to the sun. Slope aspect becomes very important when designing a trail system for multi-seasonal use. In the heat of summer, trails on north facing slopes become a shady relief for hikers. In the winter and shoulder seasons, trails on south facing slopes provide warmth and melt the snow off of the trails more quickly. A good combination of trails on north and south facing slopes provides a better multi-season trail system.

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK, SLOPE ANALYSIS

0' 1750' 3500' 7000' 10,500'

DATE: 3/4/2022



Legend

- 0% - 7%
- 7% - 12%
- 12% - 20%
- 20% - 26%
- 26% - 35%
- 35% - 45%
- 45%+

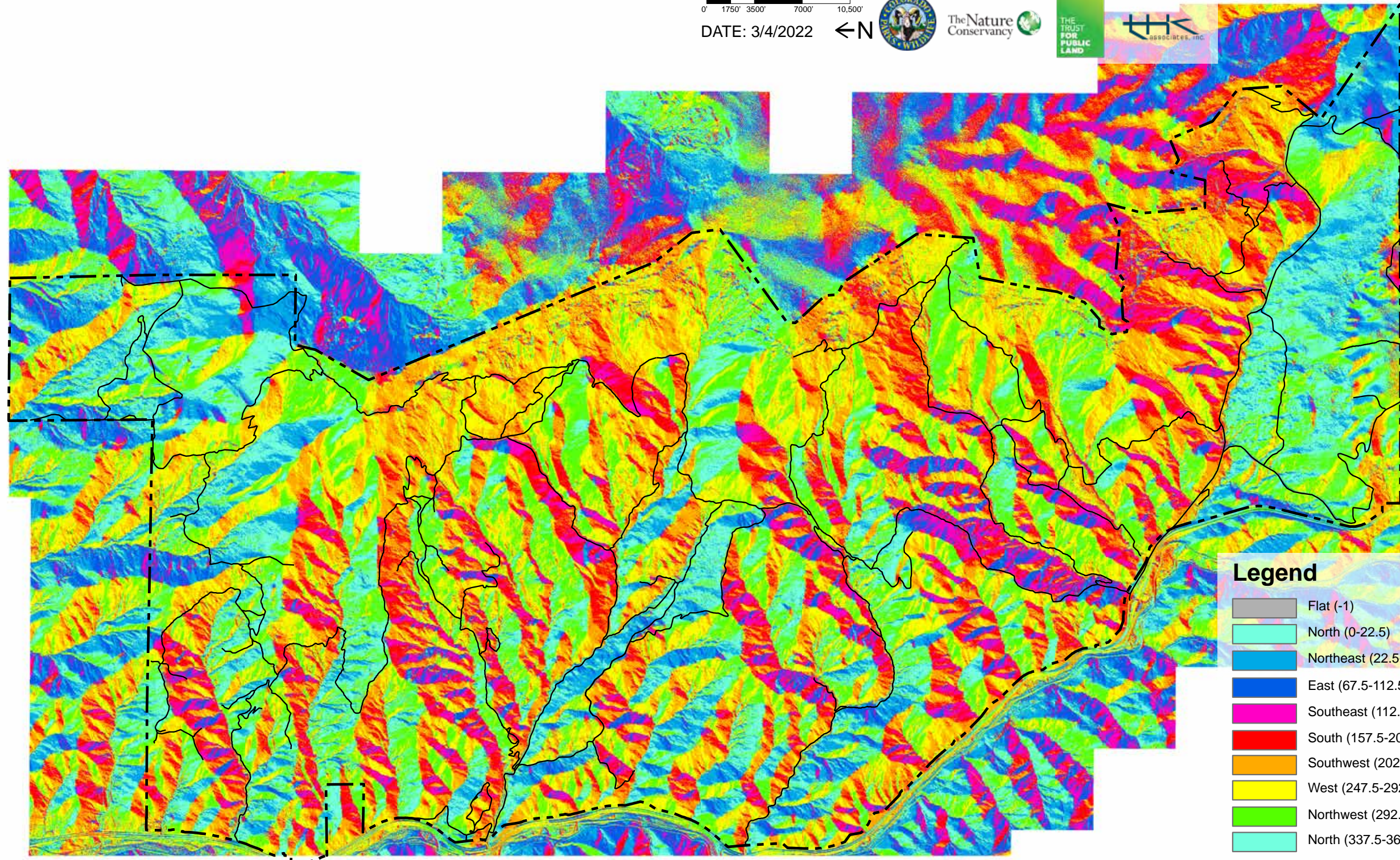
FISHERS PEAK BOUNDARY

EXISTING ROADS

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK, ASPECT ANALYSIS

0' 1750' 3500' 7000' 10,500'

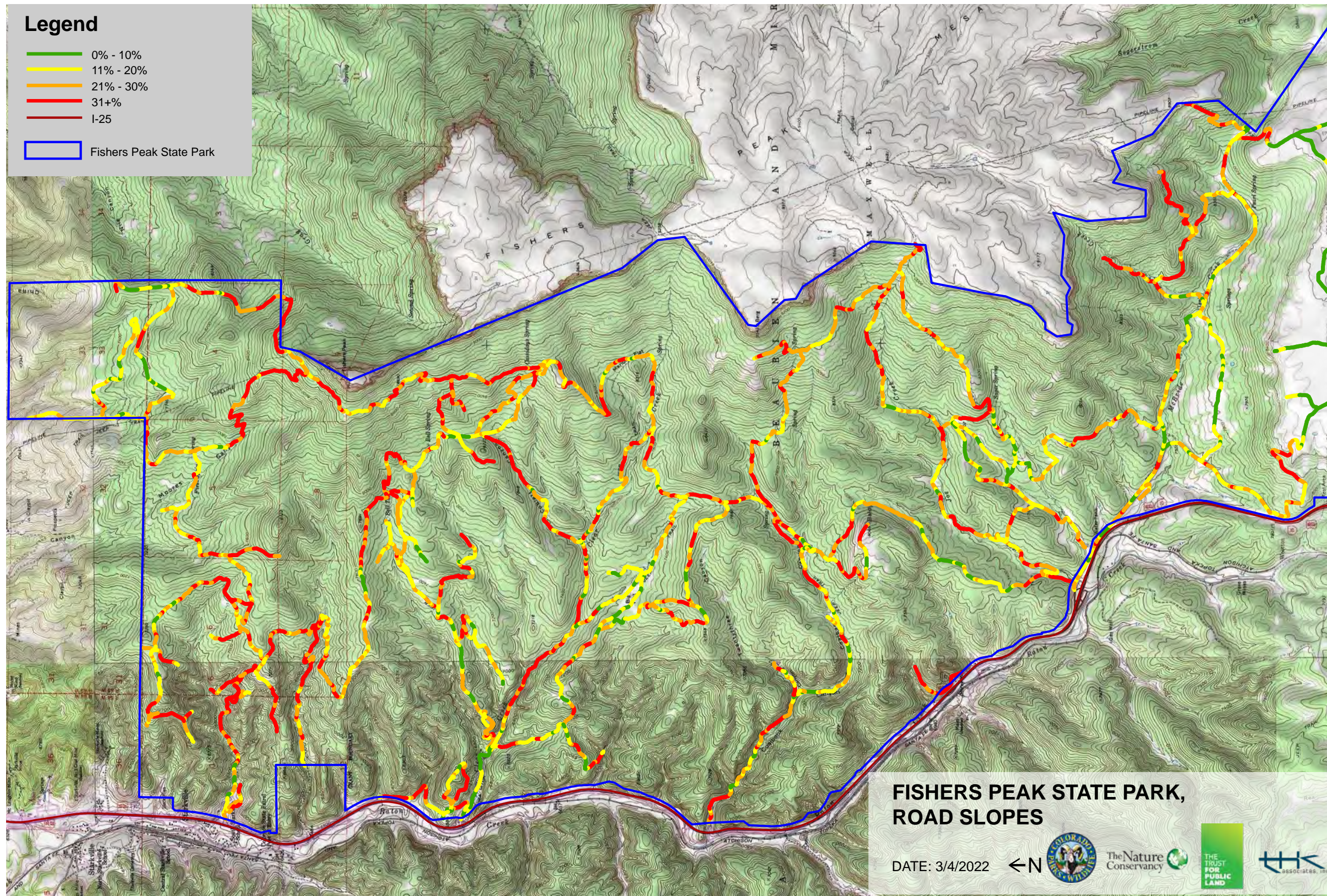
DATE: 3/4/2022



Legend

- Flat (-1)
- North (0-22.5)
- Northeast (22.5-67.5)
- East (67.5-112.5)
- Southeast (112.5-157.5)
- South (157.5-202.5)
- Southwest (202.5-247.5)
- West (247.5-292.5)
- Northwest (292.5-337.5)
- North (337.5-360)
- FISHERS PEAK BOUNDARY
- EXISTING ROADS





Existing Ranch Roads

There are approximately 90 miles of mapped ranch roads. There might be as much as 20 to 30 miles of additional ranch roads that are not mapped. Most of the existing mapped ranch roads are steep with slopes of 11% to over 30%. Roads this steep are subject to significant erosion and require continuous maintenance to keep them usable. Sustainable soft surface roadway design usually requires that roads are built with no slopes greater than 8%. Roads with flatter slopes will be easier and over time less costly to maintain. This fact should be considered when determining which ranch roads are identified as park management roads versus the steeper roads that should be taken out of service and reclaimed.

The same logic applies when thinking about converting the ranch roads to trails. Sustainable trail design uses 6-8% as the average slope criteria to be used when designing trails. Because many segments of ranch road are steeper than 10% and are experiencing significant erosion, converting the ranch roads to trails is not recommended. The ranch roads do not provide a quality hiking experience.

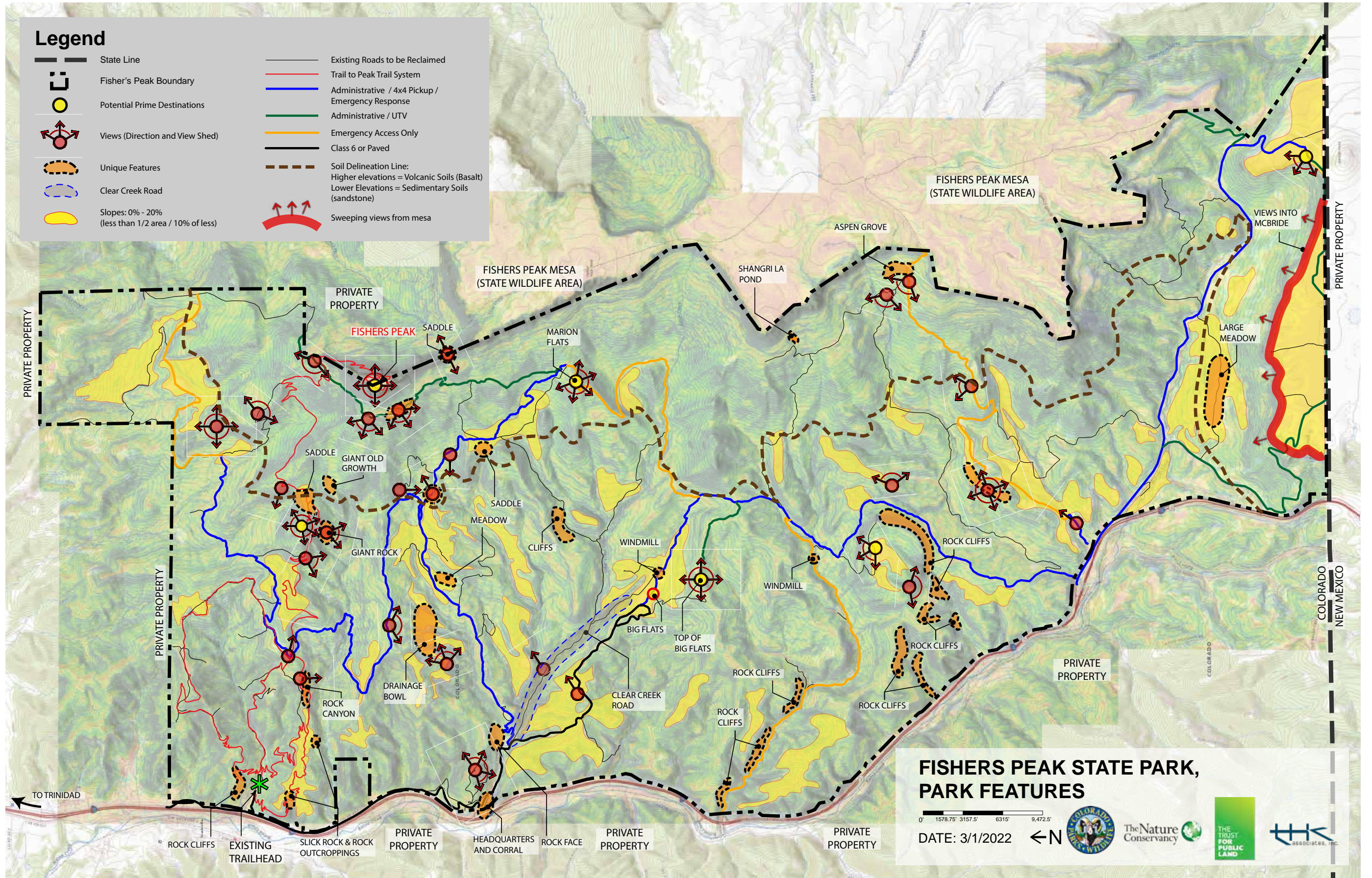
Park Features

Prior to developing the Park Framework Plan, the Trail System Plan and the Park Facilities Schematic Design, the Park features map was created to identify key features within the existing landscape. The key features represented opportunities to enhance visitor experience within the Park that were considered as the Park was planned and designed. These features include:

- Potential Prime Destinations
- Views (viewpoints and view sheds)
- Unique features (special natural place)
- Slopes under 20% (that could accommodate development since they are flatter areas)
- Existing Roads (that could be considered for reuse as park management roads and roads that are best reclaimed)
- Soil Delineation (volcanic soils and sedimentary soils)
- Adjacent Property Ownership (public vs. private)

It was not the intention of the Master Plan to use or take advantage of every key park feature identified, but rather to make sure visitors had the opportunity to experience at least one good example of each type of feature identified.







Crazy French Ranch Entrance Gate (Exit 8)



Manufactured House above Headquarters



Exit 8 Headquarters House



Evelyne's House



Exit 8 Headquarters House Adobe Garage



Exit 2 Manufactured House



Exit 8 Maintenance Shop and Outbuildings



Low Star Lodge

4.2.4 Existing Structures

There are a number of existing structures within the Park. These structures are left from the previous ranching operations on the site. Additionally, CPW purchased several smaller private properties along the western boundary of the Park. The Amato property included a number of building foundations, bridge abutments and a large coal pile, all remaining from the coal processing that took place on site approximately 100 years ago. The other property purchased by CPW was the Bacharach property that includes a house, maintenance shop and small outbuildings. It should also be noted that the ranch house at Exit 8 was renovated by The Nature Conservancy in 2019 to be used as the property management headquarters. After the purchase of the ranch by the state and the decision to develop the property as a State Park, CPW has continued to use the Exit 8 ranch house as the Park headquarters, researcher bunkhouses and staff offices. A list of all existing structures follows with a description of the current management plan for each structure. The Master Plan recommends a more detailed condition and structural assessment be completed on all structures that are intended to be retained and reused as part of the programming of Fishers Peak State Park.

- **Exit 8 Headquarters House:** Retain the structure as office space in the short term. Long term, the structure will be used as a research bunkhouse and/or employee housing.
- **Exit 8 Headquarters House Adobe Garage:** Retain the structure for staff use and storage (likely to be the only remaining historic structure on site)
- **Exit 8 Maintenance Shop and Outbuildings:** Retain all structures for daily park operations and storage.
- **Manufactured House above Headquarters:** Retain and relocate the structure to a better location for use as a bunkhouse and/or employee housing. The structure in its current location, potentially conflicts with the proposed park entrance road. If it is determined that reuse is not feasible, the structure will need to be donated, sold and removed or demolished.
- **Evelyne's House:** As a very visible nuisance, the manufactured structure will need to be donated, sold and removed or demolished. The extensive concrete foundation will need to be demolished and buried.
- **Exit 2 Manufactured House:** The structure will need to be donated, sold and removed.
- **Low Star Lodge:** Retain the structure as a guest house, to be reserved and used by park visitors. A structural conditions report is recommended since the structure has sat vacant without maintenance for some time. Additionally, two to three smaller cabins around the house or in place of the house, if the house is found to not be structurally sound, should be considered for park visitor lodging. Built in the 1980s, Low Star Lodge is an important piece of the property's past. Low Star is arguably the most recognizable and charismatic structure on the property. CPW should ensure that this fact be taken into consideration when planning this area of the Park.
- **Bacharach House, Maintenance Shop and Outbuildings:** Retain all the structures for employee housing, storage and park operations. The house is in very good shape and is very visible from I-25 along the future park entrance road. The Bacharach house should be occupied to keep wildlife and trespassers out of the structures. In the long term, the structure could continue to be used as employee housing or remodeled to serve as a guest house, to be reserved by park visitors. This use would be similar to the Harmsen Guest Ranch at Golden Gate Canyon State Park.
- **Historic Structures on the Amato Property:** Retain and stabilize all structures. None of the structures are complete. The structures are falling down and some present a safety concern. Since these structures are likely historic and are remnants of the site's coal mining history, the structures provide a great opportunity for interpretation of the region's coal mining history.



Bacharach House



Bacharach House



Bacharach Maintenance Shop



Bacharach Outbuilding

4.3 Opportunities and Challenges

As a part of the Master Planning Process, there was diverse public outreach that engaged over 500 unique park users and enthusiasts looking to have a role in the process (See Section 3.3 for a list of opportunities identified by the stakeholders). The input received from the diverse public engagement, coupled with over 100 field days hiking and documenting the conditions on site by the Planning Team, lead to the development of the July 20, 2021 Opportunities and Challenges at FPSP white paper. The entire white paper is included within the appendix of this Master Plan. Opportunities and challenges were organized by category, these categories included:

- Stakeholder Input
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Park Infrastructure and
- Trails

The following Table 7 provides a partial list of the key opportunities and challenges to park development and enjoyment identified in the above categories. Table 3 in Section 3.3 provides a more detailed description of opportunities and challenges identified by stakeholders. The complete list is included in the white paper.



Looking South at the Amato Property with the Coal Pile in the Background

Table 7

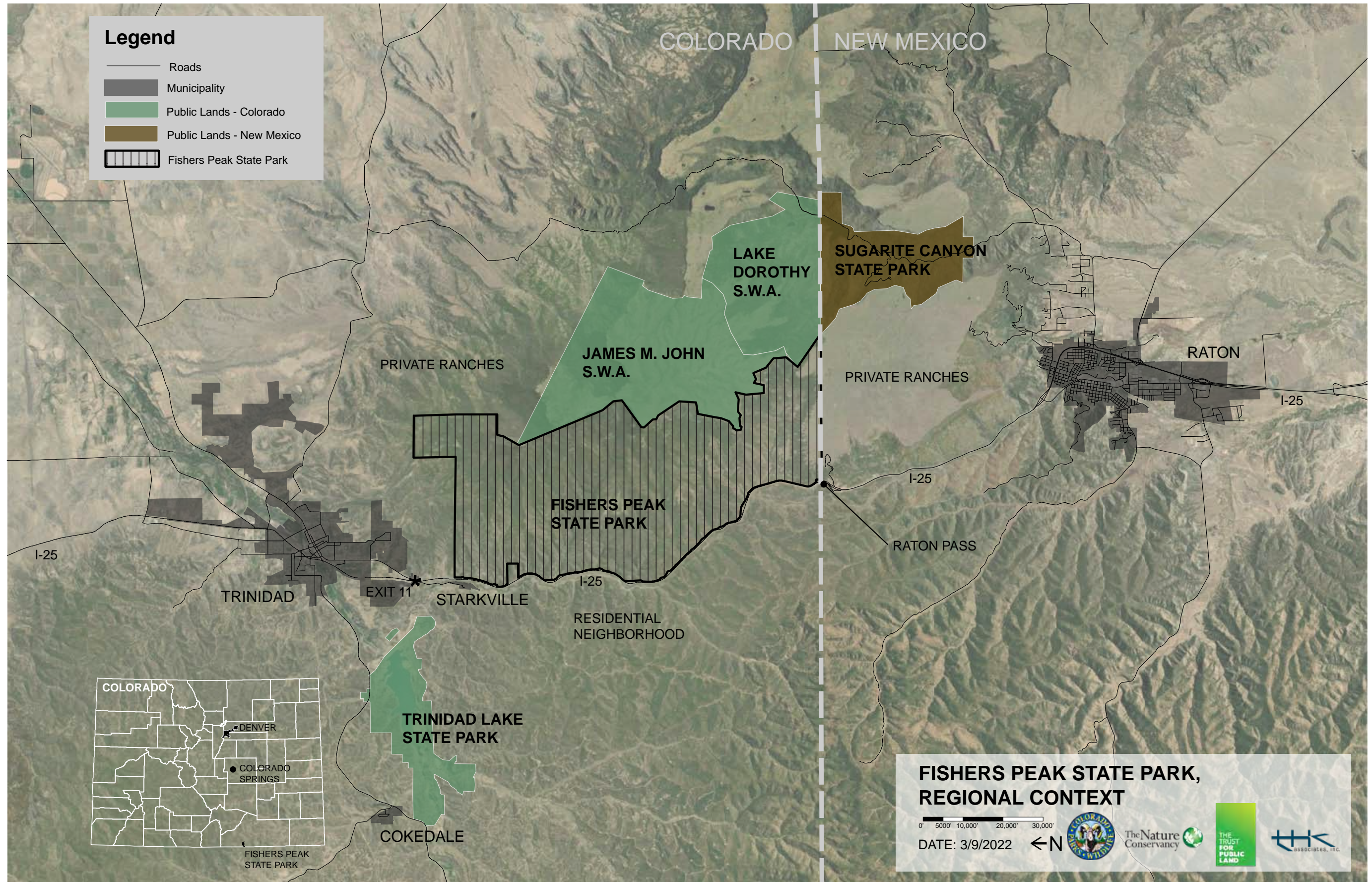
CATEGORIES	OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
Stakeholder Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the natural environment • Provide unique recreational opportunities • Inclusive education • Maintain the Parks historical significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance recreation and economic growth with natural resource management • Regional collaboration between jurisdictions and across state lines • Manage diverse recreational experiences in one place
Environmental and Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetative diversity • Rugged areas • Watchable wildlife • Education and interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive wildlife habitat • Seasonal closures • Endangered species protection • Cultural resource protection
Park Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park scale • Existing disturbances • Connectivity • Historic ranching heritage • Elevation change • Rock outcrops and large boulders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing roads • Potable Water • Rock cliffs • Steep terrain • Adjacent property ownership
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspect • Elevation • Geology • Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Vegetation • Soils • Existing infrastructure

4.4 Regional Context

FPSP is located in Southern Colorado, on the state line with New Mexico, immediately east of I-25. Trinidad is 1-mile north of the Park and Pueblo is 85 miles north of the Park on I-25. Colorado Springs is 130 miles north and Denver is 200 miles north of the Park, on I-25. Raton Pass, at the state line and on I-25, is a major north-south gateway that links Colorado and New Mexico. Monthly, thousands of travelers use I-25 over Raton Pass.

Located just north of FPSP is the City of Trinidad, Colorado, with a population of approximately 9,000 people, the major population center of Las Animas County. Just south of FPSP, in New Mexico, is the City of Raton, with a population of approximately 6,000 people. While there are not a lot of public lands in southern Colorado, the area immediately around FPSP and between Trinidad and Raton does have a number of public lands accessible to the public. West of FPSP is Trinidad Lake State Park, approximately 2,860 acres. Bordering the eastern edge of FPSP is James M. John State Wildlife Area, approximately 8,339 acres and Lake Dorothy State Wildlife Area, approximately 5,152 acres. Additionally, southeast of FPSP, in New Mexico, is Sugarite Canyon State Park, approximately 3,600 acres. Combined, this is a total of 39,151 acres or 61 square miles of open land for recreation and habitat conservation on the border with New Mexico. Northeast and south of FPSP are a number of private ranches. Directly west of FPSP, across I-25 to the west, are residential neighborhoods. Two-thirds of FPSP is bounded by private property. The I-25 right-of-way along the entire western boundary of FPSP is a barrier between the Park and the private property, on the west side of I-25.

Access to FPSP can only occur from four exits off I-25. All of these exits do not meet current design and safety standards. However, at the present time, Exit 11 on the very south edge of the City of Trinidad, is being improved and brought up to current design and safety standards. Because of its proximity to the City of Trinidad, the improved Exit 11 becomes a great point of entry to the Park. Exit 11 will over time accommodate the traffic volumes expected at the Park and will safely provide a connection to Trinidad Lake State Park.





CLIMBING LITTLE BALDY



5

RECOMMENDATIONS





SPANISH PEAKS AS SEEN FROM BIG FLATS

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Management Zones

Park management zones provide a framework for identifying recreational use and resource conservation priorities that are compatible with the natural resources and topography of the park. Within each management zone, suitable types of facilities and land uses are identified, along with the expected visitor experience and management focus for that zone. Management zones help set common expectations among visitors, park managers, and stakeholders about the type and intensity of recreation in certain areas, the level of suitable development and conservation, and long-term management needs.

For this master plan, CPW used management zone definitions that have been applied to other state parks, albeit tailored to meet the unique resources and character of Fishers Peak. The four (4) management zones, in summary, are:

- **Development** – Lower ecological sensitivity with high-density recreation and infrastructure; including roads, trails, trailheads, visitor center, and developed campgrounds.
- **Passive Recreation** – Lower ecological sensitivity with medium density recreation and infrastructure; including trails, interpretive sites, and backcountry camping.
- **Natural** – Medium to high ecological sensitivity with medium to low-density recreation and infrastructure; including trails, interpretive sites, and backcountry camping.
- **Protection** – High ecological sensitivity with low-density recreation, limited access, and minimal infrastructure; limited to trails that may be subject to seasonal restrictions.

Management zones for Fishers Peak State Park were developed considering the convergence of a variety of factors, including:

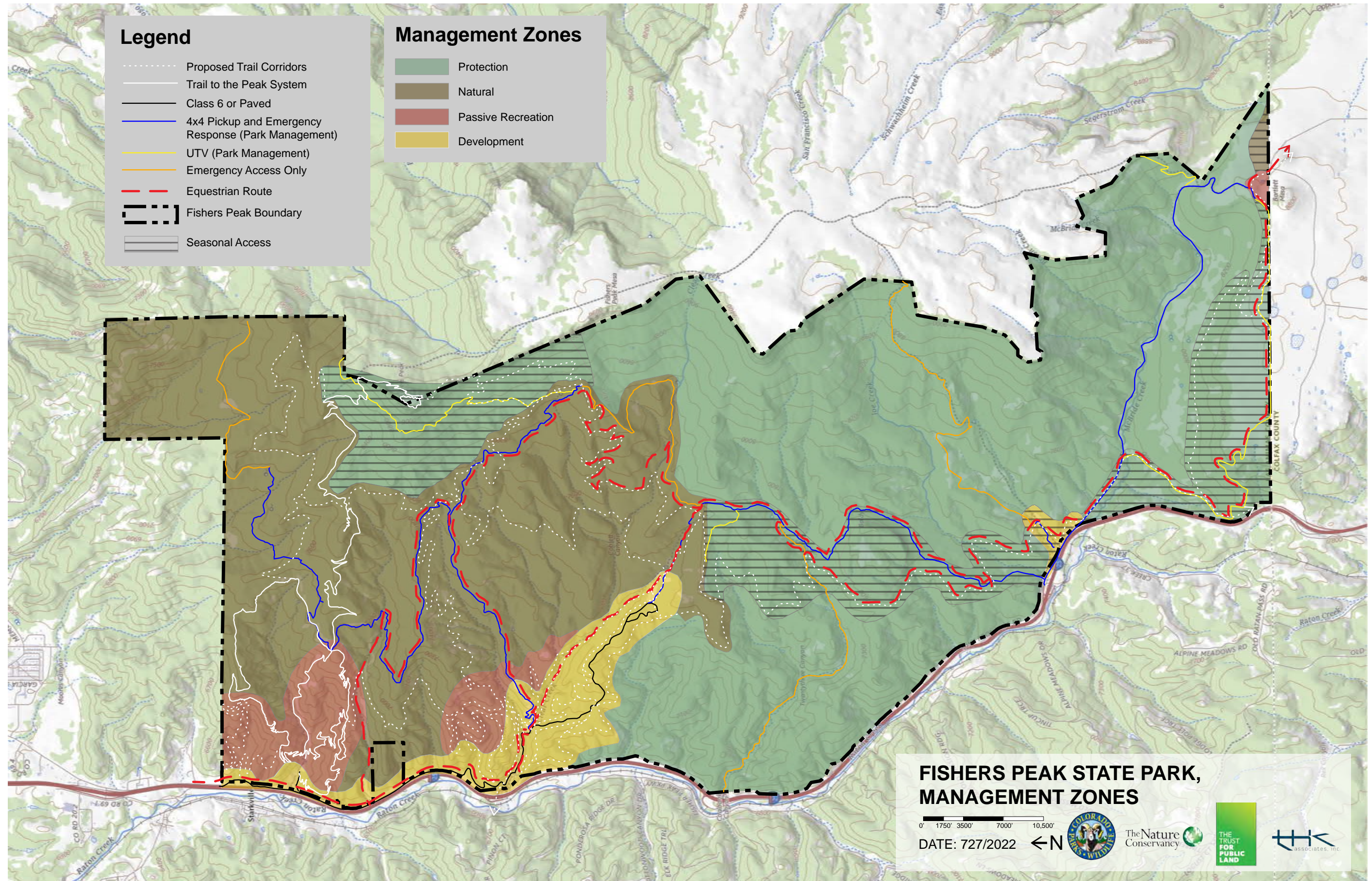
- **Ecological sensitivity** – Based on the ecological attributes within the park, areas with higher ecological sensitivity were considered for the Protection zone, while areas with lower sensitivity were considered for the Development and Passive Recreation zones (see Section 4.2.1 and in the Appendix).
- **Terrain and accessibility** – Considering the rugged terrain and limited access to the park, Development and Passive Recreation zones were considered for areas that are more suitable for infrastructure (flat areas) and are reasonably accessible from park entry points.
- **Recreation suitability** – Integrating the above factors with the overall vision and concept for the park (see Section 5.2.2), Development and Passive Recreation zones were defined to support more intensive frontcountry trails and recreation experiences, while the Natural and Protection zones were defined to support more remote dispersed backcountry trails and experiences.

Application of these management zones to Fishers Peak State Park are summarized in Table 8, while the management zone characteristics are further defined in Table 9.

Table 8
FPSP Management Zone Summary

MANAGEMENT ZONE	ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT	RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE	ACRES	PERCENT OF PARK
Development	Lower ecological sensitivity with substantial existing disturbance	Roads, trails, trailheads, visitor center, developed campgrounds	988	5%
Passive Recreation	Lower ecological sensitivity with proximity to existing disturbance	Trails, interpretive sites and backcountry camping	902	5%
Natural	Medium to high ecological sensitivity with many undisturbed habitat areas	Trails, interpretive sites and backcountry camping	6,172	32%







Development Zone Near Exit 2



Passive Recreation Zone Looking East from Headquarters



Natural Zone Looking Southwest from the Peak



Protection Zone Along East Edge of the Park

Description of Management Zones at Fishers Peak State Park

Management zones for Fishers Peak State Park, and the concepts that they are intended to support, are described below. These zone concepts and specific boundaries will be further defined in the future Management Plan for the park.

Development Zone

This zone is focused around the park entrance along I-25, and the main park access road extending south to the visitor center and developed campgrounds. Ecological sensitivity in these areas is low, due to lower habitat diversity and extensive human disturbance. It includes three major trailheads, multiple picnic sites, the visitor center, four developed campground clusters, and a cabin/yurt area. This will be the most accessible and heavily-used area, with multiple access points for the trail system.

In the southern end of the park, near I-25 Exit 2, a small development area is focused around an equestrian and hunting access facility, and a small trailhead to provide access to the southern portion of the park and a regional trail connection to New Mexico. While the level of development will be high immediately adjacent to I-25, the overall level of visitor use in this area is expected to be low.

Passive Recreation Zone

This zone primarily consists of frontcountry trail loops extending along the ridgelines above the major trailheads in the northern portion of the park. Ecological sensitivity is low to moderate, with some occurrences of sensitive resource values. In these areas, trail density and management is deliberately high to separate users, provide loops, and emphasize a high-quality visitor experience. Visitor use along the trails will be moderate to high during busy time periods.

Natural Zone

Most of the northern portion of the park is within the Natural Zone, which will feel and function like many of the public land backcountry areas in Colorado. This area is dominated by naturally functioning habitat, with some sensitive resource attributes and low to moderate levels of existing human disturbance. It will include larger trail loops, key trail destinations, and walk-in backcountry camp sites. While this area will be the destination for many hikers, mountain bikers, runners, and equestrians, the overall level of visitor use along the trails will be low.

Protection Zone

The upper elevations and most of the southern half of the park fall within the Protection Zone. These areas have moderate to high levels of ecological sensitivity and contain some of the most significant biological resources in the park with very little existing human disturbance. These areas are difficult to access and have a true backcountry feel. Trails and visitor infrastructure are minimal to emphasize habitat protection and natural processes. While some areas such as the Fishers Peak summit will be a popular visitor destination, the overall level of visitor use will be low to sparse.

Within the Protection Zone, seasonal closures will be used to limit visitor access to certain areas to protect natural resources during certain times of the year. Two seasonal closure areas are currently under consideration:

- **Fishers Peak Raptor Closure** – Higher-elevation areas around Fishers Peak and its connecting ridge to the south will be subject to a seasonal closure from March 15 through July 31 each year. This is primarily to protect the known and active peregrine falcon nest on the face of Fishers Peak and habitat areas within ½ mile of the nest, as well as potential nesting habitat along the face of the mesa to the south.
- **South Access Closure** – A seasonal closure may be considered for areas in the southern half of the park, based on wildlife habitat needs, compatibility with hunting activity, or to simply limit public trail use. The time period and management goal of such closures are not yet certain and would be further developed along with the recreation infrastructure in that area.

Table 9
Management Zone Characteristics

MANAGEMENT ZONE	VISITOR EXPERIENCE	RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	POTENTIAL FACILITIES	MANAGEMENT FOCUS
Development	-High social interaction -Low opportunity for solitude -Moderate degree of interaction with the natural environment -Low opportunity for challenge	-High-density recreation -Emphasis on opportunities with easy motor-vehicle access and access point to other zones	-Paved or high-use roads, parking areas, visitor services, group picnic areas, interpretive facilities and developed campgrounds	-Intense management needs -Provide sustainable recreation and aesthetic qualities -Prevent invasive weeds, erosion, or other degradation -Intense fire prevention -Revegetation with native or non-invasive species
Passive Recreation	-Moderate social interaction -Low opportunity for solitude -Moderate degree of interaction with the natural environment -Moderate opportunity for challenge	-Medium-density recreation -Emphasis on dispersed, non-motorized trail-based recreation	-Trails, interpretive facilities and hike-in backcountry camping, cabins or yurts -Minimize utilities to the extent possible	- Moderate to high management needs - Provide sustainable recreation and maintain the natural character - Actively manage weeds and prevent erosion or other degradation - High level of fire prevention - Revegetation with native species
Natural	-Low social interaction -Moderate to high opportunity for solitude -High degree of interaction with the natural environment -Moderate to high opportunity for challenge	-Medium to low-density recreation -Emphasis on dispersed, non-motorized trail-based recreation -Off-trail use for hunting is allowed	-Trails, interpretive facilities and hike-in backcountry camping -Minimal utilities, if any	-Moderate to low management needs -Maintain natural character, native habitat and ecological functions while balancing sustainable recreation -Actively manage weeds and prevent erosion or other degradation -Moderate to high level of fire prevention -Revegetation with native species
Protection	-Very low social interaction -High opportunity for solitude -High degree of interaction with the natural environment -High opportunity for challenge	-Minimal, low-density recreation -Emphasis on limited non-motorized trail-based recreation and off-trail hunting access	-Limited trails, with restricted access and seasonal closures	-Low management intensity -Emphasize preservation of sensitive resource, native habitat and ecological functions with limited recreation -Fire prevention

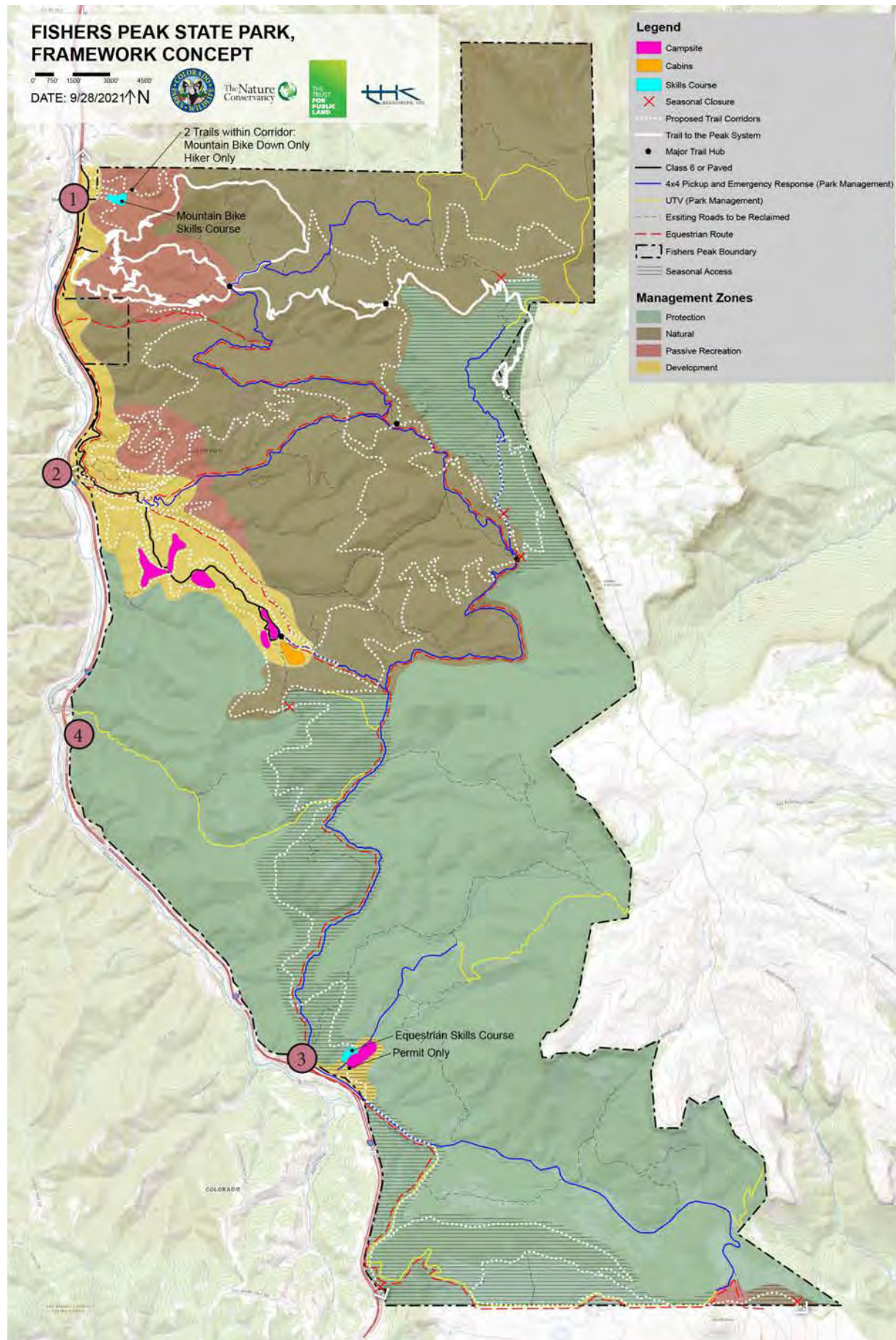
5.2 Physical Plan (Site and Trail Plan)

An understanding of the physical and natural resources of the Park guided a broad scale view of various uses and activities that would be appropriate in the Park. This understanding of the land shaped the location and relationships of the proposed park infrastructure improvements. From the onset, the two project pillars established by the partners guided the master planning for the Park: 1) Providing world-class recreational opportunities in a way to protect and promote 2) Long-term ecological conservation. Balancing conservation and recreation lead to an overall theme for the Park as a backcountry, wild land experience. Extensive site testing and field verification of a number of proposed improvements such as roads, parking areas, trails, campsites and buildings was done during the master planning effort. The process entailed preparing conceptual plan alternatives of the improvements based on GIS mapping and walking the site locations and alignments using numerous mapping applications. The approximate locations of roads, parking areas, trails, campsites and buildings were marked with colored flagging to understand preliminary feasibility. Through this process, a number of alternatives for the different proposed park features/improvements were identified. Then, using the vision and goals developed during the planning process, the benefits and drawbacks were identified for each alternative to compare and contrast the alternatives with one another and to identify the preferred alternatives. Once the preferred alternatives were identified, drone survey and photogrammetry were used to prepare a more detailed schematic design of the proposed park features/improvements. This was done to further test the site specific feasibility of developing the park features in the locations proposed. The result of this process was a physical Master Plan that respects the natural resources of the site and fits to the form of the land.

5.2.1 Planning Concept Alternatives

A series of five maps and five corresponding benefits vs. drawbacks tables were developed for the main park infrastructure. Alternatives for the main park entrance, Visitors Center, trailheads, developed camping and backcountry camping were studied. Existing natural resources, site conditions and user experience were all considered when identifying the benefits and drawbacks for each alternative. Within each table, the final preferred alternatives are identified. The alternatives analysis included onsite workshops with the Work Groups and Interest Groups followed by a public meeting to validate the final selection of the preferred alternatives. The preferred alternatives were carried forward into the final Master Plan recommendations.





PARK FEATURE ALTERNATIVE - MAIN PARK ENTRANCE

1. Exit 11 (preferred)

Benefits

- Takes advantage of new interchange and Frontage road
- Closest access to Trinidad using public R.O.W.
- Space for entry gate and trailhead
- Ability to manage most of the Park access from one location
- Protects historic ranch HQ setting
- Provides good access to the Trail to the Peak
- Support from CDOT
- Historic interpretation opportunities

Drawbacks

- May require property acquisition
- Requires improvements to frontage road

2. Exit 8

Benefits

- Shorter distance to visitor center
- Uses the historic main entrance to the ranch

Drawbacks

- Requires improvements to Exit 8
- Impacts the historic ranch HQ setting
- More impacts to the Clear Creek riparian area

3. Exit 2

Benefits

- Access to the southern half of the Park
- Plenty of space
- Provide access to the Park close to the pass

Drawbacks

- Does not connect easily to the main development area of the Park
- Does not provide good access to the trail to the Peak
- Impacts McBride riparian area
- Hard to control access to the north end of the Park

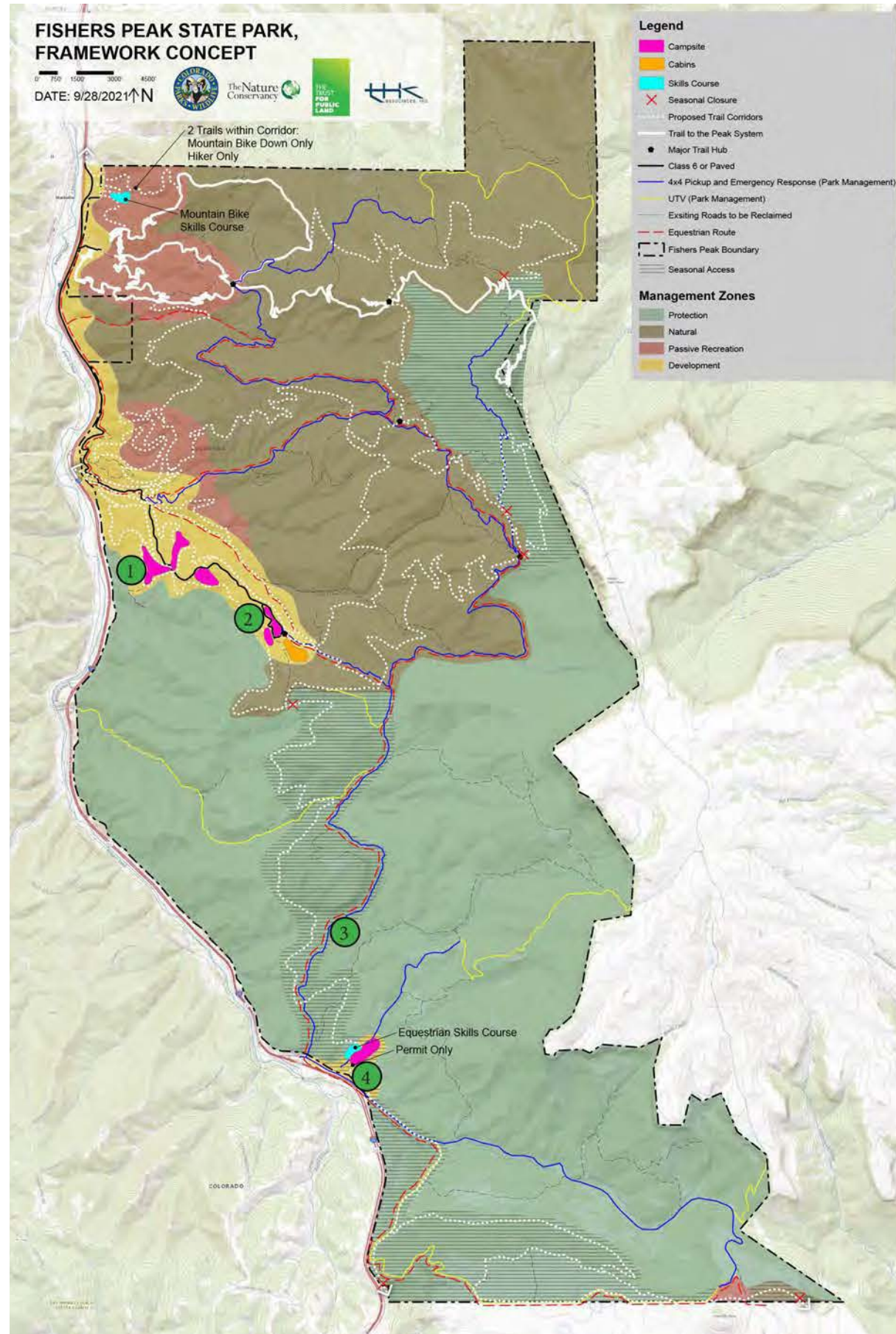
4. Exit 6

Benefits

- Access to the center of the Park

Drawbacks

- No space
- Rough terrain
- Does not connect to development areas well
- Requires improvements to interchange
- Hard to control access to north end of the Park



PARK FEATURE ALTERNATIVE - DEVELOPED CAMPING

1. Above the Visitors Center (preferred)

Benefits

- Views to Fishers Peak
- No highway noise
- Close to visitor center/camper services
- Gentle terrain
- Connected to major trail corridor system

Drawbacks

- Top of ridge exposed to the weather

2. West of Big Flats (preferred)

Benefits

- No highway noise
- Gentle terrain
- Connected to major trail corridors system

Drawbacks

- Impacts to Big Flats
- Not close to visitors center/camper services
- Top of ridge exposed to the weather

3. Below Little Baldy

Benefits

- Gentle terrain
- No highway noise

Drawbacks

- Less accessible
- No views to Fishers Peak
- Not close to visitor center/camper services
- Less connected to major trail corridor system

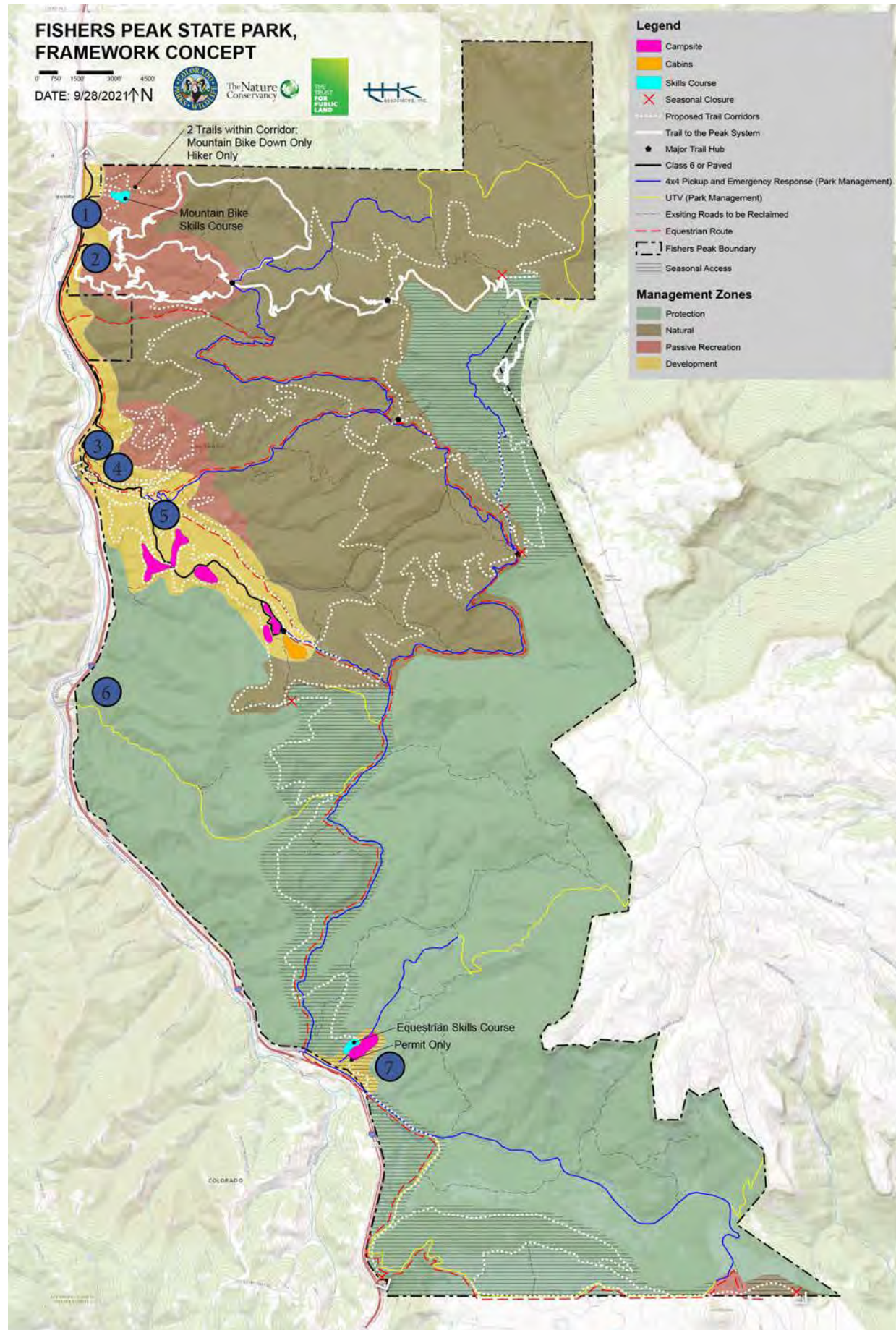
4. Exit 2 (preferred)

Benefits

- Good access to back Country
- Can accommodate large vehicles

Drawbacks

- Some highway noise
- More challenging terrain
- Limited space for camping
- Not close to visitor center/camper services
- Not located near major trail corridor system
- Far from Fishers Peak



PARK FEATURE ALTERNATIVE - TRAILHEADS

1. Coal Pile (preferred)

Benefits

- Close and easy connection to Trinidad
- Disturbed area
- Ample parking
- Connects into the Trail to the Peak
- Ample room for a mountain bike skills course
- Interpretation opportunities

Drawbacks

- Some highway noise
- Coal debris

2. Fishers Peak (Existing Public Trailhead)

Benefits

- Gentle terrain
- Ample parking
- Direct access to the Trail to the Peak
- It already exists

Drawbacks

- Can be subject to flooding
- Some highway noise

3. Above HQ (preferred)

Benefits

- Direct access to a SP overlook with picnicking
- Provides access to close in trail loops

Drawbacks

- More challenging terrain
- Limited parking
- Some highway noise

4. Lower Clear Creek (preferred)

Benefits

- Provides access to HQ and ranch buildings
- Provides access to close in Trail Loops
- Ample parking

Drawbacks

- Some highway noise
- Close to Clear Creek

5. At Visitors Center (preferred)

Benefits

- No highway noise
- Ample parking including large vehicles and horse trailers
- Forested terrain/setting

Drawbacks

- Close to Clear Creek

6. Exit 6

Benefits

- Close to Exit 6 on I-25

Drawbacks

- Limited parking
- Highway noise
- Challenging terrain (very tight canyon)
- Very limited access to trail system
- Standalone entrance off I-25 (management issue)

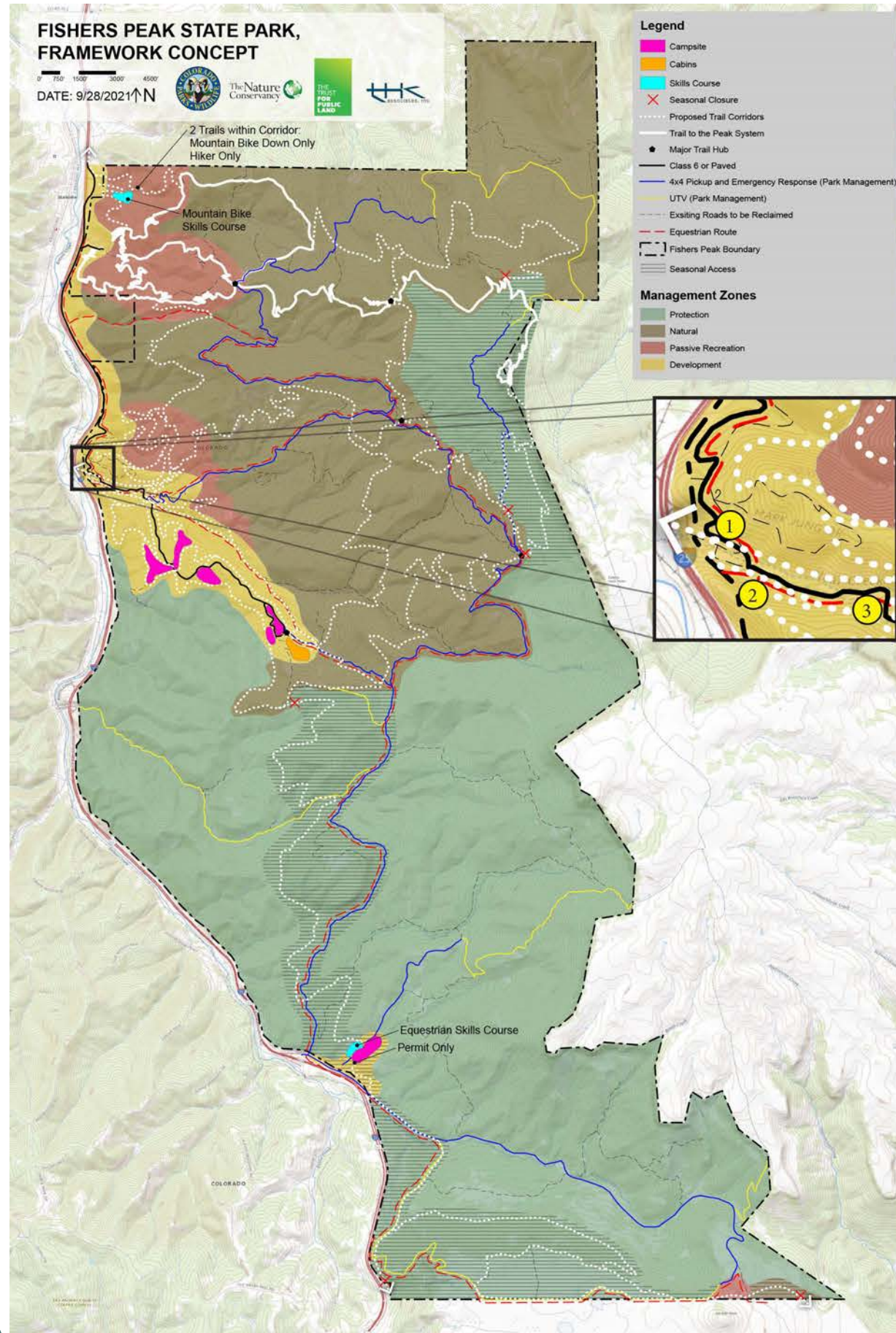
7. Exit 2 (preferred)

Benefits

- Direct access to southern end of trail system
- Ample parking including large vehicles and horse trailers
- Forested terrain/setting

Drawbacks

- Standalone entrance off of I-25 (management issue)
- Highway noise



PARK FEATURE ALTERNATIVE - VISITOR CENTER

1. HQ Area

Benefits

- Developed area
- Open terrain
- Ranch HQ history/context
- Ample parking

Drawbacks

- No views
- Highway noise
- Building and parking may destroy historic HQ setting
- No connection to park terrain and resources

2. Above Corral Area

Benefits

- Disturbed area
- Gentle terrain
- Slight view of Fishers Peak
- Ample parking

Drawbacks

- Partial view
- Some highway noise
- Less interesting site/context

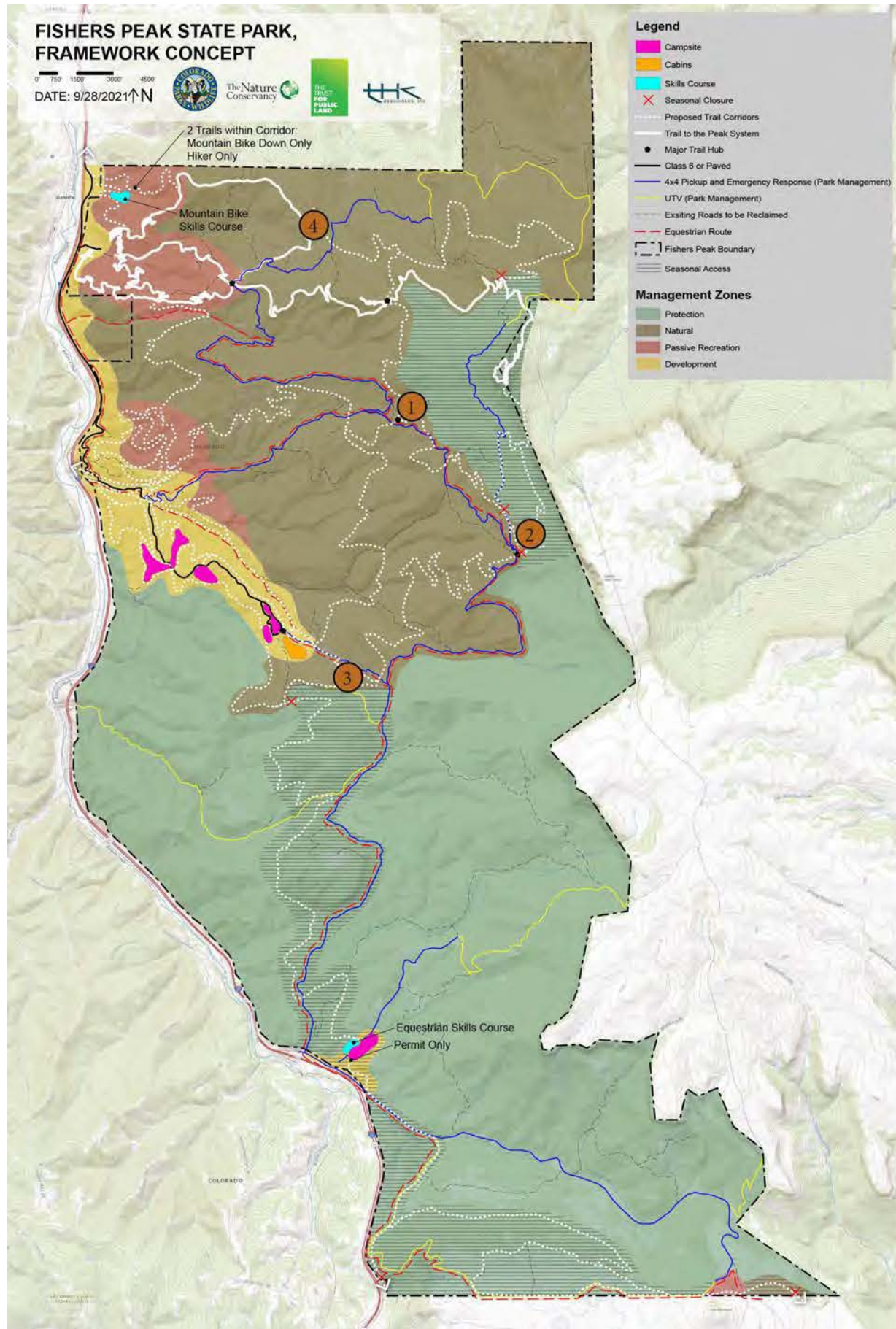
3. Confluence Area (preferred)

Benefits

- Impressive view of Fishers Peak, mesa, and canyons
- Forested terrain/setting
- Proximity to camping and trails

Drawbacks

- Challenging terrain
- Limited space for parking



PARK FEATURE ALTERNATIVE - BACK COUNTRY CAMPING

1. Above Maxwell Road (preferred)

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle terrain Can access with maintenance vehicle Great views to Fishers Peak Provides great second day access to Fishers Peak Ample room for campsites 	

2. North of Marion Flats (preferred)

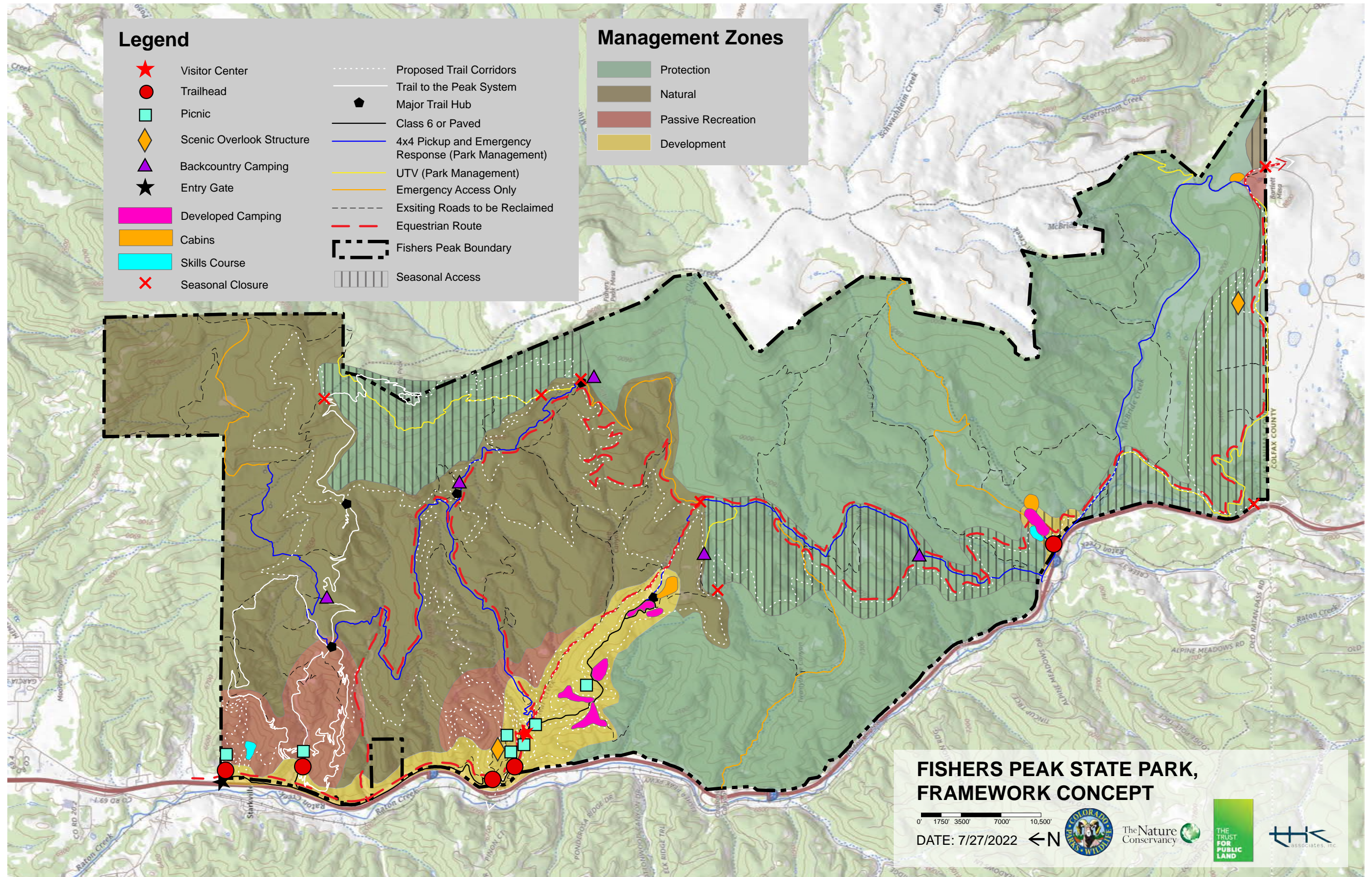
Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can access with maintenance vehicle Great views west and south across the Park Provides great second day access to Fishers Peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer opportunities for camp sites due to steeper terrain Close to Protection Management Zone (camping may have seasonal closures) Could have impacts to Marion Flats

3. Above Big Flats (preferred)

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle terrain Can access with maintenance vehicle Great views of Fishers Peak, the northern end of the Park, and Big Flats Provides great second day access to the north or south end of the Park (in the middle of the Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could have impacts to Big Flats Exposed to the weather

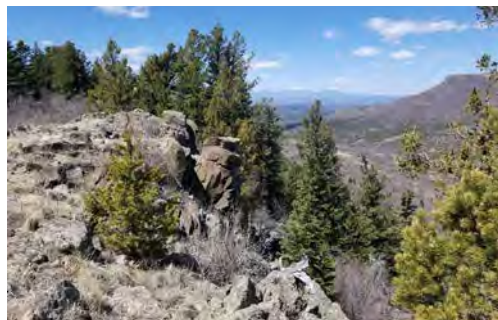
4. North End

Benefits	Drawbacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle Terrain Can access with maintenance vehicle Great views of Fishers Peak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too close to the Front Country Less than halfway to the Peak Exposed to the weather





Black Bear Tracks



Overlooking McBride Drainage



Sandstone Cliffs



View of Fishers Peak

5.2.2 Framework Concept

One of the most frequent comments made by the community was the desire to maintain the natural environment and landscape of FPSP, with as little human impact as possible. Based on the initial biological assessments of FPSP, the two pillars and the community's desires for the Park, FPSP is being planned and designed as a largely backcountry recreational experience that is focused on wild land and wildlife conservation. Over 90% of the Park will be in the Natural or Protection management zones, with only 5% of the Park in the Development management zone. Please see section 5.1 for a detailed discussion about recommended Park Management Zones.

FPSP is over 19,200 acres in size and approximately 30 square miles of very rugged terrain. While the steep ridges, tight canyons, rock outcrops and dense vegetation make for a challenging park development, they also allow for trail and park infrastructure configurations that provide a backcountry feel, while minimizing habitat impact. FPSP has more than enough high-quality habitat to support a backcountry/wild land experience for park users, while also conserving several very large habitat blocks for wildlife.

Rising 3,000 feet in elevation from west to east, within three (3) miles, FPSP transitions through five life zones that will provide visitors with multiple settings and experiences within a single outing. Trails can traverse open meadows, tall forests and dense shrublands, which will provide a constant sense of transition and discovery.

The Park is wild, but as a former working ranch it is not pristine. As a result of past land uses, there are multiple existing disturbances including over 90 miles of ranch roads, corrals, ponds and pastures. These existing disturbances provide opportunities to site and cluster new park infrastructure in a manner that will reduce new ecological impacts. Most of these existing disturbances are located along the western edge of the Park, adjacent to the I-25 corridor. Some of the existing roads are desirable for administrative or recreational use, but most are not. The existing roads are generally too steep and narrow to easily be converted to public use.

Using Exit 11 on I-25 and working with CDOT through a "devolution" process, portions of the frontage road will be converted to being a main park entrance road that will reduce the amount of public roads within the existing park boundary. The Park entrance road will provide access to three (3) major trailheads including the existing trailhead, the existing Park Headquarters Complex, the Visitors Center/camping services and approximately 100 developed camping sites. FPSP is set up into 4 unique access zones based on access to FPSP from Exits 11 and 2, the existence of unique experience areas, parking availability and development phasing. These access zones include: 1) Park entrance trailhead, 2) existing "First Look" Trailhead 3) Headquarters/Visitors Center Trailheads and 4) the Exit 2 trailhead. As a result, each access zone has its own experiences and destinations that will require their own functional trail system for access. All trailheads will include picnicking, restroom facilities and equestrian trailer access. The Park entrance trailhead will likely be most heavily used by local residents and connect directly to the City of Trinidad by a city-planned trail connection from downtown.

From the park entrance trailhead, trail users will be able to connect directly into the trail to the peak trail system. To polish their riding abilities, a mountain bicycle skills course for beginners and intermediate riders is planned at the park entrance trailhead. Additionally, a paved interpretive trail will provide the history of the region's coal mining and milling history. Taking advantage of the educational opportunities at the Park is a key element of the Park Master Plan. Education opportunities will include outdoor recreation skills courses, natural resource and cultural resource interpretation. Section 5.6.1 provides more detailed information about the different potential education opportunities that exist on the Park.

To accommodate many different hiking skill levels and park visitors with mobility challenges, the Headquarters/Visitors Center Trailheads will provide access to several shorter trail loops in the lower Clear Creek drainage. These trail loops will provide close-in opportunities for environmental education, access to nature and views of park features. Trails will connect the Headquarters, Visitors Center, developed camping, large group picnic area and the larger park trail system. A beginner-level mountain bike downhill-only trail from the campground will be provided as well.

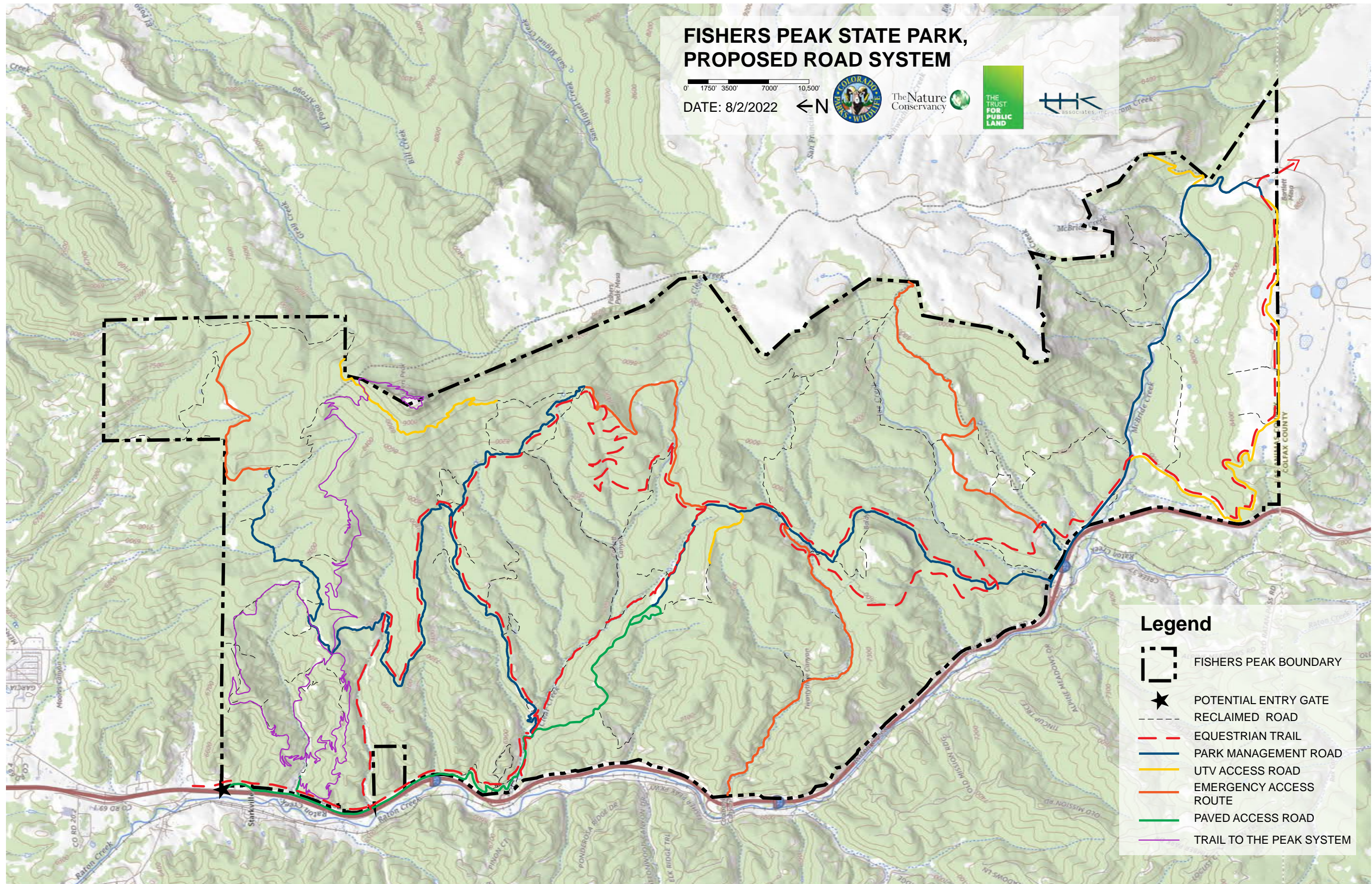
The Exit 2 trailhead will be controlled by permit access only for all recreational users. Mountain bikers and hikers will have access to the larger park trail system, as well as regional trails connecting to Sugarite Canyon State Park in New Mexico. A hunting and equestrian campground will also be developed with access to an equestrian skills course and access to the back country for hunting. Also from Exit 2, by permit only, climbing will be provided on Little Baldy. While this is not an epic climbing opportunity, it does provide many diverse routes that accommodate beginners to more advanced climbers. Little Baldy, with its climbing opportunities and the location of a backcountry camping area at the base of Little Baldy, will provide a great opportunity as a climbing training and practice area. A more detailed discussion of all the major park development areas is provided in section 5.4 of this Master Plan.

Public motorized access to the Park beyond the trailheads, Visitors Center, cabins and developed camping will not be allowed. However, a number of the existing ranch roads will be improved for use as park management roads to be patrolled regularly. Based on terrain and habitat restrictions, two different types of park management roads are identified. Management roads are designated to accommodate larger 4x4 pickups or UTV's only. Additionally, there are roads that would not be used regularly, but used only in case of an emergency to provide access to the backcountry. Of approximately 90 miles of existing ranch roads, one third of the roads will be reclaimed and allowed to revegetate. Developing an existing ranch road reclamation plan is strongly recommended as a priority next step in the effort to reconnect habitat blocks.

The Park was designed to accommodate seasonal closure areas along the western side of Fishers Peak, for the peregrine falcon. This raptor buffer closure will close the Peak from March 15th until August 1st every year. To accommodate elk calving and/or hunting, an additional seasonal closure area is being considered in the southern part of the Park.

In addition to the developed camping, backcountry camping and cabins for rent, there are other potential overnight accommodation opportunities being provided at the Park. The backcountry camping areas are provided in areas that will accommodate multi-day backpacking trips. Three different cabin locations are provided in the Park, one in the central part of the Park, the second near the Exit 2 campground and a third in the extreme southeast corner of the Park. To accommodate the regional point-to-point traveler, the cabins are strategically located along the north-south regional trail route that could connect to New Mexico and Sugarite Canyon State Park.

The FPSP trail system will include about 85-100 miles of trails within the Park. To provide a quality visitor experience and avoid conflict and congestion, the trail system deliberately includes multiple hiking-only and biking-only trails in the front country areas. Additionally, there are equestrian-only trails and multi-use trails throughout the larger parkwide trail system. The larger park trail system uses a series of efficiently designed stacked loop trails with backcountry camping to access the upper elevations of the Park and accommodate longer hikes and rides, including multiple day hikes for backpackers. The stacked loops also work well to accommodate round trip hikes and rides when the seasonal closures are in place. Stacked loop trails eliminate the "out and back trip." Please see section 5.2.4 of this Master Plan for a more detailed description of the trail system.



5.2.3 Proposed Road System

As a result of past land uses and management, there are currently over 90 miles of existing roads on FPSP. These roads range from well-maintained, graded dirt roads to overgrown and impassible two-track routes. This Master Plan recommends a road system that provides necessary access for park management while significantly reducing the overall length, use and footprint of the roads. The proposed road system types are described as follows (see Table 10):

- **Paved Access Road** – Extending from the park entrance through the headquarters area and to developed campgrounds, the main park entry road is intended to be a two-lane, paved road that is accessible to park visitors in any standard vehicle. These roads will vary in width (depending on location) may have paved shoulders to facilitate bicycle access and will be constructed to modern roadway standards.
- **Park Management Road** – Several of the existing roads in the Park will be retained as park management roads, suitable for access in a standard four-wheel drive truck or a UTV. These roads are natural surfaces, may be as narrow as 8 feet in places and may have rough or rocky surfaces and occasional small ruts and gullies. While some of these roads will also be used for visitor equestrian access, they are not intended for general public vehicle access or use.
- **UTV Access Road** – Some of the park management roads that are steeper, narrower, or rougher will be retained for access only by UTV or other similar vehicles. These roads are intended for occasional park management access, while one road (Bartlett Mesa) will also serve as an equestrian route. Otherwise, they are not intended for general public access.
- **Emergency Access Route** – Four backcountry routes in the Park are designated for emergency access only. These roads are rough and are generally overgrown with ground cover, but will be periodically maintained to remain passable for emergency access/egress and periodic resource management access. General public access to these routes is strictly prohibited.
- **Reclaimed Roads** – The remaining roads are designated to be reclaimed and eliminated from the park road system. These roads will not be used for any visitor use or park management activities, will remain impassible and will be actively or passively revegetated.

Road Management Guidelines

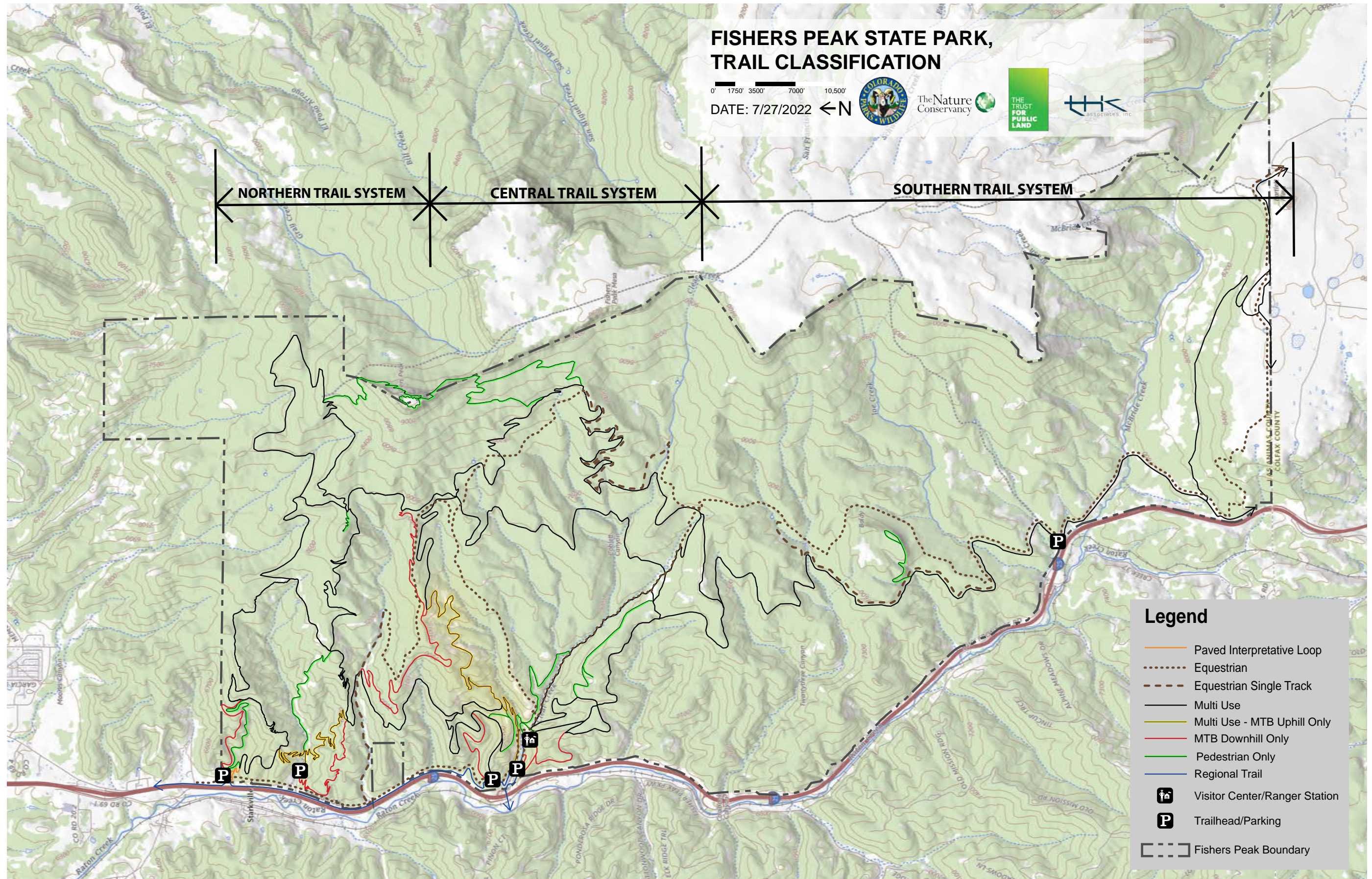
The proposed road system for FPSP is based on our understanding of the general condition and characteristics of each route. Guidelines for managing the park road system include the following:

- **Paved Access Roads** – Routine monitoring and maintenance that is necessary to maintain safety and the overall visitor experience. This may include drainage improvements, crack and pothole repair, restriping and over the long term, repaving.
- **Park Management Roads** – These roads will require routine monitoring and maintenance to remain safely and efficiently passable to service vehicles. This will include downed tree and rock removal, drainage improvements and spot repairs to gullies on an annual basis. Some portions of road may require regrading every few years.
- **UTV Access Roads** – These roads will require routine monitoring and occasional maintenance to remain passable. This will include down tree and rock removal and spot repairs on an as needed basis.
- **Emergency Access Route** – These roads should be maintained to a minimum standard where they are reasonably passable with UTVs or high-clearance vehicles in an emergency. They are expected to grow over with grasses and woody vegetation and accumulate periodic gullies and washouts. They should be inspected every year to identify issues and the need for spot repairs.
- **Reclaimed Roads** – These routes should be allowed to reclaim so that over time they are indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape. For most roads, this will require continued abandonment of the route while allowing woody vegetation to grow in (passive reclamation). Some routes may require more active reclamation that may include physical obliteration of the road tread, reseeding or replanting with native species, placement of downed timber or rocks across the road and/or the installation of gates and fencing. Some roads may also require the placement of rocks or woody debris at the road entrance to obscure the road and prevent access, while allowing the rest of the road to passively reclaim over time.

Table 10
Proposed Road System

ROAD TYPE	MILES	DESCRIPTION
Paved Access Road	6	Paved road intended for visitor access to parking and infrastructure
Park Management Road	20	Existing roads intended for CPW access by 4WD or UTV
UTV Access Road	9	Rough and narrow roads intended for CPW access by UTV
Emergency Access Route	11.5	Routes retained for emergency and monitoring access only
Reclaimed Road	41	Routes to be reclaimed and revegetated and removed from the system





Legend

- Paved Interpretative Loop
- ⋯ Equestrian
- - - Equestrian Single Track
- Multi Use
- Multi Use - MTB Uphill Only
- MTB Downhill Only
- Pedestrian Only
- Regional Trail
- i Visitor Center/Ranger Station
- P Trailhead/Parking
- Fishers Peak Boundary

5.2.4 Proposed Trail System

The proposed FPSP trail system is designed and intended to provide diverse, nature-based recreation experiences that are compatible with the conservation of significant environmental resources. The trail system incorporates several design elements that are specifically intended to minimize environmental impacts, provide meaningful access to inspiring park destinations and provide a positive experience for all visitors.

The overall theme for the Park is a backcountry, wildland experience.

Trail System Overview

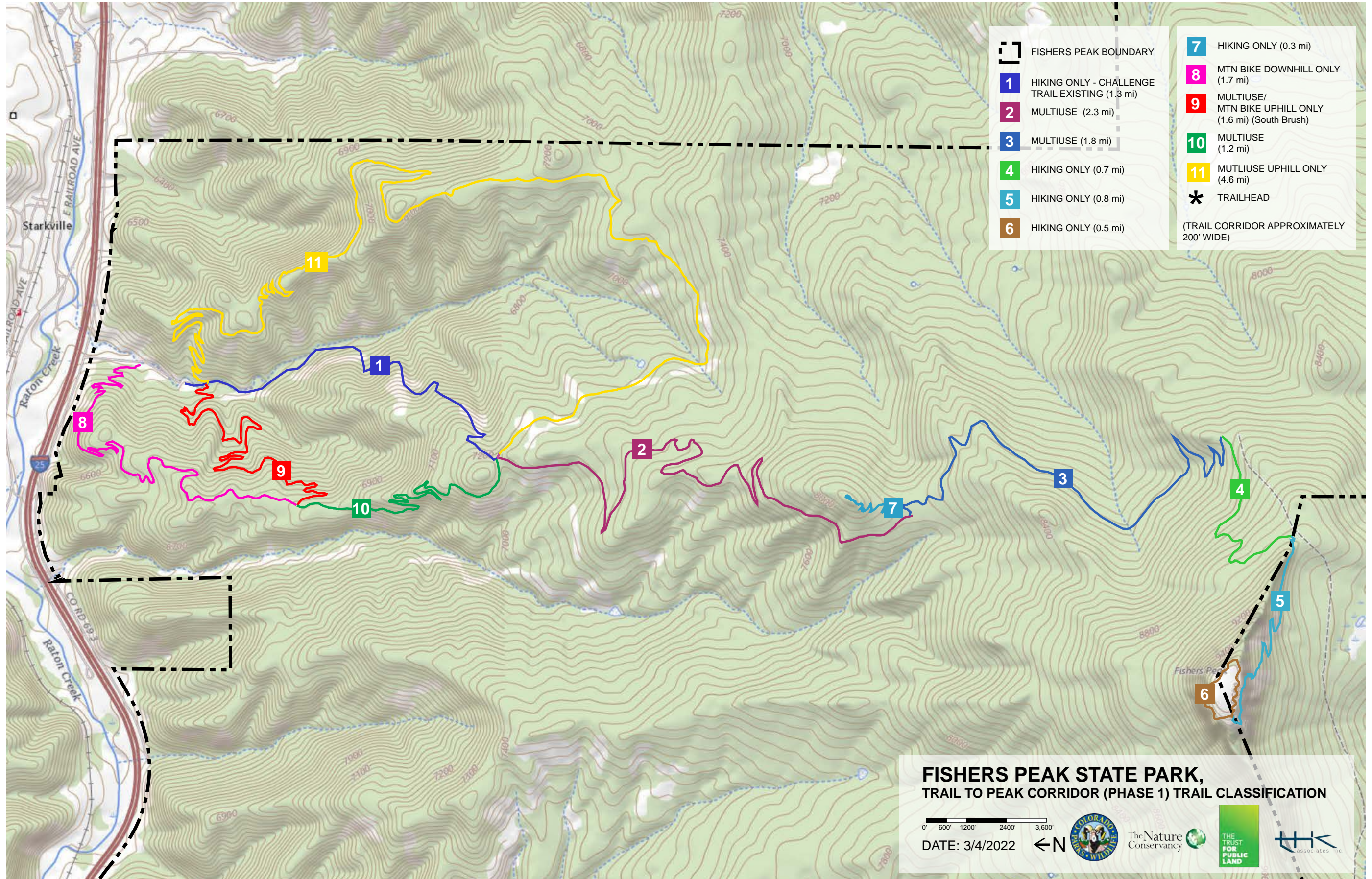
Trailheads and Access Points

The FPSP trail system has two major and two minor trailheads and access points. These varying access points are intended to disperse visitors, provide access to distinctly different settings within the Park and allow repeat visitors to discover and experience new areas of the Park. The access points, from north to south, are:

1. **Coal Pile Trailhead** – This small trailhead in the northwest corner of the Park is characterized by historical mining features at the base of a dry, rocky valley. This trailhead is adjacent to the park entrance and is best suited for locals seeking quick access to the trail system, or travelers seeking a quick respite from I-25.
2. **First Look Trailhead** – Opened in 2020, this access point has a large parking lot and is the major trailhead for the network of trails in the northern portion of the Park. This is the primary access for the trail to the summit of Fishers Peak.
3. **Headquarters / Visitors Center Trailheads** – Located near the former ranch headquarters along lower Clear Creek, these trailheads are characterized by diverse terrain and interpretive experiences. These trailheads provide access to rugged canyons and higher-elevation features near the center of the Park.
4. **Exit 2 Trailhead** – This small trailhead provides limited access to the southern portion of the Park, which has more of a vast and wild character. This access point is intended to support hunting and equestrian access, along with long-distance regional excursions between the main FPSP trail system and connections to the south in New Mexico.

These trailhead names are for descriptive purposes only. Actual final trailhead names will be determined prior to their implementation.





Northern Trail System

From the First Look and Coal Pile trailheads, the trails in the northern portion of the Park consist of a series of interconnected, stacked loops that rise to the east towards Fishers Peak. The lower loops explore rugged ridges and canyons dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands, providing several short (3-8-mile) outings from the trailhead. Extending higher to the east, the next loop provides access to a prominent sub-peak and landmark (Osita Point) perched in the cool ponderosa pine forests, which is likely to be a destination for many visitors (8 miles out and back from the trailhead). The furthest loop provides a remote backcountry experience, exploring the north slopes of Fishers Peak with commanding views of downtown Trinidad and the vast eastern plains.

The main feature in the north trail system is the route to the summit of Fishers Peak from the First Look trailhead. This 8-mile trail climbs 3,200 feet from the trailhead, wrapping around the east side of the peak to reach a rocky scramble to the top. Access to the peak will be closed seasonally from March 15 to July 31 to protect an active peregrine nest. For visitors who are short on time or energy for the full trek, the lower sub-peak (Osita Point) offers a worthy destination with a 4 mile hike (one way) with 1,800 feet of elevation gain.

For mountain bikers, the northern trail system out of the First Look trailhead is completed by a 6-mile directional downhill trail that descends 1,500 feet from the upper forests to the trailhead. This trail is intended to provide a long, flowy experience that explores the landscape, providing a rewarding intermediate-level descent, while also separating descending bikers from other trail users.



Fishers Peak Mesa



Pinyon - Juniper Woodlands



Forest Fire Burn Area



Cool Ponderosa Pine Forest



Lichen on Top of Fishers Peak



Cairn on Top of Fishers Peak



Central Trail System

From the Headquarters and Visitors Center Trailheads, the central trails explore the rocky, desert canyons of Spring and Clear Creeks, the scenic Big Flats meadow and the inspiring view from Marion Flat. Several lower loops near the Visitors Center provide close-in opportunities for families and mobility-challenged visitors to experience the rugged and intimate character of the canyons. Longer outings include a loop to the Big Flat meadow (5 miles), Big Flat crest (7 miles) or a longer loop circling back to the Spring Creek canyon (10 miles).

Ambitious visitors can continue climbing to the east to reach Marion Flat, which is an open high point with inspiring views and is the highest point in the Park that will be open year-round. This route is about 8 miles each way, climbing 2,000 vertical feet and can be completed as a loop from the trailheads. Above Marion Flat, a short upper loop trail explores the unique forests and geology at the base of the upper cliffs, with a spur that provides a south access to the summit of Fishers Peak. These short upper routes will be seasonally closed to protect raptor nests.



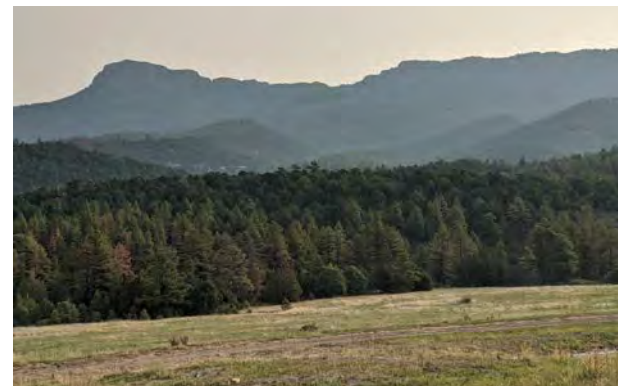
Rocky Desert Canyons



Big Flat



Marion Flat



Big Flat



Rocky Desert Canyons



Fishers Peak



Inspiring Views



Fishers Peak



Rocky Desert Canyons



South Trail System

Accessed from the Exit 2 trailhead, the south trails provide long-distance access through the southern half of the Park and into New Mexico. Trail access is limited, since this part of the Park is primarily intended to be left for wildlife. A single trail route contours from the Big Flat Crest to the south, circling around the Little Baldy formation, to reach the trailhead near the bottom of Joe Creek. From the trailhead, the single trail follows a historic road bed before venturing into the rugged terrain at the foot of Bartlett Mesa, eventually reaching the mesa top. A secondary loop explores the rim of Bartlett Mesa, providing visitors a unique experience and expansive views of the Park. A future trail connection to the southeast may eventually extend into New Mexico and Sugarite Canyon State Park.

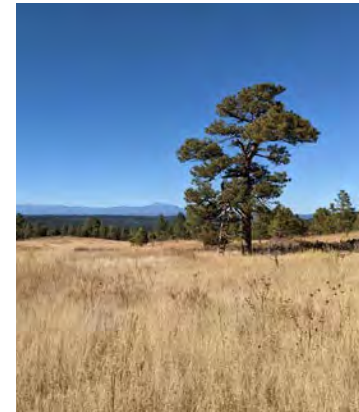
The south trail system is intended to be a special, low-use experience that primarily serves long-distance trail users. The distance from the Headquarters and Visitors Center Trailheads to Exit 2 is about 10 miles. From Exit 2 to the New Mexico border is 6 miles, with about another 2 miles to reach the current boundary of Sugarite Canyon State Park.

Environmental Protection Elements

Since the beginning of the planning process, environmental resource protection was a priority for CPW, project partners, the Planning Team and the public. However, to provide meaningful access to key destinations on such a rugged landscape, multiple trail loops and access points are necessary.

Considering these factors, the Planning Team integrated several design elements into the trails plan to minimize impacts of the trail system on wildlife and habitat. These environmental protection elements include the following:

- **Avoidance of sensitive habitat areas** – Specific habitat areas that are known to have high sensitivity were avoided as much as possible. These include springs, wetlands and riparian habitat, elk calving areas and known habitat for the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse.
- **Using existing disturbance patterns** – Historic road development and recent access patterns have left an extensive web of disturbances on the landscape. Many of the proposed trail corridors were specifically designed to follow or mimic these existing disturbance patterns to reduce new disturbance and fragmentation. For example, the regional north-south trail and northern mountain bike downhill trails are deliberately located within the disturbance buffer of existing park management roads.
- **Maintaining large habitat blocks** – The trail system was designed to maintain and expand large blocks of undisturbed habitat. The Master Plan includes 7,434 acres of large undisturbed habitat blocks in the southern half of the Park and several smaller habitat blocks in the northern half of the Park, resulting in a total of 12,825 acres of undisturbed habitat.
- **Using the terrain strategically** – Most of the trails were designed to follow ridgelines rather than valley bottoms, to avoid the riparian habitat and wildlife movement corridors that are typically found along the drainages.
- **Clustering trails in low-sensitivity zones** – Most of the shorter trail loops and higher-density trail areas are located in zones that have lower environmental sensitivity. Higher-elevation habitats and areas with higher sensitivity have fewer trails, lower trail density and are expected to have fewer visitors resulting in a lower environmental impact.
- **Planning to minimize impacts** – Where sensitive resources could not be avoided, trails were specifically designed to incorporate mitigation and management measures. For example, the trail system below Fishers Peak was designed to incorporate seasonal closures while remaining functional during the closure period, while the trails that cross Clear Creek were sited to minimize impacts to potential New Mexico meadow jumping mouse habitat.



Foot of Bartlett Mesa



Bartlett Mesa



Bartlett Mesa



Near Exit 2



Little Baldy



Volcanic Rift

Visitor Management Strategy

The FPSP trail system is designed to provide a high-quality experience for all visitors, including hikers, runners, equestrians and mountain bikers. Experience from other state parks and public lands tells us that most of the visitor conflict takes place within the first few miles of the trailhead and the conflict is often due to downhill mountain bikers interacting with other trail users. The FPSP trail system is specifically designed to mitigate this issue, through the separation of uses in frontcountry settings.

Designated Use Trails

The FPSP trail system incorporates the following designated use strategies:

1. Multi-use trail – Open to all hikers, runners and mountain bikers
2. Bike uphill-only – Open to all hikers and runners; uphill-only travel for mountain bikers
3. Hiking-only trail – Open only to hikers and runners; no mountain bikes
4. Mountain bike-only downhill – Open only to downhill mountain bikers; no hikers, runners or uphill bikers
5. Equestrian routes – Designated routes for horse access along two-track roads and backcountry trails shared with other users

Each of the four (4) main trailheads have a hiking-only route, a multi-use bike uphill-only route and a bike-only downhill to ensure that everyone can experience the Park without the stress and potential conflict of negative interactions near the trailhead. This will minimize conflict and support a positive experience for all visitors. The Exit 2 trailhead in the southern portion of the Park does not include these strategies, since it is intended to support long-distance trail outings with lower volumes of use and has less of an elevation gradient.

In addition, several of the peaks in the Park are intended to be hiking only. These include Fishers Peak, Osita Point and Little Baldy. This is due to steep and rugged terrain that requires steps and exposure and the importance of preserving a unique experience on these peaks with opportunities for backcountry solitude.

The total approximate length of different trail types is as follows:

- Multi-use trails – 74 miles
- Hiking-only trails – 14 miles
- Bike-only trails – 10 miles
- Equestrian routes – 25 miles

Equestrian Routes

The park is intended to provide multiple, long-distance ride options for equestrians. Equestrian routes in the park are primarily located along existing two-track roads and some upper-elevation trails where overall trail use is expected to be low and soils are more durable. Horses will not be permitted on most other system trails. This is for the following reasons: 1) to provide separation and maintain a quality experience for all visitors, 2) equestrians are often more comfortable (and sometimes prefer) access along rustic roads 3) the friable soils at Fishers Peak would not withstand the erosional forces of frequent equestrian use, especially during wet or dusty conditions.

The equestrian routes will consist of three access points, with the 4-to-5-mile access routes from the north and south meeting a large, 9-mile loop around the central basin above the Visitors Center. A total of about 25 miles of equestrian routes are provided in the Park.

Community Access Points

Under this Master Plan, public access to the Park and the trail system will originate from the designated park entrances and trailheads. These proposed access points, trailheads, trails and infrastructure are on land that is owned and managed by CPW and can be implemented by CPW. However, CPW recognizes that over time there may be interest in one or more community access points to create additional connections between the Park and the local community.

Over the long-term, CPW will evaluate proposals for additional trail access points into the FPSP trail system considering the following criteria:

1. The trail access point, within FPSP, is at a location that is compatible with the overall design and management of the park trail system.
2. The connecting trail, outside of FPSP, is located on land that is owned or controlled (via easement) by a local unit of government or other public entity.
3. The trailhead or origination point for the connecting trail is greater than one mile, by non-motorized trail, from the FPSP boundary.
4. The origination point of the connecting trail is from a publicly accessible location with sufficient infrastructure (parking, trash removal, etc.) to support its intended use.
5. The trail, trailhead and supporting infrastructure for the connecting trail are managed by a local unit of government or other entity with the demonstrated capacity and commitment for such management.
6. The connecting trail is open to the general public, for non-motorized uses that are compatible with the management of the FPSP trail or trails to which the community trail connects.
7. The connecting trail is a natural surface trail that is planned, designed and constructed following sustainable trail design principles consistent with those outlined in this master plan.
8. The connecting trail location, within FPSP, is compatible with CPW's habitat protection and resource management objectives.
9. The connecting trail location, outside of the Park, does not result in significant habitat or cultural resource impacts.
10. The connecting trail is supported by community stakeholders, adjacent landowners, the City of Trinidad and Las Animas County.
11. Other factors as needed to support proper park management and community collaboration.

While CPW is open to considering community trail access points that are mutually beneficial to the park management and the local community, CPW also retains the right and ability to deny such proposals within the boundaries of the Park.

5.3 Management Strategies

While the upcoming Management Plan for FPSP will define specific management strategies for the Park, the FPSP Master Plan is making the following recommendations to be considered when developing the management strategies. The purpose of these recommendations is to ensure that future park management decisions are compatible with the concepts and principles that drove the design of the Park, including resource protection, public access, interpretation, visitor experience and partnerships. An immediate recommendation to consider even before the management plan is completed, would be to prioritize removal of unsafe infrastructure that exists from previous land uses on the Park.



5.3.1 Management Considerations

Developing a Routine Trail Maintenance Program: Trail Inspections: Maintenance

Trail maintenance programs are fundamental to a sound risk management program for CPW as FPSP grows into a local, then regional and even nationally recognized park on par with many U.S. National Parks. The primary goals of a trail maintenance program are to protect the safety of park visitors, protect natural and cultural resources and to preserve the trail investments for future generations to enjoy.

Maintenance requirements on newly built trails should be minimal for the first few years and limited to downed trees, corridor clearing and cleaning drainage features from the frequent flow of silt in the lower elevations. Depending on the sustainability and climate regime including massive flash flooding events similar to those seen in recent years, routine maintenance will become more critical in protecting these trail investments over time, especially as visitation increases.

Prioritizing FPSP's trail repairs in a reasonable, prudent manner involves determining whether the needed repair is deemed a significant hazard and could adversely affect the safety of the trail users expected on that type of trail. It is also essential to determine if the repair(s) can be performed in-house with existing CPW staff or whether it requires additional expertise and/or specialized equipment.

Properly training trail maintenance employees is essential to the efficient operation of FPSP's trails maintenance program. All employees should be thoroughly trained to understand and be aware of all of the above-mentioned aspects of trail maintenance. Safety, a good work ethic and proper care of equipment and tools is the backbone of a good training program. Employees must also be aware of the need and skills for positive public contacts. Proper positive attitude towards public questions and concerns is extremely important, as is the conveyance of this information to trail supervisors.

Sound record keeping is essential to a well-organized trail maintenance program. Accurate logs should be kept on items such as daily activities, hazards found and actions taken, maintenance needed and performed, etc. (Records can also include surveys of the types and frequency of use of certain trail sections. This information can be used to prioritize trail management needs, budget properly and ultimately schedule them efficiently).

Inspections should occur on a regularly scheduled basis and be well-documented. The frequency of inspections will depend on the amount of trail use, location, age of trail, aspect, slopes, soil textures, type(s) of users, type of construction and ultimately the severity of the local climate. Following severe weather events or flash floods, inspections of the trail system will be mandatory to identify severe erosion/blowouts, safety concerns and the emergence of long-term sustainability issues.

Depending on the volume/types of use and the season, routine trail maintenance inspections can be as frequent as weekly or monthly or as limited as 2-3 times per year.



Numerous Hunting Blinds Exist that Should be Removed



Fishers Peak from the Overlook on the First Look Trail



Flood Damage on Ranch Roads Creating Gullies 3-4' Deep



Massive Mullien Plant, a Common Invasive Seen in the Park

Management of Trails

As a matter of practice, CPW staff, partners and contractors should refrain from driving motorized vehicles on trails. This includes UTVs, ATVs and other similar vehicles. Use of such vehicles on trails can, in a single pass, deteriorate drainage features, erode the trail backslope and outer edge, damage rock armoring, and create ruts in the trail. If motorized vehicle access becomes common and routine, these issues are only exacerbated. Of course, motorized vehicle access along trails may be prudent and necessary for emergency response. If and when that occurs, park trails staff should inspect the affected trails and quickly repair any damage.

Revegetation of areas adjacent to trails or other new disturbances should occur to help minimize erosion. During construction, broadcasting a native seed mix into bare exposed areas of soil may help minimize the competition from annuals and often will speed up the process of revegetation, enhancing the aesthetics of the trail corridor and minimizing the unintentional transport of weed seeds into other areas of the Park via boot, wheel or hoof.

Weed control along the new trails should also be considered initially, as there is often a “flush” of weedy annual plants along the downhill edge of the trail where the spoils (native soil and organics) are disturbed and dispersed downhill. Limiting this flush of non-native annuals in the first few growing seasons can often help the native plants get re-established. A comprehensive weed management strategy should be used to manage noxious weeds along trail corridors and should be compatible with the Park’s overall weed management strategy.

Trail Signage

Monitoring, repairing and updating the trail signage on a routine basis is an essential trail maintenance programming task for protecting the natural and cultural resources and trail user experience. Trail signage falls into three categories: directional, regulatory and informational. At a minimum, trail users should be able to determine where they are and where they want to hike, ride, bike, run or ski at each trailhead. Easy access to trail maps and park information should be available online, at trailheads, entry station and at the Visitors Center. Regulatory and directional signage are most important and should be considered first. These signs should be repaired or replaced as soon as possible.

Trail Staff and Volunteers

Over the next few years, as additional trail and infrastructure projects are completed, visitor use will inevitably increase. It will be crucial to hire a seasonal trail crew to help manage and maintain the existing and proposed trail system of almost 100 miles, starting with a small crew of two to three (2-3) seasonal trail crew laborers adequate for the current phase of trail development. The trail crew will definitely need additional staff, including a full-time/permanent employee tasked with managing the Park’s expansive trail system (as more mileage and additional trailheads are developed).

An effective trail maintenance program relies entirely on securing an adequate trail program budget for recruiting, hiring and training a trail crew, as well as acquiring necessary tools and equipment to do their jobs safely and efficiently. A detailed trails program budget should be created for FPSP’s trails program and revised on an annual basis.

The use of volunteers significantly increases public awareness of trails and enhances the potential stewardship from locals and visitors. Sources of volunteers include local trail advocates, scouting groups, schools, church groups, trail users, non-profits, court appointed labor and community organizations. Implementation of an “Adopt-a-Trail” program may also be considered.



Endless Opportunities for Trail Users

5.3.2 Future Management Strategy Considerations

Climbing at FPSP

Looking at the cliffs of Fishers Peak, Fishers Peak Mesa and Little Baldy from afar makes it appear that there would be an abundance of great climbing routes within the Park. However, upon closer observation, these vertical cliff faces are a mix of unstable, loose rock (less desirable for climbing) and clean, solid rock suitable for single or multi-pitch climbing. In addition, access to these faces will require a 4 to 6 mile approach from the trailhead, which is too far for destination-worthy climbing. Additionally at the base of Fishers Peak and Fishers Peak Mesa there are rare and endangered plant species that must be protected. The lower elevation sandstone faces and boulders consist of soft, brittle rock that is not desirable for climbing.

Further south in New Mexico, climbing has been a popular activity at Sugarite Canyon State Park since the 1990’s. It has several easily accessible cliffs located within a 15-30 minute hike from the trailhead. The access to potential climbing areas at FPSP will be difficult and lengthy, with approaches taking hours not minutes and ultimately offer fewer quality climbing routes than Sugarite Canyon State Park, Staunton State Park or Castlewood Canyon State Parks currently offer.

Amazing geology abounds in the Park including beautifully sculpted sandstone boulders and shorter cliffs proliferating the slopes at lower elevations. Some of the lower sandstone outcroppings and boulders will be accessible by trail, while the upper volcanic cliffs are located further from proposed trails. As with any climbing areas, closely monitoring the formation of social trails will be helpful in managing the human impacts from off-trail use, over the long run.

For better familiarity with the ‘Mountain Project’ a website for climbing areas and routes and the information it provides to climbers, below are links to the pages for Staunton and Castlewood Canyon State Parks. These two state parks are very popular with climbers and see high activity, due to their proximity to the Front Range. As Trinidad and Las Animas County become more popular as an outdoor recreation destination, FPSP may see increased pressures from the rock climbing community for placing fixed hardware. It is recommended that a program similar to Staunton State Park, where any route development or hardware placement needs to be approved before it is placed.

<https://www.mountainproject.com/area/107838839/staunton-state-park>

<https://www.mountainproject.com/area/105744319/castlewood-canyon-sp>

Educating climbers helps to preserve quality backcountry experiences for all visitors by respecting existing seasonal raptor closures and any potential bat closures in the future. Encouraging climbers to use designated trails, when possible, may help minimize the formation of social trails, which leads to fragmentation of wildlife corridors and can negatively affect wildlife. Encouraging climbers to not leave any gear unattended helps minimize aesthetic impacts to the natural scenery and not hinder other climbers’ abilities to use and enjoy the area.

Requiring or even strongly encouraging climbers to obtain an off-trail permit, either on-line or at the Park, will help FPSP staff monitor the use and potential impacts from climbing activities. It can help staff better oversee the safety of their high adventure activity participants, whether they are doing a roped ascent of a vertical cliff or a family summiting Fishers Peak, which requires a bit of scrambling and negotiating steep trail grades with steps traversing loose, steep side-slopes.



Various Climbing Opportunities for Different Skill Levels Exist on Little Baldy

Fishers Peak Access Permit

Developing and implementing a Fishers Peak Access Permit for all visitors that desire to summit Fishers Peak should be considered. Registration options could include an online option, registration at the Visitors Center or a simple sign in/sign out sheet at the trailhead, like USFS often uses.

Users should be encouraged to purchase a Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue (COSAR) Card prior to attempting to summit Fishers Peak. Submit card purchase and supply reimbursements to SAR teams for costs incurred while conducting search and rescue operations and to provide funding for the purchase of search and rescue related equipment. Website link:

<https://cdola.colorado.gov/funding-programs/search-and-rescue-fund>

Use of Game Cameras and Trail Counters

Continued strategic use of game cameras for monitoring wildlife is recommended. Installing livestream or wi-fi game cameras at key locations should also be considered. Live streaming trail cameras detect motion and then send an alert with a picture to phone(s). They also allow users to log in and stream live video directly to their phone(s).

Live video feed game cameras are a great option for security, monitoring wildlife and monitoring trail use in FPSP. These cameras can be incredibly helpful for staff in monitoring the effectiveness of seasonal wildlife closures, off-trail use and security of costly infrastructure.

The use of trail counters is essential in keeping track of your visitor usage as it increases overtime. Trail user count data is an essential tool in acquiring funding for future trail projects. Visitor count data is extremely valuable data to include in your funding applications, as it helps justify the expansion of the trail system and/or to fill in any gaps within the network as other trailheads are developed. Combining the count data with other data sources, such as health, environmental or economic indicators, serves as a key tool to demonstrate the quantitative benefit of trails to local communities and the surrounding area.



Past Grazing Infrastructure Still Found on the Park



Past Grazing Infrastructure Still Found on the Park



Various Cliffs Composed of Basalt and Sandstone



Various Cliffs



Various Cliffs



Grazing of Livestock

Throughout the master planning process, there was an interest and some disagreement on the suitability of the future use of livestock grazing in the Park. The positive aspects included a recognition of the history of livestock use both on the property and throughout the region and the value of well-managed grazing to support ecological benefits through grassland management. The negative aspects included the potential adverse ecological impacts of poorly managed grazing, conflict with other park uses or priorities and the staffing and infrastructure required to maintain a well-managed grazing program.

Prior to developing a grazing strategy for the Park, CPW could benefit from conducting an additional inventory of livestock infrastructure, using the assessment prepared by TNC in 2020 as a starting point. This inventory should include a detailed conditions assessment of all livestock fencing existing on CPW lands, existing gates, access roads and water sources. An inventory should also include a detailed assessment of range conditions in areas that may be subject to a grazing program. Realistic cost estimates to bring the infrastructure back to a safe, suitable working condition should also be developed.

Developing a range management plan will be very helpful for CPW in evaluating the associated costs and suitability for grazing livestock. Calculating Animal Unit Month's (AUMs) and clearly defining the key management goals is also an integral component in considering and managing agricultural leases.

Goals of Grazing Livestock

In specific areas, consider implementing a high, intensity, short duration grazing program (also known as mob-grazing) to assist with the following rangeland improvement goals:

1. Improve water infiltration into the soil as a result of hoof action
2. Increase mineral (nutrient) cycling
3. Reduce the percentage of ungrazed plants including weedy plants
4. Improve livestock distribution (more uniform use of range)
5. Increase the period when actively growing forage is available to livestock
6. Help accelerate plant succession

This type of grazing requires a significantly higher level of management, with more internal temporary fencing and may require moving water sources. Native seeding in conjunction with hoof action can also help restore these previously impacted areas to pre-Euroamerican plant compositions. In certain situations, concentrating livestock in smaller areas can help with weed management efforts such as reduction of cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). Using livestock as a tool for habitat improvement and not competing with the indigenous wildlife is essential for the success of a grazing program at FPSP.



Example of High Intensity Short Duration Grazing System, Also Known as Mob Grazing

Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings

Throughout the final design and implementation of this Master Plan, CPW should proactively consider protecting and enhancing wildlife connectivity between the park and habitat areas outside of the park. This includes access to the State Wildlife Areas and private lands to the east, north and to the south in New Mexico.

Connectivity between the park and habitats to the west (across I-25) is a topic of particular interest. From the outset of implementation design and planning, CPW should coordinate closely with CDOT and other partners to identify and implement opportunities for wildlife crossings of I-25. Conceptually, this could include:

- Large, significant crossings (dedicated overpass or underpass) for wildlife in the southern portion of the park
- Enhancement of existing creek crossings and bridges at Exits 6 and 8 to facilitate safe wildlife use
- Evaluation of the many small to large culverts along the park boundary to identify opportunities for wildlife enhancements

The feasibility, design and placement of any crossings or enhancements should be determined as part of future coordination efforts.

Dark Sky

It is recommended to follow Dark Sky criteria by using down lighting with cut-off fixtures. Where safety lighting is installed, motion sensor switches should be used. Please refer to the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA): www.darksky.org.



Fishers Peak

5.4 Facilities Schematic Design

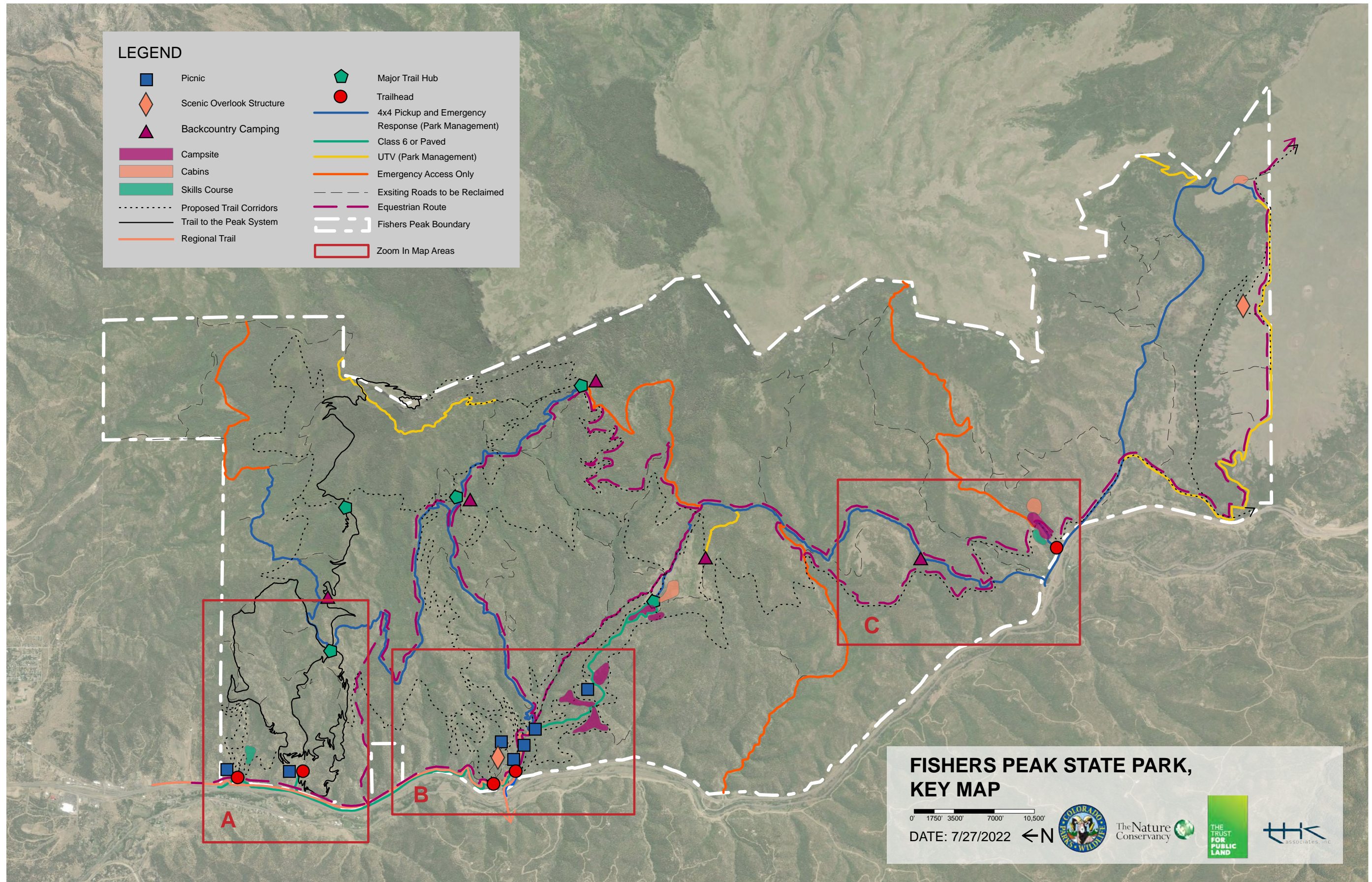
Introduction

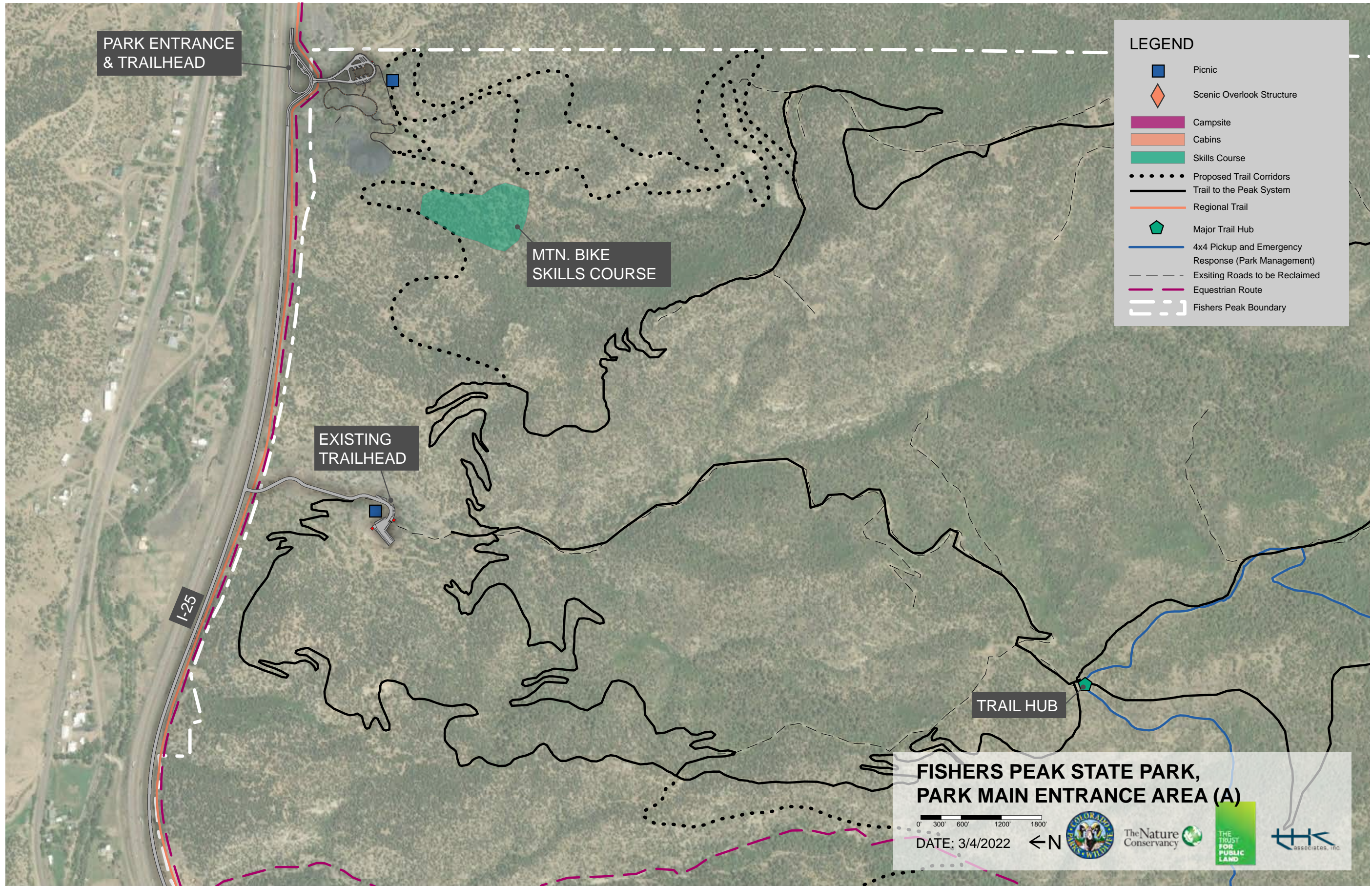
A schematic design has been created for six key destinations within FPSP: park entrance and trailhead, Headquarters Trailhead, Visitors Center, equestrian and hunting campground, typical trail hub, and typical developed campground.

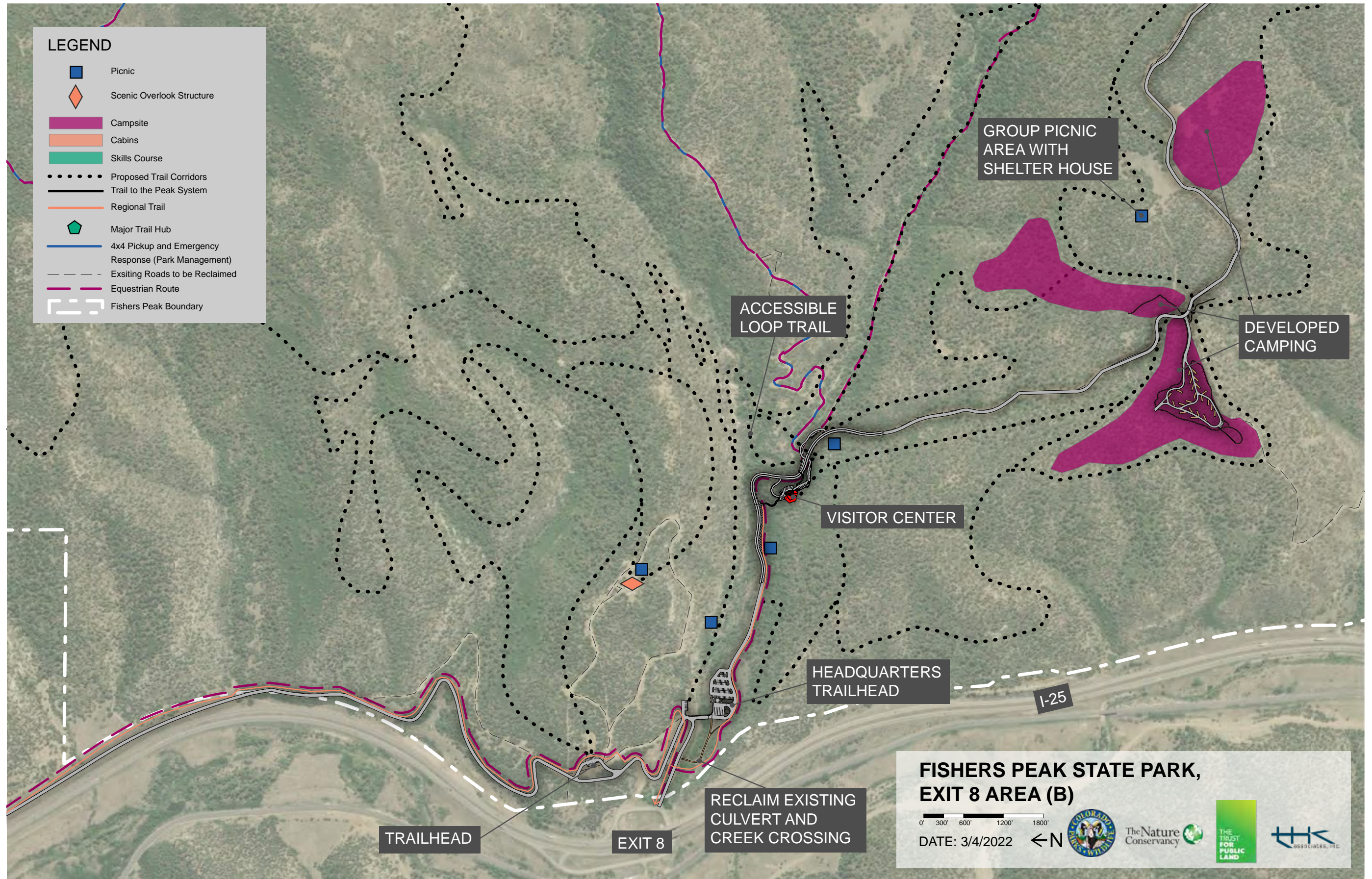
Design concepts were created using a combination of tools and programs to develop site-specific design decisions based on the unique conditions of each site. To start the process, drone photogrammetry was collected and used to create high-resolution 3D reconstructions. This data was converted to AutoCAD Civil 3D so that the design team could study the existing conditions and constraints. Environmentally sensitive design techniques guided the design, with a focus on minimizing tree removal, grading, and visual impacts from on and off site; protecting drainage patterns and vegetation; and working with the natural topography. Most importantly, the schematic designs ensure the proposed use was feasible in the proposed location. Scaled 3D visualizations and plan views show a probable layout and design solution for each of the six study areas.

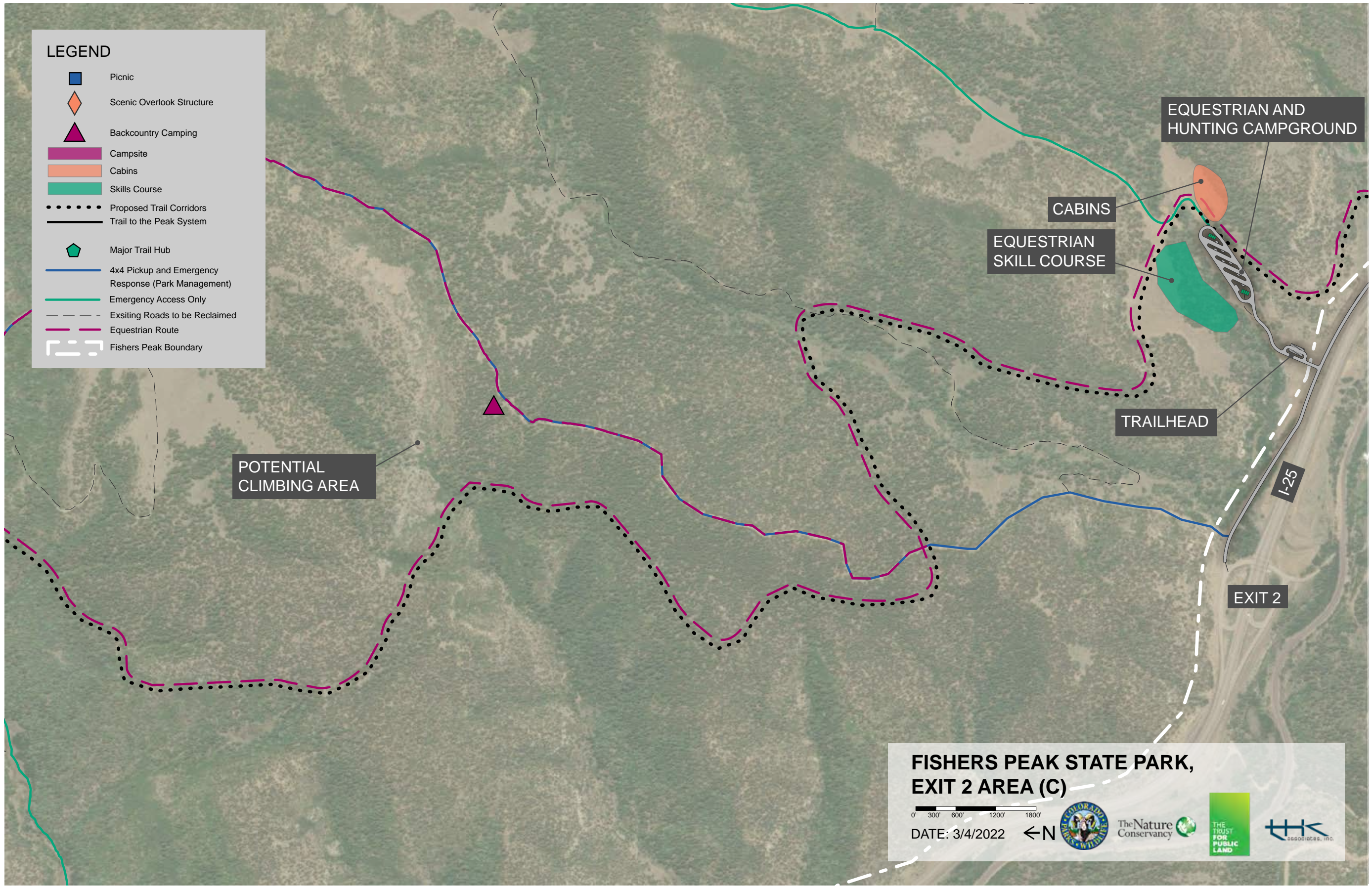
Maps

Three map enlargements have been provided of the key development areas of the park; the park main entrance area, Exit 8 area, and Exit 2 area. These maps are intended to show the locational relationship of the different key destinations.









Park Entrance

Visitors to FPSP will take the recently renovated Exit 11 off I-25 to the park entrance. A rustic, southwestern ranch-style entry gate welcomes you into the park while setting the theme of the natural character you can expect on your visit. The entrance station's traditional adobe style pays tribute to the historic late nineteenth and early twentieth-century architecture of the southwest United States. Here you can pick up day passes, permits, or general information and maps for your visit. The road splits into two lanes clearly delineating entry for visitors who already have a pass from those needing to purchase passes.

After entering FPSP, visitors have the option to park at the adjacent trailhead lot, continue to the Visitors Center, or exit the park via the right-hand exit loop back onto I-25 frontage road. The trailhead parking lot has 25 parking stalls, two (2) accessible stalls [one (1) van accessible], and three (3) equestrian or RV parking spaces. Maximum grades of 5% and 40' turning radii in the parking lot allow easy maneuverability for vehicles towing trailers.

The new Park entrance trailhead will provide access to the Fishers Peak Trail system with a direct connection to Trinidad through a regional trail along Santa Fe Trail and the frontage road. The mining history, which has roots in Trinidad since established in 1861, along the Santa Fe Trail is recounted as you hike the 0.2-mile interpretive loop trail through coal mining relics such as a towering pile of coal. Two distinct trail corridors separate mountain bikers on their downhill routes and hikers up and down hill routes for safety. Multiuse and mountain bike uphill only trails connect visitors to a dynamic network of trails, with options for an easy day hike or a strenuous all-day hike up the Trail to the Peak. A mountain bike skills course offers an ideal learning environment for people of all ages and abilities. Six (6) picnic tables along with pit toilets and trash provide a great area to have a scenic lunch or regroup between activities.



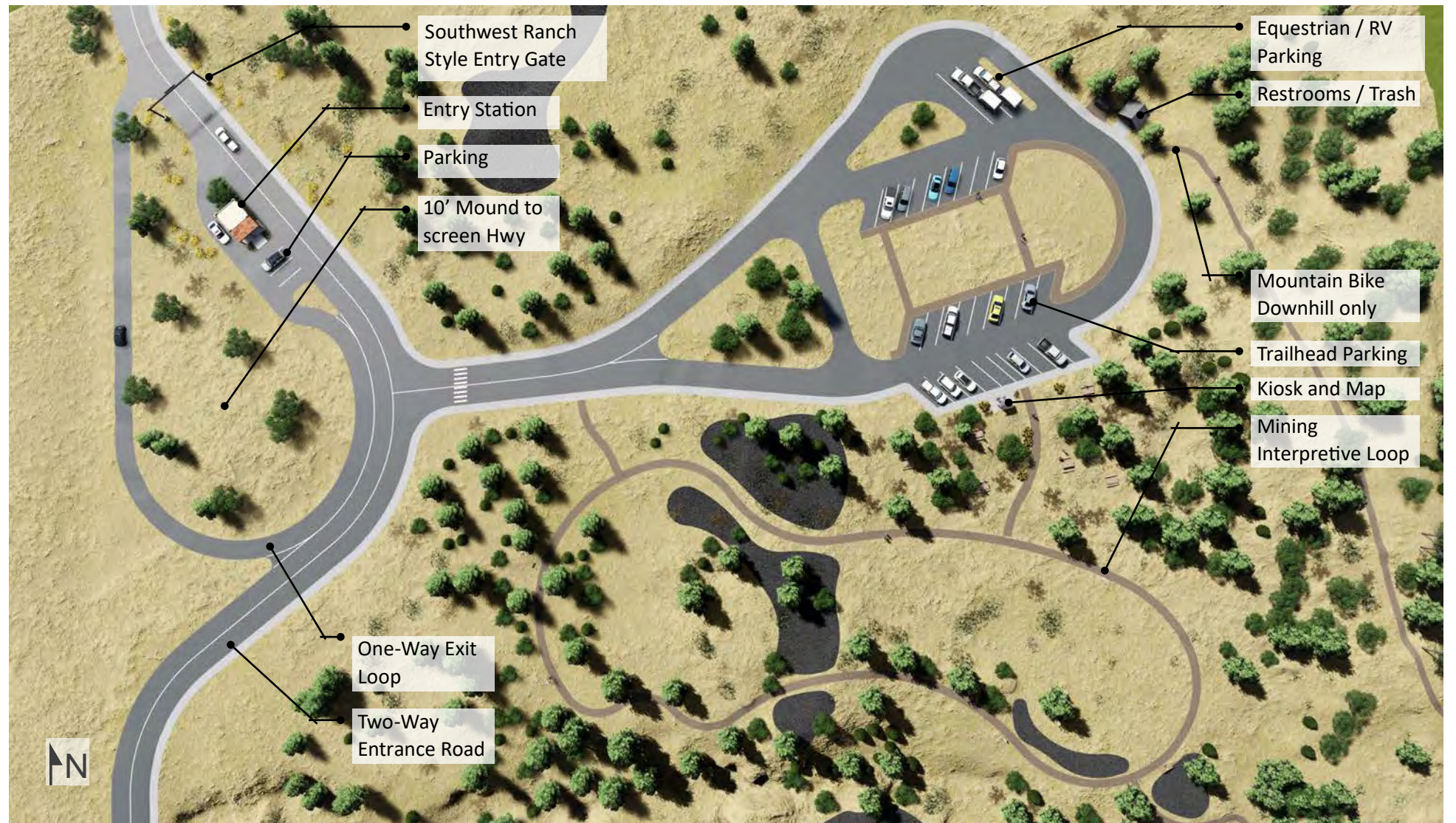
Kiosk and Map (Typical)



Entrance Station



Picnic Area



Site Plan



Looking North



Looking South

Park Entrance Design Criteria

- 25 Parking stalls
- 2 accessible parking stalls (1 Van-accessible)
- 3 equestrian parking stalls (45' x 12')
- Entry Station: Southwest, adobe style with flat roof
- Southwest ranch style entry gate
- State Park permit and pass pull-off lane separated from the entry lane.
- 4 parking stalls at the check-in area
- One-way exit loop
- 10-foot mound between the entry station and I-25 help screen the I-25.
- Trails: regional trail connection from Trinidad to the Fishers Peak Trailhead, multi-use trails (mountain bike, equestrian, hiking) and interpretive trail loop.
- Mountain bike downhill only trail separated from pedestrian trail for safety.

Roads

- Two-way asphalt entrance road: 24'-0" wide, 8% maximum grade, 40' minimum turning radius
- One-way asphalt parking lot loop road: 16'-0" wide, 5% maximum grade, 40' minimum turning radius
- 2'-0" minimum shoulders

Amenities

- Entry kiosk and map
- Pit toilets
- Trash
- Picnic tables

Interpretive Loop

- 0.2 miles (paved accessible trail)
- Shaded bench seating
- Mining history
- Interpretive signage
- Wide, 5% maximum grade, 40' minimum turning radius
- 2'-0" minimum shoulders

Headquarters Trailhead

The Headquarters Trailhead, situated between the park entrance and Visitors Center, offers parking for seven (7) equestrian trailers or recreational vehicles and 69 cars, including four (4) accessible stalls [two (2) van accessible]. Equestrian and vehicular parking is separated into two (2) lots. A 1,000 square foot corral with water troughs and hitching posts sit adjacent to the equestrian lot. Pit toilets, trash, and a kiosk with park information and trail maps are situated between the two lots with a staging area and five (5) benches.

The Headquarters Trailhead connects a network of trails with access to the Visitors Center 0.35 miles east, mountain bike downhill only trails, and trails with linkages to day hikes and equestrian trails.

Parking Lot Design Criteria

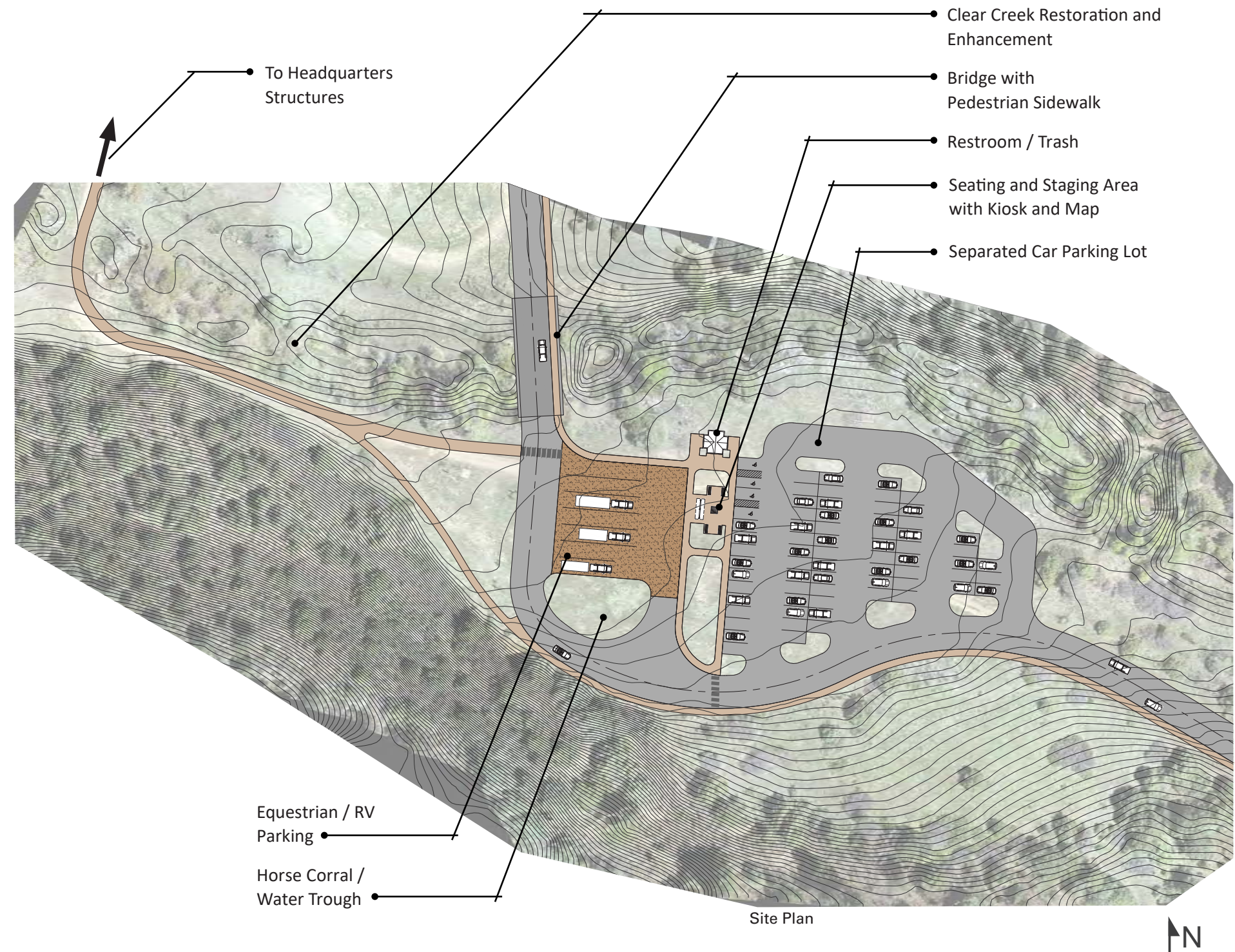
- 65 parking stalls
- 4 accessible stalls (2 van accessible)
- 7 equestrian parking stalls (55' x 12')
- Separate car and equestrian parking lot
- Bridge with pedestrian sidewalk with access to headquarters structures
- Multi-use trail connection to headquarters structures
- Trail connections (mountain bike, equestrian, hiking)

Roads

- Two-way asphalt entry road: 24'-0" wide, 8% maximum grade, 35' minimum turning radius
- Parking Lot: 3% maximum grade
- 2'-0" minimum shoulder
- Bridge with pedestrian access

Amenities

- Kiosk and map
- Pit toilets
- Trash
- Seating and staging area with 5 benches
- 1000 sf horse corral
- Hitching post
- Water trough





Looking South

Visitors Center / Camper Services

Nestled into the forested hillside at 6,700 feet, the FPSP Visitors Center will be a special destination for most visitors entering the park and offers one of the best panoramic views of Fishers Peak, Fishers Peak mesa, and several canyons. Floor to ceiling curtain windows opens onto views down two (2) drainages displaying varied ecosystems and plant communities. The juniper and pinyon pines at lower elevations lead the way to ponderosa and Gambel oak communities in the higher elevations. Mixed deciduous and evergreen riparian plant communities line the drainages and provide a stunning contrast from the mostly evergreen forests in the fall.

The two-story, 10,000 square-foot modern adobe-style building is designed to be a National Park level facility. Traditional aspects of the adobe architectural style, such as earth-colored stucco construction, roof with parapet and exposed wooden beams blend with a modern flare of large curtain windows, a cantilevered pitched roof, and more angular forms. A repository on the lower level houses a permanent display of cultural and paleontological artifacts. Temporary exhibits of other regionally relevant items may be displayed here as well. The upper level will be a great room used for meetings, educational presentations, and events. Offices for park staff will also be provided within the Visitors Center.



Looking West

A one-way loop road through the facility accesses three separate parking lots. Parking is distributed throughout three levels with 60 total spaces, including two (2) accessible [one (1) van accessible] and five (5) staff parking spaces. Large retaining walls allow the Visitors Center to be tucked into the hillside. There is an option of terracing these walls which could lessen the visual impact.

The location of the Visitors Center was chosen for several reasons. Most importantly, it offers visitors who may never make it into the backcountry or to the top of Fishers Peak a real sense of what the park is about. It immerses them in the forest, away from highway and traffic noise, and provides outstanding views of the peak and the varied ecosystems of the park. Proximity to multiple trails offers a variety of experiences. Short interpretive loop trails provide accessibility to mobility-impaired individuals. Longer loops connect points of interest. The challenging

Trail to the Peak trail can be accessed from the Visitors Center as well as biking and equestrian trails. Access to the campground is less than 0.5 miles up the road and can be reached by either trail or car. Picnicking is located at the lower lot with direct trail access.

Power and water supply are considerations that need to be further studied and addressed during detailed design. There are two (2) options for the water supply. The options include either connecting to the local water supply system or drilling a well and installing a water treatment facility. Power can be extended from I-25 Exit 8.



View from Visitors Center



Looking Northeast to Fishers Peak



Site Plan



Looking South at the Northwest Facade of the Visitors Center



Looking at the Northeast Facade of the Visitors Center



Examples of Southwest and Modern Southwest Architecture



Developed Campgrounds

There are five (5) developed campground pods located throughout FPSP. A majority of Fishers Peak will be protected wild land which is only accessible by foot and mountain bikes. The camping pods will provide connectivity to the Park’s recreational opportunities and key destinations as well as backcountry access through a series of multiuse trails. A kiosk with trail maps provides directional information for the many destinations and trails throughout the park.

By utilizing sensitive design efforts and working with the natural topography of the site, the impacts of grading were minimized while also preserving important trees to be used for buffering between campsites and from roads. A 14’, one-way, paved loop road winds through the site providing access to 22 campsites with angled parking spurs. The 12-foot wide, 40-foot-long gravel spurs can accommodate one large pickup truck with a small camper, or two vehicles. Boulders or logs define the edge of the spurs to prevent vehicles from damaging sensitive vegetation. Amenities include a minimum 20’x25’ level open area with tent pad, fire ring with grilling grate, picnic table, and bear box for food storage. Select campsites come equipped with hammock posts strategically placed to provide shaded lounging areas. Multiple walk-in campsites furnished with the same basic amenities are situated along the flats overlooking amazing views of the valleys below. Twenty percent of the campsites will be accessible and a sustainably designed, accessible trail system wraps the perimeter of the campground with a 5% maximum grade. Two pit toilet structures with trash are located to serve each side of the campground.

Campsite Design Criteria

- Angled crushed gravel parking spur: 12’-0” wide, 40’-0” long for small RV’s
 - 1 truck with small camper, or 2 vehicles
 - 8% max. running slope
 - 3% max. cross slope, 2% max. cross slope for accessible spaces
- Delineation of parking spurs by rock edging or logs (natural features) to prevent vehicles from damaging vegetation.
- 8% maximum running grade, 5% cross slope
- Tent pad (20’ x 25’ min.) relatively level, open area
- Fire ring with grilling grate
- Picnic table
- Bear box (setback from the tent pad)

Trails

- Multi-use trails (mountain bike, equestrian, hiking)
- 5%-8% average grade
- Sustainable trail design

Roads

- Two-way asphalt entry road: 24’-0” wide, 8% maximum grade, 35’ minimum turning radius
- One-way asphalt loop road: 14’-0” wide, 8% maximum grade, 35’ minimum turning radius
- 2’-0” minimum shoulders
- Primary entry road to the campground: 400 feet minimum setback from primary park road to buffer campsite from vehicular traffic.

Amenities

- Entry kiosk and maps
- Pit toilets
- Trash
- Recreation access to beginner’s mountain bike downhill only trail and hiking trails



Typical Loop with Spur Parking



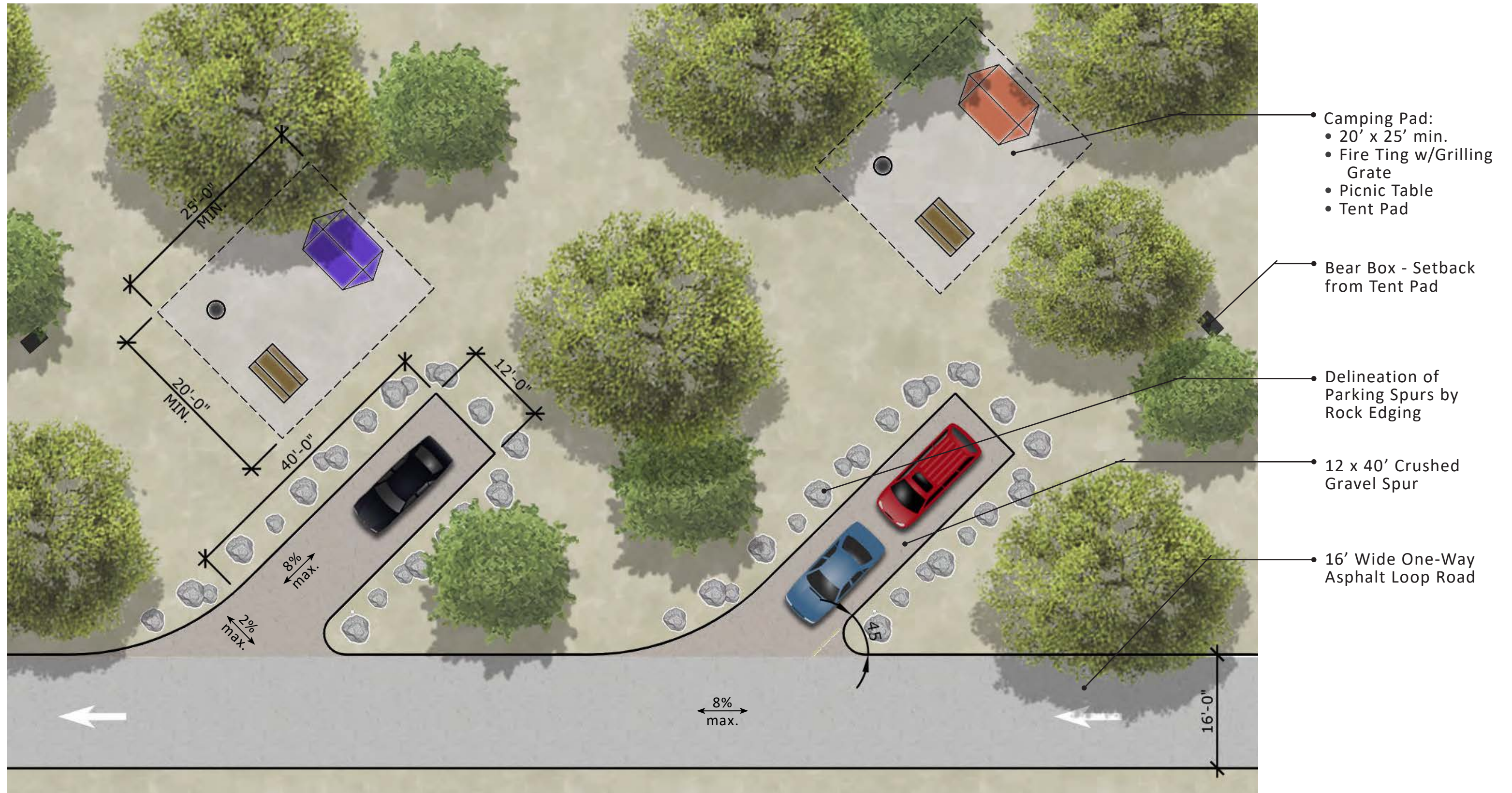
Typical Campsite - Aerial View



Typical Campsite - Aerial View



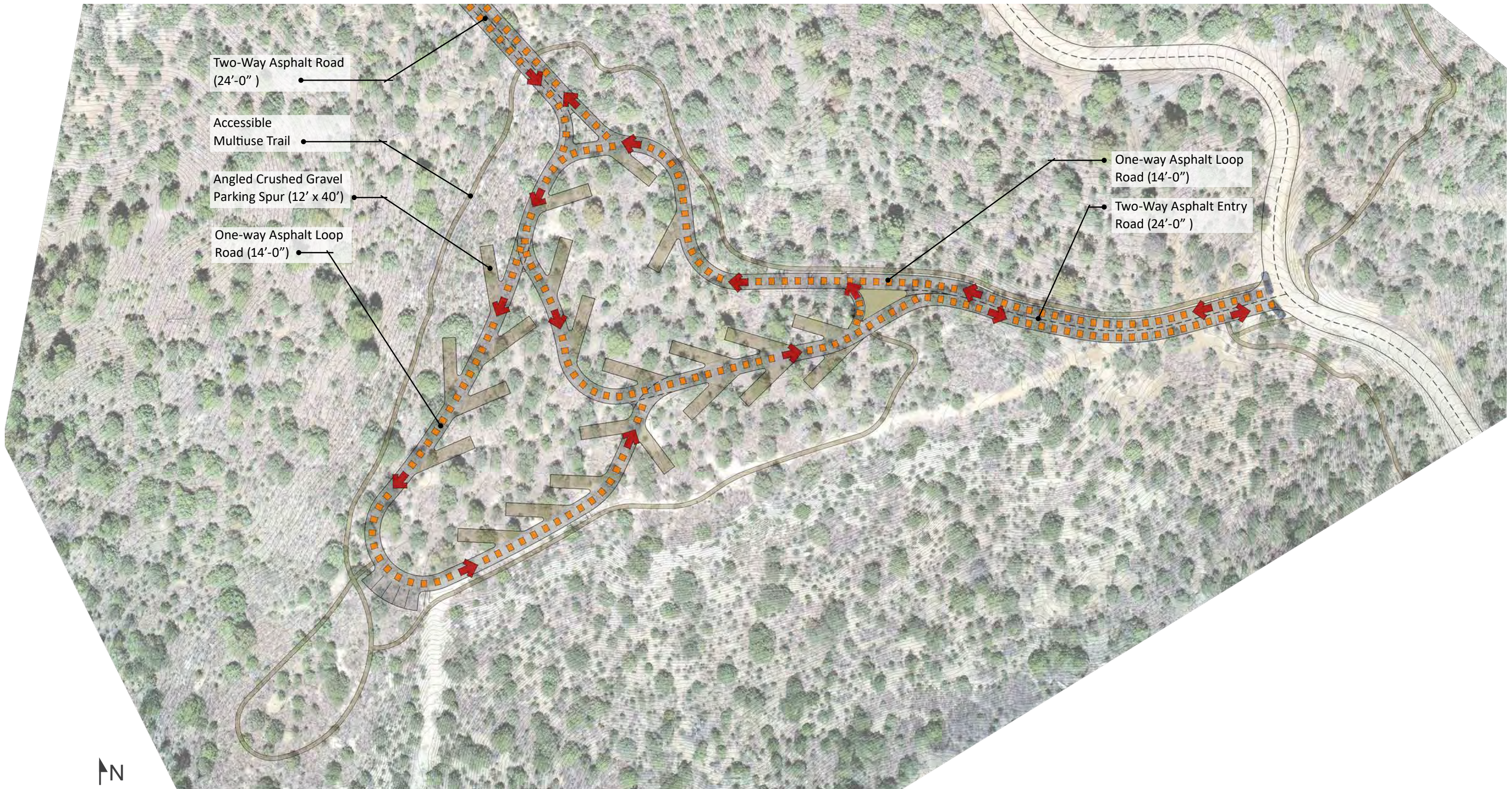
Typical Campsite Layout



Site Plan



Developed Campground Circulation Diagram



Site Plan



Walk-in Camping Sites - Aerial View



Walk-In Camping Sites



Looking North at Developed Camp Sites



Developed Camp Sites Located Between Existing Trees

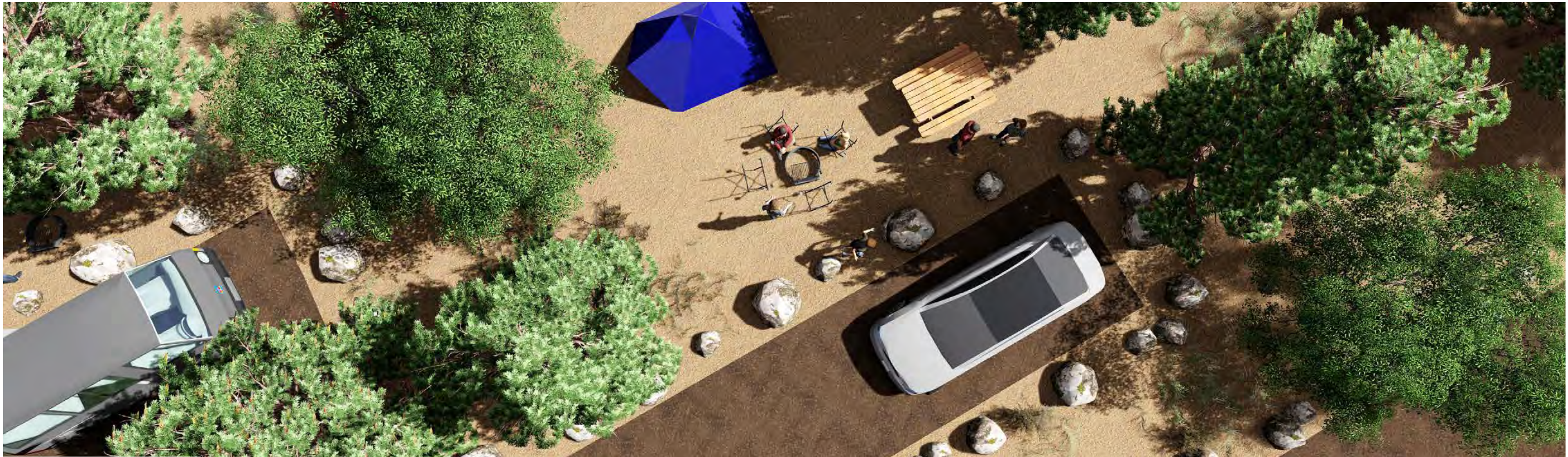




Typical Camp Site Close-Up



Typical Camp Site Close-Up



Typical Camp Site - Plan View

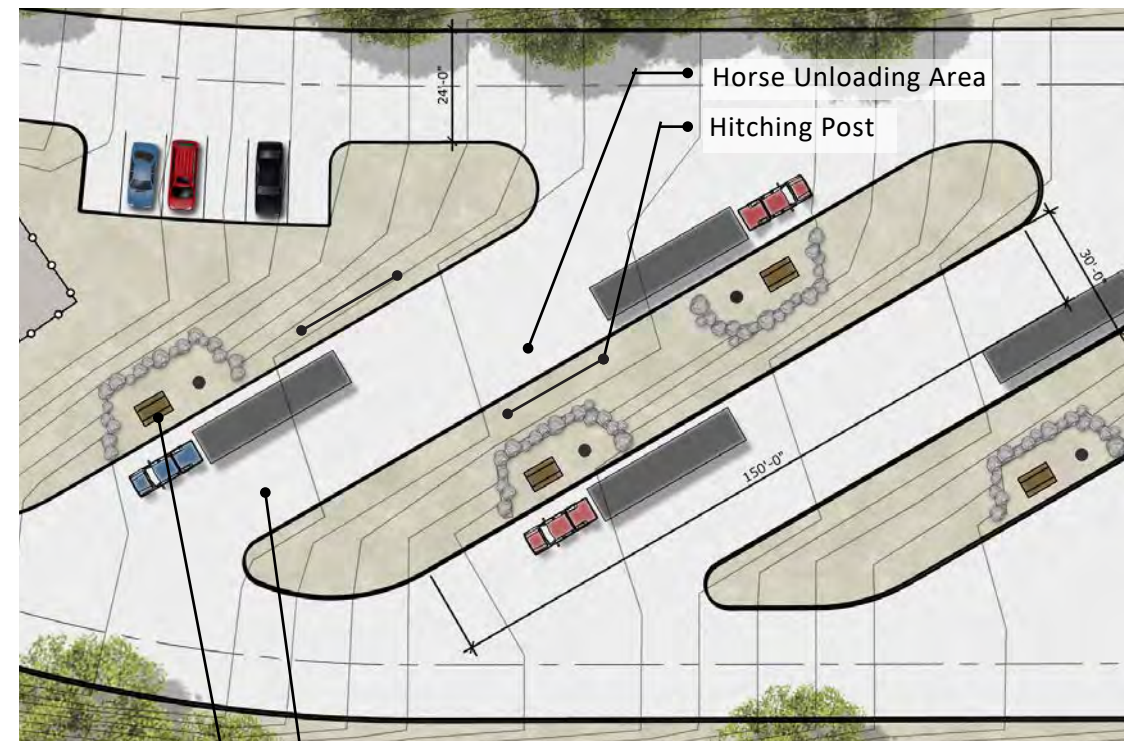


Equestrian and Hunting Campground

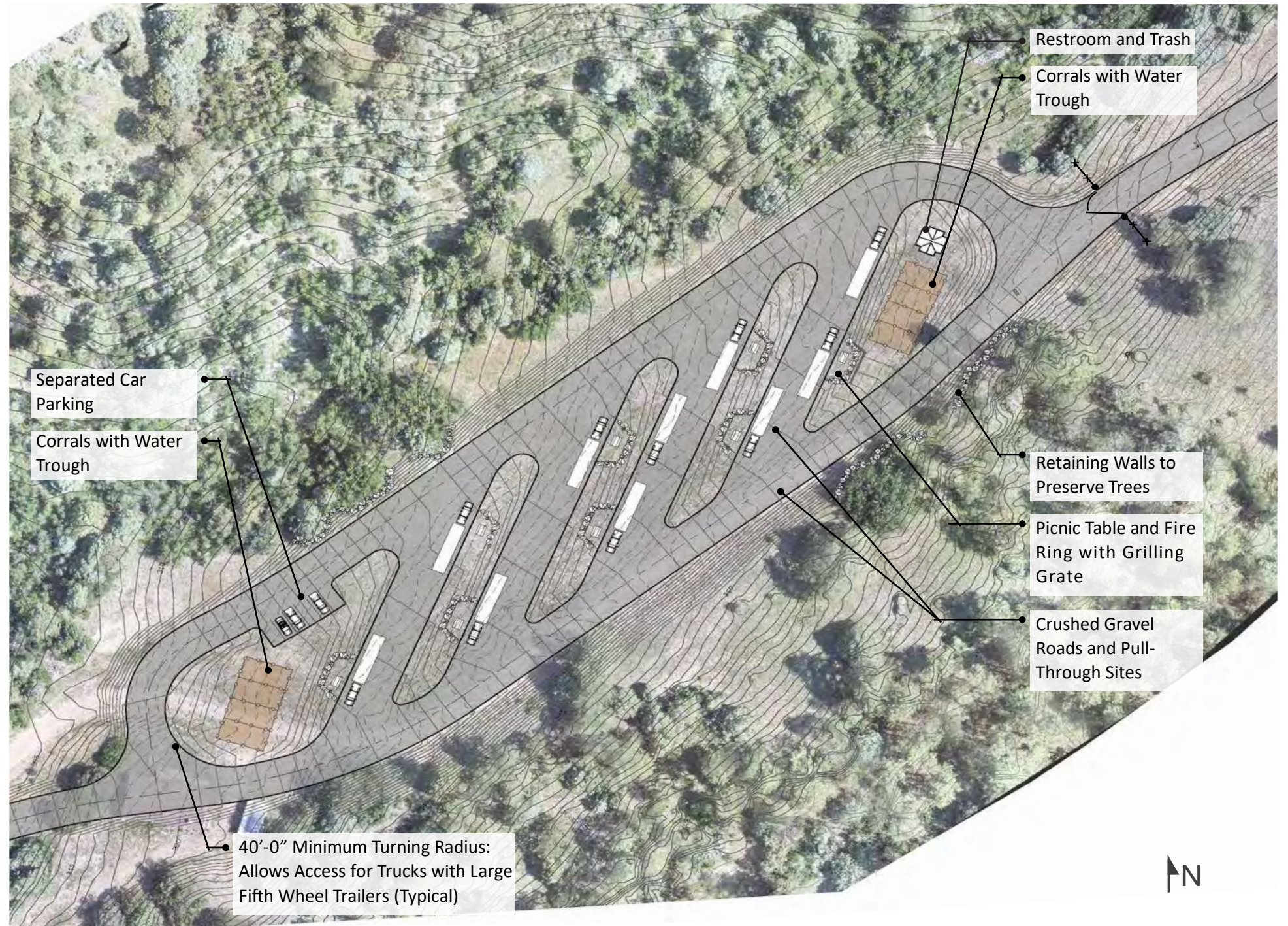
The southernmost entry to FPSP is located near the Colorado / New Mexico border off I-25 at Exit 2, in a more remote and isolated area surrounded by protected wild land. With limited access to park amenities and trails, the southern portion of FPSP provides a true backcountry experience to hunters. It also provides access to climbing opportunities on Little Baldy and is the hub for most equestrian uses, including an equestrian skills course.

Eight defined level and well-graded pull-through stalls (150' x 30') offer ample room for multiple trailer parking at each campsite. The parking area has a maximum of 2% cross slope and 2.5% running slope. Each campsite can hold up to two (2), 2-horse trailers with full-size trucks, or one (1) larger four (4)+ horse trailer and truck. A horse-friendly surface of crushed gravel is used on all roads and parking areas. A loop road allows trailers to pull through in either direction with 40' minimum turning radii for easy maneuverability of large trailers. Six (6) parking spaces separate from horse trailer parking are provided for additional vehicles.

Amenities include eight (8) separated horse corrals with 450 square feet of space each, a horse unloading area and hitching posts at each campsite, manure disposal area, pit toilets, trash, bear boxes and water.



- Pull-Through Parking / Campsite: Flat Gravel Area to Utilize as an Outdoor Living Space, Tent Pad or Cooking Area.
- Picnic Table and Fire Ring with Grilling Grate



Site Plan





Looking East



Looking North

Equestrian and Hunting Campground Design Criteria

- 8 defined, large, level and well graded pull through parking stalls with crushed gravel surfaces.
- Max 2.5% grade (running/cross slope)
- Campsite / horse trailer parking: 150'-0" long by 30'-0" wide, extra-long pull through sites.
- Each campsite can park up to two, 2-horse trailer/trucks combos or one larger 4+ horse trailer and truck.
- Unloading zone and hitching area at each campsite.
- Each campsite has a picnic table and a large, flat gravel area to utilize as an outdoor living space, tent pad or cooking area.
- Multi-use trail access (hiking and equestrian)
- Direct trail link to equestrian skills camp

Roads

- Two-way gravel entry road and perimeter drive: 24'-0" wide, 8% maximum grade, 40' minimum turning radius
- 2'-0" minimum shoulder
- Horse-friendly surface on all roads and parking area: crushed gravel
- Car parking spaces separate from horse trailer parking (minimum 6)

Amenities

- Pit toilets
- Trash
- 8 horse corrals with water troughs (450 sf each)
- Hitching posts
- Horse unloading zone
- Manure disposal
- Picnic tables
- Fire ring with grilling grate
- Staging area

Backcountry Camping

There are five (5) backcountry camping areas proposed. They will include four (4) to ten (10) camp sites per camping area with a tent pad at each campsite and one (1) shared bear box for every two (2) tent pads. It is intended that all five (5) backcountry camping areas be accessed by foot or on a mountain bicycle or horseback. Just like the developed campgrounds all backcountry campsites must be reserved in advance of use. Each backcountry camping area will have pit toilets similar to the toilets at the trailheads. Each back country camping area will require maintenance vehicle access.

All the backcountry camping areas are located along major backcountry trails to accommodate multi-day hikes to Fishers Peak, Bartlett Mesa, and Marion Flats. Four (4) of the five (5) backcountry camping areas are located in the Ponderosa Pine Forest. The intent is to build the backcountry camping areas with little or no disturbance to the existing Ponderosa Pine Forest. Additionally, the backcountry camping area located at the base of Little Baldy is intended for use by rock climbers so they can have a multi-day climbing experience. Backcountry campers will have to pack in their water and pack out their trash. There will be no access to water or trash receptacles.



Fishers Peak From One of the Proposed Backcountry Camping Areas



Hiking the Trails at Fishers Peak State Park



Construction of the Fishers Peak Trail

Back Country Cabins

There are three (3) backcountry cabin locations proposed. One (1) at the west end of Big Flats, one (1) at the Exit 2 trailhead and one (1) at Low Star. These could be yurts as well. Three (3) to five (5) cabins are envisioned at each of the three (3) proposed cabin areas. The cabins should accommodate six (6) to eight (8) people. A small percentage of the cabins could have a heat source to accommodate winter use. Water will be available at each cabin area but not necessarily within each of the cabins. Pit toilets, similar to those at the trailheads, will be provided at each cabin area to avoid individual toilet facilities in each cabin. The cabin areas at Big Flats and Exit 2 will have motor vehicle access. The cabin area at Low Star will not have motor vehicle access. At Low Star, the cabins will be accessible by foot, mountain bicycle, horseback, or outfitter transport.

The cabin areas are located at very scenic areas with great views. For this reason, the cabins could have covered porches. The porches also provide shade for the hot summer months. The cabins should be in keeping with the 'southwestern style architecture' proposed for all the new park buildings.

Trail Hub

There are several trail hubs located throughout FPSP. Each trail hub connects users to desired destinations within the park, such as unique outcroppings, prominent views, historical sites, interesting landforms, and trails connections to amenities within the park. A sense of arrival is created through enhanced landscape features, such as locally sourced flagstone paving, natural boulder seating, and interpretive signage highlighting the notable features at each hub. Trail signs with mileage guide the way to desired destinations.

Trail Hub Design Criteria

- Interpretive signage
- Wayfinding signage
- Locally sourced flagstone paving
- Wood 3-strand wire fence and metal gate to control access to maintenance roads (when needed).
- Maintenance roads are not meant for hiking and are not sustainable as trails.
- Natural boulder seating areas
- Views toward key features in the park
- Multiple trail connections: (mountain bike and hiking)
- Lead users to desired destinations and viewpoints (rock outcroppings, framed views of Fishers Peak, vistas, interesting landforms, etc.)
- Avoid steep slopes, critical habitats, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Minimize erosion potential: Follow natural contours. Contour trails on the side slope easily shed water and are sustainable in rain events.



Interpretive Signage at Trail Hub with Boulder Seating



Trail Hub: Interpretive Signage, Shaded Boulder Seating, Locally Sourced Flagstone Paving, Views, Controlled Access Gates at Maintenance Roads, Multiple Trail Connections





Drone Image of Existing Conditions with Proposed Design Overlay

SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DESIGN

Sustainable Trail Design

Sustainable trail planning, design and development is essential for protecting trail investments and the quality of the user experience, while protecting and conserving the natural and cultural resources for future generations. Balancing the various desires for conservation and outdoor recreation pursuits is a delicate task often requiring hundreds of hours in the field understanding where trails should and should not go. With the increasing trail usage that land managers are experiencing, it is even more critical that sustainable, realistic trail plans be prepared for the masses. From a trail management perspective it is important to consider three main goals of sustainable trail planning, design and development: environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability.

Contour trails are the most sustainable and should be implemented when conditions allow. This sort of trail will not be feasible in all conditions, such as the "Trail to the Peak", where challenging terrain restricts the ability to design more gradual trail grades and conform to the following guiding principles of sustainable trail design.



Photos of the "First Look Trail" Construction

Minimum Sustainable Trail Design Criteria

- Rolling contour design when possible
- 3-6% out-sloping most places, except berms, features
- 5-8% trail grade average are most sustainable
- Limit trails on mesas, ridgelines and riparian corridors
- Effective drainages every 50-75 LF
- Rocks >3" high removed from tread
- Loose rocks removed from trail
- No stumps/roots left in tread
- 48" wide tread (max machine size 50")



Photos of the "First Look Trail" Completed

5.5 Park Management

Park staffing and equipment recommendations were developed based on the current planned buildout of FPSP.

5.5.1 Staffing

Recommendations are based on the full build out of the Park as identified in this Master Plan. The approximately 19,200-acre park will include over 100 miles of multi-use trails, a Visitors Center, different types of camping and picnicking opportunities along with some rock climbing and a 3- to 4-mile mountain bike, downhill only, trail. Based on the above described program for the Park, the suggested staffing is as follows:

- (1) Park Manager V (Park Manager)
- (1) Park Manager III (Senior Ranger)
- (2) Park Manager II (Park Rangers)
- (1) Administrative Assistant IV (Administrative Assistant)
- (2) Park Resource Technician IV (Park Resource Technician/PRT)

Additional seasonal or temporary staff is also recommended for public safety and enforcement support staff at the Visitors Center and to conduct trail maintenance as described in more detail in section 5.3.1 Management Recommendation.

5.5.2 Equipment

In addition to staff pickup trucks, the following major equipment is suggested for the Park:

- (2) Four-person UTVs (with the ability to add tracks)
- (2) ATVS
- (1) Snowcat (to access deep snow accumulation in areas of the Park)
- (1) Small single axle dump truck (haul soil and boulders for road and drainage repairs)
- (1) Small UTV towable honey wagon (pump out backcountry toilet facilities)
- (3) Electric bikes (patrol multiuse trails)
- (1) Excavator with thumb (clean out culverts and pick up small boulders)
- (1) Bulldozer with blade (maintain park management roads)
- (1) Equipment trailer (move park equipment)

5.6 Education and Interpretation for All

5.6.1 Programs

FPSP provides a myriad of high-quality interpretive and educational opportunities to offer local schools, Trinidad State College, Trinidad and Las Animas County residents and visitors to the area. The unique natural resources and cultural history of the Park offer numerous topics to interpret and educate visitors.

Accessible, self-guided nature trails are proposed at two additional trailheads to be developed at a minimum in the future: the Coal Pile Trailhead and the Visitors Center trailhead (not formal names but simply placeholder names for ease of discussion). These two additional trails will complement the Discovery Trail, the existing self-guided, interpretive trail accessed from the existing trailhead. As more about the Park is learned more access/interpretive trails should be considered.



View of Fishers Peak showing Poison Canyon Sandstone in Foreground and Basalt Cliffs on the Mesa Rim



Possible KT Boundary on North End of Park, East of Amato Parcel

The following lists are opportunities for future interpretive programming:

Geology: This subject at FPSP may provide the most robust opportunities for interpretation at the Park. Universally important topics range from the extensive Capulin Volcanic Field to the meteoric KT Boundary and astounding views from the grasslands of the Great Plains to the snow-covered peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.



Clear Creek Near the Proposed Visitors Center Showing Robust Riparian Habitat



Bear and Mountain Lion Tracks

Hydrology: The springs, seeps and wetlands are the lifeblood of the ecology of FPSP. Many species depend on these riparian corridors including the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (NMMJM), which has seen significant population declines in the southwest United States.

Native Fauna: Nesting raptors like peregrine falcons and golden eagles often provide more charismatic species to interpret than ovenbirds and the NMMJM. Providing educational information on nesting raptors and other protected species is key in helping visitors understand and respect the seasonal closures associated with them.

Like many municipalities, installing “peregrine cams” offers folks a viewing opportunity within the Visitors Center, often part of an interpretive exhibit. These Peregrine cams are extremely popular, stretching across our country literally from Berkeley, CA to Baltimore, MD. These cams, often posted on www.explore.org, allow visitors to view the peregrines via live feed when the birds are nesting and fledging their young from anywhere in the world via the internet.

A peregrine falcon cam monitor could be installed in the proposed Visitors Center and would have viewing opportunities of the falcons for a much wider park audience, like many cities have installed on taller buildings. This would allow additional opportunities to educate visitors on the life cycle and seasonal closures to protect the nesting raptors.



Huge Elk Shed Found in the Park to be Displayed in the New Visitors Center

Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, black bear, gray fox and wild turkeys may be the most commonly viewed wildlife in the Park. Everyone loves viewing elk but few understand their vital role in the broader landscape. Their life cycle and role in nature is an excellent topic to interpret, especially as it relates to protecting elk calving areas and critical winter range found in the southern portion of the Park.

Native Vegetation: Capulin goldenrod is an endangered and unique plant to interpret at the Park. However, the various life zones that are encountered at the Park, from trailhead to peak, are also an excellent interpretive opportunity. When summiting Fishers Peak, visitors will travel from grasslands and pinyon-juniper forest, up through lower and upper montane zones, into the subalpine zone at the top of the summit.

Cultural History: The rich and diverse cultural history of the area offers numerous interpretive opportunities, ranging from the prehistoric inhabitants to the Santa Fe Trail and coal mining to ranching for wildlife.



6

IMPLEMENTATION



FISHERS PEAK TRAILHEAD

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Project Partnership Opportunities

From inception, Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) has been a model for public and private partnerships. The Trust for Public Land (TPL), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the City of Trinidad worked together to purchase and plan the 19,200 acres that became FPSP. Throughout the planning process other key partnering opportunities have arisen, including Las Animas County and the Colorado Department of Transportation regarding access to the Park, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control regarding fire prevention and emergency response, along with Trinidad State College regarding educational opportunities. In order to achieve the maximum potential for FPSP, the emphasis on the necessity to seek out project partners will continue well beyond the completion of this Master Plan. Continuing to foster partnerships at the Park for funding, development, management, recreation and education will create a very dynamic park, fitting the magnificent natural landscape in which FPSP resides.

In addition to the original founding partners and the major potential partnerships that grew out of the master planning process, a number of organizations have volunteered their ongoing efforts. The number and diversity of potential volunteers with varying backgrounds and interests have, in effect, already shaped the Master Plan through their involvement in the Interest Groups process and public meetings. The wants and needs of these interest groups is the primary reason that a Master Plan is necessary to guide the future development of FPSP. With so many interests, it is imperative that the “Park Vision” described in the Master Plan and supported by the majority of interests is documented and available to guide future partnership opportunities. Following is a list of potential organization partnership opportunities that were expressed during the planning process and interest in providing volunteer help to CPW for design and implementation of park amenities.

The following is a brief description of the ongoing potential partnerships that are being explored at the time that this Master Plan was published. The ongoing potential partnerships will continue beyond the completion of this Master Plan. The brief opportunity descriptions are listed by potential Partner Organizations.

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) – Together, CPW and CDOT are exploring the devolution of the existing frontage road, along the east side of I-25. A portion of the frontage road would be converted to be the main park entrance road and extend further south to the Park headquarters and to the future visitors’ center. CPW and CDOT would work together to redesign the road, make wildlife crossing and fencing improvements, repair several cross drainages, extend utilities and transfer roadway ownership.

Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control – A discussion is occurring around the idea of shared office space and storage of fire fighting equipment on the Park. Locating offices and equipment on the Park would create a southern Colorado operational hub from which fire and emergency response can occur for southern Colorado, including FPSP. Locating on the Park would be a big plus for the Park, reducing emergency response time dramatically.

Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety – The Amato property, at the very northwest corner of the Park, was purchased by CPW at the end of 2021. On the newly purchased property there is a historic coal mining and milling infrastructure, along with a large coal pile. The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety has expressed an interest in partnership with CPW, to do reclamation of the site and provide historic interpretation of the area. The historic mining interpretation on the Park is a unique opportunity that does not occur anywhere else in the state, on CPW property.

Table 12

ORGANIZATION	PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY	CONTACT
History Colorado	Cultural Resources	Dr. Holly Kathryn Norton
US Forest Service	Natural Resources	Derek Sokoloski
Access Fund	Climbing	Erik Murdock
TPA/COHVCO	Motorized Vehicles	Scott Jones
Rocky Mountain Back Country Horsemen	Equestrian Support / Trails and Facilities	Leslie Miller
Bridledale Undevelopment Corporation	Equestrian Support / Trails and Facilities	Deborah Pierce
Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates	Mountain Biking	Cory Sutela
Overland Mountain Bike Association	Mountain Biking	Kenny Bearden
Colorado Mountain Club	Trail Building and Volunteers	Phil Kummer
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	Hunting	Allen Kerby
CPW Southeast Region Sportspersons Roundtable	Hunting	Ron Goodrich
Purgatoire Watershed Partnership	Conservation and Volunteering	Julie Knudson
Denver Audubon	Conservation and Volunteering	Kate Hogan
Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative	Conservation and Volunteering	Carrie Adair
Rocky Mountain Field Institute	Conservation and Volunteering	Jennifer Peterson
Friends of Greenhorn Mountain Trails	Conservation and Volunteering	Tom Corlett
Las Animas County Search and Rescue	Fire Mitigation Planning	Seth Wheeler
Colorado Search and Rescue Assoc.	Fire Mitigation Planning	Jeff Sparhawk
Latino Outdoors	DEI Engagement	Rosie Sanchez
Green Latinos	DEI Engagement	Ean Thomas Tafoya
Next 100 Coalition	DEI Engagement	Rosie Sanchez
Indigenous Roots	DEI Engagement and Education	Pamela Good Wind
Trinidad State College	Education and Academic Partnering	Lynette Bates
National Wild Turkey Federation	Design, Construction, Volunteering	William Kalaskie
Colorado Department of Correction	Erosion Control and Fire Mitigation	Dennis DeLong



Phase I Trail to the Peak System



Phase I Trail to the Peak System



Phase I Trail to the Peak System

Trinidad State College (TSC) – There have been numerous conversations between TSC and CPW regarding educational partnerships at both Trinidad Lake State Park and FPSP. TSC students enrolled in the trails program have already used both State Parks as hands-on learning opportunities. There is an ongoing desire by both TSC and CPW to continue the trails program partnership. TSC students also have opportunities for internships at both State Parks because both parks hire seasonal employees during the busy summer season.

Additional ongoing partnership opportunities with the original project partners – The Nature Conservancy, New Mexico State Parks and the State of New Mexico – continue to work with CPW to explore a regional trail connection across the state line. Also, TNC has expressed an interest in continuing to help evaluate the feasibility of grazing on FPSP as a habitat management tool for the Park. Last but not least, GOCO is looking to support partnership projects that include CPW, City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, TPL and TNC.

6.2 Phasing and Implementation

Implementation of this Master Plan will occur over time as funding and resources are available. While CPW is committed to this Plan, the agency is also committed to thoughtful and methodical park development that meets resource conservation goals, provides and maintains high-quality visitor experiences and continues to set high standards for sustainable park development. While implementation is envisioned to occur in the following sequential phases, the actual timing and sequence may change in response to resource management needs, unique opportunities and evolving visitor needs.

Phase 1 - Trail to Peak System

This phase is currently under development, including the existing Fishers Peak Trailhead and the initial trails, including the Challenge Trail, which were opened to the public in 2020. This phase will include completion of a trail route to the summit of Fishers Peak, as well as other trails and loops to provide initial access to the Park. Key amenities include:

- Fishers Peak Trailhead
- Hiking trail to Fishers Peak
- Secondary loop trails
- Mountain bike downhill trail

Phase 2 - North Area Buildout

The primary objectives of this phase will be to complete the main park entrance, construct the main road into the Park and build out the trail loops in the northern portion of the Park. Key amenities include:

- Entry gate and road
- Entry trailhead and interpretive loop
- Road and utility extension to visitors' center site
- Northwest trail loops
- Northeast trail loops
- Mountain bike downhill trail
- Backcountry camping

Phase 3 - Visitors' Center and Access

The primary objectives of this phase will be to complete visitor infrastructure in the central portion of the Park (Exit 8 area), including the Visitors Center, trails and developed camping. Key amenities include:

- Headquarters area trailheads
- Visitors Center
- Developed Campground 1
- Additional backcountry camping
- Lower and middle canyon trails
- Equestrian access
- Exit 2 equestrian camping

Phase 4 - Clear Creek Area Access

The objective of this phase is to develop trail loops in the upper Clear Creek area, including Big Flat and Marion Flat and to expand camping opportunities. Key amenities include:

- Developed Campground 2
- Additional backcountry camping
- Road improvements to Big Flat
- Trail loops to Big Flat, Marion Flat and Fishers Peak south notch
- Expanded equestrian access (central loop)

Phase 5 - North-South Connection

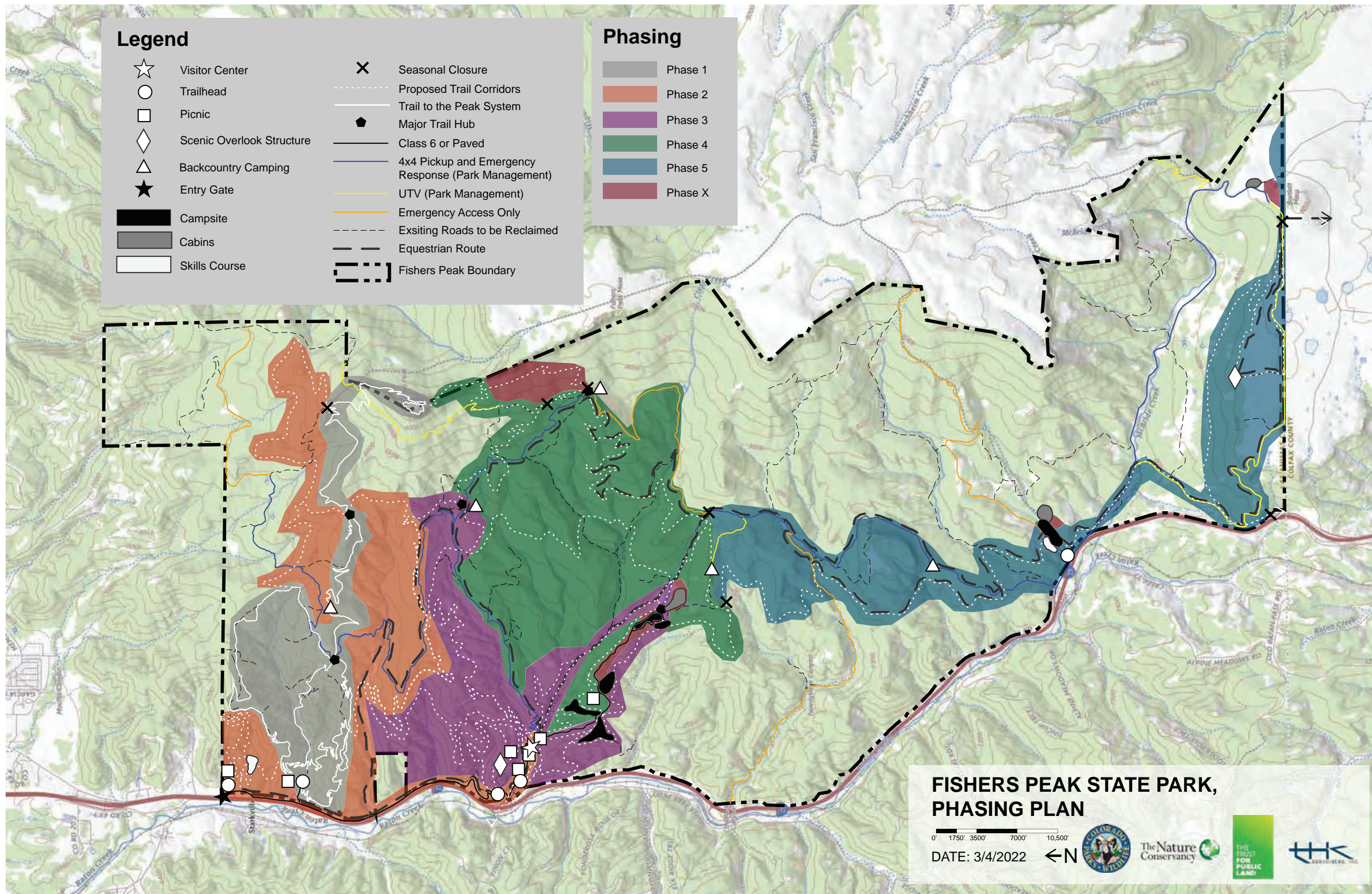
This phase focuses on the development of facilities at Exit 2 and the establishment of trail connectivity through the southern half of the Park. Key amenities include:

- Exit 2 access gate, trailhead and road improvements
- Exit 2 equestrian camping
- North-south regional trail
- Bartlett Mesa loop trail
- Climbing access to Little Baldy
- Expanded equestrian access (full Park)

Phase 6 - Opportunistic Additions

This phase includes individual amenities that can be implemented individually with any previous phase, or reserved for a later time. These would be added on an opportunistic basis based on visitor needs, partnerships, or other factors. These amenities include:

- Developed campgrounds 3 and 4
- Cabins at Big Flat
- Cabin(s) at Exit 2
- Low Star Lodge improvement or replacement
- Additional backcountry camping
- Upper loop trail above Marion Flat



6.3 Construction Cost Estimates

Cost estimates are often prepared at several points during project planning and design. The expected level of accuracy is directly proportional to the level of design and engineering effort applied and known details. Each category of estimate must be carefully prepared from the conceptual level to the study level, preliminary design and final engineer’s estimate. The project team recommends four levels of accuracy for construction cost estimating categories as addressed below:

- Category 1: Conceptual Estimate
- Category 2: Study Estimate
- Category 3: Preliminary Estimate
- Category 4: Detailed Estimate (Final Engineer’s Estimate)

The accuracy of estimated costs should increase as the project moves from planning through design and to the detailed estimates prepared at the completion of design. Because not all the design features and details have been addressed during the preliminary planning efforts, it can be expected that the conceptual estimates will have a relatively wide accuracy range relative to the construction contract amount. In comparison, the detailed estimate should be more accurate due to the additional level of detail that is known when the final design is completed.

The costs associated with this Master Plan are estimated at the conceptual level (Category 1). Unit costs were developed based on values used from recent master plans, bid tabulations from recent projects and the project team’s experience with cost estimating on similar projects. This cost estimate was created in December of 2021 and is based on 2021 construction costs. When using this information in ensuing years, an inflation factor should be applied.

The following cost estimate is broken into several sections. Table 13 (total cost per phase) shows the overall cost summary for all phases of the Master Plan project. Tables 14 through 18 (cost estimates for each phase) provide the breakdown of costs within each of the project phases discussed in the previous section of the Master Plan. Table 19 (Unit Costs Used to Come Up with Lump Sum Prices for Park Facilities) provides the breakdown of unit costs used to establish the lump sum pricing that was used in Tables 14 through 18 (cost estimates for each phase). The Trail ID map (see page 114) shows all proposed trail segments for Fishers Peak State Park and is color coded by phasing with trail segment identification for each trail segment that matches up with trail segment costs in Tables 14 through 18 (cost estimates for each phase).

As a word of caution, the cost line items in Tables 14 through 18 (Cost estimate for each phase) should not be viewed as a stand-alone price for single items. All items in a single phase were considered as a complete project. This means that construction sequencing was considered when creating the different phases, new cost estimates should be completed if project phasing and sequencing changes.

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 13

TOTAL COST PER PHASE	
Phase	Amount
Phase 2	\$24,025,723.08
Phase 3	\$17,807,322.49
Phase 4	\$9,317,348.03
Phase 5	\$2,511,987.35
Phase X	\$4,666,299.30
GRAND TOTAL	\$58,328,680.24



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 14

PHASE 2

ENTRY GATE AND ROAD

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Entrance Station/Gate House	1	LS	\$20,820.00	\$20,820.00
Southwest Ranch Style Overhead Entry Gate with Vehicular Gate	1	LS	\$8,280.00	\$8,280.00
Asphalt Roads (Including Grading)*	3,324	SY	\$100.00	\$332,400.00
Road Base @ 8" Depth*	1,024	TON	\$50.00	\$51,200.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks)	4	GAL	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Concrete Paving (Including Grading)	106	SF	\$9.50	\$1,007.00
Concrete Building Slab with Grading (at Entry Station) 12" Thick Rebar	320	SF	\$10.00	\$3,200.00
10' Screening Berm (Between Entry Station and I-25)	2,290	CY	\$25.00	\$57,250.00
Improved Landscape at Entry	10,500	SF	\$4.25	\$44,625.00
Irrigation (Berm and Entry)	30,000	SF	\$1.75	\$52,500.00
Entry Gate and Road Subtotal				\$573,282.00

AMATO TRAILHEAD AND INTERPRETIVE LOOP

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Trailhead	1	LS	\$106,610.00	\$106,610.00
Picnic Area	1	LS	\$12,300.00	\$12,300.00
Asphalt Roads and Parking Lot (Including Grading)	3,103	SY	\$100.00	\$310,300.00
Road Base @ 8" Depth	955	TON	\$50.00	\$47,750.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks)	3	GAL	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
Concrete Paving (Including Grading and Interpretive Loop) (B1)	8,419	SF	\$9.50	\$79,980.50
Interpretive Signage	12	EA	\$1,300.00	\$15,600.00
Amato Trailhead and Interpretive Loop Subtotal				\$574,040.50

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO VISITORS CENTER

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Asphalt Roads (Including Grading)*	45,845	SY	\$100.00	\$4,584,500.00
Vehicular Bridge with Pedestrian Walk	1	LS	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Box Culvert with Grading	1	LS	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00
Road Base @ 8" Depth*	14,117	TON	\$50.00	\$705,850.00
Asphalt Striping (Roads/Lane Delineation)*	57	GAL	\$500.00	\$28,500.00
Road Improvements Subtotal				\$7,218,850.00

UTILITY EXTENSION TO HEADQUARTERS AND VISITOR CENTER

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
6" Water Line (Tie Into Existing City Connections)	22,232	LF	\$40.00	\$889,280.00
6" Sewer Line (Tie Into Existing City Connections)	22,232	LF	\$80.00	\$1,778,560.00
Water Tap Fees (Trinidad)	1	LS	\$37,500.00	\$37,500.00
Sewer Tap Fees (Trinidad)	1	LS	\$37,500.00	\$37,500.00
Gas Line Extension	22,232	LF	\$25.00	\$555,800.00
Power/Electric: Tie into Existing Power at Frontage Road	17,106	LF	\$18.00	\$307,908.00
Utility Subtotal				\$3,606,548.00
Water Extension Subtotal				\$926,780.00

Option 2: Alternate Water Supply

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
New Well (200' Deep, 6" Diameter)	1	LS	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Booster Pump Storage Tank (12' Dia. w/25,000 Gal. Capacity, 6" Inlet and Outlet)	1	LS	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00
Water Treatment Facility (Midgrade Reverse Osmosis Purification System)	1	LS	\$16,000.00	\$16,000.00
Alternate Water Supply Subtotal				\$156,000.00

Alternate Water Supply Subtotal Is Not Included In Phase 2 Total Cost

ADDITIONAL PHASE 2 COMPONENTS

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Trail Hubs	1	LS	\$81,075.00	\$81,075.00
Additional Phase 2 Components Subtotal				\$81,075.00

TRAILS (ID)

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Mountain Bike Skills Course	1	LS	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
Northeast Trail Loop A (C2)	1	LS	\$98,500.00	\$98,500.00
Northeast Trail Loop B (C3)	1	LS	\$188,040.00	\$188,040.00
Mountain Bike Downhill Trail (C5, Connector 4)	1	LS	\$284,200.00	\$284,200.00
Amato Access Trails (B2, B3, B4)	1	LS	\$292,750.00	\$292,750.00
7800 Connector North (C4.1)	1	LS	\$47,796.00	\$47,796.00
Concrete Regional Trail*	219,830	SF	\$9.50	\$2,088,385.00
Trails Subtotal				\$3,249,671.00

SITE WORK

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Site Clearing (Not Including Trails)	33	AC	\$5,000.00	\$165,000.00
Native Revegetation (Not Including Trails)	16	AC	\$2,000.00	\$32,000.00
Site Work Subtotal				\$197,000.00

*Some of These Costs Should Be Shared with Other Partners Including CDOT, City Of Trinidad, and Las Animas County

PHASE 2 SUBTOTAL	\$15,500,466.50
10% Mobilization	\$1,550,046.65
30% Contingency	\$5,115,153.95
12% Design and Planning Fee	\$1,860,055.98
TOTAL	\$24,025,723.08



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 15

PHASE 3

HEADQUARTERS AREA TRAILHEADS

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Headquarters Trailhead	1	LS	\$106,610.00	\$106,610.00
Picnic Area	1	LS	\$12,300.00	\$12,300.00
Horse Corral Area	1	LS	\$6,300.00	\$6,300.00
Concrete Paving (Including Grading)	3,636	SF	\$9.50	\$34,542.00
Asphalt Roads and Parking Lot (Including Grading)	4,721	SY	\$100.00	\$472,100.00
Road Base (Under Asphalt Roads)	1,453	TON	\$50.00	\$72,650.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks) 2,088 LF	7	GAL	\$500.00	\$3,500.00
Crushed Gravel Parking (Road base)	279	TON	\$50.00	\$13,950.00
Headquarters Area Trailheads Subtotal				\$721,952.00

VISITOR CENTER

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Visitor Center*	10,000	SF	\$600.00	\$6,000,000.00
Picnic Area	1	LS	\$12,300.00	\$12,300.00
Asphalt Roads and Parking Lot (Including Grading)	3,351	SY	\$100.00	\$335,100.00
Road Base (Under Asphalt Roads)	1,031	TON	\$50.00	\$51,550.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks)	5	GAL	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Concrete Paving (Including Grading)	1,987	SF	\$9.50	\$18,876.50
High Retaining Wall (Avg. 11')	300	LF	\$500.00	\$150,000.00
Low Retaining Wall (Max 30")	161	LF	\$125.00	\$20,125.00
3'-0" Retaining Wall With Guard Rail	150	LF	\$180.00	\$27,000.00
Concrete Stairs (Includes Grading)	117	LF	\$350.00	\$40,950.00
Concrete Cheek Wall	132	LF	\$275.00	\$36,300.00
Metal Guard Rail Type 3	125	LF	\$30.00	\$3,750.00
Tubular Steel Handrails	117	LF	\$260.00	\$30,420.00
Visitor Center Subtotal				\$6,728,871.50

ADDITIONAL PHASE 3 COMPONENTS

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Trailhead	1	LS	\$106,610.00	\$106,610.00
Trailhead without Pit Toilet	1	LS	\$23,250.00	\$23,250.00
Trailhead Parking 1 (Asphalt Paving)	1,394	SY	\$100.00	\$139,400.00
Road Base: Trailhead 1 (Under Asphalt Roads)	429	TON	\$50.00	\$21,450.00
Trailhead Parking 2 (Asphalt Paving)	477	SY	\$100.00	\$47,700.00
Road Base: Trailhead 2 (Under Asphalt Roads)	147	TON	\$50.00	\$7,350.00
Developed Campground 1	656,674	SF	\$1.72	\$1,132,197.65
Backcountry Campground	1	LS	\$54,400.00	\$54,400.00
Interim Hunting Campground	1	LS	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00
Trail Hub	1	LS	\$81,075.00	\$81,075.00
Picnic Area	1	LS	\$12,300.00	\$12,300.00
Scenic Overlook Structure	1	LS	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Additional Phase 3 Components Subtotal				\$1,825,732.65

TRAILS (ID)

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
6900 Connector (C1)	1	LS	\$174,452.00	\$174,452.00
Spring Creek Trail (D1.1, D1.2)	1	LS	\$277,052.00	\$277,052.00
7800 Connector-South (C4.2)	1	LS	\$34,056.00	\$34,056.00
Clear Creek Trail (D2)	1	LS	\$44,364.00	\$44,364.00
CC Short Hike (D3)	1	LS	\$201,490.00	\$201,490.00
Campground Trail 1 (D4)	1	LS	\$67,192.00	\$67,192.00
Campground Trail 2 (D5)	1	LS	\$50,440.00	\$50,440.00
VC-Big Flat (D6)	1	LS	\$87,608.00	\$87,608.00
Campground Trail 3 (D7)	1	LS	\$30,784.00	\$30,784.00
Campground Trail 4 (D8)	1	LS	\$55,992.00	\$55,992.00
Overlook (D9)	1	LS	\$32,350.00	\$32,350.00
Canyon North (D9)	1	LS	\$76,767.00	\$76,767.00
Bike Downhill Mid (D10)	1	LS	\$89,764.00	\$89,764.00
Bike Downhill South (D11)	1	LS	\$82,760.00	\$82,760.00
Connectors (Connector 2, Connector 3, Connector 5, Connector 6)	1	LS	\$59,968.00	\$59,968.00
Trails Subtotal				\$1,365,039.00

UTILITIES

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Power: Tie into Existing Power at Exit 8. New Meters at Visitors Center and HQ.	1	LF	\$65,000.00	\$65,000.00
Sewer Lift Station (70 Gal./Person, Avg. 3,500 Gal./Day*)	1	LS	\$650,000.00	\$650,000.00
Utilities Subtotal				\$715,000.00

*Utility Assumptions

SITE WORK

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Site Clearing (Not Including Trails)	22	AC	\$5,000.00	\$110,000.00
Native Revegetation (Not Including Trails)	11	AC	\$2,000.00	\$22,000.00
Site Work Subtotal				\$132,000.00

PHASE 3 SUBTOTAL	\$11,488,595.15
10% Mobilization	\$1,148,859.52
30% Contingency	\$3,791,236.40
12% Design and Planning Fee	\$1,378,631.42
TOTAL	\$17,807,322.49



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 16

PHASE 4				
ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO BIG FLAT				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Asphalt Roads (Including Grading)	32,192	SY	\$100.00	\$3,219,200.00
Road Base @ 8" Depth	9,913	TON	\$50.00	\$495,650.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks)	41	GAL	\$500.00	\$20,500.00
Road Improvements to Big Flat Subtotal				\$3,735,350.00
ADDITIONAL PHASE 4 COMPONENTS				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Developed Campground 2	473,938	SF	\$1.72	\$817,135.28
Backcountry Campgrounds	1	LS	\$54,400.00	\$54,400.00
Trail Hub	1	LS	\$81,075.00	\$81,075.00
Group Picnic Area	1	LS	\$230,989.00	\$230,989.00
Additional Phase 4 Components Subtotal				\$1,183,599.28
TRAILS				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Big Flat Loop (E3)	1	LS	\$103,048.00	\$103,048.00
Marion North (E1)	1	LS	\$156,630.00	\$156,630.00
Marion South (E2)	1	LS	\$303,480.00	\$303,480.00
Fishers Peak South Notch Trail (E5)	1	LS	\$121,045.00	\$121,045.00
Clear Creek Cross Trail (E4)	1	LS	\$236,476.00	\$236,476.00
Upper Upper - Road (E6.1)	1	LS	\$22,564.00	\$22,564.00
Trails Subtotal				\$943,243.00
SITE WORK				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Site Clearing (Not Including Trails)	23	AC	\$5,000.00	\$115,000.00
Native Revegetation (Not Including Trails)	17	AC	\$2,000.00	\$34,000.00
Site Work Subtotal				\$149,000.00
PHASE 4 SUBTOTAL				\$6,011,192.28
10% Mobilization				\$601,119.23
30% Contingency				\$1,983,693.45
12% Design and Planning Fee				\$721,343.07
TOTAL				\$9,317,348.03

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 17

PHASE 5				
EQUESTRIAN CAMPING				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Equestrian Campground	1	LS	\$77,493.00	\$77,493.00
Trailheads	1	LS	\$106,610.00	\$106,610.00
Equestrian Camping Subtotal				\$184,103.00
EXIT 2 TRAILHEAD/ROAD IMPROVEMENTS				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Trailheads	1	LS	\$106,610.00	\$106,610.00
Road Base @ 8" Depth (Road, Trailhead, and Equestrian Campground)	4,373	TON	\$50.00	\$218,650.00
Exit 2 Trailhead/Road Improvements Subtotal				\$325,260.00
ADDITIONAL PHASE 5 COMPONENTS				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Equestrian Skills Course	1	LS	\$153,000.00	\$153,000.00
Backcountry Campground 3	1	LS	\$54,400.00	\$54,400.00
Additional Phase 5 Components Subtotal				\$207,400.00
TRAILS				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Baldy Connector (F1)	1	LS	\$325,808.00	\$325,808.00
Old Highway (F2)	1	LS	\$15,104.00	\$15,104.00
Get High Stay High (F3)	1	LS	\$184,924.00	\$184,924.00
Bartlett Rim (F4)	1	LS	\$105,620.00	\$105,620.00
Bartlett Road (F5)	1	LS	\$0.00	\$0.00
Baldy Cliffs (F6)	1	LS	\$110,908.00	\$110,908.00
Raton Pass Spur (F7)	1	LS	\$5,322.00	\$5,322.00
Upper Upper Loop (E6.2)	1	LS	\$120,188.00	\$120,188.00
Trails Subtotal				\$867,874.00
SITE WORK				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Site Clearing (Not Including Trails)	6	AC	\$5,000.00	\$30,000.00
Native Revegetation (Not Including Trails)	3	AC	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00
Site Work Subtotal				\$36,000.00
PHASE 5 SUBTOTAL				\$1,620,637.00
10% Mobilization				\$162,063.70
30% Contingency				\$534,810.21
12% Design and Planning Fee				\$194,476.44
TOTAL				\$2,511,987.35



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 18

PHASE X

PHASE X COMPONENTS

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Developed Campground 3	452,302	SF	\$1.72	\$779,831.79
Developed Campground 4	459,375	SF	\$1.72	\$792,026.63
Backcountry Campground 4	1	LS	\$41,380.00	\$41,380.00
All Equestrian Trails (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, D2, F3, F4, F5, Adjacent to the Regional Trail)	165,703	LF	\$0.75	\$124,277.25
Big Flat Cabins	4	EA	\$90,000.00	\$360,000.00
Exit 2 Cabins	4	EA	\$90,000.00	\$360,000.00
Low Star Cabins	4	EA	\$90,000.00	\$360,000.00
Road Reclamation	34	AC	\$2,000.00	\$68,000.00
Phase X Components Subtotal				\$2,885,515.68

SITE WORK

Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Site Clearing	21	AC	\$5,000.00	\$105,000.00
Native Revegetation	10	AC	\$2,000.00	\$20,000.00
Site Work Subtotal				\$125,000.00

PHASE X SUBTOTAL	\$3,010,515.68
10% Mobilization	\$301,051.57
30% Contingency	\$993,470.17
12% Design and Planning Fee	\$361,261.88
TOTAL	\$4,666,299.30



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Schematic Design - Opinion of Probable Development Cost

Table 19

UNIT COSTS USED TO COME UP WITH LUMP SUM PRICES FOR PARK FACILITIES

DEVELOPED CAMPGROUND				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Double Vault Toilet (CXT Style installed)	2	EA	\$80,000.00	\$160,000.00
Concrete Building Slab (at Pit Toilet)	336	SF	\$10.00	\$3,360.00
Kiosk and Overhead Structure on Concrete Pad	2	EA	\$12,000.00	\$24,000.00
Picnic Table	26	EA	\$2,000.00	\$52,000.00
Camp Site Markers	26	EA	\$30.00	\$780.00
Bear Box	26	EA	\$2,500.00	\$65,000.00
Fire Ring with Grill Grate and elevated metal table/stand on conc. Pad	26	EA	\$2,000.00	\$52,000.00
Bear Proof Trash Receptacles (64 Gal.)	2	EA	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00
Boulders at Camping Spurs	352	TON	\$100.00	\$35,200.00
Road Base Spurs	113	TON	\$50.00	\$5,650.00
Asphalt Drive (Including Grading)	2,863	SY	\$100.00	\$286,300.00
Road Base @8" Depth	113	TON	\$50.00	\$5,650.00
Asphalt Striping (Parking, Lane Delineation, Crosswalks) (1 gal. will provide 300 linear feet of 4" wide stripe)	1.00	GAL	\$500.00	\$500.00
Compacted Native Soil (Tent Pads 10'X12' and Trails)	392	CY	\$20.00	\$7,840.00
Developed Campground Subtotal				\$708,280.00
Campground Area	410,802	SF		
Developed Campground/SF Subtotal				\$1.72
BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS 1-3				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Pit Toilet Structure (cost based on complete toilet like Mueller backcountry)	1	EA	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Concrete Building Slab (at Pit Toilet)	336	SF	\$10.00	\$3,360.00
Bear Box	10	EA	\$2,500.00	\$25,000.00
Camp Site Markers	10	EA	\$30.00	\$300.00
Relatively Level Tent Pads (10'X10' Compacted Native Soil)	37	CY	\$20.00	\$740.00
Backcountry Campgrounds 1-3 Subtotal				\$54,400.00
BACKCOUNTRY CAMPGROUNDS 4				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Pit Toilet Structure (cost based on complete toilet like Mueller backcountry)	1	EA	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
Concrete Building Slab (at Pit Toilet)	336	SF	\$10.00	\$3,360.00
Bear Box	5	EA	\$2,500.00	\$12,500.00
Camp Site Markers	5	EA	\$30.00	\$150.00
Relatively Level Tent Pads (10'X10' Compacted Native Soil)	19	CY	\$20.00	\$370.00
Backcountry Campground 4 Subtotal				\$41,380.00
PICNIC AREA				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Picnic Tables	6	EA	\$2,000.00	\$12,000.00
Crushed Gravel Pad (Under Picnic Tables)	3	TON	\$100.00	\$300.00
				\$12,300.00

GROUP PICNIC AREA				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Picnic Tables	20	EA	\$2,000.00	\$40,000.00
Bear Proof Trash Receptacles (64 gal)	2	EA	\$5,000.00	\$10,000.00
Shelter House (30'x52')	1	LS	\$57,357.00	\$57,357.00
Concrete Slab at Shelter House (30'x52')	1,560	SF	\$10.00	\$15,600.00
Group Pedestal Grill	5	EA	\$1,500.00	\$7,500.00
Crushed Gravel Parking (30 Cars) 8,040 SF	330	TON	\$50.00	\$16,500.00
Double Vault Toilet (CXT Style installed)	1	LS	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
Concrete Slab (at Pit Toilet)	336	SF	\$12.00	\$4,032.00
Group Picnic Area Subtotal				\$230,989.00

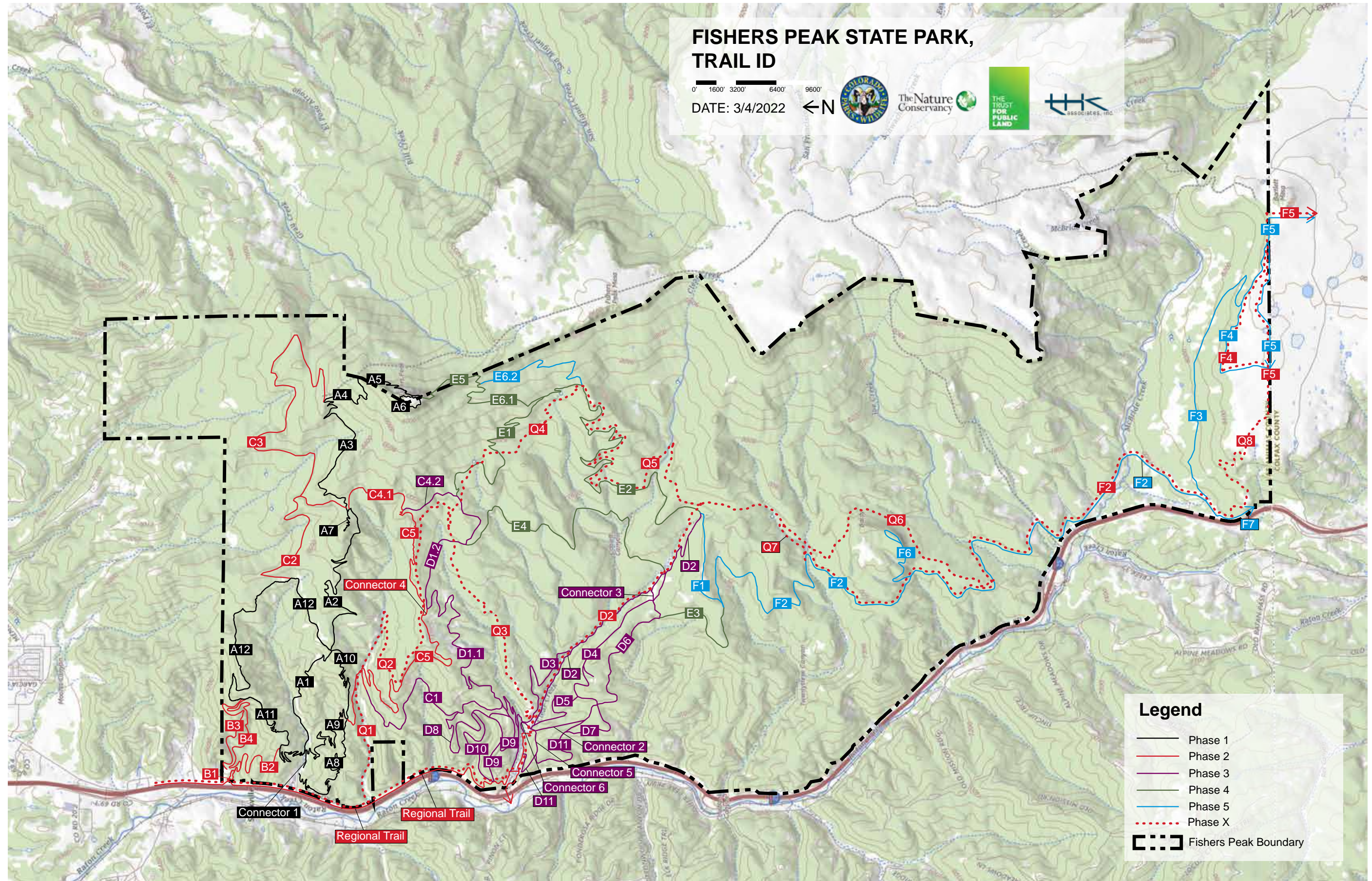
TRAILHEAD				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Double Vault Toilet (CXT Style installed)	1	EA	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
Concrete Building Slab (at Pit Toilet)	336	SF	\$10.00	\$3,360.00
Benches	4	EA	\$1,500.00	\$6,000.00
Kiosk and Overhead Structure on Concrete Pad	1	EA	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
Bear Proof Trash Receptacles (64 gal)	1	EA	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Wayfinding Signage	1	EA	\$250.00	\$250.00
Trailhead Subtotal				\$106,610.00

TRAIL HUB				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Interpretive Signage	3	EA	\$500.00	\$1,500.00
Wayfinding Signage	4	EA	\$250.00	\$1,000.00
Locally Sourced Flagstone Paving	617	SF	\$65.00	\$40,105.00
Compacted Native Soil	36	CY	\$20.00	\$720.00
Wood 3-Strand Wire Fencing (Where Required for Controlled Access)	125	LF	\$50.00	\$6,250.00
Metal Gate (Where Required for Controlled Access)	2	EA	\$12,000.00	\$24,000.00
Natural Boulder Seating	15	EA	\$500.00	\$7,500.00
Trail Hub Subtotal				\$81,075.00

INTERIM HUNTING CAMPGROUND (150,000)				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Gravel Road and Parking		SF		\$0.00
Water Well Improvements	1	LS		\$0.00
Temporary Horse Corral		LF		\$0.00
Interim Hunting Campground Subtotal				\$0.00

EQUESTRIAN CAMPING				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Cost	Amount
Picnic Tables	8	EA	\$2,000.00	\$16,000.00
Fire Ring with Grill Grate and elevated metal table/stand on conc. Pad	8	EA	\$2,000.00	\$16,000.00
Bear Proof Trash Receptacles (64 gal)	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Camp Site Markers	8	EA	\$30.00	\$240.00
Hitching Post	8	EA	\$400.00	\$3,200.00
Boulders (Retaining Wall)	627	SF	39	\$24,453.00
Horse Corral Areas	2	EA	\$6,300.00	\$12,600.00
Equestrian Campground Subtotal				\$77,493.00







APPENDIX





LOOKING WEST TOWARD SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS

APPENDIX

- A. Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) Master Plan – Proposed Trail Descriptions
- B. Natural Resource / Support Documents
 - 1. FPSP Master Plan – Conservation Planning Summary Technical Memorandum (ERO)
- C. Opportunities and Challenges at FPSP White Paper
- D. Planning Concept Alternatives
- E. Public Participation / Support Documents
 - 1. Advisory Teams: Work Groups and Interest Groups
 - 2. Tribal Coordination
 - 3. Public Coordination
 - 4. DEI Outreach and Recommendations
 - 5. Engagement and Communications Plan
 - 6. Gaps Analysis
 - 7. Interest Group Report Summary (Overview Version)
 - 8. Public Survey Report
 - 9. Draft Concepts Report
- F. Trail Maintenance





LONE CLUB TRAIL

Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan

Proposed Trail Descriptions

This document provides a summary of each of the trails that are proposed for Fishers Peak State Park. These descriptions are intended to capture the overall characteristics and intent of each trail, and to provide basic information to facilitate final design, construction, and management.

Trail to the Peak Segments

Trail Identification Map (see page 114)

ID: A1	Planning Name: Challenge Trail	Length: 1.3 miles
Old, steep ranch road that was opened to pedestrian use in 2020. This trail is intended to provide a direct, rustic, and challenging route to an upper saddle and viewpoint, which will serve as a junction with three other system trails.		
Suggested Width: 8-10 feet	Character: Frontcountry, rugged Management: Hiking only	Notes: Existing
ID: A2	Planning Name: Snowcone Ridge	Length: 2.4 miles
Climbs along the ridge between the Challenge Trail and Osita Peak/Snowcone Saddle. Includes thick brush, open forest, and large sandstone formations. Primary route to Fishers Peak.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, intermediate difficulty Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A3	Planning Name: Big Valley	Length: 2.1 miles
Climbs through a thickly forested, north-facing valley below Fishers Peak. Primary route to Fishers Peak.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, intermediate difficulty Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A4	Planning Name: Burn Area	Length: 0.8 miles
Follows an old road alignment through the burn area on the north side of Fishers Peak, to provide direct access for the peak ascent.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, intermediate difficulty Management: Hiking-only; closed March 15 – July 31	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A5	Planning Name: Peak Approach	Length: 1 mile
Climbs and contours on the east side of Fishers Peak, ascending through a series of gaps in the cliffs and rock outcrops to reach a rocky scramble at the foot of the peak plateau. Requires a section of steps to ascend a steep gully.		
Suggested Width: 3 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Hiking-only; closed March 15 – July 31	Notes: 2022-2023 construction

Trail to the Peak Segments

ID: A6	Planning Name: Summit Loop	Length: 0.6 miles
Trail that loops the periphery of the Fishers Peak summit plateau, connecting between prominent viewpoints in each direction. Requires coordination to minimize impacts to vegetation and cultural resources.		
Suggested Width: 2 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, easy Management: Hiking-only; closed March 15 – July 31	Notes: 2022-2023 construction
ID: A7	Planning Name: Snowcone Spur	Length: 0.6 miles
From Snowcone Saddle, spur trail that steeply climbs to the summit of Osita Peak, with a short loop at the top.		
Suggested Width: 2 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Hiking-only	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A8	Planning Name: MTB Downhill	Length: 2.1 miles
Mountain bike-only trail that explores the ridgeline and rock formations as it descends to the First Look Trailhead. Intended to be intermediate-level difficulty, with advanced optional features.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, intermediate Management: Bike-only	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A9	Planning Name: South Brush	Length: 1.9 miles
Shared use trail that climbs through a series of gullies and ridges to reach a trail junction along the ridgeline south of the First Look Trailhead		
Suggested Width: 4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, intermediate Management: Shared use; bike-uphill only	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A10	Planning Name: South Ridge	Length: 1.4 miles
Rugged and twisty trail that explores the rocky, south-facing slope, including a notch between the cliff wall and a rock hoodoo, before reaching the trail junction at the top of the Challenge Trail.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, rugged, intermediate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A11	Planning Name: North Cliffs	Length: 1.7 miles
Ascends from the trailhead through a series of turns, gullies, and rock outcrops to reach the upper ridgeline to the north of the First Look Trailhead.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, rugged, intermediate Management: Shared use; bike-uphill only	Notes: 2022 construction
ID: A12	Planning Name: Long Traverse	Length: 3.2 miles
Contours the upper rim of the desert valley, following an old, abandoned roadbed. Requires drainage enhancements and short detours to maintain a sustainable route.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: 2022 construction



Northwest/Entry Segments

ID: B1	Planning Name: Interpretive Loop	Length: 0.2 miles
Short interpretive loop highlighting the coal mining history and artifacts of the site and the surrounding Starkville area, including the coal pile, bridge abutments, and building foundations.		
Suggested Width: 4-6 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Hiking only	Notes: Paved or crusher-fine surface
ID: B2	Planning Name: Access Spur	Length: 1.0 miles
Connector from the northwest/entry trailhead to the North Cliffs Trail (A11).		
Suggested Width: 4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Shared use; bike-uphill only	Notes:
ID: B3	Planning Name: NE Bike Downhill	Length: 1.3 miles
Advanced bike-only downhill trail from A12 back to the northwest trailhead. Intended to utilize multiple rock formations, slickrock slabs, and drops. Intended to be advanced-level difficulty, with expert-level optional features.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Bike-only downhill	Notes:
ID: B4	Planning Name: NE Hiking Trail	Length: 1.6 miles
Rugged hiking-only trail along the ridgeline near the bike downhill. Intended to be steep and rugged, with multiple step sections.		
Suggested Width: 2-3 feet	Character: Frontcountry, rugged, advanced Management: Hiking-only	Notes:

North Ranch Segments

ID: C1	Planning Name: 6900 Connector	Length: 3.3 miles
Long contour trail above the lower canyons in the western portion of the park, establishing a main trail connection between the north trailheads and the central trailhead/visitor's center at an elevation of about 6,900 feet.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: C2	Planning Name: Northeast Loop - Lower	Length: 2.3 miles
Trail extending to the north of Osita Point between the Fishers Peak Trail (A3) and the Long Traverse Trail (A12), to create a middle loop in the system and reduce congestion/conflict.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: C3	Planning Name: Northeast Loop - Upper	Length: 3.9 miles
Trail loop to the north of Fishers Peak, connecting back to C2 to create an extended backcountry trail experience in the northeast corner of the park. Allows for continuous trail travel during the seasonal closures on the peak and provides expansive views to the east and north.		

North Ranch Segments

Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Requires two lateral crossings of the gas pipeline
ID: C4	Planning Name: 7800 Connector	Length: 1.6 miles
High traverse between the Osita trail hub and mid canyon trail hub, crossing through ponderosa forest and dense oak thickets, at an elevation of about 7,800 feet.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: C5	Planning Name: Long Bike Downhill	Length: 4.6 miles
From a rock garden midway along C4, this bike downhill weaves along the ridgeline to the north of Maxwell Road. After crossing the road, the trail traverses a high oak-filled slope before dropping through a series of turns to reach trail C1. This is intended to be a destination-worthy bike downhill with relatively shallow grades, and playful use of the terrain. Intermediate-level difficulty, with advanced optional features.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Bike-only downhill	Notes: Requires control signs and possible gates at junctions

Mid-Canyon Segments

ID: D1	Planning Name: Spring Creek Trail	Length: 5.7 miles
This trail is intended to be the main thoroughfare between the HQ-area trailheads and the upper hub area. As it climbs the south-facing slopes above the Spring Creek canyon, it passes through conifer forest, oak scrubland, open meadows, and rock outcrops.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Bike uphill only in lower segment above VC
ID: D2	Planning Name: Clear Creek Trail	Length: 2.0 miles
Follows existing ranch roads along the south bank of Clear Creek between the Visitor Center and Big Flat. This trail is intended to provide a relatively easy route that is well-shaded. This route is also open to equestrians.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Shared use; hiking, biking, and equestrian	Notes: May be suitable for winter uses (XC skiing; fat biking)
ID: D3	Planning Name: CC Short Hike	Length: 1.7 miles
This trail winds in and out of along the lower canyons, providing an intimate view of rock formations, stream channels, and vegetation. This is intended to provide a short and interesting hike close to the Visitor Center.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Hiking-only	Notes: Requires at least two large bridges
ID: D4	Planning Name: Campground Trail 1	Length: 1.5 miles
This trail connects between the developed campgrounds and Big Flat, following the north-facing slope above Clear Creek.		



Mid-Canyon Segments

Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Hiking-only	Notes: Requires short campground connections
ID: D5	Planning Name: Campground Trail 2	Length: 1.2 miles
This trail connects between the developed campgrounds and the Visitor Center.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: D6	Planning Name: VC – Big Flat	Length: 2.4 miles
This trail connects between the Visitor Center and Big Flat, along the rugged south-facing slope to the south of the campgrounds.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Requires short campground connections
ID: D7	Planning Name: Campground Trail 3	Length: 0.8 miles
This trail loops around the outside of the lower campground.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Requires short campground connections
ID: D8	Planning Name: Canyon North	Length: 0.9 miles
This trail explores the rocky canyon to the north of the main trailhead and HQ area.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate, rugged Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: D9	Planning Name: Overlook	Length: 0.6 miles
Short connector to an overlook site at the top of the point (current house site)		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate, rugged Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: D10	Planning Name: Bike Downhill Mid	Length: 1.2 miles
Bike downhill trail that explores the rocky canyon to the north of the HQ area, providing an alternate exit from the trail system to the main trailheads. Intended to be intermediate difficulty, with optional advanced features.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, moderate, rugged Management: Bike-only downhill	Notes:
ID: D11	Planning Name: Bike Downhill South	Length: 1.3 miles
Beginner-level bike downhill trail that meanders through the open forests west of the lower campground, extending down to the Visitor Center and main trailheads. Intended to be beginner difficulty, with optional intermediate features.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Frontcountry, easy Management: Bike-only downhill	Notes:

Upper Clear Creek Segments

ID: E1	Planning Name: Marion North	Length: 3.1 miles
This trail is intended to be the main access to the Marion Flat Bald, the highest point in the park accessible to all visitors. From the trail hub, it gently climbs through lush forests and meadows to reach the Marion Flat overlook.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: E2	Planning Name: Marion South	Length: 4.9 miles
This trail connects between Marion Flat Bald and the Big Flat area, creating a long backcountry loop with Trail E1. This long trail meanders through open, park-like forests, dense brush, and deep canyons.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Requires a long bridge over Clear Creek
ID: E3	Planning Name: Big Flat Loop	Length: 2.4 miles
This trail climbs to the crest above Big Flat, providing extensive views in all directions, before descending back to the valley.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: E4	Planning Name: Clear Creek Cross Trail	Length: 3.4 miles
From Big Flat, this trail gently climbs and traverses in an out of several canyons to reach to the trail hub at the top of Spring Creek (D1).		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: Requires a long bridge over Clear Creek and several smaller stream crossings
ID: E5	Planning Name: Fishers Peak South Notch	Length: 1.0 miles
From the upper loop trail (E6), this route provides an alternate access to Fishers Peak. It climbs to a rocky notch in the ridgeline to reach to steep, forested slopes on the east side. After following a traverse, it climbs steeply through a series of switchbacks to reach the upper ridge, just south of the summit.		
Suggested Width: 2-3 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Hiking-only	Notes:
ID: E6	Planning Name: Upper Upper Loop	Length: 2.9 miles
Using portions of the upper Fishers Peak access road (existing) this trail explores the dense forests and talus slopes below the upper rim of Fishers Peak Mesa, looping back to Marion Flat.		
Suggested Width: 2-3 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Hiking-only	Notes:



South Area Segments

ID: F1	Planning Name: Baldy Connector	Length: 7.3 miles
From the crest of Big Flat, this trail contours in and out of multiple canyons, and forests, around the west side of the Little Baldy formation to reach the open meadows near the Exit 2 trailhead. While the setting is remote and rugged, the trail itself will have a meandering feel with little significant elevation gain or loss.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking, and equestrian (partial)	Notes: Equestrian route does not include the northernmost section
ID: F2	Planning Name: Old Highway	Length: 1.7 miles
This section of trail uses the historic US Highway 87 roadbed, as it climbs to the south toward Raton Pass.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Frontcountry, moderate Management: Shared use; hiking, biking, and equestrian	Notes: Improvements primarily drainage and wayfinding
ID: F3	Planning Name: Get High Stay High	Length: 2.9 miles
From the roadbed near Raton Pass, this trail climbs to the east through forests and meadows at the foot of Bartlett Mesa, to a point where it climbs steeply through a break in the upper cliffs to reach the mesa rim.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: F4	Planning Name: Bartlett Rim	Length: 1.4 miles
This trail traverses the outer rim of Bartlett Mesa, providing a tour of the mesa-top grasslands and rock outcrops with multiple viewpoints to the north.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes:
ID: F5	Planning Name: Bartlett Road	Length: 3.3 miles
This trail uses the existing two-track road along the southern park boundary and New Mexico state line.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Backcountry, easy Management: Shared use; hiking, biking, equestrian	Notes: Requires minimal improvements for trail use
ID: F6	Planning Name: Baldy Cliffs	Length: 1.2 miles
This rugged hiking trail is intended to provide rock climbing access on Little Baldy, and access to the top of the formation.		
Suggested Width: 2-3 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Hiking-only	Notes:
ID: F7	Planning Name: Raton Pass Spur	Length: 0.6 miles
This is a continuation of the Old Highway (F2) to the top of Raton Pass, if public access to and from that location is desired.		
Suggested Width: 2-3 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, difficult Management: Shared use; hiking, biking	Notes: If this access is not desired, it should be actively closed

Equestrian Routes

ID: Q1	Planning Name: Bacharach Canyon	Length: 1.4 miles
From the park access road, this route follows an old, rugged road up the canyon that has been overgrown in some places. This route will feel more like a singletrack trail.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet	Character: Backcountry, rugged, moderate Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q2	Planning Name: Maxwell Road	Length: 3.9 miles
This is a wide, graded park management road that is closed to other visitors, connecting between the north access and the central loop.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Graded road, easy Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q3	Planning Name: North Road - Lower	Length: 2.7 miles
This is a wide, graded park management road that is closed to other visitors, and is part of the main central loop.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Frontcountry, graded road, easy Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q4	Planning Name: North Road - Upper	Length: 2.4 miles
This is a wide, park management road that is closed to other visitors, and is part of the main central loop. It is steeper and more rugged than other road sections.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Backcountry, rugged road, moderate Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q5	Planning Name: Upper Clear Creek	Length: 4.2 miles
This is a combination of wide, park management roads and a section of singletrack trail (E2 – Marion South) that explores the forests and canyons of the Clear Creek drainage to reach Marion Flat.		
Suggested Width: 3-4 feet (trail section)	Character: Backcountry, rugged road, moderate Management: Shared use/Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q6	Planning Name: North – South Road	Length: 3.9 miles
This is a wide, rugged park management road that extends from Big Flat to Exit 2. It is generally steep and rugged as it goes in and out of multiple canyons.		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Backcountry, rugged road, moderate Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q7	Planning Name: Canyon Connector	Length: 0.5 miles
Short connection on and existing road from the Baldy Connector Trail (F1) to the North – South Road (Q6).		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Backcountry, rugged road, moderate Management: Equestrian only	Notes:
ID: Q8	Planning Name: Bartlett Mesa Road	Length: 1.7 miles
Follows existing park management road as it ascends Bartlett Mesa and follows the south park boundary (upper section same as Trail F5).		
Suggested Width: N/A	Character: Rugged road, moderate Management: Equestrian only	Notes:



B. Natural Resource / Support Documents



Consultants in Natural Resources and the Environment

Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan Conservation Planning Summary Technical Memorandum

Prepared for: Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Prepared by: Bill Mangle, ERO Resources Corporation
Date: April 2022

Introduction

This document, an appendix to the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan, is intended to summarize the ecological resources and wildlife habitat attributes in Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP, or park) and the measures to integrate this information into the planning process and the recommended master plan for the park. Ecological conservation and management is a long-term priority for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and will be further described in a future management plan for the park.

Existing and Ongoing Resource Surveys

Fishers Peak State Park contains exceptional ecological diversity, resulting from its geographic location, rugged topography, hydrology, and elevational gradient. Since acquisition of the park property in 2019, ecologists with CPW, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) and other organizations conducted extensive surveys and field work to characterize the ecological values of the park. These efforts are encapsulated in several technical reports and documents, including the following:

- Vegetation Classification and Mapping (NREL 2021)
- Crazy French Ranch/Fishers Peak Current Conditions Report (LREP 2020)
- Guidance for a Resilient Park: Conservation Priorities and Recreation Opportunities at Fishers Peak State Park (TNC 2021)
- Other documented, internal, and informal resource data

While this work and data collection is ongoing, a baseline understanding of ecological targets was used to guide the master planning process towards a park design that minimizes ecological impacts while providing high-quality outdoor recreation.

Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan
Conservation Planning Summary
Technical Memorandum

Ecological Planning Approach

Following on the guidance of key project partners and stakeholder/public input, the overall vision for the park is a backcountry recreational experience focused on wild land and wildlife conservation. To achieve this vision, the master plan was based on two foundational pillars for the park: World class recreation and habitat conservation.

With these pillars in mind, CPW and the planning team set out to identify opportunities for park access and infrastructure on the 19,200-acre property in 2020. Existing resource data was supplemented with extensive site reconnaissance to identify key destinations, understand sensitive habitat areas, and document the overall opportunities and challenges to park development. Throughout the planning process two primary ecological planning principles emerged:

1. **Protect sensitive Ecological Targets** – Avoid or minimize impacts to location-specific habitats or features that support unique or otherwise sensitive species or communities
2. **Maintain or expand Undisturbed Habitat Blocks** – Minimize new impacts to large blocks of undisturbed wildlife habitat, and where possible, increase the size and connectivity of habitat blocks

These principles are described in greater detail below.

Ecological Targets

Based on existing resource data and knowledge of the property, CPW and the planning team identified 26 ecological targets and attributes to illustrate the biological diversity of the park, and the relative sensitivity of certain areas to park development and use (Table 1). These targets and attributes are briefly described below, by relative sensitivity ratings.

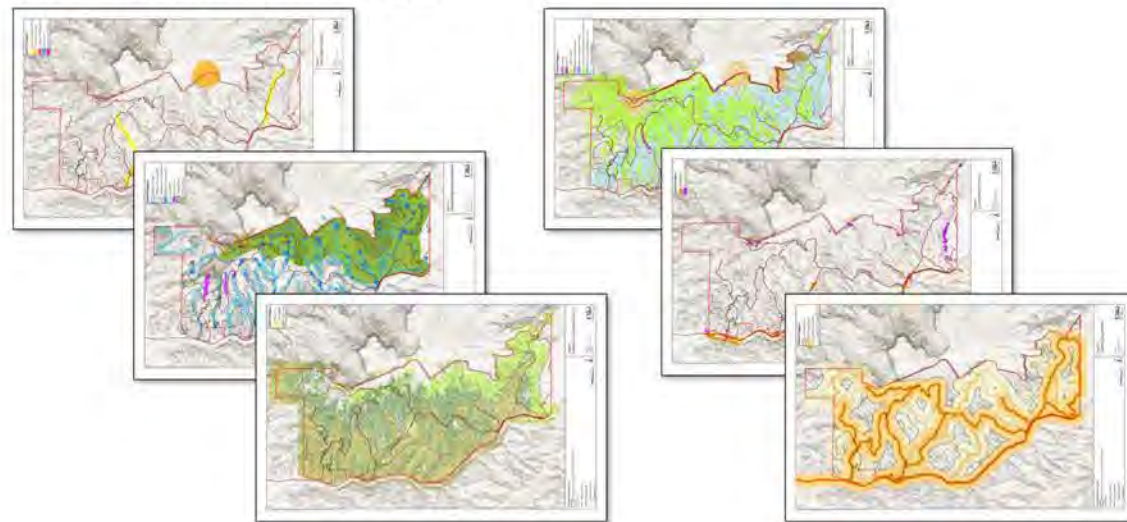
Table 1. Ecological Targets and Attributes

Ecological Target/Attribute	Description
High Sensitivity	
New Mexico meadow jumping mouse	Occupied habitat (300-foot buffer)
Golden eagle	Nesting habitat; known nest buffers
Capulin goldenrod	Known occurrences; 25m buffer
Other rare plants	Known occurrences; 25m buffer
Medium – High Sensitivity	
Peregrine falcon	Nesting habitat; known nest buffers
Elk – production area	Area mapped by CPW
Connectivity corridors	Mapped corridors with 100m buffer
Riparian, wetlands, and springs	Water features with 100m buffer
Old growth stands	Areas mapped by CPW
Undisturbed habitat – Large	Core habitat > 600+ acres
Medium Sensitivity	
Elk – Severe winter range	Area mapped by CPW
New Mexico meadow jumping mouse	Potential habitat (300-foot buffer)
Ovenbird	Estimated potential habitat

Ecological Target/Attribute	Description
Montane grasslands	NREL vegetation mapping
Shortgrass prairie	NREL vegetation mapping
Mixed conifer forest	NREL vegetation mapping
Cliff faces	Estimated polygon
Forest raptors	Known nests and buffers
Undisturbed habitat – Medium	Undisturbed habitat > 200 acres
Movement corridors	Mapped corridors with 25m buffer
Medium – Low Sensitivity	
Pinyon-juniper woodlands	NREL vegetation mapping
Oak shrublands	NREL vegetation mapping
Ponderosa pine woodlands	NREL vegetation mapping
Primary road buffer	Primary roads with 400m buffer
Secondary road corridors	Secondary roads with 100m buffer
Low Sensitivity	
Developed areas	NREL vegetation mapping
Disturbed grassland	NREL vegetation mapping
Primary road corridors	Primary roads with 100m buffer

During the planning process, each of these ecological targets were mapped in GIS for use during the site reconnaissance, stakeholder engagement, and park planning.

Figure 1. Ecological Attribute Mapping

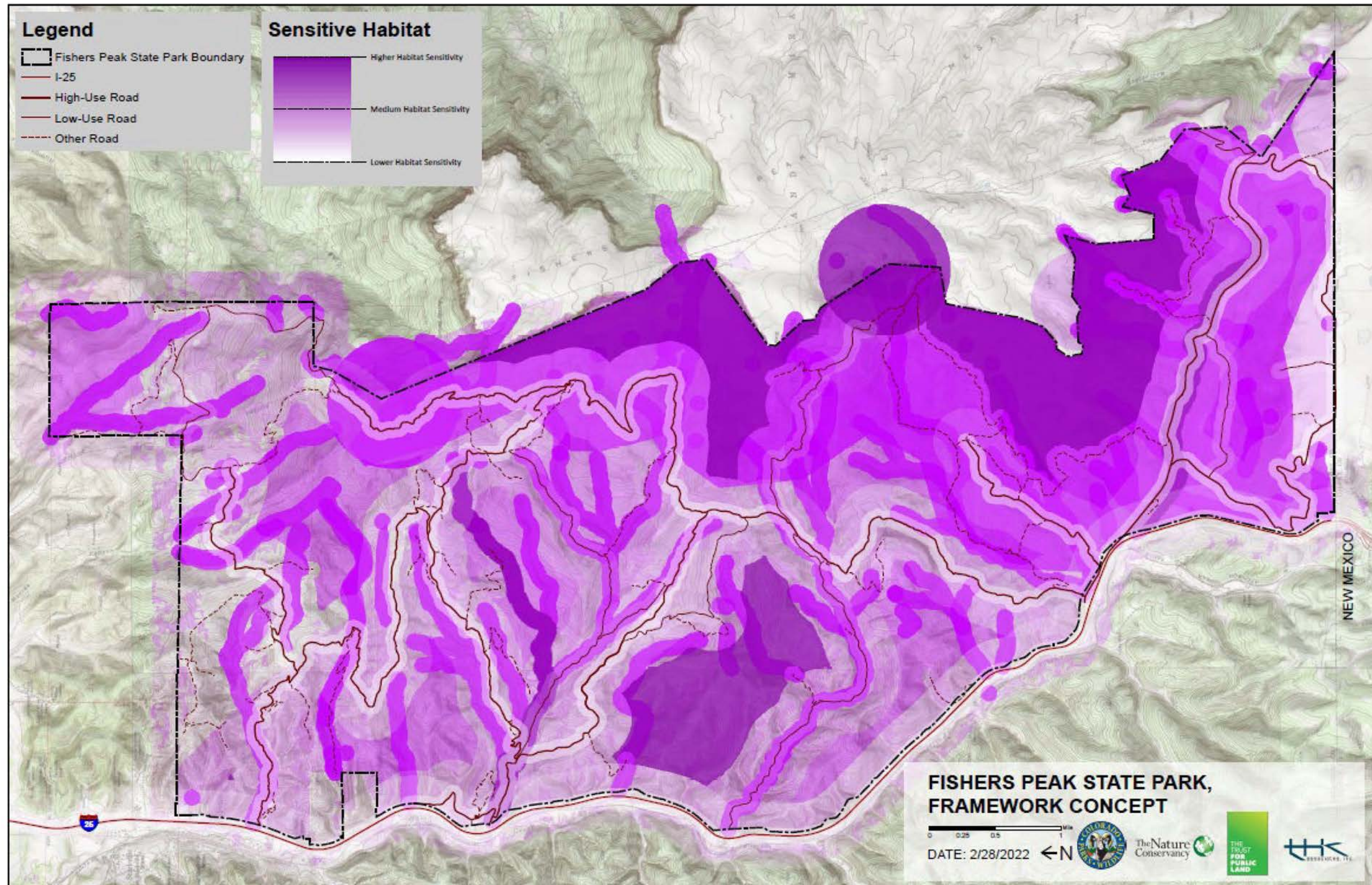


Habitat Sensitivity Analysis

In addition to the individual resource mapping, the planning team developed a composite sensitivity map to illustrate the areas that have the highest concentration of sensitive ecological attributes, and those areas with lower sensitivity. As a general rule, trails and other park infrastructure are more suitable in areas with lower overall habitat sensitivity, while areas with higher sensitivity should be avoided as much as possible.

To produce a habitat sensitivity map for the park, the above ecological targets (High to Low sensitivity ratings) are shown using graduated colors on the map (Figure 2). Areas with the highest sensitivity or multiple co-occurrences of sensitive resources are shown with the darkest shade, while those with the lowest sensitivity are shown with the lightest shade. Existing ranch roads and infrastructure, and the existing habitat impacts associated with those features, have reduced the overall sensitivity in those areas and are shown with lighter shades. This map provides a visual illustration of the areas with the highest relative sensitivity and conservation priority.

Figure 2. Habitat Sensitivity Composite



Ecological Attribute Descriptions

High Sensitivity

The following ecological targets are extremely rare and/or sensitive to human development and disturbance. High sensitivity targets should be avoided to the greatest extent possible, with no new impacts from park development, use and management.

- **New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, occupied habitat (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*)** – Federally listed endangered species, known to occur along perennial streams with dense riparian herbaceous vegetation. Within the park, populations have been identified within the Clear Creek and McBride Creek drainages. Other drainages are considered potential habitat until the absence of suitable habitat or populations is confirmed. Surveys of suitable habitat and occupancy will continue to occur for several years, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once all drainages are cleared, the Habitat Sensitivity Composite Map will look slightly different.
- **Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)** – Tier 1 species in the Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), which primarily nests within high cliffs. One golden eagle nest has been documented along the upper cliffs of the park. CPW guidelines call for a ½ mile buffer from any human encroachment or activity from December 15 through July 15.
- **Capulin goldenrod (*Solidago capulinensis*)** – This species is an extremely rare plant species that is known to occur in undisturbed pinyon-juniper woodland within the park. Only one site has been confirmed within the park.
- **Other rare plants** – Several other rare plant species have been documented within the park, including: Canadian River spiny aster (*Herrickia horrida*), grassy-slope sedge (*Carex oreocharis*), marsh-meadow Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja lineata*), New Mexico cliff fern (*Woodsia newmexicana*), Plummer's cliff fern (*Woodsia plummerae*), Red alum-root (*Heuchera rubescens*), Smith whitlow-grass (*Draba smithii*), Mexican squaw-root (*Conopholis alpina var. mexicana*), and bird foot violet (*Viola pedata*).

Medium-High Sensitivity

These targets are critical to the ecological value and diversity of habitat in the park, and new impacts should be avoided as much as possible. Where impacts are unavoidable, they should be carefully planned and managed to minimize impacts to the ecological functions that may be disrupted.

- **Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)** – Tier 2 species in the Colorado SWAP, which primarily nests within high cliffs. Two nests (or “eyries”) are known to be active within the park; one on Fishers Peak, and one along the cliffs above McBride Creek. CPW guidelines call for a ½ mile buffer from any human encroachment or activity from March 15 through July 31.
- **Elk (*Cervus elaphus*) – production area** – Elk are a broad-ranging species that utilize a variety of habitat types, are a species of importance for CPW, and are managed at a regional scale. Their habitat needs are indicators for overall habitat integrity and connectivity. Elk production areas are areas where calving, fawning, and rearing of young occurs in the spring. These are critical habitats for elk that are the most sensitive to human disturbance. Within the park, production areas are located in the meadows, riparian, and shrubland habitats in the south and eastern portions of the park.

- **Connectivity corridors** – Several key corridors provide connectivity for a variety of wildlife species between the park, state wildlife areas to the east, and undeveloped habitat to the northeast. These corridors are primarily breaks in the upper cliffs, and are used by elk, black bear (*Ursus americanus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and other broad-ranging species.
- **Riparian, wetlands, and springs** – Natural water sources are a scarce resource in this semi-desert environment, which underscores their ecological sensitivity and importance where they exist. Several dozen natural springs and man-made ponds support wetland and riparian habitat and contribute to ecological function and diversity within the park.
- **Old growth** – The park contains several documented stands of old growth forest, including oak (*Quercus*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa var. scopulorum*), and white fir (*Abies concolor*) communities. Old growth forests, and the wildlife habitat they provide, can be sensitive to excessive development and disturbance. Limited access to old growth provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about and be inspired by these unique areas of the park.
- **Undisturbed habitat – large areas** – Large, core habitat areas are greater than 400m from human disturbances and greater than 600 acres in size. These areas provide important wildlife habitat for target species and sustain other species not specifically identified as sensitivity targets. Only a few large tracts currently exist along the eastern boundary of the park.

Medium Sensitivity

Ecological targets with medium sensitivity are those that are common in the park and surrounding region, but are important to the ecological integrity of the park. Impacts from human development and disturbance may occur, but should be thoughtfully planned to minimize the amount of impact to any one target; where one area is impacted, others should be left alone.

- **Elk – Severe winter range** – Lower-elevation areas that are utilized by elk to survive severe winter conditions. CPW defines severe winter range to be areas where 90% of the individuals are located when the annual snowpack is at its maximum and/or temperature are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten. Most of the park is considered to be severe winter range for elk, with the exception of the upper elevation and north-facing areas in the northeast corner.
- **New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, potential habitat** – Most drainages within the park are considered to be potential habitat, until the absence of suitable habitat or populations is confirmed by field surveys and concurrence by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*)** – Ovenbird are a sensitive bird species, with specific habitat requirements and a narrow range in Colorado. Suitable habitat within the park includes mature oak and ponderosa pine-oak stands with a multi-layer ground structure and leaf or duff litter for ground nesting. Interior habitat patches with little to no fragmentation are important. Ovenbirds have been documented in mid-elevation forests and oak stands throughout the park and are expected to primarily occur between 7,400 and 7,900 feet in elevation.
- **Montane grasslands** – Grasslands associated with the higher-elevation mesa tops within and adjacent to the park. These are primarily composed of Arizona fescue (*Festuca arizonica*),

mountain muhly (*Muhlenbergia montana*), and Parry oatgrass (*Danthonia parryi*) interspersed with other grassland species. Within the park, this community is located on the summit of Fishers Peak and on Bartlett Mesa.

- **Shortgrass prairie** – Small patches of native prairie located along prominent high points and ridgelines. Dominant grass species include blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), Parry's oatgrass, Canada bluegrass (*Poa compressa*), Arizona fescue, mountain muhly, interspersed with broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) and plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*), slivery lupine (*Lupinus argenteus*), Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja*), and purple locoweed (*Oxytropis lambertii*). This community is located on open ridgelines throughout the park, with the most prominent patches on Marion Flat, Big Flats Bald, and Little Baldy.
- **Mixed Conifer Forest** – The upper elevation forests, below the mesa rim, are dominated by a mixed conifer forest community, consisting of white fir, Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), ponderosa pine, pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis*), and aspen intermixed with patches of shrubs including Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum* var. *glabrum*), Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*), and New Mexico locust (*Robinia neomexicana*). The species composition and density varies depending on the slope, aspect, moisture and other variables.
- **Cliff Faces** – The basalt cliffs along the rim of the upper mesas contain unique habitat that is distinctly different from the surrounding landscape. Rare plant species including Smith whitlow grass and rare ferns have been identified at the base of some cliff areas, while the high cliffs provide favored nesting habitat for a variety of bird species, most notably the golden eagle and peregrine falcon.
- **Forest Raptors** – The diverse forest communities in the park provide habitat for several raptor species that rely on undisturbed forest habitat, including flammulated owl (*Otus flammeolus*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*), and red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*).
- **Undisturbed Habitat – Medium** – Habitat areas greater than 100 meters from human disturbances and over 200 acres in size. These undisturbed areas provide habitat for smaller, more localized wildlife species, and secondary habitat and movement corridors for broad-ranging species. These areas are an important component of the overall habitat matrix and complement the large undisturbed core habitat areas in the eastern and southern portions of the park.
- **Movement Corridors** – Several major wildlife movement corridors have been identified in the park, primarily along major drainages or connecting between water sources and breaks in the upper cliffs to reach the habitat areas to the east. Other wildlife corridors are also evident throughout the park.

Medium – Low Sensitivity

These ecological targets are somewhat common and ubiquitous throughout the region, may have already been affected by past human disturbance, and are less sensitive to new human disturbance.

- **Pinyon-juniper woodlands** – This community type is common throughout southern and western Colorado, and dominates the lower elevations of the park. This community is dominated by oneseed juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) and Rocky Mountain juniper occurring with pinyon pine and an understory of shrubs and grasses.
- **Oak Shrublands** – Patchy shrublands dominated by Gambel oak are found on many of the north and west facing slopes in the park and are more extensive in the southern portions of the park. In some areas these shrublands transition to thickets of New Mexico locust.
- **Ponderosa Pine Woodlands** – The mid-elevation forests in the park are characterized by extensive stands of ponderosa pine, interspersed with an understory of Gambel oak and common grasses. This common community is interspersed with other communities including oak shrublands, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and at the upper elevations, mixed conifer forest.
- **High-Use Road Buffer** – Most of the primary roads have fairly common and routine human use and disturbance associated with park management access. These existing disturbances – both the physical disturbance of the road itself and the routine human disturbance – are assumed to have diminished the value and sensitivity of wildlife habitat along the corridor, within up to about 400 meters from the road.
- **Low-Use Road Corridors** – These existing roads are generally less developed and have infrequent human use and disturbance associated with park management access. These existing disturbances are assumed to have diminished the value and sensitivity of wildlife habitat within about 100 meters from the road.

Low Sensitivity

- **Developed Areas** – Developed areas have extensive human development, structures, and infrastructure. While some vegetation exists and some wildlife use occurs, these areas have low ecological value and sensitivity.
- **Disturbed Grassland** – Several large meadows in the park were historically used for agricultural purposes, were seeded with non-native pasture grasses or crops, and may have had significant livestock use. These areas are dominated by non-native grasses and noxious weeds and have low ecological value and sensitivity.
- **High-Use Road Corridors** – The common human use and disturbance of primary roads for park management access are assumed to have diminished the value and sensitivity of wildlife habitat within about 100 meters from the road. This impact is more intensive than the buffer impact (up to 400m) described above.

Common Wildlife Species

In addition to the ecological targets listed above, the park contains habitat for numerous wildlife species that are common throughout southern Colorado. Large mammals include elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), black bear, mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) and coyote (*Canis latrans*). Small mammals include a number of rodents

and several species of bat. Common bird species include wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), cliff- and forest-nesting raptors, and numerous migratory songbirds. Reptiles and amphibians include several lizards and snakes, while amphibians include tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*) and multiple toad species.

Recreation and Conservation Planning Elements

Throughout the master plan process, the planning team worked to design trails and other park infrastructure that provides meaningful access to key destinations while minimizing impacts to ecological targets. These infrastructure and conservation planning elements include the following:

- **Avoidance of sensitive habitat areas** – Specific habitat areas that are known to have high sensitivity were avoided as much as possible. These include springs, wetlands, and riparian habitat, elk calving areas, and known habitat for the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse.
- **Using existing disturbance patterns** – Historic road development and recent access patterns have left an extensive web of disturbances on the landscape. Many of the proposed trail corridors were specifically designed to follow or mimic these existing disturbance patterns to reduce new disturbance and fragmentation. For example, the regional north-south trail and northern mountain bike downhill trails are deliberately located within the disturbance buffer of existing park management roads.
- **Maintaining large habitat blocks** – The trail system was designed to maintain and expand large blocks of undisturbed habitat. The master plan includes 7,434 acres of large undisturbed habitat blocks in the southern half of the park, and several smaller habitat blocks in the northern half of the park, resulting in a total of 12,825 acres of undisturbed habitat.
- **Using the terrain strategically** – Most of the trails were designed to follow ridgelines rather than valley bottoms, to avoid the riparian habitat and wildlife movement corridors that are typically found along the drainages.
- **Clustering trails in low-sensitivity zones** – Most of the shorter trail loops and higher-density trail areas are located in zones that have lower environmental sensitivity. Higher-elevation habitats and areas with higher sensitivity have fewer trails, lower trail density, and are expected to have fewer visitors resulting in a lower environmental impact.
- **Planning to minimize impacts** – Where sensitive resources could not be avoided, trails were specifically designed to incorporate mitigation and management measures. For example, the trail system below Fishers Peak was designed to incorporate seasonal closures while remaining functional during the closure period, while the trails that cross Clear Creek were sited to minimize impacts to potential New Mexico meadow jumping mouse habitat.

Undisturbed Habitat Blocks

A key component of the ecological conservation strategy at FPSP is the protection and establishment of large, undisturbed blocks of habitat (while also establishing high-quality recreation opportunities). Such large habitat areas allow wildlife species to persist in their natural state, across a variety of ecological and elevational gradients, with little human influence. While most species thrive in these conditions, some species require undisturbed habitat areas to simply survive.

Habitat Fragmentation Analysis

In any natural landscape, the proliferation of roads and trails fragments habitat values, by disrupting ecological processes and contiguity, increasing erosion and vegetation loss, and by introducing linear edges and corridors that become pathways for predators and nonnative species. Habitat fragmentation reduces the size and overall integrity of habitat areas and is detrimental to many species (Noss and Cooperrider 1994, Groves et al. 2002, Decker 2018). Roads and trails, and the human access and use that they support, exacerbate these impacts by creating a “zone of influence” within which human disturbance may alter wildlife behavior and reduce the value of habitat to some wildlife. The impacts of fragmentation vary by species and individual animal and can range from no effect, to interruption of activity, to flight, to abandonment of breeding or foraging sites. This zone of influence can range from 30 to 400 meters or more, depending on terrain, vegetation, species, and levels of human use and prior habituation (Miller et al. 2001; Taylor and Knight 2003; Stankowich 2008; Cassirer et al. 1992; George and Crooks 2006, Naylor et al. 2009, Malone and Emerick 2003, CPW 2021).

Considering the broad range of impact distances, the existing conditions and context of FPSP, and other factors, the following analysis of existing and future habitat fragmentation uses a range of 100 to 400 meters as the zone of influence, or impact buffer, of existing and proposed roads and trails. This range recognizes that the impacts of human disturbance are not fixed, but occur along a gradient. Areas closer to the disturbance are more likely to be impacted, while areas more distant may not be affected as severely or as often.

For this analysis, and the overall planning framework for FPSP, the habitat elements are defined as follows:

- **Trail or Road Corridor** – The actual road or trail bed and adjacent corridor (up to about 10 meters), that includes the physical disturbance of the travel corridor, associated cut and fill areas and drainage features, and vegetation removal or alteration.
- **Disturbance Area** – Habitat areas within 100 meters of the road and trail centerline, where physical impacts and human activity have the greatest impact on wildlife behavior and habitat use.
- **Undisturbed Habitat** – Areas between 100 meters and 400 meters from roads and trails, where the habitat remains intact but human activity may impact wildlife behavior and habitat use, depending on the species and context.
- **Core Habitat** – Areas greater than 400 meters from any road, trail, or human disturbance, where the habitat remains intact, diverse habitat types and gradients are preserved, and human influence is minimal.

Figure 3. Habitat Fragmentation Analysis Elements



This gradient of human disturbance does *not* take into account the type or relative frequency of the human disturbance. While existing and future roads are classified as “high use” or “low use,” all future trails are all assumed to have similar levels of visitor use and frequency of disturbance. In reality, the lower-elevation trails will have higher levels of visitor use and frequency, while the higher-elevation backcountry trails are expected to have relatively low and infrequent visitor use, which may reduce the level of impact for some wildlife.

GIS Analysis Assumptions

To quantify the impact of existing roads and future roads and trails on habitat within the park, a GIS analysis was conducted using the following assumptions:

- **Disturbance Area –**
 - Areas within 100 meters of all existing roads
 - Areas within 100 meters of proposed trails
- **Undisturbed Habitat –**
 - Areas greater than 100 meters from all existing roads
 - Areas greater than 100 meters from all proposed trails
- **Core Habitat Area –**
 - Areas greater than 400 meters from High Use and Low Use Roads
 - Areas greater than 400 meters from all proposed trails

The analysis of future conditions is based on the road and trail recommendations in the master plan, assuming full build-out of the proposed plan.

Existing Conditions

The legacy of past land uses has left the park in an impacted state. Currently, about 90 miles of roads have been identified and mapped within the park, ranging from major access routes to overgrown tracks. The inventory of existing roads is below in Table 2.

Table 2. Existing Roads on FPSP

Road Type	Miles	Definition
High Use Road	36.3	Major roads commonly used and maintained for park management
Low Use Road	17.1	Roads occasionally used for park management/monitoring access
Other Roads	36.5	Roads that are sparsely used, and may be overgrown or impassible
Total	89.9	

Existing Habitat Blocks

Based on the road disturbance analysis described above, about 31 percent of the park is currently influenced by existing roads, while about 32 percent consists of high-quality core habitat (Table 3).

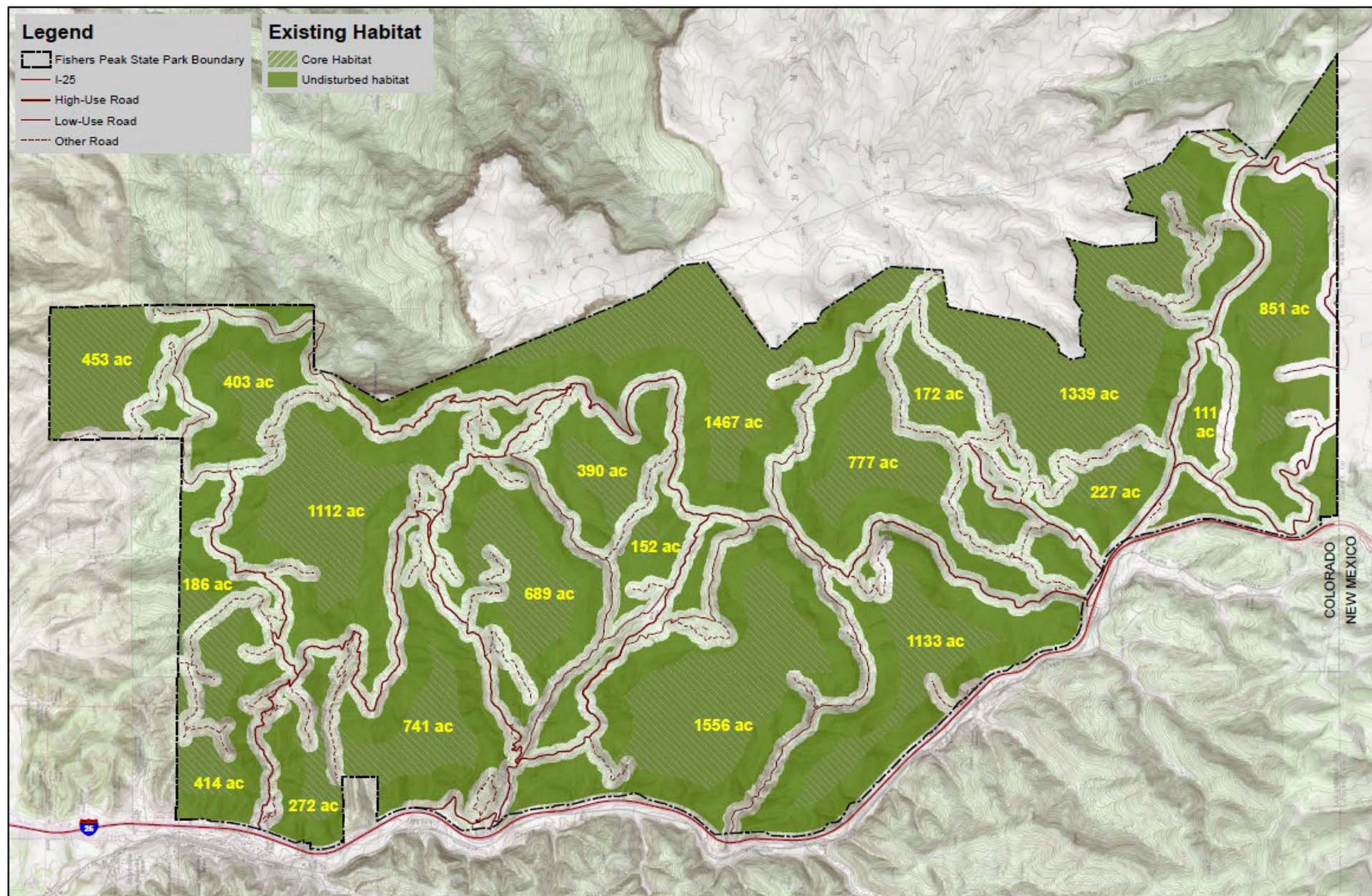
Table 3. Existing Habitat Blocks

	Definition	Acres	Percent of Park
Disturbed Areas	< 100m from Roads	5,969	31%
Undisturbed Habitat	100m – 400m from Roads	7,121	37%
Core Habitat	> 400m from Roads	6,110	32%
Undisturbed + Core Habitat	> 100m from Roads	13,231	69%

Currently, a total of 13,231 acres (69% of the park) consists of habitat that is not disturbed by existing park roads. The largest habitat blocks are located in the southern half of the park, consisting of three blocks of 1,556, 1,467, and 1,339 acres. A fourth habitat block of 1,112 acres is located in the northern half of the park, on the slopes below Fishers Peak to the west (Figure 4).

About 6,110 acres (32%) consist of core habitat, which is distributed across 33 small habitat blocks, with only 3 being larger than 600 acres.





Future Conditions

The Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan proposes an extensive recreational trail system along with the closure and reclamation of many unused roads. Many of the proposed trails are located within or adjacent to existing road disturbances and are designed to minimize new fragmentation of large habitat blocks. In addition, the closure and reclamation of unused roads will restore currently fragmented habitat blocks as the closed roads are fully revegetated (Table 4).

Table 4. Future Roads on FPSP

Road Type	Miles	Definition
High Use Road	29.8	Major roads commonly used and maintained for park management
Low Use Road	4.0	Roads occasionally used for park management/monitoring access
Reclaimed/ Other Roads	56.1	Roads that are actively closed and reclaimed, passively closed and allowed to revegetate, or retained for emergency access only
Total	89.9	

Future Habitat Blocks

Based on the future road and trail disturbance analysis described above, the park at full buildout will have a total of 12,825 acres (67% of the park) that will remain undisturbed by park management roads and recreation trails, with about 6,207 acres (32%) consisting of core habitat (Table 5).

Table 5. Future Habitat Blocks

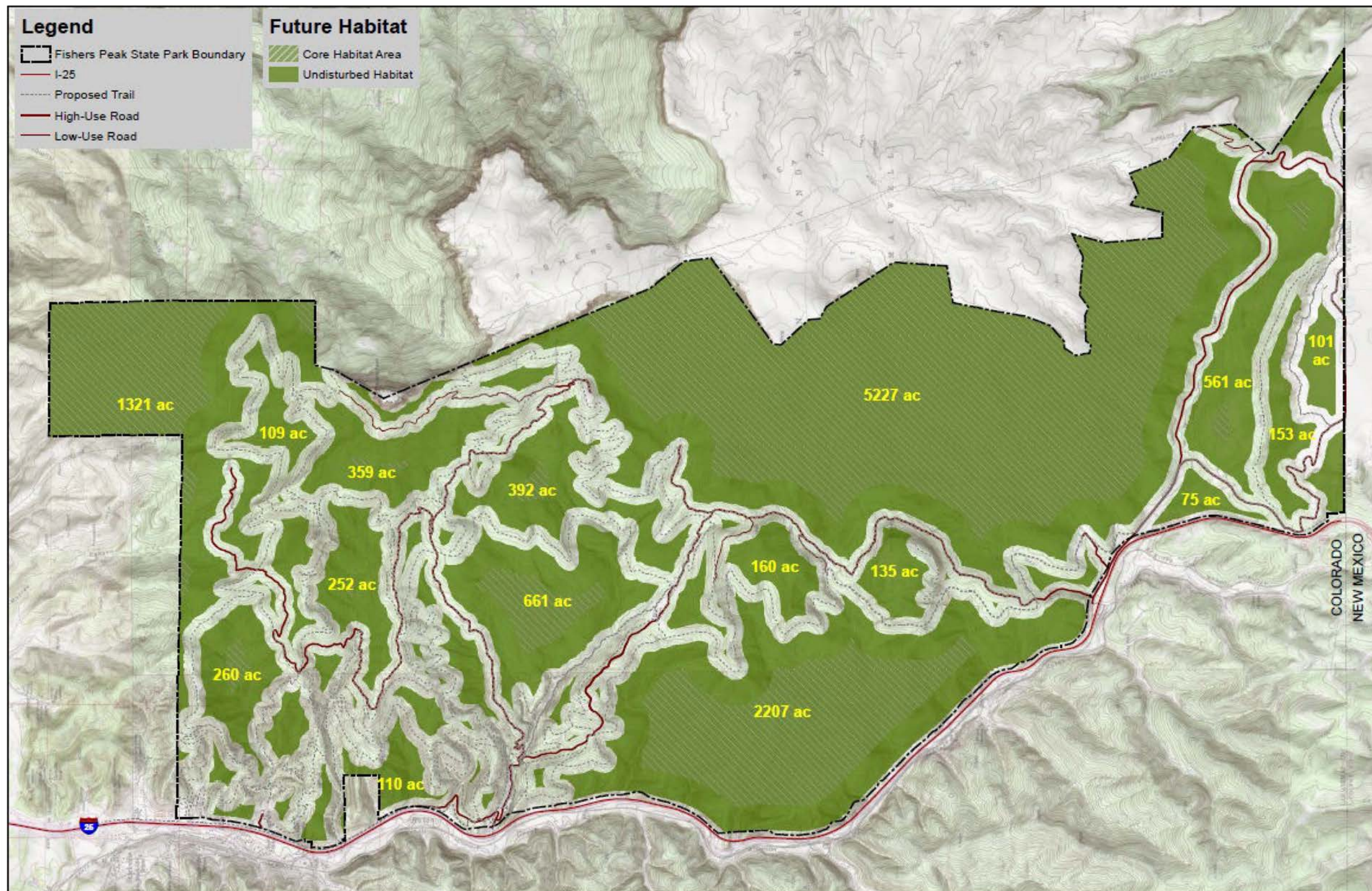
	Definition	Acres	Percent of Park
Disturbed Areas	< 100m from Roads and Trails	6,375	33%
Undisturbed Habitat	100m – 400m from Roads and Trails	6,618	34%
Core Habitat	> 400m from Roads and Trails	6,207	32%
Undisturbed + Core Habitat	> 100m from Roads and Trails	12,825	67%

The largest habitat blocks will be concentrated in the southern half of the park. These will consist of two major habitat blocks:

- **Southeast woodlands** – 5,227 acres between the main north-south park management road and the upper rim of Fishers Peak Mesa. This habitat block contains a mosaic of pinyon-juniper woodland, oak shrubland, ponderosa pine woodlands, and mixed conifer forests along with numerous springs, ponds and wetlands and several key riparian corridors.
- **Western canyons** – 2,207 acres between the north-south regional trail and I-25. This habitat block contains multiple canyons dominated pinyon-juniper woodlands, with ponderosa pine woodlands on north-facing slopes.

In the northern half of the park, several smaller habitat blocks will also contribute to wildlife habitat and resource conservation. These consist of another 3,354 acres of habitat across 7 habitat blocks that are bisected by park management roads and recreation trail loops. The largest existing habitat block in the northern half of the park (1,112 acres on the west side of Fishers Peak) will be negatively impacted by trail development, which will break it into three smaller habitat blocks with a combined total of 720 acres (Figure 5).





Existing – Future Comparison

Compared to existing conditions, implementation of the FPSP master plan will result in a decrease in the total acreage of undisturbed habitat by 406 acres (2 percent), with a small 97-acre increase in total core habitat.

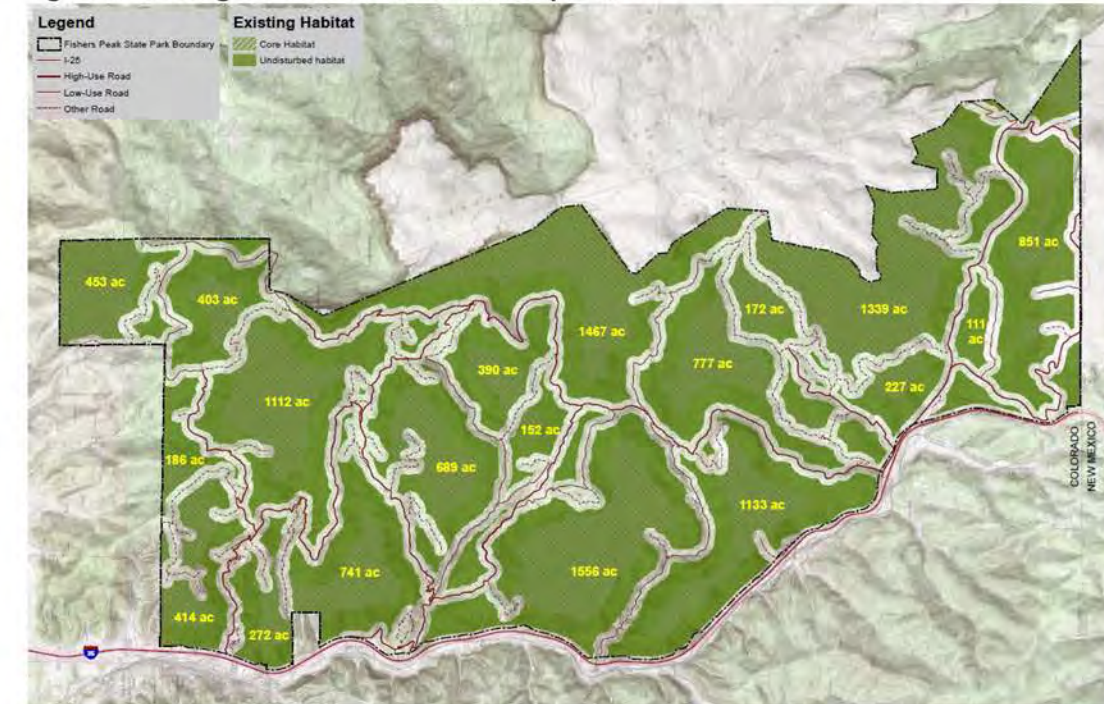
Table 6. Existing - Future Habitat Block Comparison

	Definition	Existing Conditions (Acres/Percent)	Future Conditions (Acres/Percent)	Change (Acres/Percent)
Disturbed Areas	< 100m from Roads and Trails	5,969 31%	6,375 33%	406 2%
Undisturbed Habitat	100m – 400m from Roads and Trails	7,121 37%	6,618 34%	-503 -3%
Core Habitat	> 400m from Roads and Trails	6,110 32%	6,207 32%	+97 0.5%
Undisturbed + Core Habitat	> 100m from Roads and Trails	13,231 69%	12,825 67%	-406 -2%

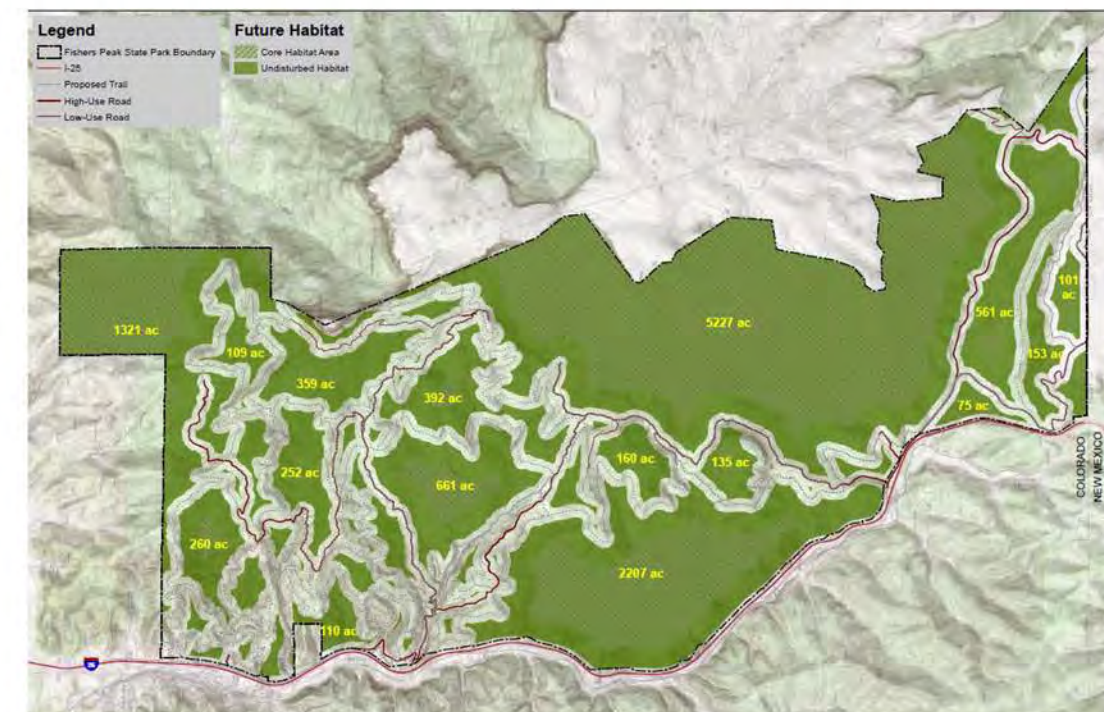
While the total area of undisturbed habitat will decrease slightly, the design of the future road and trail system to cluster disturbances and minimize impacts, combined with the closure and reclamation of roads in core habitat areas, will result in a net benefit in the overall size and configuration of large habitat blocks. This benefit is based on the following:

- The largest undisturbed habitat blocks (5,227 acres and 2,207 acres) will encompass most of the southern portion of the park, and will be adjacent to each other, separated by a single trail corridor and park management road.
- These large habitat blocks will include significant habitat areas, including numerous springs and seeps, occupied New Mexico meadow jumping mouse habitat along McBride Creek, known and potential nest sites for golden eagle and other raptors, elk calving habitat, and several major wildlife movement corridors.
- These two areas, encompassing 7,434 acres, will create a large conservation area that is larger than most other state parks.
- When combined with the State Wildlife Areas that are adjacent to the east, it will support a regional conservation area encompassing over 20,000 acres.

Figure 6. Existing - Future Habitat Block Comparison



Existing Conditions



Future Conditions



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C. Opportunities and Challenges at Fishers Peak State Park

Opportunities and Challenges at Fishers Peak State Park

Prepared by: THK Associates, Inc., ERO Resources, Tony Boone Trails and CDR Associates

Stakeholder Input Overview

Input from the public, local community, region, and state is critical to the success of the Fishers Peak State Park (FPSP) Master Plan. As a state-managed property, FPSP was paid for through public contributions and the local, regional, and statewide community. Those communities have expressed strong interest in access, preservation, and management of Colorado's newest state park. Diverse perspectives are an important part of the planning process that help develop what FPSP will look like, who will use it, and how they will use it. By engaging the public, stakeholders are able to weigh in on design concepts, ideas, and evaluation criteria that are important to them. While, ultimately, FPSP won't be everything to everyone - we are listening carefully to the wide variety of interests shared by the public and are seeking to use those interests to inform decision-making for the FPSP Master Planning process.

Since the property was initially purchased by TNC and TPL and planning for FPSP began, members of the public have noted a wide range of concepts and ideas that they would like to see implemented. Fundamentally, the public wants access to this iconic landscape. They want to experience the natural beauty inherent to the area, and some are ambitious enough to attempt a trip to the top of the peak. In a lot of ways, FPSP is more than a park to the local and regional community - it is an iconic symbol of the place they call home.

Through the diverse public engagement process, our team has engaged over 500 unique park users and enthusiasts looking to have a role in the planning process. We've heard consistent input, and below we've compiled a high-level summary of that input into Opportunities and Challenges:

Stakeholder Input

Opportunities

Stakeholder Input to park development and enjoyment...

- **Maintaining the natural environment:** One of the most frequent comments received by the community was the desire to maintain the natural environment and landscape of FPSP with as little human impact as possible. This synergy of input is rare, and the greatest opportunity (and challenge) for the Master Plan will be to capitalize on this desire for preservation and conservation.
- **Provide unique recreational opportunities for the region:** With few similar backcountry recreational opportunities in the region, FPSP allows access to a new landscape the public has not yet experienced. The desire for access and recreation opportunities places FPSP in a unique position to be a "go to" destination in the region.
- **Educate the local and regional community on stewardship and natural resources:** Because of FPSP's unique landscape, flora, and fauna, FPSP provides a natural source of education about stewardship, natural resources, ecosystems, history, and much more.
- **Diverse recreational experiences (hiking, biking, hunting, equestrian, etc.):** During our conversations, it is readily apparent that there are many diverse perspectives on the recreation offerings at FPSP. FPSP Master Plan has the opportunity to establish a framework for CPW to

offer experiences for not one but many recreation groups who may be looking to diversify or improve their skills on a new landscape.

- **Setting a precedent for inclusive education and outreach process (tribal consultation, DEI groups, etc.):** It is important to the Planning Team to be able to engage a variety of diverse perspectives and stakeholders, and this Master Planning process is setting a precedent for inclusive engagement. The hope is this precedent will continue into park management practices moving forward.
- **Maintain the Park's historical significance and stories:** Many community members have unique stories about Fishers Peak. There is an opportunity to capture many of these stories as well as FPSP's ranching history and indigenous history to tell a compelling narrative of FPSP and its importance to communities through time.
- **Building something meaningful from the ground up:** The iconic Peak already has meaning to local and regional stakeholders, and the public is hopeful the Master Planning process will lead to a unique, meaningful public space to preserve and enjoy nature for generations to come.

Challenges

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Balance recreation and economic growth with natural resource management:** There is a strong desire to use this opportunity to bring recreation and therefore economic growth to the local community. The public is concerned that some of that economic drive and recreation interest may catalyze over-development of FPSP and degrade natural resources.
- **Regional collaboration between jurisdictions and across state lines:** FPSP has brought together many communities and partners, at the county, city, and state levels. Coordination between partners, including varying best practices and management styles is a challenge for CPW's long-term management of FPSP, park access, and park resources.
- **Managing diverse recreational experiences in one place:** While there is an important opportunity to bring diverse recreational activities to one space, managing the interaction of those recreational activities is particularly difficult when each group has different needs and desires. Delineating and clearly communicating these issues, and eventually the associated park policies, will be critical to the success of the Master Plan.
- **Managing expectations (timeline, types of recreation, staff resources, etc.):** Many stakeholders want to provide input into the Master Plan and want to see rapid implementation. Throughout the Master Planning process and beyond, the Planning Team and CPW will need to manage the expectation of park development, making sure park staffing levels are allocated to meet demand and use, provide clarity to the planning process as well as establishing budgets and implementation priorities.

Input pulled from:

- *December 2021 Public Meeting*
- *Interest Group Discussions / Report*
- *Spring 2021 Work Group Meetings*
- *Spring 2021 Public Meeting*
- *Public Survey*

Field Review and Existing Documentation Evaluation Overview

The Planning Team has spent over 100 field days hiking and documenting the conditions on site at FPSP. The firsthand knowledge of the site collected, by the Planning Team, has been synergized with the biological and recreational information provided through the open standards process and other site specific information provided by CPW staff to develop a high-level summary of the opportunities and challenges for development and management of FPSP.

Environmental and Cultural Resources

Opportunities

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Vegetative Diversity** – Rising from west to east, the FPSP transitions through five life zones within four miles, providing visitors with multiple settings and experiences within a single outing. Trails can traverse open meadows, tall forests, and dense shrublands, providing a constant sense of transition and discovery.
- **Rugged Terrain** – While the steep ridges, tight canyons, rock outcrops, and dense vegetation make for challenging park development, they also allow for trail and park infrastructure configurations that provide a backcountry feel while minimizing habitat impacts. In rugged terrain, trails and park infrastructure can be sited on ridgelines that avoid the most sensitive habitat areas, while giving visitors a sense that they are further from other trails or infrastructure than they actually are.
- **Lower-Sensitivity Areas** – Many of the lower elevation areas on the west side of FPSP have higher levels of disturbance and lower ecological sensitivity. These areas are dominated by ubiquitous, pinyon-juniper woodland habitat and have the greatest concentration of roads and other disturbances. These areas provide an opportunity to locate park development and visitor access infrastructure in areas that minimize new ecological impacts.
- **Watchable Wildlife** – FPSP contains a diversity of wildlife, ranging from elk, bear, and mule deer to migratory songbirds, snakes, and lizards. Access to different life zones in FPSP will provide an opportunity for visitors to view wildlife in their natural habitat.
- **Education and Interpretation** – FPSP and the surrounding landscape has a rich geologic, natural, and human history that can be viewed firsthand throughout FPSP. FPSP provides incredible content and a venue for educational and interpretive sites and programming.

Challenges

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Sensitive Wildlife Habitat** – A large extent of FPSP contains habitat that is sensitive to human disturbance, including elk calving areas, wetlands, rare plants, raptor nests, and endangered species. The importance of protecting and maintaining the function of these habitats presents a challenge to park development, limiting areas that are available for trails, infrastructure, and visitor use.
- **Seasonal Closures** – Several habitat areas require seasonal closures to protect critical breeding periods, including the peregrine falcon which nests on Fishers Peak. While maintaining seasonal closures is a priority, it limits the areas that can be accessible to visitors, and substantially reduces the time of year when some key destinations are accessible to the public.
- **Endangered Species Protection and Consultation** – The New Mexico Meadow jumping mouse is a federally-listed endangered species that is known to reside within FPSP. Any new disturbance or development within mouse habitat should be avoided and is subject to federal concurrence and regulation. This presents a challenge to park infrastructure development, since some

streams that are suspected to support mouse habitat are also near areas that may be necessary for public access and infrastructure.

- **Cultural Resource Protection** – Avoiding impacts to cultural resources, while honoring and interpreting their story, is a challenge for park infrastructure development. FPSP and surrounding region have a rich human history and FPSP is known to contain significant historical and archaeological sites. These sites are an important resource and are often located in areas that are also desirable for future park uses, due to their topography, location, proximity to water, and other attributes.

Park Infrastructure

Opportunities

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Park Scale** – At 19,200-acres, FPSP has more than enough high-quality habitat to support a back country/wilderness experience for park users while also preserving very large habitat blocks.
- **Existing Disturbances** – As a result of past land uses, there are multiple existing disturbances on FPSP, including roads, corrals, ponds, and pastures. These existing disturbances provide opportunities to site and cluster new park infrastructure in a manner that would reduce new ecological impacts.
- **Main Park Access (front door)** – Using Exit 11 on Interstate 25 and working with CDOT through a “devolution” process, portions of the frontage road could be converted to being the main park access road reducing the number of public roads within the existing park boundary. Purchasing the Amato property could provide a potential location for the main entry station.
- **Connectivity** – There are several opportunities to connect to New Mexico; from Exit 8 south along the west side of Interstate 25, in mostly County R.O.W.’s; also east through private property to Sugarite Canyon State Park and along the east side of Interstate 25, along the old highway to Raton Pass. Additionally, connectivity to Trinidad Lake State Park and downtown Trinidad can occur along the frontage road at the northwest corner of FPSP through Exit 11 on Interstate 25 and along Santa Fe entirely in existing public R.O.W.’s
- **Historic Ranching Heritage** – The main Crazy French Ranch entrance, buildings, and landscape could be preserved by not utilizing Exit 8 off Interstate 25 as the main entrance to FPSP. The existing ranch house (HQ), adobe garage, and shed could be used for ranch heritage interpretation.
- **Elevation Change** – There is 3,000-feet of elevation gain from the western boundary of FPSP to the eastern boundary of the park. The elevation change coupled with the ruggedness of FPSP will reduce the number of people willing to hike to the eastern side of the park, reducing impacts to the higher elevation habitats.
- **Headquarters (HQ) Building** – TNC remodeled the ranch house and it is currently being used as FPSP’s HQ. HQ long-term, provides a great continuing opportunity for temporary staff housing, meeting space and future educational classes.
- **Rock Outcrops and Large Boulders** – The sandstone rock outcrops and large boulders at the lower elevations provide bouldering opportunities for different skill levels.
- **Highest Point East of Interstate 25 in Colorado** – Fantastic vistas and long-range views exist from the many ridgelines and highpoints in FPSP. The spectacular views will become one of the iconic features of FPSP.
- **“Low Star”** – The lodge in the southeast corner of FPSP presents an opportunity for overnight accommodations in a back country setting. There is electrical power to the structure but the structure has sat empty for a very long time. The structure would require extensive repairs as



the structure is continuing to deteriorate without regular use and maintenance. The lodge could be an opportunity to partner with a local concessionaire. There is interest in the community for concessionaire opportunities in FPSP as noted in several of the stakeholder meetings.

- **The Corrals at Exit 2** – There are livestock corrals located near Exit 2 on Interstate 25 that are in good condition. The opportunity exists to use them in either a cattle or equestrian application.
- **Over 40 Permitted Springs** – Many springs exist in FPSP. The opportunity exists to improve the springs and associated impoundments for wildlife or cattle use. This opportunity needs further study to determine the best use of the water.
- **Water Wells** – Numerous water wells exist on site. At least one well is permitted. Research is needed on the other wells to determine the right to use and well yields.

Challenges

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Existing Roads** – There are a multitude of existing roads in FPSP associated with past land uses. Although some existing roads may be desirable for administrative or recreational use, most are not. These existing, abandoned roads are both an ecological impact and an attractive nuisance for visitor use. The existing roads present a challenge for designing and managing a trail system that seeks to utilize existing disturbances to reduce impacts while also minimizing visitor interaction with closed or undesirable routes. The existing roads are too steep and narrow to easily be converted to public use. Major grading, drainage and road surfacing would be required to improve ranch roads to a safe maintainable condition to allow public use as roads.
- **Water** – There is very little surface water in FPSP, so no real water based recreational opportunities exist within FPSP. Improving the streams or small ponds for fishing is also not practical due to the seasonal flow of the streams and the small size of the ponds. Often the streams and many of the ponds are dry for a long period of time each year.
- **Rock Cliffs** – While the cliff faces of Fishers Peak, Fishers Peak Mesa and Little Baldy may be climbable, access to the cliff faces is very difficult. Raptor buffers will close large areas of the cliff faces from March 15th through July 31st every year. Also many of these cliff faces will require a 2 to 6 mile hike to access the cliff faces.
- **Uncontrolled Access to FPSP** – There are three exits off Interstate 25 along the west boundary of FPSP. Additionally, within CDOT R.O.W. there are plenty of places to park at the three exits. People can then climb the fence or gate and enter FPSP on foot.
- **Steep Terrain** – Over 80% of FPSP has slopes at 20% or greater, making park infrastructure development extremely difficult. Tremendous impacts to the existing habitat would occur if infrastructure were to be developed. Less than 10% of FPSP has slopes ranging from 0% to 10%. These flatter locations are often associated with existing meadows that have been identified as important habitat that should not be extensively developed.
- **Adjacent Property Ownership** – Approximately one third of FPSP's boundary is shared with State Wildlife Areas. The remaining two thirds of FPSP's boundary is shared with private property owners and Interstate 25 R.O.W., making pedestrian access to the site difficult.
- **Old Ranch Buildings** – Other than the ranch structures (HQ) at Exit 8 on Interstate 25, all other ranch buildings (excluding "Low Star") present a safety and management challenge. There is evidence of use by the homeless in at least one of the structures. Removal of these structures may be the best management plan.
- **Park Staff and Equipment** – The scale of FPSP (19,200-acres) and the fact that uses will be dispersed across FPSP will make management and property oversight time consuming. Equipment will be needed to provide access all year and maintain park infrastructure. Expanding staff and resources to manage FPSP as it opens up overtime will present management budgeting issues.

5

Trails

Opportunities

To park development and enjoyment...

- **Biophysical Components** - The sheer immensity of FPSP is staggering and awe-inspiring. The natural beauty and epic views combined with an intricate puzzle of deep valleys and steep ridges create an opportunity for a true backcountry trail experience, unmatched by most other state parks. The complexity and diversity of these landforms are a record of past biophysical components including the hydrology, geology, soils, wind, aspect, exposure, climate and topography. These various components help provide an incredibly diverse, world-class trail experience for hikers, bikers, runners, and equestrians.
- **Aspect** - The various aspects of the slopes have dramatically different temperature differences during winter and summer months, with northern aspects remaining snow covered long after south facing slopes are bone dry with temperatures 10-20 degrees warmer on the sunny side. During the summer, the temps on south facing slopes are hitting 100+ degrees while the north slopes stay much cooler, especially in areas of heavy forest cover. Trails can be planned to move between the various aspects so that regardless of the season, trail users can easily find shade on a hot summer day or a nice warm spot on a brisk winter day, sheltered from the cold wind by the south facing cliffs.
- **Elevation** - At lower elevations, the sandstone formations that ring the numerous canyons west of the high mesas offer superb trail experiences for all users. Winding through the sculpted hoodoos, huge boulders, bare slickrock, and along the tops and base of the 15-50' high sandstone cliffs is absolutely enchanting. These sandstone packed ridges also offer amazing viewpoints of the Sangre de Christo Range, Spanish Peaks and Fishers Peak. Secluded grottos and optional natural stone features provide unique opportunities for kinesthetically diverse trails for mountain bikers and runners when intricately weaving between all the unique stone formations. Trails with high kinesthetic diversity are highly sought after by mountain bikers as well as some runners.
- **Soils** - The soils found in FPSP are diverse and vary greatly depending on elevation. In the upper elevations, the ancient lava flows consist of dark, fine-grained basalt with small amounts of scoria that erupted during Miocene time. These volcanic based soils can offer a sustainable, durable, all-season trail surface as compared to the sand and silt-based soils below at the lower elevations in FPSP.
- **Geology** - The unique geology of the area offers some of the most interesting interpretive opportunities available in FPSP. Views of the different basalt flows of the Capulin Volcanic Field on Fishers Peak and Fishers Peak Mesa are almost always visible around the next corner and create an intense curiosity for visitors to continue going higher.
- **Climate** - Winter recreation is also a viable option at FPSP with the average seasonal snowfall in nearby Trinidad at 45 inches. Over this past winter, snow depths varied significantly on Fishers Peak depending on elevation and aspect. On north-facing slopes during the winter 2020/21, snow depths often exceeded three feet regardless of elevation, while the south facing slopes often had minimal snow coverage during same period. Cross country skiing, fat biking and snowshoeing at FPSP could be reasonable expectations and may become increasingly popular in high snowfall winters, especially for any trails located mostly on the north facing slopes.

6

Challenges

To park development and enjoyment....

- Biophysical Components** – With 19,200 acres of open space and parkland it will be fairly easy to get lost if visitors stray off the designated trail system. It is foreseeable that lost visitor(s) may likely head west down any of the two dozen canyons that exist and end up somewhere along interstate 25. While these drainages (and frequently the existing roads along them) all lead to civilization and Interstate 25, these lost visitors could easily end up miles away from their trailhead requiring them to walk along the frontage road for miles to get back to their vehicle.
- Climate** - Past climate data statistics show average annual precipitation at 16 inches. Of this, about 10 inches, or 64 percent, usually falls in May through September. Until recently, the heaviest 1-day rainfall during the period of record was 4.20 inches at Trinidad on August 11, 1980. However, on the weekend of May 22 & 23, 2021, *“heavy downpours fell on Colorado’s newest state park over the weekend with nearly 5 inches of rain were reported. The torrential storm unleashed a flash flood that caused enough damage to shut Fishers Peak State Park down temporarily.”* Planning, designing and building sustainable trails is key in minimizing severe storm damage.
- Flora** - Non-native flora exists within FPSP adding species diversity but also creating long term challenges such as noxious weed control and management. Thick stands of Gambel Oak and New Mexico Locust also create challenges in trail design and construction due to the heavy density of shrubs/trees and sharp thorns on the locust trees.
- Soils** - The soils found in FPSP vary greatly depending on elevation. The Poison Canyon Formation consists of buff or yellow sandstone, siltstone, and shale deposited during Paleocene time while the Raton Formation consists of shale, siltstone, coal, and sandstone deposited during the Upper Cretaceous Period. These less-durable, highly erodible soils for recreational trails dominate the lower elevations while the more durable, lava plateaus of the Capulin Volcanic Field dominate the upper elevations.
- Social/Cultural** –The pent-up frustration from the surrounding community to access Fishers Peak over the past decades is evidenced by the current situation of park visitors going well beyond the 250-acre park use limit, exploring the existing roads.
- Safety/Risk Management** – Hazards are abundant on the property including; lightning, dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, rockfall, steep/loose slopes, flash flooding, hazard trees, rattlesnakes, thorny/poisonous plants, and other natural hazards. It is reasonable to expect that there will be incidents where trail users will need assistance getting back to their trailhead after getting lost or getting injured.
- Human-related hazards** – Numerous hazards resulting from past land use are present on the property. These include abandoned barbed wire, unstable deer/elk blinds, open mine pits/shafts/tunnels, past marijuana grow sites (discarded chemicals and fertilizers) as well as potential trail/road related hazards such as improper corridor clearing (pungee sticks, coat hangers). While these past land uses may offer significant, high-quality interpretation opportunities, they also create challenges to manage any inherent risks to park visitors and trail users.
- Existing Infrastructure** – The presence of 90+ miles of existing roads on the property creates challenges when planning and designing future trails. Understanding fully that the existing roads are basically a collection of sustainable sections and non-maintainable sections of natural surface roads that do not lend themselves to be grandfathered completely into the designated trail system. The existing roads have not been constructed to sustainable grades and are eroding even without public use and would offer a poor visitor trail experience.



D. Public Participation / Support Documents

1. Advisory Teams: Work Groups and Interest Groups

Work Groups: Work groups consisted of members of Partner Organizations who provided input on the public input received, technical guidance related to the interplay between recreation and conservation and local issues. Based on these categories, three work groups were established: 1) a Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Work Group, 2) a Science and Recreation Work Group, 3) and a Local Work Group (City of Trinidad/Las Animas County).

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Communication:** The Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information and Communications Work Group acted as the primary advisory team responsible for providing input on the engagement strategy throughout the master planning process. This group first established agency, organization and consultant roles and responsibilities related to engagement and then suggested strategies to engage a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- **Science and Recreation:** The Science and Outdoor Recreation Work Group included representatives from TNC, CPW, CNHP and other experts engaged by the partners to perform biological inventory, identify and initiate research needs, identify opportunities and needs for habitat improvements, forest management and fire mitigation, manage data and inform comprehensive management planning.
- **City of Trinidad/Las Animas County:** The City of Trinidad/Las Animas County Work Group consisted of locals representing different aspects of the community, including tourism, recreation, schools/youth and conservation. As local ambassadors to the project, members were responsible for representing community interests, bringing on-the-ground knowledge to project meetings, collecting local feedback and supporting public outreach.

Interest Group Discussions: In January 2021, the Planning Team released a call for interested governmental and non-governmental organizations and businesses to register for a series of interest group discussions. The purpose of these discussions was twofold: 1) enable participants to share ideas, expertise and perspectives on opportunities, challenges and evaluation criteria for the Park and 2) build relationships with key stakeholders.

15 Interest Groups were established with a total of 134 participants. Interest Group categories included:

- Conservation/Environmental/Stewardship
- Wildlife/Hunting
- Outdoor Recreation
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian
- Climbing
- Motorized Recreation
- Grazing and Agriculture
- Emergency Services
- Education and Interpretation
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Local Businesses
- Local and Regional: Colorado
- Local and Regional: New Mexico
- State and Federal Agencies

Virtual Interest Group Discussions (March and April 2021): The first round of Interest Group discussions was held virtually and focused on opportunities, challenges and potential evaluation criteria.

Combined Work and Interest Group Onsite Tours/Workshop (October and November 2021): Members of the project Work Groups and Interest Groups were invited to participate in day-long onsite tours to tour specific locations and discuss Master Plan draft concepts, including an analysis on park feature alternatives including: 1) Main Park Entrance, 2) Developed Camping, 3) Trailheads, 4) Visitors' Center Location, 4) Backcountry Camping 5) Recreational Use and 6) Habitat Preservation. A series of maps were presented on these topics. Participants provided feedback on the presentation and went on a tour of key site locations.

2. Tribal Coordination

As part of the planning process, CPW began consultation with indigenous Native American Tribes in the fall of 2020. The goal of consultation is to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between park staff, CPW and consulting tribes through consultation characterized by transparency, patience and active listening. All 48 tribes with a legacy of historic association with the landscape in the state boundaries of Colorado were invited to participate. CPW began the process with the intent to identify ways in which the Park planning process and development could create tangible benefits for consulting tribes and indigenous visitors and so that resources and places important to the Tribes could be managed and protected.

Consultation Progress

Initial consultation coincided with tribal office closures due to COVID-19, which likely muted initial responses. After the first consultation letters were sent out, CPW followed up with emails and phone calls to tribes with ethnographic presence in the southeast Colorado area. Since consultation initiation, CPW has been actively consulting with the Jicarilla Apache, Northern Arapaho, Northern Cheyenne, Pawnee Nation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe (consulting tribes). The Colorado Council of Indian Affairs has also participated in the consultation process by attending consultation meetings. CPW continues to reach out to other tribes and welcomes any new interest in the consultation process.

CPW is consulting on park planning activities, conceptual plans and design, cultural resource studies, cultural resources and educational opportunities. Tribal consultation has primarily occurred via email or virtual meetings and COVID-19 unfortunately limited the number of opportunities to visit the Park in person with consulting tribes. In the fall of 2021, Mr. Brian Soundingsides, a Traditional Cultural Specialist of the Northern Arapaho Tribe accompanied ERO archaeologists on a trail survey. Mr. Soundingsides helped ERO redefine trail alignments to avoid areas of traditional importance. In late fall of 2021, Ms. Cassandra Atencio, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, accompanied ERO archaeologist, Jonathan Hedlund and park manager, Crystal Dreiling on a tour of the Park to review the landscape and known archaeological sites (see photo on the following page). Future park visits are anticipated through the planning and development stages of the Park.



Park Manager Crystal Dreiling and Cassandra Atencio in the McBride Creek Valley.

CPW received and continues to receive significant amounts of feedback from consulting tribes through the consultation process. The overarching theme that encompasses most of the conversations is that the landscape itself is an important cultural landscape and that it should be treated as such. Early in the planning process, consulting tribes stated that the Park development should be developed with the following ideas in mind:

- Tribes should be involved early in the planning phases of all proposed park developments.
- The project development should be as minimal as possible and not commercialized.
- Impacts to vegetation, wildlife, springs and wildlife corridors should be minimized.
- The Park should be a place of education for tribal members and non-tribal members alike, with a focus on connecting people to a landscape and educating non-tribal visitors on the histories of tribes at the Park.
- Cultural resources including archaeological sites, certain plants and aspects of the landscape should be preserved in place as part of the landscape.
- Involve tribes as participants in cultural resource studies.

The need for a memorandum of agreement (MOU) between CPW and the consulting tribes was also identified early in the consultation process. MOUs are agreement documents that outline how multiple groups work together to achieve goals through mutual consensus. The MOU between CPW and consulting tribes is still in development but it is expected to cover topics such as cultural resource review, traditional use of the landscape, education and data sharing. CPW will continue to consult on the MOU and a draft version will be distributed to all 48 tribes with a legacy of association to Colorado to ensure that any tribe that wishes to participate has an opportunity to do so.

Consultation Beyond the Master Plan

CPW will continue to consult with tribes throughout park development and afterwards. Near term consultation includes the finalization of an MOU, reviewing anticipated park facility development such as trailheads, the visitors' center, trails and campgrounds; and consultation on the results of cultural resource studies.

3. Public Coordination

Public Survey: Throughout June and July 2021, the Planning Team conducted a public survey to understand public interests and potential uses for Fishers Peak. The survey received a total of 518 responses. View the full survey report in Appendix, 8.

Community Information Sessions (Public Meetings): CPW hosted four community information sessions throughout the master planning process.

- **Community Information Session #1:** The first Community Information Session was held on December 14, 2020 with a follow up Q&A session held on December 17, 2020. The Community Information Session provided updates on the Master Plan including explanations of the master plan process, schedule, unique findings to-date and upcoming stakeholder engagement opportunities.
- **Community Information Session #2:** The second Community Information Session was held on June 24, 2021. The Community Information Session provided updates on the status of the environmental studies, design of the trail to the peak and additional stakeholder outreach. The Planning Team also led a Q&A session. A summary report addressing the public's questions was made available following the meeting (see Appendix A).

- **Community Information Session #3:** The third Community Information Session was held on November 18th, 2021, at the Trinidad Community Center. Over 100 community members and other interested individuals attended the meeting. The Planning Team prepared and shared multiple maps depicting Master Plan concepts and information collected from the previous Community Information Sessions, the Community Survey, environmental engineers/biologists, cultural resource specialists, recreation specialists and work and interest group meetings.
- **Community Information Session #4:** The fourth and final Community Information Session was held on April 11, 2022 at Trinidad State College. Schematic designs were shared depicting proposed features for the Park, including the visitors' center, campgrounds and trail hubs.

Online Comment Form: In addition to the in-person and virtual engagement opportunities, the project website (www.fisherspeakstatepark.com) included a comment form. The team tracked, organized and responded to every public comment, which were then integrated with other input received and used to inform project decision-making. A total of 278 comments were received.

4. DEI Outreach and Recommendations

Equity and Inclusivity Panel: In an effort spearheaded by the Trust for Public Land, an Equity and Inclusivity Expert Panel was convened to provide feedback and oversight on the Engagement and Communications Plan (see Appendix A,). The panel was composed of local and statewide DEI professionals, community organizers and local leaders who represented historically marginalized groups and had insight into engaging hard-to-reach populations. Through a survey and workshop, the Panel provided recommendations to make the process more inclusive.

Equity and Inclusivity Panel Organizations

- Outdoor Buddies
- Trinidad State Junior College
- National Wildlife Federation
- Sierra Club
- Next 100 Colorado
- Rising Routes
- SIFT Visuals LLC
- HECHO (Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors)
- Latino Outdoors
- San Luis Valley Get Outdoors
- Trinidad Youth Club
- CPW

Gaps Analysis: At the midpoint of the master planning process, the Planning Team conducted a gaps analysis designed to understand which groups had been engaged up to that point and which voices were missing. The gaps analysis acted as a tool to ensure the Planning Team was following through on its commitment to DEI. As a result of the gaps analysis, additional representatives of organizations focused on DEI issues and education were added to Interest Groups and participated in the onsite tours.



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FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK MASTER PLAN

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Engagement and Communications Plan Introduction

The Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan is a collaborative effort between Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Trust for Public Land (TPL), Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the City of Trinidad, the project consultant team, and a growing number of additional partners and organizations.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this Engagement and Communications Plan is to articulate the strategy for the Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information, and Communications Work Group as it carries out its tasks to support the Master Planning process. This document serves as the foundation for developing the timeline for deliverables, benchmarks for success, and specified allocation of roles as it relates to stakeholder engagement. It also outlines the steps necessary to achieve the project objectives developed at the Project Visioning Workshop on April 22, 2020.

Charge of the Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information, and Communications Work Group

The Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information, and Communications Work Group, consisting of experts from each Project Leadership Team organization as well as the consultant team, will develop a game plan and tactics to engage the many constituents and constituent groups throughout the Master Planning process. This group will first establish agency, organization, and consultant roles and responsibilities regarding engagement, and then develop strategies such as engaging statewide as well as local interests; public information strategy; assuring tribal interests are included; determining effective ways to engage youth; employing best practices to reach non-English speaking and special needs populations; etc.

Furthermore, this group will develop and carry out a stakeholder engagement and public communications strategy that aligns with and advances the vision of the Fishers Peak State Park. Through formative discussions with members of the Work Group, including the initial project Visioning Workshop, several critical components of this Work Group have emerged. These components include:

- Centering inclusivity throughout engagement initiatives;
- Harnessing a breadth of voices, including underrepresented populations and atypical outdoor enthusiasts, to develop the Master Plan;
- Integrating 'stories of place' from the perspective of the local culture and community; and
- Applying the unique strengths of each partner toward the objectives of this plan.

Through collaboration with the local community, a unified messaging strategy between partners, a clear timeline, and benchmarks for success, the Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information, and Communications Work Group will work to compile input to inform Fishers Peak State Park development and complete the Master Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

Subcommittees

The Stakeholder Engagement, Public Information, and Communications Work Group is responsible for a wide range of tasks and deliverables that will inform the Fishers Peak master planning process. For the purpose of clearly identifying and distributing roles and responsibilities within the Work Group, the Group will divide into two subcommittees: a Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee and a Public Communications Subcommittee. Each subcommittee will appoint a Point Person and an Alternate to assist with agenda setting, report outs, and act as the conduit between the subcommittee and the full Work Group.

Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee

This subcommittee will be responsible for identifying and engaging key stakeholders throughout the duration of the project. Members of this subcommittee will include representatives with engagement expertise from each partner organization as well as members of the consultant team. The overarching focus of this subcommittee will be to use expertise to develop engaging stakeholder engagement opportunities and to gather, analyze, and incorporate input from stakeholders for the Master Plan.

Public Communications Subcommittee

This subcommittee will be responsible for developing and circulating communications related to the Fishers Peak State Park and the master planning process. Members of this subcommittee will include representatives with public communication expertise from partner organizations as well as members of the consultant team. The overarching focus of this subcommittee will be to develop and coordinate key messages, strategies, and tactics to inform the public and identified audiences about the Project and the State Park.

Partner Roles

In an effort to apply the specific expertise of each partner organization to stakeholder engagement and communication deliverables, while not duplicating efforts, the following partner roles have been developed. As collaboration is the cornerstone of the Stakeholder Engagement Work Group and master planning processes as a whole, these roles are not rigidly all-encompassing; rather, they are meant to depict a general outline for the specific foci of each organization with the understanding that roles and responsibilities will have some degree of overlap and fluidity as the project progresses.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)

- Lead engagement efforts with strategic partners, including but not limited to: Tribal Governments, School districts, Local elderly community/organizations, Colorado Outdoor Partnership, Sportspeople Roundtable, Neighboring property owners/lease holders, State, federal, and local gov entities (law enforcement, planning, transportation, etc.)

- Collaborate with partners and support consultation of the following stakeholders: EDI/Community groups, Sportspeople and other outdoor recreation interests, Conservation organizations, Business interests/Chamber, Community Colleges
- Lead the public information campaign for the general public through the following communication activities: Press releases, CPW eNews, Social media (Instagram, Twitter, FB), Radio
- Lead a collaborative effort with partners to ensure message consistency across all communication channels
- Ensure an inclusive, equitable, and transparent process through translation services and other inclusive activities
- CPW seeks support from partners in telling and promoting compelling stories about Fishers Peak to support the vision focus areas and objectives.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL)

- Collaborate with partners on initiatives to center inclusivity and bring forward underrepresented people, including engagement activities for: non-English speaking groups, youth, elderly, lower-income populations and people of color
- Identify and engage communities that do not usually show-up or are asked to engage in these public land projects
- Assist in updating traditional community engagement activities to meet the unusual circumstances of the current public health situation
- Assist with collaborative effort to develop a list of individuals and organizations with whom to engage
- Collaborate in strategy development for special events, local/regional champions, and non-traditional outreach ideas.
- Assist stakeholder engagement group in event logistics (in person and virtual) and planning. Ex. Scheduling, identifying & communicating with vendors & participants, pre-event planning & managing day-of.
- Assist in drafting & disseminating information via communication tools, utilizing broader TPL (marketing) team as needed

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

- Collaborate with partners on stakeholder engagement, data collection, and message development
- Leverage previous engagement and messaging to inform upcoming events and initiatives
- Act as a liaison between the Science Work Group and the Stakeholder Engagement Work Group to inform messaging and communications around science inventories, data collection, and other information

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

- Act as a connector between GOCO's network and the Work Group, particularly emphasizing the amplification of diverse voices in the engagement process
- Leverage organizations around the state to ensure a breadth of groups are involved
- Collaborate with partners to review engagement strategies, communications, and other materials related to the Work Group
- Support partners who are carrying out engagement efforts 'on the ground' through relationship building and other means as needed

City of Trinidad

- Act as the liaison to the local community by identifying and connecting with critical local groups, representatives, and institutions
- Assist with communication strategy and engagement to suit the local context
- Aid in the development of historical resources

Las Animas County

- Act as the liaison to the local community by identifying and connecting with critical local groups, representatives, and institutions
- Assist with communication strategy and engagement to suit the local context
- Aid in the development of historical resources

Consultant Team

- Facilitate Work Group meetings to implement stakeholder engagement and communications plan, identify and engage potential stakeholders, develop public information protocols and plan

- Supplement stakeholder engagement facilitation as needed through discussions with the Work Group (this could include strategizing, implementing, and/or documenting stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community events, digital engagement, and other engagement activities)
- Lead the development of the Engagement and Communications Plan and update as new information is available and the Master Planning process progresses
- Catalog and respond to initial online questions/inquiries on the Project. This input will be integrated into the Stakeholder Input Final Report.
- Lead development of Stakeholder Input Final Report as a piece of the Master Plan.

Additional Work Groups

Two additional Work Groups (Science and Outdoor Recreation Work Group / Trinidad Work Group) will provide technical assistance and information to help the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications group identify appropriate messages and opportunities for public engagement.

Partner Collaboration and Information Synthesis

Partners will rely on a number of best-practices and information-sharing tools to ensure that they are collaborative and synergistic while carrying out the charge of the Work Group. These best practices and tools may include:

- *A shared timeline and calendar of events*, developed and reviewed by all members of the Work Group and consultant team;
- *A stakeholder engagement tracking sheet* that documents 'who,' 'why,' and 'when' various stakeholders were engaged;
- *A report template for all stakeholder events*, developed and reviewed by all partners, to ensure correct and comparable information is being gathered during each interaction with stakeholders;
- *Documenting, analyzing, and sharing outcomes* of engagement activities with partners in meetings and other channels to determine themes that will inform the master plan.
- *Identifying Issues and Final Recommendations* for action and /or approval by the Project Leadership Team

Decision-Making and Messaging Protocols

The Engagement and Communications subcommittees will be responsible for developing initial recommendations for specific implementation steps, which will be brought back to the Work Group for

refinement and eventually brought before the Project Leadership Team for decision-making. Similarly, key messages will be developed by the Work Group and approved by the Leadership Team.

Vision Focus Areas, Objectives, and Strategies

Vision Focus Areas, Objectives, and Strategies for this engagement plan stem from those developed at the project Visioning Workshop and from the Work Group kickoff meeting. During the Visioning Workshop, project partners developed draft Focus Areas and Objectives that are designed to guide the project and act as a foundation for what will eventually become the Master Plan. Subsequently, during the Work Group kickoff meeting, members completed a prioritization exercise to determine which Objectives were most aligned with the charge of the Work Group. The following table lists the objectives that were prioritized in that activity.

At this stage, the implementation steps and strategies listed below are suggestions based on internal conversations with Work Group members and the Visioning Workshop. They will be updated based on recommendations from the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications subcommittees. *Note: This is not an exhaustive list of Focus Areas, Objectives, or Strategies, merely a representation of Focus Areas and Objectives highlighted by the Work Group members and Strategies discussed to-date.*

Focus Area	Objective	Potential Implementation Steps and Strategies
The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource	Local heritage, as well as history and ongoing significance of the property, informs recreation and interpretation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust local engagement campaign that includes topics focused on history, recreation, and local context Interview and conduct listening sessions with multi-generational families in the area, tribal representatives, long-term area institutions, community colleges and schools Tell important stories of the property's history, development, and impact on the local community and State of Colorado
	Cultural and historical resources are honored, preserved, and protected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop inventory of cultural site data determine necessary stakeholders Determine and schedule engagement activities Host a site visit with interested and impacted Tribal Governments

	Best Management Practices seek to avoid impacts to and degradation/reduction of significant non-renewable resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other Work Groups (Science and Recreation) and other necessary parties to develop best-practices Determine engagement and communication needs with other Work Groups
Outreach And Educational Opportunities Exist For All Coloradans And Visitors	Inclusive, nature-based recreational and educational activities are available for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define underrepresented populations for the purpose of this Master Plan Develop stakeholder list that incorporates underrepresented populations Implement engagement techniques that "meet people where they are" including attending community events and neighborhood meetings (virtually, if necessary) Engage target stakeholders and community members Develop and execute 'Champions' program
	Programming and interpretive content enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the Park's cultural, historical, and natural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multilingual content for park-based education programs Develop and execute 'Champions' program
	Education and interpretive messaging foster visitor behavior that protects the Park's resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop case studies on importance of protection Develop key messages focusing on preservation Consider establishing a robust and interactive Visitors Center Pursue a full-time education/outreach specialist for the park
	Local community residents continue to connect with and learn about the property and its resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer a lecture series at Trinidad State Junior College to engage community members in technical information Establish a "backyard park pass" program for local residents to visit and enjoy the property
Partnership along with Park Development and Operations Advance	Partner expertise, partnership diversity, and project story inspire similar projects around the nation to bring together unique partnerships for the benefit of public lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop documentation of project partnership and strategy Create video and interview key stakeholders to tell the story of the partnership and the property



<p>Objectives from all Vision Focus Areas</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage outside stakeholders to promote the 'story' of the partnership (e.g., community colleges, traditional media)
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Categories of Groups to Engage

Throughout the Visioning Workshop and preliminary conversations with Work Group members, the following categories of stakeholders to engage have emerged.

Categories:

- Conservation
- Recreation
- Education
- Economic and Development Organizations
- Atypical outdoor enthusiasts
- Underserved/underrepresented communities
- Planning organizations
- Local, state, and federal government entities
- Tribal entities
- Safety and Law Enforcement
- Spanish speaking communities
- Local and regional residents
- Regional partners

Engagement and Communications 'Toolbox'

The Engagement and Communications toolbox is the list of methods the Work Group can utilize in the process of meeting plan objectives.

Engagement Tools

- *Public Meetings:* Two virtual public meetings are proposed. These meetings are an opportunity for the Project Team to update the public on the status of the Master Planning process, present concepts for park features and facilities, and solicit general input on a range of topics. Like the focus groups, public meetings will occur during the first phase, to gather general input, and again during the second phase, to gather more specific feedback related to the concepts under development
- *Virtual Webinars:* Webinars could either be components of a public meeting or act as stand-alone activities for engagement. Like virtual public meetings, webinars are an opportunity to present information and answer questions about the process. Zoom or Facebook Live are both platforms that are equipped to host successful Q&A-style webinars. Webinars generally require less time and resources than public meetings, so these could act as touch points throughout the duration of the Master Planning process to 'bring the public along'

- *Interviews:* One-on-one or group interviews with key stakeholders. These can focus on a range of topics, including local history and culture, recreation opportunities, conservation, etc. and may be incorporated into a documentary detailing the stories of Fishers Peak
- *Focus Groups/Listening Sessions:* The Fishers Peak project team is holding a variety of focus groups targeted to engage interest groups, organizations, NGOs, and businesses. This provides an opportunity for organized interests to discuss their goals, expertise, and opportunities and challenges for the Park with the project team.
- *Surveys/polls:* Public surveys will help the Project Team to understand public opinion on a broader scale. Two surveys are proposed: the first, administered early in the process, will be focused on more general public interests and desires for the park; the second, administered later, will be more specific and place more focus on tradeoffs within the established parameters
- *Bilingual Engagement:* Ensuring that messages are available in Spanish (and potentially other languages as needed) to reach the broadest possible audience, including translating all public-facing materials and offering interpretation services during meetings
- *Website/Email responses:* Using the feedback function on the project website, email feedback will be cataloged, analyzed, and incorporated into the Master Plan
- *Pop-ups and Community Events:* Dependent upon the public health situation, these activities will engage individuals where they already live, work, and play. Events might include farmers' markets, block parties, or park days
- *Inclusivity and Equity Expert Panel:* This program, led by TPL, involves identifying and partnering with local advocates and experts who will provide insight into the Engagement and Communications plan to ensure an inclusive and equitable approach
- *Site Visits:* Project site visits, held with specific groups or individuals, will allow stakeholders to convey their aspirations for the park as well as share specific expertise with the planning team

Communication Tools

- *Website(s):* Partner websites, Fisherspeakstatepark.com, and other online locations can be used to inform the public about the project and solicit feedback through comments and forms.
- *Regular e-blasts:* The project team will keep all stakeholder apprised of updates via email blasts detailing important project milestone and upcoming engagement opportunities
- *Press Releases:* Press releases can inform the public about project milestones and updates.
- *PSAs:* Public service announcements can be utilized to inform the public around project status updates and relevant information



- **Social Media:** CPW and other partner social media pages can be used to inform and solicit project-related feedback
- **Earned Media:** Local and state-wide publications can be engaged to inform on project updates
- **Radio:** Local and state-wide radio stations can be used to inform the public regarding project updates

Engagement and Public Health

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ordinances restricting certain engagement activities may still be in effect during the proposed timeline. While fulfilling the objectives of this plan is a top priority for the Work Group, ensuring public health and safety for stakeholders will always be paramount. In an effort to both meet project objectives and timeline as well as ensure safety, this section considers strategies for altering engagement activities for virtual formats as well as shifting to more creative engagement strategies necessary in the current context.

Many of the strategies and engagement activities listed above can be altered with relatively little effort to fit virtual formats. These include:

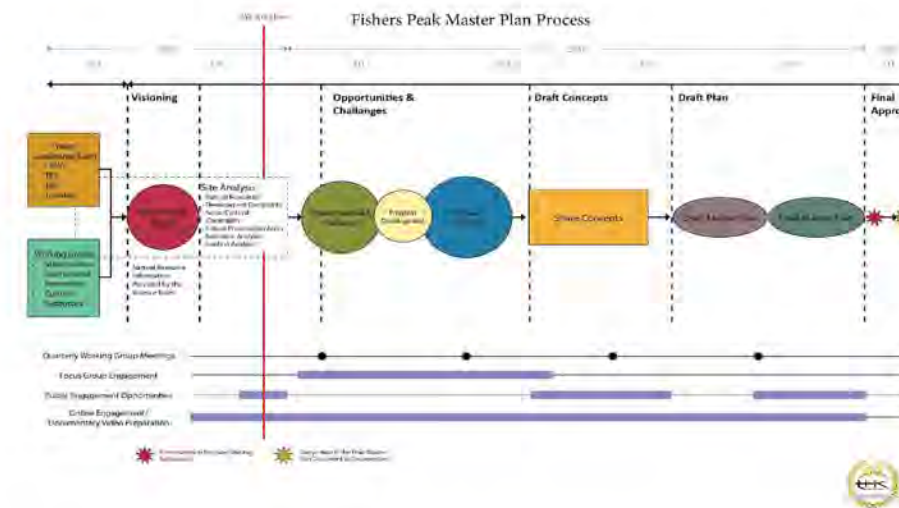
- *Virtual interviews*
- *Virtual focus groups*
- *Online surveys/polls*
- *Website/email responses*
- *Online visioning tools such as a community ideas wall or interactive mapping tool*
- *Online “Public Meeting” that offers information and ways to connect on the website*
- *Virtual town halls or Q&A sessions*
- *Recorded webinars*

Recognizing that relationship building with the community is important, engagement activities that may require more effort to accomplish virtually include:

- *Community champions program and local relationship building*

Phases and Timeline

The phases of this Engagement and Communications plan coincide with the Master Plan Project Schedule. The phases for the Engagement and Communications Plan include 1) Visioning, Goals, and Data Gathering, 2) Concept Development and Refinement, 3) Drafting, and 4) Finalization of Master Plan. The specifics of each phase are detailed below.



The “Spectrum of Public Participation” helps clarify the role of the community in planning and decision-making, and how much influence the community has over planning or decision-making processes. The Spectrum used here identifies five levels of public participation (or community engagement):

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	DECIDE
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For the purposes of this Engagement and Communications Plan, the Spectrum includes project partners as the entities involved in the ‘Collaborate’ level. CPW will be the final decision-maker.

- **Inform:** Provide these groups with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, opportunities, and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain feedback and analysis from these groups. Keep them informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how their input influences the decision.
- **Involve:** Work directly with these groups to ensure their concerns and goals are consistently understood and considered. Reflect feedback in decision-making.

- Collaborate:** Partner with these groups in each aspect of the project, including identifying preferred solutions. Work together to formulate solutions and incorporate their advice and recommendations into decisions to the maximum extent possible. Stakeholders include TPL, TNC, GOCO, and the City of Trinidad.
- Decide:** As the property owner and the ultimate steward of the public trust, CPW holds final decision-making authority but is committed to working with partners along the spectrum and strives towards consensus recommendation.

Phase 1: Visioning, Goals, and Initial Outreach (June 2020 - February 2021)

The initial phase of the Master Plan will focus on developing key objectives, strategies, timeline(s), and success criteria for the project. This phase is the launching point for stakeholder engagement and public communication initiatives for the project going forward. During this phase, an initial round of public information will be completed to inform stakeholders on project status and anticipated timelines. A primary goal of Phase 1 will be to engage key stakeholders who can assist in completing the necessary data collection and analyses. Phase 1 will also involve any engagement and communications activities necessary to support an early access opening of the Park.

Communication and stakeholder engagement will begin simultaneously during Phase 1.

Phase 1 Outreach:

Level of Engagement	Who	How
Inform	-General Public -Local community members	-Website information -Social media -Press releases -eNews -Fact Sheets -Traditional media -Bilingual messaging
Consult	-Key stakeholders (for data gap analysis) -Historical and cultural experts -Tribal entities -Interest groups	-Inclusivity Expert Panel -Focus Groups -Surveys
Involve	-Subject matter experts to help fill data gaps (as determined by data gap analysis)	-Interviews -Surveys -Direct engagement: meetings, calls, emails, etc.

Engagement/Communication Activity	Audience	Timeline	Level of Engagement	Partner Lead	Status
Develop and refine Engagement and Communications Plan to reflect the current context and the overall strategy of the Work Group	-Internal	June-July 2020	Collaborate	Consultant	Complete - updates ongoing
Develop and refine a schedule that coincides with the Engagement and Communications Plan	-Internal	June-July 2020	Collaborate	Consultant	Complete - updates ongoing
Develop survey interview and report template for tracking stakeholder engagement	-Internal	July 2020	Collaborate	Stakeholder Engagement Subcommittee	Complete
Create general messaging around project status, Vision and Objectives, and data analysis	-General Public	July-September 2020	Inform	Consultant/Public Comms Subcommittee	Kick-off complete & ongoing (Imaging Fishers Peak article)
Implement a social media campaign to inform the public about the status of the park	-General Public	Ongoing	Consult	CPW	Ongoing
Work with known community members and outside groups to identify the right stakeholders to engage	-Inclusivity Expert Panel -Residents of Trinidad -Local community organizations	Fall 2020 - Winter 2021	Involve	Consultant/TPL	Complete
Work with local and state publications to inform the general public about the status of the project through traditional media	-Trinidad Chronicle -Walsenburg World Journal -La Junta Ag Journal -Colorado Sun	Ongoing	Inform	CPW	Ongoing



Launch public website to inform the public about the project as a whole	-General Public -Local Communities	Summer 2020	Inform	Consultant	Complete - updates ongoing
Catalog and begin to apply responses from website and/or email toward the engagement strategy	-General Public	Ongoing	Consult	Consultant	Ongoing
Utilize website platform and virtual engagement presentation/Q&A session to inform community and stakeholders about project status, Vision and Objectives, and identify data gaps	-Local community -Regional stakeholders	Summer 2020	Inform/Consult	Consultant	Complete - December 2020 Information Sessions
Engage with technical stakeholders to help inform the data and information collection process on the property	-Conservation groups -Recreation groups - Work Group members	Summer 2020	Consult	Consultant	Complete
Engage local and statewide radio stations to inform the general public about the park	-Public Radio for Southern Colorado -CPR	Summer 2020	Inform	CPW	Complete
Begin to target local champions to determine where to best engage local communities	-Local community members -Local groups -Local leaders	Summer 2020	Consult	TPL	Complete

Phase 2: Development and Refinement (November 2020 - June 2021)

Phase 2 will be developed iteratively by applying information gathered and lessons learned during Phase 1. In particular, the data gap analysis taking place during Phase 1 will set the boundaries of the engagement efforts and conversations in Phase 2. Phase 2 will include a wider round of engagement initiatives, taking place virtually and/or in-person (depending on the public health situation and other related factors).

Phase 2 Activities:

- Interviews, focus groups, and surveys to develop a robust understanding of sentiments from specific groups and the general public
- Community visioning sessions with specific groups and/or demographics to understand how best to make the park inclusive and accessible for all
- Engage local champions to develop best practices for reaching hard-to-reach groups

- Work to 'meet people where they are' at local events (farmers markets, festivals, etc.), depending on public health recommendations

(Note: This list will be updated as more knowledge is gained throughout Phase 1)

Phase 3: Drafting of Master Plan (June 2021 - January 2022)

As the final phase, Phase 3 will focus on incorporating the data collected over the first two phases into the Master Plan. The third phase will culminate with the drafting of the Fishers Peak Master Plan.

Phase 3 Activities:

- Integration of community engagement into final Master Plan
- Community engagement focusing on specifics of the master plan (recreation, conservation, history/culture)
- Document and communicate the partnership process to act as a model for other similar multi-party partnerships

Phase 4: Finalization of Master Plan (January 2022 - May 2022)

The fourth phase will culminate with the finalization of the Fishers Peak Master Plan.

Phase 4 Activities:

- Integration of community engagement into final Master Plan
- Final community meeting to present key tenants of Master Plan

Phase 2 - 4 Outreach:

Level of Engagement	Who	How
Inform	-General Public -Local community members	-Website information -campaign -Social media -Press releases -eNews -Fact Sheets -Traditional media -Bilingual messaging
Consult	-EDI/Community groups -Youth -People with disabilities	-Interviews -Focus Groups -Surveys

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conservation orgs -Business community/Chambers -Academic institutions -Outdoor recreation and Sportsperson interest groups -Next 100 Coalition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bilingual engagement -Town halls (virtual and traditional) -Public meetings -Listening sessions -Virtual visioning sessions
Involvé	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tribal governments -School districts -TS Junior College -Cultural/historical experts -Residents of Trinidad -Non-traditional outdoor enthusiast groups -Latinos Outdoors -Outdoor Afro -Queer Nature -Brown Girls Climb -Brothers of Climbing -Asian/South Asian community -Refugee Community -Rural Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Direct outreach: calls, meetings, work groups -Polling/questionnaires -Interviews -Surveys -Oral histories -School/youth targeted events or contests

Appendix

Potential Strategies

The following strategies, developed in the project Visioning Workshop, pertain to stakeholder engagement and communication. As this document is developed in collaboration with the partners, these will be refined and updated to reflect the specific objectives and the engagement phases.

- Engage teachers and students in education programs at all levels and across all disciplines, including the Junior College, to ensure the property and its history are embedded into city and county curriculum.
- Identify populations to include in planning and implementation process with which to interact (retired/senior, latinx, individuals with disabilities, mining community, etc.).
- Identify interests and needs of these populations and potential activities to satisfy needs through bi-lingual community engagement and educational materials. Ensure we are hearing from stakeholders who we have yet to hear from.
- Pilot Track-Chair Programs.
- Measure types of offerings that are designed to be accessible and survey barriers, opportunities and success rate of activity offerings to underserved populations.
- Engage with Friends Groups, Inspire Coalition, Generation Wild, Backpack Program, Backyard Park Pass Program.
- Consider Backyard Park Pass Program and a free park pass check-out option.
- Engage and incorporate underrepresented populations into the planning and design of park opportunities.
- Develop and maintain key partnerships with organizations and non-profits to implement accessible programming.
- Develop and maintain robust Visitor Center. Consider a Visitor Center model as an educational hub in coordination with self-guided, interactive tours.
- Messaging should explain why the property is unique and encourage visitors to consider how the park is important to the State and to them, personally.
- Develop a community outreach program to ensure ongoing engagement with the park after opening.
- Implement a “backpack” program and self-guided interactive park tours.
- Ensure educational materials and signage is bi-lingual.



- Hire a full-time interpretive lead for the park.
- Interact with the “Trails with Wildlife” program at Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC).
- Identify and engage champion educators.
- Identify and build out field trip necessities (busses, picnic areas, etc.) for school trips.
- Work with partners and their resources on implementation (e.g., Generation Wild)
- Host Lecture series at TSJC.
- Engage with Environmental Learning for Kids group.
- Identify important metrics to capture (number of volunteers, visiting families, number of people working at the park, etc.).
- Create educational programs that include a wide range of curriculum, including history, writing, poetry, science, etc. and more.

Potential Stakeholders (Initial draft - additional group recommendations welcome)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation organizations - Purgatoire Watershed Partnership, • Next 100 Coalition • Colorado Outdoor Partnership (overlaps with several other groups, includes recreation, conservation and agriculture) • Tribes - federally recognized and those with historical connection receiving greater level of involvement • Hunting Recreation Groups: Nat Wild Turkey Federation, RMEF, MDF, BHA, CBA, etc. • Recreational user groups • Outdoor recreation industry and OIA • DEI Groups - use CPW contact list | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Districts/Schools/teachers/Trinidad State Junior College • Local businesses/ Chamber • Tourism organizations • Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee • South Central Council of Governments • CDOT / including Colorado Scenic Byways-Scenic Highway of Legends Byway • USFWS • Trinidad history museum, state historical society baca/bloom house • New Mexico state parks • City of Raton • State Forest Service |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishers Peak Fire Protection District • Las Animas County Ambulance Service • Las Animas County Commissioners • Las Animas County Planning Commission • Las Animas County Road and Bridge Department • Las Animas County Sheriff's Department • Las Animas-Huerfano Counties Health Department • Trinidad Elders • Trinidad Youth Club • Faith Community • Indigenous Community – (Ute community particularly) • The Next 100 • Mount Carmel Wellness & Community Center • Trinidad State Junior College • Local Trinidad / Alamosa School District (K-12) • State Health Department – Raton, NM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park Service Long Distance Trails Group • Natural Resource Conservation Service • San Isabel Electric • Other entities holding easements • State Patrol • Community colleges/academic institutions • Center for Disabilities • Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (Deputy Director, Richard Morales) • Latinos Outdoors • Outdoor Afro • LGBTQIA outdoor group • Disability Community • Asian/South Asian community • Refugee/new immigrant community • Adjacent communities with public lands/capacity issues (San Luis Valley?) • CCIA |
|---|---|



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK MASTER PLAN: ENGAGEMENT GAPS ANALYSIS

AUGUST 2021

Introduction

The Fishers Peak State Park Master Planning Project has maintained a focus on stakeholder and public engagement since its launch in April 2020. With a dual focus on local (Trinidad, Las Animas County) and statewide engagement, the Project Team has developed multiple avenues for receiving input from individuals and organizations interested in the planning process. As of August 2021, there have been notable successes in both the breadth and depth of engagement for the project. However, there are also important gaps that need to be addressed. This memo intends to identify those gaps and provide recommendations for addressing them.

Engagement to Date

The following methods have been used to engage and receive input from stakeholders.

- *Work Groups* - Work groups consist of members of partner organizations who provide input on the public input received and how to use it along with technical guidance. There are three Work Groups: Science and Recreation; Stakeholder Engagement and Communication; and Trinidad/Las Animas County.
- *Equity and Inclusivity Panel* - In an effort spearheaded by the Trust for Public Land, an Equity and Inclusivity Expert Panel was convened to provide feedback and oversight on the Engagement Plan for the Fishers Peak Master Plan.
- *Interest Group Discussions* - In an effort to engage stakeholder organizations, a series of 15 Interest Groups Discussions were conducted in March and April 2021. A full report of the interest group conversations can be found [here](#).
- *Tribal Consultation* - Distinct from the Project’s public engagement efforts have been the Tribal Consultation conducted by CPW.
- *Public Survey* - In June and July 2021, the Project Team conducted a public survey to understand public interests and potential uses for Fishers Peak. The survey received a **total of 518 responses**.
- *Public Meetings* - In December 2020 and June 2021 two virtual public meetings were held.
- *Online Comment Form* - Since the launch of the Project Website, fisherspeakstatepark.com, the comment form on the site has received **226 comments**.
- *Ad hoc stakeholder meetings* - Meetings have taken place between stakeholders and Project Team members based on stakeholder interest and specific project-related issues. Stakeholders

involved in these meetings have included local community leaders, property owners, individuals with a family history on or near the Park, and others.

Demographic Gaps

Race/ethnicity - Based on the survey results, which are the only documented demographic information obtained by the Project Team thus far, engagement has occurred largely with individuals identifying as White/Caucasian (84%), followed by individuals who preferred not to share their race/ethnicity (9%), Hispanic/Latino (5%), Native American/Native Alaskan (2%), and African American (1%). (See Appendix C for the associated demographic chart and table.)

Given this information, the project team recognizes a need to augment outreach to BIPOC communities (African American, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and others). While some community organizations focused on racial equity in outdoor recreation have engaged with the Project Team either by participating in the Equity Panel, participating in interest group discussions, or by forwarding project communications to their networks, the Project Team will work to ensure that the groups already engaged have all available resources to connect their communities to the Project, and groups yet to engage are identified and engaged if they desire.

There are several specific strategies to improve engagement with BIPOC communities:

Potential Strategy	Specific Groups or Communities
Identification of important community leaders and organizations to engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Trinidad and Las Animas County to identify gaps • Trinidad State
Conduct stakeholder interviews with organization leaders and community members to discuss community needs for engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Nonprofits
In-person visit or presentation about the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Schools • Community organizations (clubs, HOAs, etc) • Businesses / Chamber of Commerce
Provide regular newsletter blurbs for publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Schools • Community organizations
Re-engage Equity and Inclusivity Panel members, and those identified but did not participate (involvement could include providing input via	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix B



stakeholder meetings or email, being involved in the Interest Group Discussions, or sharing updates and engagement opportunities with their networks)	
Add additional interest groups and identify if there is a need for a Spanish-speaking interest group	
Develop tailored survey for BIPOC communities related to the project	
Conduct targeted push of Fishers Peak State Park Facebook page through known channels (social media, radio, newspaper ad, etc)	

Age - The public survey participants were skewed toward older age groups, led by the 51-64 age group (37%), which was followed by the 31-50 age group (28%) and the Over 64 age group (24%). The 18-30 age group lagged behind at only 9%. This indicates a need for more engagement with younger audiences. Although there is an assumption that organizations represented in engagement efforts to date serve both younger and older demographics, there has been limited intentional engagement with younger age groups. (See Appendix D for age group survey results.)

Several strategies for improving engagement with younger demographics include:

Potential Strategy	Specific Groups or Communities
Work more directly with TSJC—which is an already engaged stakeholder organization and has representation on multiple Work Groups—to engage students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trinidad State
Identify and initiate tailored outreach to youth or college-age outdoor recreation organizations and potentially add younger representatives of these groups to the appropriate interest groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado Outdoor Recreation Office Youth sports clubs CPW youth hunters program Trinidad State, CU, CSU, DU
Add a “Young Adults” Interest Group composed of youth working in or associated with outdoor recreation or conservation-related organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyscouts/Girlscouts School clubs, sports programs Boys and Girls clubs

Conduct targeted interviews with youth working in or associated with outdoor recreation or conservation-related organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Community organizations Interns - TPL, TNC, GOCO, CPW
Develop a tailored survey for youth related to the Project.	
Conduct presentations in K-12 classrooms about the Park, planning process, and/or natural resources and gather feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local school districts CPW education program (Tracy Predmore)
Host youth day/evening at the Park for kids to learn about the Park, planning process, and/or natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPW education program (Tracy Predmore)

Organizational Gaps

While **77 separate organizations participated** in the first round of Interest Group Discussions alone from around the State and local Trinidad/Las Animas County area, there were **32 organizations that registered but did not participate** (these are the unbolded organizations listed in Appendix A). This latter group of registered but non-participatory organizations offer potentially “low hanging fruit” for engagement in upcoming phases of the project. This is also the case for the organizations identified for the Equity and Inclusivity Panel but who, up to this point, have yet to participate.

More difficult to reach will be those organizations that have not yet engaged with the Project in any form. The list in Appendix E, taken from the Engagement and Communications Plan, was first compiled during the Partners Visioning Session and has been subsequently added to over the previous months. It lists potential groups, or categories of groups, to engage. Appendix E includes separate columns for the groups that have been engaged from the list and those that have yet to be engaged. Revitalizing outreach efforts toward the groups yet to be engaged has the potential to significantly address the current engagement gaps identified.

Conclusions

- The Fishers Peak Master Plan Project has engaged many organizations, interest groups, and user types since the Project began, but engagement to date still includes gaps in certain demographics (BIPOC Communities and younger age groups) and organizations (K-12 school districts, faith communities, and others – see Appendix E).



- The Project Team can build on the momentum already established by deepening engagement with groups already engaged and by focusing more attention on the groups yet to be engaged.
- **Specific strategies for filling the engagement gaps include:**
 - Direct outreach to organizations that have been identified but have yet to participate. These include the Interest Group organizations who registered but did not participate and the organizations identified but not engaged for the Equity and Inclusivity Panel (see Appendix A and Appendix B respectively).
 - Developing tailored engagement tactics for groups or demographics that have not been engaged.
 - **Specific tactics could include:**
 - Additional surveys - Based on Project Team recommendations, tailored surveys could be developed and sent to organizations whose mission and member make-up address the gaps described (e.g., developing a survey for TSJC students to understand the interests of younger age demographics).
 - Individualized emails - As an initial outreach step, Project Team members could send emails to organizations to 1) gauge their interest in engaging with the Master Plan and 2) better understand their constituencies' interests.
 - One-on-one or group stakeholder interviews - As a subsequent step, if organizations are indeed interested in engaging with the Project, interviews could be designed to meet with individuals or groups to solicit more information about their interests.
 - Presentations to groups or organizations - The Project Team could attend meetings of existing groups, organizations, or schools to present about the project and gather that specific group's input.
 - Pop up events around town - The Project Team could set up a pop up booth at the community center, library, or at a specific local event and provide information about the planning process and Park.
 - Groups that registered for Interest Group Discussions but did not participate (see Appendix A) and groups that were identified for the Equity and Inclusivity Panel but not engaged (see Appendix B) offer a "low hanging fruit" opportunity in that they have already either engaged with Project in some capacity or have been identified by the Project Team as potential stakeholders. In particular, groups under these two categories

that also address the demographic gaps mentioned above appear as a logical place to begin a subsequent round of targeted engagement efforts.

Additional Groups to Engage

To have more diverse racial and ethnic representation	To have more diverse age group representation	To have more local representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americas for Conservation + the Arts/ Promotores verdes/ non-profit • Center for Disabilities • Green Latinos • Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities • Inclusive Journeys • Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber Of Commerce • Latino Coalition for Community Leadership • LULAC (hispanic) • My Outdoor Colorado • Native Women's Wilderness • Outdoor Afro • Outdoor Asjans • Out There Adventures • PAACO (African american) • Queer Nature • Refugee/new immigrant community • The ARC (physical/intellectual disabilities) • Trinidad Community Foundation • Trinidad/Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber • Vibe Tribe • Wild Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14ers.com • Boys and Girls Clubs • Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts • Colleges and Universities: CSU, CU, DU, Trinidad State, Adams State • GALS Inc./The Girls Athletic Leadership Schools • Local Trinidad / Alamosa School District (K-12) • Summitpost.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith Community • Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce • Mount Carmel Wellness Center • Trinidad Downtown Development Group • Trinidad Elders



Next Steps

Based on this synthesis of known gaps in the project team’s outreach, the project team recommends the following next steps:

1. Identify priority organizations and outreach strategies
2. Identify points of contact, if not already known

Execute additional outreach activities in conjunction with the fall 2021 public engagement efforts

Update: Summer 2021 Engagement Efforts

In July and August of 2021, the project team began targeted outreach in the local community to identify community leaders and organizations willing to partner with the project team to distribute information and gather input about the Park. The following groups and individuals were contacted as part of that outreach:

Churches	Community Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fishers Peak Community Church ● First Christian Church ● Holy Trinity Catholic Church ● Zion's Lutheran Church ● Church of the Nazarene ● First Pentecostal Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trinidad Community Foundation ● Hispanic Chamber of Commerce ● Dept. of Social Services ● South Central Council of Governments ● El Grupo Azteca (Disbanded)

APPENDIX A: Interest Group Discussion Organizations

Interest Group	Organization
Interest Group: Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship	Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI)
	Denver Audubon
	Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
	Arkansas Valley Audubon Society (AVAS)
	Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
	Southern Colorado Trail Builders
	Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
	Friends of Greenhorn Mountain Trails/ Sangre de Cristo Group
	Sierra Club(SdCG)
	Colorado Watershed Workgroups
	Colorado Partners in Amphibians and Reptiles
	Sierra Club
Colorado Wildlife Federation	
Interest Group: Wildlife / Hunting	Frontier archery club
	Rocky Mountain Elk foundation
	CPW Southeast Region Sportspersons Roundtable
	Southeast region sportspersons roundtable
	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION
	Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Interest Group: Outdoor Recreation	State Trails Committee
	Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
	City of Trinidad, Office of Outdoor Recreation
	San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
	Adventures With Daniel



	Fremont Adventure Recreation
	Big Agnes
	Colorado Mountain Club
	City of Trinidad
	La Veta Trails
	Santa Fe Trail Association
	Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
Interest Group: Motorized Recreation	
	TPA/COHVCO
Interest Group: Mountain Biking	
	Singletrack Trails Inc.
	Cloud City Wheelers Bike Club and Owner Trailside LTD
	Overland Mountain Bike Association
	Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates
	Boulder Mountainbike Alliance
	BMA rep for CMBC (Colorado Mountain Bike Coalition)
	International Mountain Bicycling Association
	Southern Colorado Trail Builders
Interest Group: Equestrian	
	Back Country Horsemen of Colorado
	Bridledale Undevelopment Corporation www.bridledale.org
	Kit Carson Riding Club
	Rocky Mountain Back Country Horseman's Association
	Boulder Area Trails Coalition
Interest Group: Climbing	
	Access Fund
Interest Group: Emergency Services	
	Las Animas County Search and Rescue

	Colorado Search and Rescue Assoc.
	Trinidad Ambulance District/Las Animas County Search and Rescue
	Hoehne Fire Protection District
	Trinidad Fire
Interest Group: Grazing and Agriculture	
	Colorado Farm Bureau
	Marchetti Cattle Ranch
Interest Group: Education and Interpretation	
	Trinidad Carnegie Library
	Pueblo Archaeological & Historical Society
	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
	The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
	Trinidad Public Library
	Trinidad State Junior College
	Culebra Range Community Coalition, Bar NI Ranch Community Fund, Purgatoire Valley Foundation
	Trinidad State Junior College
	Indigenous Roots
	Legacy Core Scanning, LLC
Interest Group: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	
	GALS Inc./The Girls Athletic Leadership Schools
	Americas for Conservation + the Arts/ Promotores verdes/ non-profit
	San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
	Inclusive Journeys
	Next 100 Colorado
	Sierra Club
	Continental Divide Trail Coalition
	TWS
	GreenLatino
	Colorado State Land Board



Interest Group: Local and Regional: New Mexico

	New Mexico State Parks Division Northeast Region
	Sugarite Canyon State Park
	City of Raton
Interest Group: State and Federal Agencies	
	USACE
	History Colorado
	Colorado State Forest Service
	National Park Service
	Colorado Department of Transportation
	Colorado Division of Water Resources
	Colorado Correctional Industries/Department of Correction, Heavy Equipment/Swift
	Colorado Dept. of Public Safety - Div. of Fire Prevention and Control

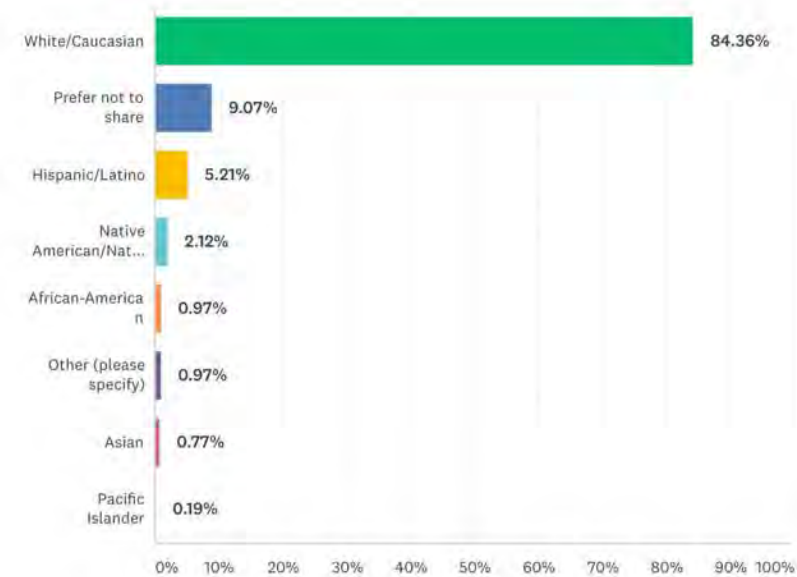
APPENDIX B: Equity and Inclusivity Panel Organizations (bold = participation, non-bold = identified)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Buddies • Trinidad State Junior College • National Wildlife Federation • Sierra Club • Next 100 Colorado • Rising Routes • SIFT visuals llc • HECHO (Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors) • Latino Outdoors • San Luis Valley Get Outdoors • Trinidad Youth Club • CPW • Green Latinos • Outdoor Afro • Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Outdoor Colorado • Inclusive Journeys • Center for Disabilities • Outdoor Asians • Vibe Tribe • Native Women's Wilderness • PAACO (African american) • LULAC (hispanic) • The ARC (physical/intellectual disabilities) • Trinidad Community Foundation • Public Health Dept. • Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber Of Commerce
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APPENDIX C: Race/Ethnicity Survey Results

Please select the race or ethnicity with which you identify. (Select All That Apply)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0

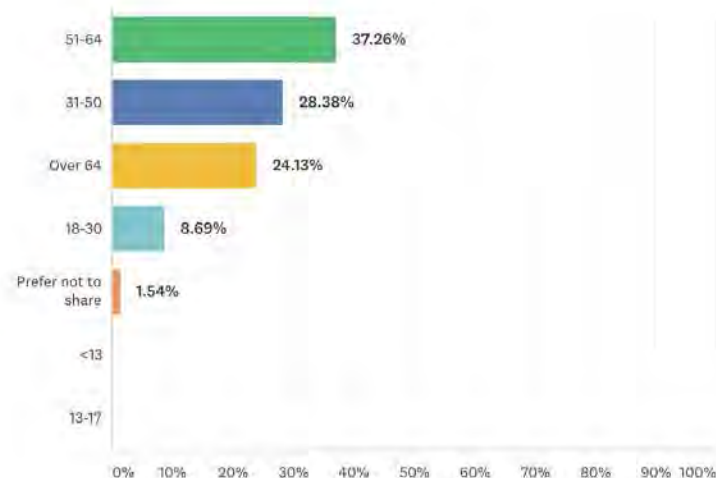


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
White/Caucasian	84.36% (437)
Prefer not to share	9.07% (47)
Hispanic/Latino	5.21% (27)
Native American/Native Alaskan	2.12% (11)
African-American	0.97% (5)
Other (please specify)	0.97% (5)
Asian	0.77% (4)
Pacific Islander	0.19% (1)
Total Respondents: 518	

APPENDIX D: Age Group Survey Results

Please select your age range. (Select One)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
51-64	37.26%	193
31-50	28.38%	147
Over 64	24.13%	125
18-30	8.69%	45
Prefer not to share	1.54%	8
<13	0.00%	0
13-17	0.00%	0
TOTAL		518

APPENDIX E: Groups to Engage (taken from Engagement and Communications Plan)

Key:	
(engaged via Interest Groups)	
(engaged via Equity Panel)	
(engaged via separate consultation process)	
(engaged via Work Groups)	
Groups Engaged	Groups Yet to be Engaged

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purgatoire Watershed Partnership Next 100 Coalition San Isabel Electric Tribes - federally recognized and those with historical connection receiving greater level of involvement Hunting Recreation Groups: Turkey Federation, RMEF, MDF, BHA, CBA, etc. Trinidad State College Tourism Board Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee CDOT / including Colorado Scenic Byways-Scenic Highway of LegendsByway Trinidad Youth Club Latinos Outdoors New Mexico state parks City of Raton Las Animas County Commissioners State Forest Service Adjacent communities with public lands/capacity issues CCIA 	<p><i>BPIOC Organizations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center for Disabilities Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (Deputy Director, Richard Morales) Outdoor Afro Asian/South Asian community Refugee/new immigrant community LGBTQIA outdoor groups Disability Community Trinidad/Las Animas County Hispanic Chamber <p><i>Community Groups and Organizations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith Community Trinidad Elders Mount Carmel Wellness Center Las Animas County Sheriff's Department State Patrol Las Animas-Huerfano Counties Health Department Fishers Peak Fire Protection District Las Animas County Ambulance Service South Central Council of Governments Las Animas County Planning Commission Las Animas County Road and Bridge Department <p><i>Youth-Oriented Organizations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14ers.com Summitpost.com Local Trinidad / Alamosa School District (K-12) <p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado Outdoor Partnership National Park Service Long Distance Trails Group Natural Resource Conservation Service Outdoor recreation industry and OIA Trinidad history museum, state historical society baca/bloom house State Health Department – Raton, NM
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FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

MARCH/APRIL INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

Last revised 5/26/2021

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to document the input from Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan interest group sessions held in March and April 2021. The findings represent high-level takeaways, opportunities and challenges, and potential evaluation criteria for the project team to consider when identifying options for the Park. A complete list of interest group discussion notes are found in Appendix A - Full Report.

PROCESS OVERVIEW:

In January of 2021, the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan team released a call for interest groups to sign up for interest group discussions with the intent to hold a variety of interest group discussions to engage governmental and non-governmental organizations and businesses with direct knowledge and expertise for the project. The purpose of these discussions was twofold: (1) to enable interest groups to share ideas, expertise, and thoughts on opportunities and challenges related to the park and (2) to build relationships between the project team and interest groups for the Master Plan process.

The registration process was open from January 29, 2021 - February 26, 2021. Interested groups were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, which was distributed digitally through the Fishers Peak State Park master contact list as well as via partners including CPW, TPL, and TNC. Over 100 questionnaires were filled out. The attached Appendix B - Full Report includes a list of groups that were invited and participated in the interest group discussion process. The following interest groups were convened in March and April of 2021:

- Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship
- Wildlife / Hunting
- Outdoor Recreation
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian
- Climbing
- Motorized Recreation
- Grazing and Agriculture
- Emergency Services
- Education and Interpretation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Local Businesses
- Local and Regional: Colorado
- Local and Regional: New Mexico
- State and Federal Agencies

Each interest group conversation was held virtually and lasted 1.5 hours. The project team presented a high-level overview of the project and process (Appendix C - Full Report) and listened to interest group

ideas based on targeted questions. A complete agenda and list of questions can be found in Appendix D - Full Report.

The project team anticipates meeting again with the groups later in 2021 and following up with participants throughout the duration of the Master Plan.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

OPPORTUNITIES	
General appreciation to be engaged with the Master Plan	Participants were excited to be engaged in the Master Planning process and grateful to be given an opportunity to share their experiences and expertise. Maintaining this momentum and excitement will be a key factor for Master Plan success.
Emphasis on protecting natural resources and unique landscape of the Park	All groups noted the importance of conserving the special resources (wildlife, plant species, unique geographical features, etc) of the Park. While all wanted varying levels of access for the public to recreate on the Park, all recognized the importance of conserving habitat and designing recreation opportunities that have as little impact as possible on nature.
Desire for varied types of recreation opportunities that do not significantly impact existing nature	Groups noted the strong desire for a variety of recreation types for multiple skill levels . Not only is this an inclusive approach to recreation where recreationists can develop, grow and enjoy their specific skill sets, it also brings more people into the Park to learn about nature and the importance of stewardship.
Interest in unique experiences that aren't found elsewhere in the region (lookouts, wildlife viewing, challenging recreational trails, etc.)	One way to maintain visitation to the Park is to provide unique experiences (to the region and the state park system) that people want to enjoy on a regular basis. Considering how trails interact with viewing lookouts, specific rock or geographic features, wildlife viewing opportunities can create robust trail experiences that keep the user coming back for more.
Importance of tying park operations to the community (community economic	The community was an important part of interest group conversations. Recognizing this Park is a resource for the community at the foot of the peak, the community is and



benefit, and community opportunities to learn and give back)	should continue to be engaged in a meaningful way in the Master Plan. Interest group participants mentioned the economic benefit of increased recreation and opportunities for the community to learn about stewardship and give back to the Park. Volunteer groups offered expertise on community engagement and volunteer programming to sustain this interest.
Opportunity for unique education, interpretation, and creative experiences	Planning a new state park provides a unique opportunity to have interpretive programming focused on the history of the property. Participants highlighted the need to engage elders, youth, and community members in the development of interpretation messages. In addition, the unique landscape offers a wide variety of creative experience beyond traditional recreation (artist engagement, photography, etc.)
Desire for inclusive and equitable recreation and visitation opportunities	Providing multilingual ways to engage with the Park's interpretive content was an important component of inclusivity. Additional ideas included hiring Park staff and recruiting volunteers to reflect the diversity of the community and considering accessibility in the infrastructure development of the Park as well as the accessibility of transportation to/from the Park.
Preservation and recognition of history and culture of the park (Tribes, grazing and ag)	Many groups recognized the Park is not only an important resource for the life that thrives there, but it is an important cultural resource as well. Participants noted a desire to reflect <i>all</i> facets of the Park's history and highlight important components including Tribal history as well as the tradition of grazing and agriculture on the land.
Quality trails for easier maintenance	Recreation user groups noted the importance (and unique opportunity) to develop a well-designed trail system from the onset of the Park that will minimize future maintenance needs. With an increase in public lands users due to COVID, increasing interest in outdoor recreation, and a growing population, building well planned, constructed and designed trails for a variety of uses is a great way to ensure long-term durability of the Park.

Opportunities to Partner with Local, Regional and State Organizations and Agencies	There were multiple offers from organizations and agencies to assist with Park operations, maintenance, emergency response, interpretation and education. For example, museums, libraries and schools (including Trinidad State) offered to host exhibits, as well as student and volunteer projects. Another example includes local and regional agencies offering support for fire planning, mitigation, response and restoration.
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CHALLENGES	
Recognition of the challenge of Park management and operations - opportunities to collaborate regionally (emergency services, businesses, volunteer groups, etc.)	The Park covers an extensive amount of land, creating challenges in Park management. There are many opportunities to collaborate with entities within the region to help address these management challenges. Emergency services organizations, businesses, and volunteer groups have offered their expertise and skill sets to ensure safe and enjoyable Park visitor experiences.
Need for appropriate infrastructure and staffing to manage visitation and respond to community/visitor needs and interests (education/volunteer coordinator)	With a variety of interest and user groups expected to visit the Park, infrastructure and staffing were an important component for many interest groups when considering park operations. Groups recommended staffing the Park adequately to not only enforce rules but also educate visitors and to be a resource to members of the public. With too little resources, both in terms of staffing and infrastructure, management of the Park could be a challenge from the start.
Landscape challenges and opportunities that may drive recreation and land use	Certain landscape challenges and geographical features may dictate recreation and land use opportunities. For user groups, there may be specific areas of the Park that are appropriate for specific uses, and it's unclear how difficult visitor access to these areas will be or if uses will conflict with one another.
Differing recreational interests and needs	The Project Team spoke with a number of motorized and non-motorized recreation groups, and one of the greatest challenges that arose from these conversations is that this



	Park can't be everything to everyone. Many recreation user groups recognized the importance of positive interactions amongst recreation users and they identified that providing a large variety of recreational uses in the Park may pose a challenge for the team.
Community's desire for economic benefit may drive over-development of the Park	Community members are hopeful that increased recreation opportunities in the region will bring additional economic benefit. The challenge is to manage this hope and desire for economic growth with manageable recreational uses over the long term.
Visitor Management Across State Park Lines	Fishers Peak and Sugarite State Parks are adjacent to each other at the Colorado / New Mexico state borders. There is interest in addressing park visitation across the state line. One question that arose is whether it is possible to have park fees that allow access to state parks in both NM and CO. Another issue is addressing differing Park management approaches between the two state's park systems, such as allowing dogs. These issues may need to be raised to higher decision-making levels in the two states. There also is interest in coordinating and collaborating on trail connectivity, shared education and outreach, supporting the economy of neighboring communities, and other efforts.

POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA (BY FOCUS AREA):

These potential criteria represent two types of criteria used in the Master Plan to refine options and build a robust plan and management guide for the Park: 1) criteria that guide design and management approaches and 2) criteria that help evaluate options. These criteria do not reflect a full suite of what CPW will/won't do as a result of the planning process, but are concepts and ideas to be considered.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Will the wildlife habitat remain inhabited and conserved in their present condition or better?
- Will the native plant and animal species diversity be maintained?
- Are wildlife migration corridors and winter ranges maintained or improved?
- Are facilities and trails in locations that avoid and/or minimize impacts to wildlife and important wildlife habitats?
- Are human impacts to the natural systems appropriate for/minimal enough to meet conservation goals?

- Does the management philosophy of the Park involve an ecosystem management approach versus a focus on wildlife species or the provision of recreation opportunities? (eg. holistic assessment of the overall health of the habitat and ecosystems)

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Is the multi-use trail system allowing for each user group to have high quality outdoor experiences?
- Does the Park offer diverse recreation opportunities that can be used by many recreation interests and skill levels?
- Are recreation opportunities designed to minimize impacts to the Park's natural and cultural resources? (ie social trails, illegal parking, etc)
- Is recreation infrastructure and recreation opportunities planned to limit conflicts among users (hunters, recreationists, climbers, birdwatchers, etc.)?
- Are trails designed to appropriately accommodate planned uses?
- Will a diversity of seasonal visitor experiences be offered?
- Is there appropriate trail connectivity to other recreation opportunities (other parks, city, etc.)?
- Are trails designed to accommodate multiple uses and high visitation with minimal management and maintenance?
- Are there opportunities for longer (in mileage) trail experiences?
- Are there fun and entertaining opportunities to increase skill levels in different recreation opportunities?
- Is there easy access and connectivity to the park and it's trails (shuttles, connection to town, etc.)?
- Does the Park infrastructure offer opportunities to adapt to the needs of various users?

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Does the story told about the Park reflect all facets of Park history?
- Are there resources dedicated to cultural and historical preservation?
- Are the recreation opportunities planned and developed in ways that preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the property?
- Have the tribes provided input on evaluation criteria, since it is so crucial to understand the resources tribes want preserved?
- Is the Park honoring its cultural history around grazing and agriculture?

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Are there educational opportunities related to multi-use trails?
- Are there a variety of engagement opportunities for all users?
- Is there both diversity (in age, ethnicity/race, ability, recreation interest, etc.) of and significant number of individuals reached?
- Are there learning and experiential opportunities that involve and engage local and regional youth in the Park?



- Is the Park taking advantage of the potential for partnerships to support outreach and education? Does the Park have the resources and staff to accomplish this?

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Is the Park creating a sufficient amount of revenue for CPW?
- Does the messaging in the Park highlight the unique character of the community of Trinidad?
- Is there trail/access connectivity to promote regional recreation, including New Mexico?
- Are there opportunities to work with local businesses to highlight Park resources?

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along With Park Development And Operations Advance Objectives From All Vision Focus Areas

- Is the Park providing educational and stewardship (ie volunteer) opportunities for the local Trinidad area community?
- Is there staff and budgetary capacity to maintain infrastructure for high-use recreational activities?
- Are there community forums established where people can share information about the Park?
- Are there criteria or a process that helps establish funding priorities?
- Are there opportunities to partner with agencies and local businesses and organizations for emergency response, fundraising, and investment management?



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK MASTER PLAN

PUBLIC SURVEY REPORT & ANALYSIS

August 2021

Introduction

The Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan Project Team is committed to robust engagement to inform decision-making and ensure that stakeholder voices are incorporated into the Master Plan. As one component of this engagement process, the Project Team conducted a public survey between May and July 2021. This report provides an overview of survey participation and results, an analysis of the findings in the context of other engagement efforts, and acts as a resource for future engagement considerations (e.g., gaps analysis). Importantly, the survey and its results are intended to be just one tool in the toolbox connecting stakeholder interests to Park planning. A variety of other inputs from the stakeholder engagement process (e.g., Interest Group Discussions, Public Meetings, etc.) as well as other inputs from on-site data collection, tribal consultation, and elsewhere all coalesce to inform sound project decisions. Decisions will not be made based on any single input.

Purpose and Structure of Report

The survey (attached as an appendix) was divided into sections ranging from demographic and general park-related questions to specific questions about potential activities and initiatives, with the latter topic-specific sections being optional. As such, the Report is divided by the sections of the survey:

1. Participation Demographics*
2. General Park*
3. Fishers Peak-Specific*
4. Trails*
5. Camping
6. Mountain Biking
7. Hunting
8. Dogs
9. Equestrian
10. Rock Climbing
11. Education/Interpretation
12. Future Engagement*
13. Anything Else

* indicates required section

Differences between local and statewide participants: The Fishers Peak Project Team and Partners have stated since the Project's onset that engagement efforts will work to understand the interests of both local and statewide stakeholders. Consequently, some sections of this report include a subheading for notable differences between the local community (defined here as anyone who listed their place of residence as Trinidad, Raton, or Las Animas / Huerfano County) and the statewide community (defined as anyone who listed their place of residence as Pueblo/Colorado Springs, Denver Metro Area, Northern Colorado, Other Colorado, Other New Mexico, Other (please specify), or Prefer not to share). It should be noted that while there were some slight differences between local and statewide stakeholder groups, the two are generally aligned in their responses.

Survey Tool and Methodology

Survey Monkey was used to develop and administer the survey. This tool allowed for easy quantification and analysis of results and ease of use by participants. Questions were primarily multiple choice or ranking, which allowed for more quantifiable answers. The final question was open-ended and intended as a “catch-all” so that participants could share input related to topics that previous questions failed to address.

Outreach and Participant Recruitment

Due to the robust engagement with public stakeholders and organizations that had already occurred leading up to the survey launch, the Project Team was able to rely on existing relationships to help promote the survey across a variety of stakeholder networks. The survey was promoted or disseminated in the following ways:

- 3 E-Blasts were sent to the **576 stakeholders** signed up for Fishers Peak email updates
- Emailed to over **117 Fishers Peak Interest Group members** who represent a variety of governmental and non-governmental organizations. They were asked to distribute the survey across their networks.
- Emails were sent to **68 Fishers Peak Work Group Members** who were also asked to distribute throughout their networks.
- Emails were sent to **22 members of the Project’s Equity and Inclusivity Panel** who represent organizations focused on diversity and inclusion. They were asked to distribute the survey across their networks.
- **Project Partners** (Colorado Parks and Wildlife, The City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and Great Outdoors Colorado) all were engaged to help distribute the survey across their networks. Additionally, Trust for Public Land sent the survey to the **Next 100 Coalition** for distribution across their network of diversity-focused outdoor organizations.
- A **digital/print flyer** was created and distributed in each of the above emails. Print flyers were mailed to Project Team members on the ground in Trinidad to be physically distributed around the community.
- A **communication packet** that included social media posts, newsletter/email language, and photos was also created and distributed to the Work Groups, Interest Groups, and Equity and Inclusivity panel.
- The survey was promoted at the **Public Meeting** on June 24, 2021.
- Multiple **community leaders** were asked to distribute the information via their networks. The information was posted on Facebook as well as through other local community outreach mechanisms.
- The information was also sent to the **local radio station** for promotion.

Key Findings

- **Importance of natural resource conservation balanced with recreation:** When asked to rank the importance of general opportunities presented by the Park, participants ranked Wildlife and Natural Resource Conservation (45%) slightly ahead of Outdoor Recreation (43%). This is important because achieving a healthy, sustainable balance between conservation and recreation has been the pivotal theme for the Project Team throughout the Master Planning process. While the majority of comments received through the website comment form thus far have advocated for various types of recreation (e.g., equestrian, mountain biking, etc.), this survey finding demonstrates that, when asked, stakeholders value conservation and preservation of natural resources just as much as recreation access and development.
- **Backcountry experiences:** Backcountry trails were participants’ top choice for potential Park infrastructure. This finding paired with those from both the Mountain Biking and Equestrian sections, which point to an interest from both user groups for exploring the backcountry via their respective activities, suggest that Fishers Peak becoming a backcountry destination is not only palatable but desirable for stakeholders.
 - **Trail to the Peak:** While backcountry experiences appeared to be of high interest to participants, when asked to rate their interest in hiking to the Peak, participants averaged a 3/10 (0=no interest, 10=highest level of interest).
- **A typical Park user:** Outreach efforts previously conducted as well as the survey data itself supports the claim that stakeholders for the Park vary in their demographics and interests. This has been established by the Project Team and engenders the need for continued intentional engagement with a diverse array of stakeholder groups through a wide variety of means. However, using this survey data it is possible to create a composite of a typical Park user.

The traits of a typical Park user based on survey responses include:

- Trinidad or Denver Metro resident
- Most often visits Trinidad Lake or Lake Pueblo State Park
- Usually visits parks with a partner or spouse, and has done so within the last six months
- Prefers to camp in the park if staying overnight and likes to bring their own supplies
- Prefers trail-based or nature-based events
- Plans to visit Fishers Peak in the Fall or Spring
- Is most interested in backcountry trails and a visitor center for potential Fishers Peak facilities
- Values Wildlife and Natural Resource Conservation and Outdoor Recreation almost equally, with a slight edge to Natural Resource Conservation
- Is only marginally interested in a trail to the Peak
- Primarily prefers slightly challenging trails for walking/hiking/jogging and usually spends between 2-6 hours on a trail

- Has slightly more interest in hiking-only trails compared to multi-use trails and prefers directional trails
- Is close to equally interested in connectivity to Fishers Peak from adjacent wildlife areas, Sugarite Canyon State Park, and Trinidad Lake State Park
- Prefers to receive Park updates digitally, either from the website, social media, or e-blasts and prefers to provide input to the Project Team via the website comment form.

Note: The above traits are derived only from the required survey questions and does not include information from the optional sections (camping, hunting, mountain biking, etc.).

Survey Sections

1) Participation and Demographics

Overview:

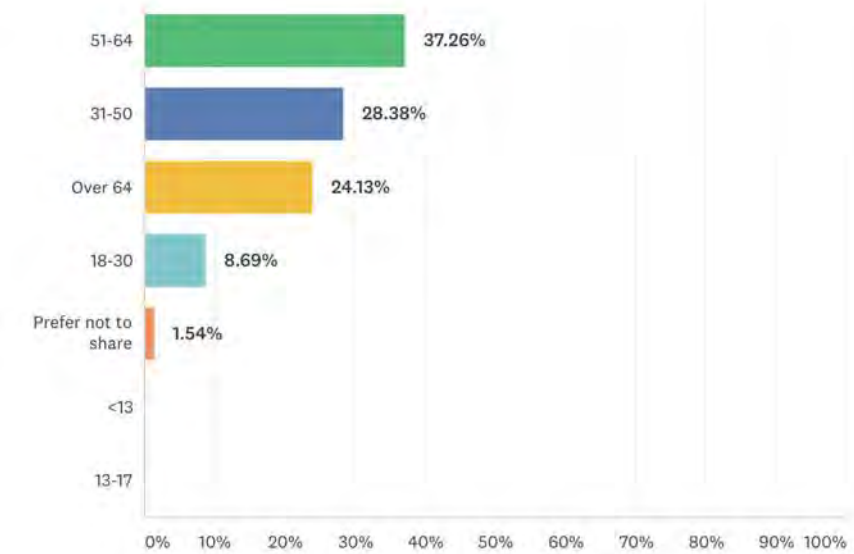
- With **518 total responses submitted**, the survey's promotion efforts were successful.
- The vast majority of participants were over the age of 30.
- Responses were relatively evenly distributed between participants identifying as male (51%) and female (46%).
- Participants identified primarily as White/Caucasian (84%) or preferred not to share; the next highest identified race or ethnicity was Hispanic/Latino (5%).
- Most participants listed the Denver Metro Area (30%) as their place of residence, followed by Trinidad (21%).

Differences between local and statewide participants: The local subset leaned slightly older and included more participants identifying as female (55%).

Analysis: The high number of total participants underscores the excitement of stakeholders and their desire to engage with the Fishers Peak Master Planning process. However, while efforts were made to reach a demographically diverse range of stakeholders (see Outreach and Participant Recruitment section above), including those of different races, genders, and ages, the results also point to a need to continue augmenting outreach initiatives to reach those underrepresented in this survey. This knowledge will inform engagement strategy development throughout the remainder of the Project.

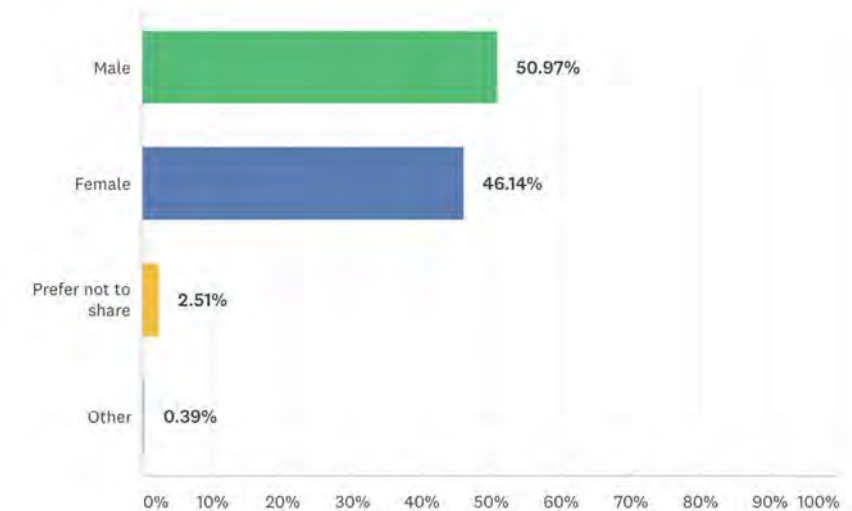
Please select your age range. (Select One)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0

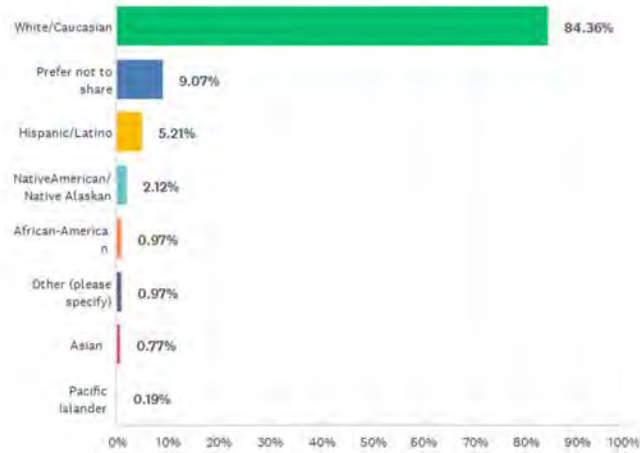


Please select your gender. (Select One)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0

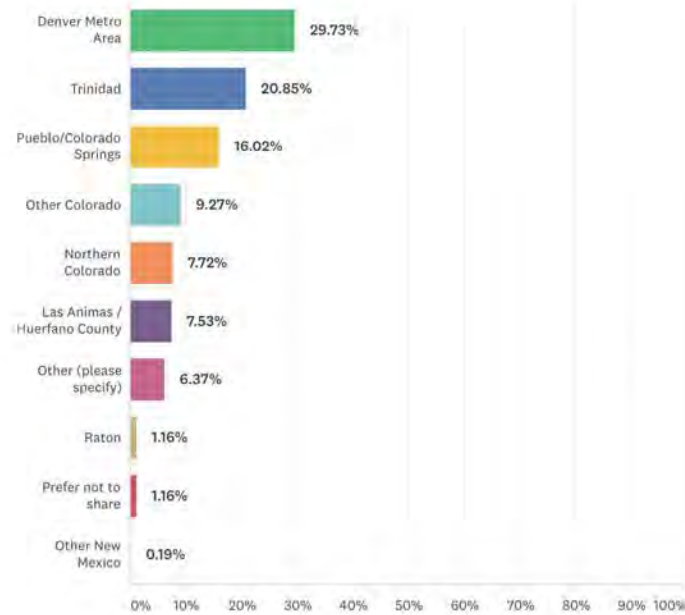


Q3 Please select the race or ethnicity with which you identify. (Select All That Apply)



Do you reside in: (Select One)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0



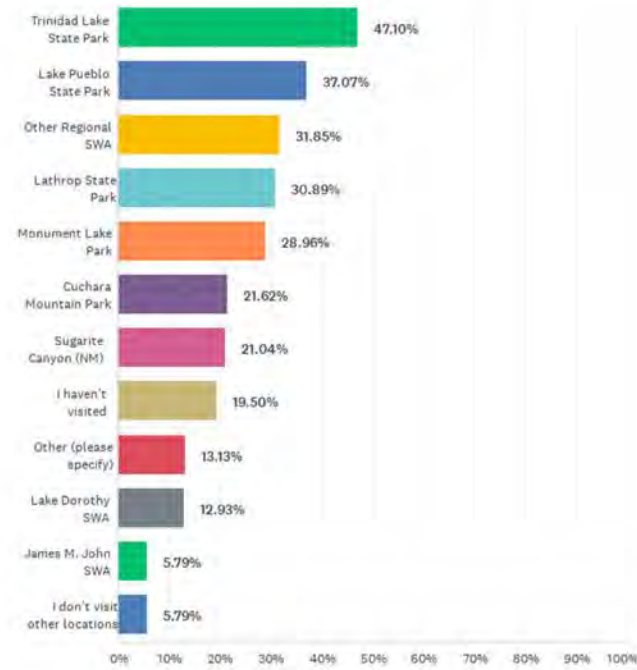
2) General Park*

Overview:

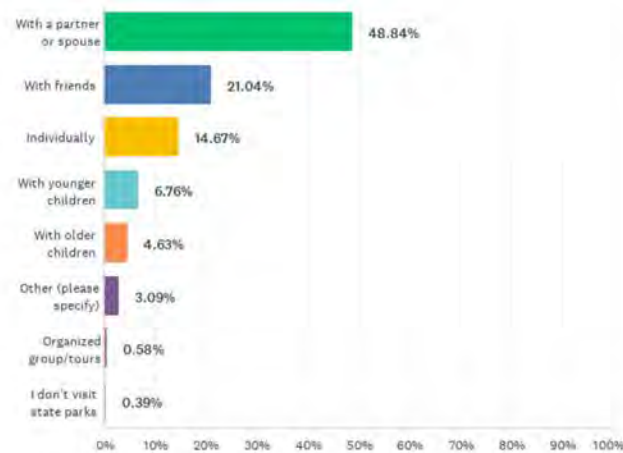
- The top three regional recreational locations visited by participants were Trinidad Lake State Park (47%) and Lake Pueblo (37%), followed by Other Regional SWA (Spanish Peaks, Bosque Del Oso, North Lake, Wahatoya, Apishapa) (32%).
- Most participants either visited state parks with a partner/spouse (49%) or with friends (21%).
- Most participants were frequent state park visitors, having visited a park in the last month (68%) or last 6 months (20%).
- If staying overnight, most participants prefer to camp in the parks they visit (58%).
- Most participants generally choose to bring their own supplies to the parks they visit (75%), as opposed to buying supplies in a nearby store (25%).
- When participants were asked to list the events they have attended while visiting public lands and parks the top selection was trail-based events (57%), followed by environmental events (52%), and historical or cultural events (34%).

Differences between local and statewide participants: The local subset selected Monument Lake Park (63%) and Sugarite Canyon State Park (47%) as its second and third choices for recreational locations visited. Trinidad Lake State Park remained their top choice.

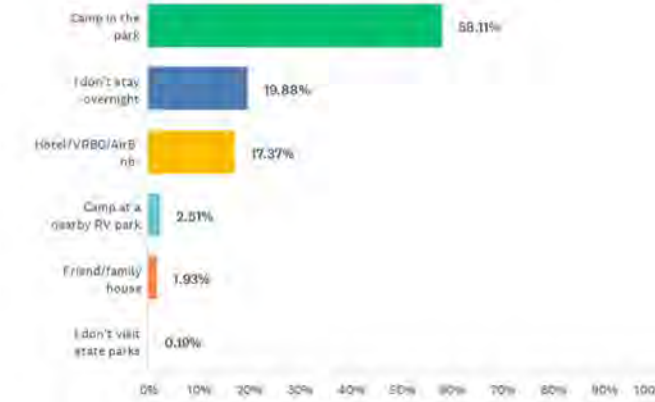
Q5 Which other regional recreation locations do you visit? (Select all that apply)



Q6 When you visit state parks it is usually: (Select One)



Q8 When visiting a state park away from home, and you plan on staying overnight are you most likely to: (Select One)



3) Fishers Peak-Specific*

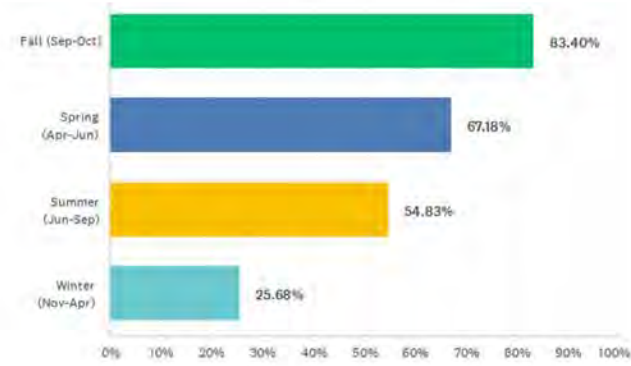
Overview:

- Most participants anticipate visiting Fishers Peak in the fall (83%), although spring (67%) and summer (54%) were also both highly selected. (Participants were asked to select all answers that apply, hence the sum surpassing 100%.)
- Backcountry trails were participants' top choice for potential Fishers Peak infrastructure (49%), followed by a visitor center (17%) and short interpretive trails (9%).
- When asked to rank the importance of opportunities, participants ranked Wildlife and Natural Resource Conservation (45%) slightly ahead of Outdoor Recreation (43%).
- Overall, participants averaged a 3/10 when asked how likely they were to attempt a hike to the Peak. This was true whether camping near the base was permitted or not.
- Adjacent wildlife areas (47%) and Sugarite Canyon State Park (46%) topped the list for which areas participants hoped to see connectivity to Fishers Peak.

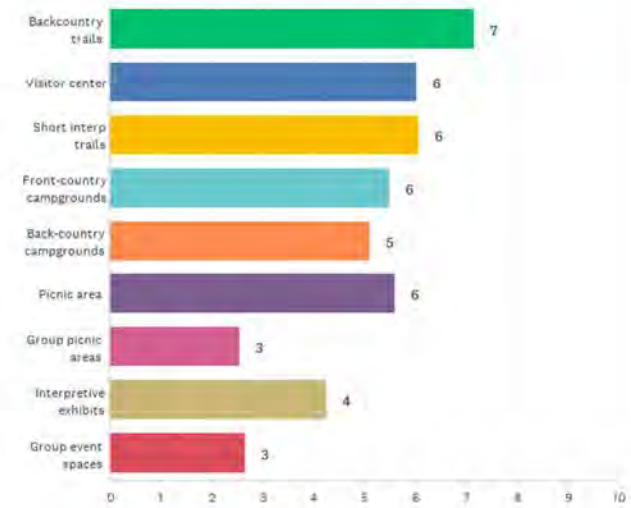
Differences between local and statewide participants: Connectivity to downtown Trinidad was slightly more important to local participants when compared to statewide participants.



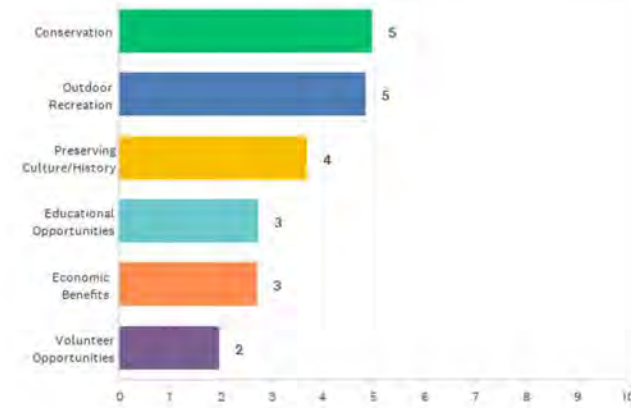
Q11 What time of year do you anticipate visiting Fishers Peak State Park most often? (Select all that apply)



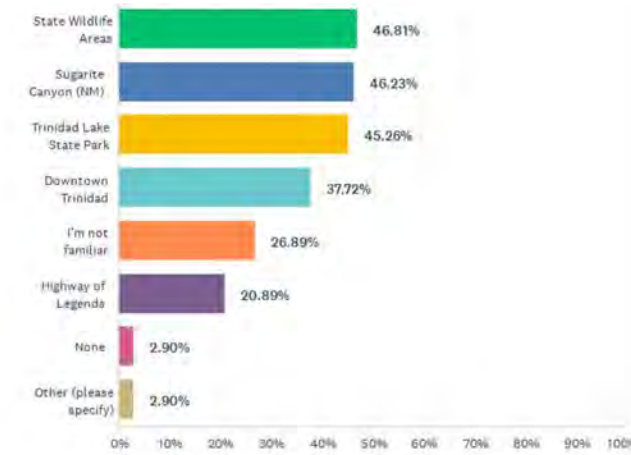
Q12 What recreation programs and facilities would you value the most? (Please rank based on highest importance)



Q13 Please tell us the importance of the following Opportunities at Fishers Peak State Park: (Please rank based on highest importance)



Q19 What type of trail connectivity would you like to see from the Park? (Select all that apply)



4) Trails*

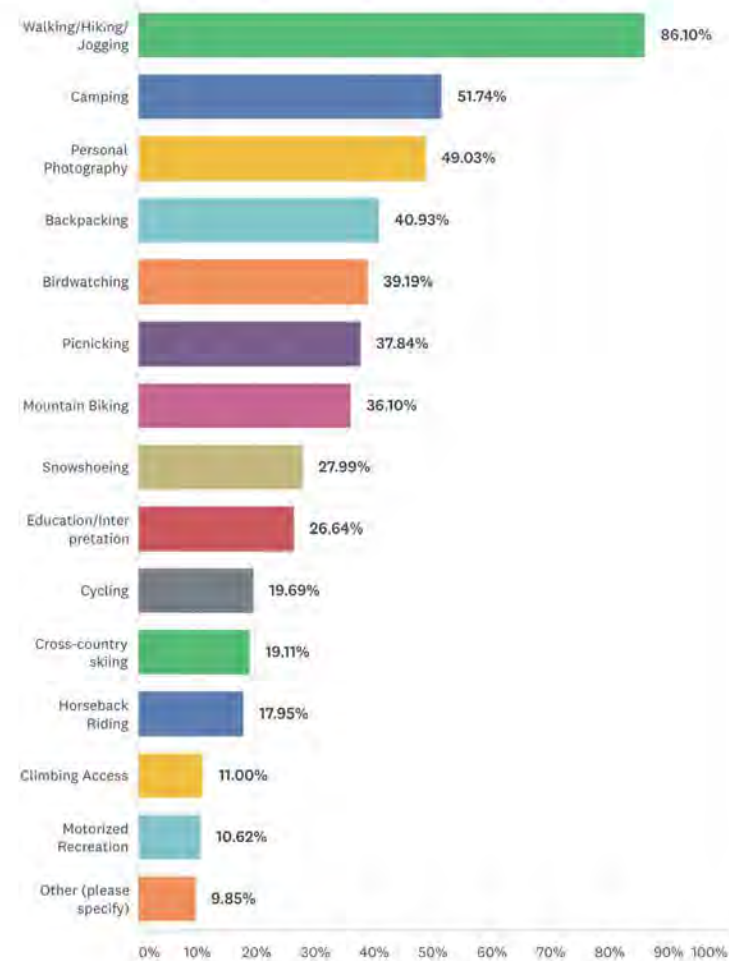
Overview:

- Walking/hiking/jogging was the top selection (86%) for how participants anticipate using trails, followed by camping (52%). Motorized recreation was the least selected response (10%). Mountain biking was selected by 36% of participants.
- Most participants anticipate spending 2-6 hours on a given trail (66%) and prefer trails to be hiking-only (42%) and directional (60%). A preference for multi-use trails was selected by 31% of participants and mountain bike-only trails garnered 12%.

Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

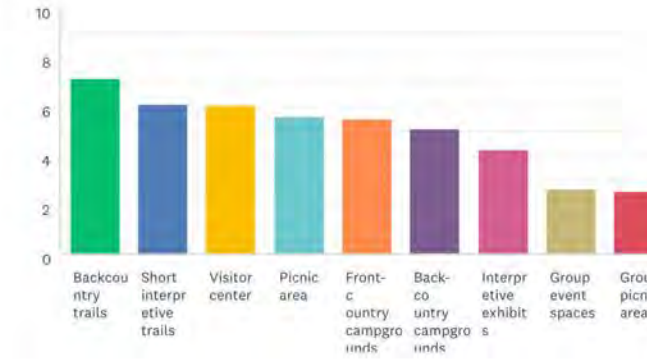
How do you use trails in public open spaces and parks? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0



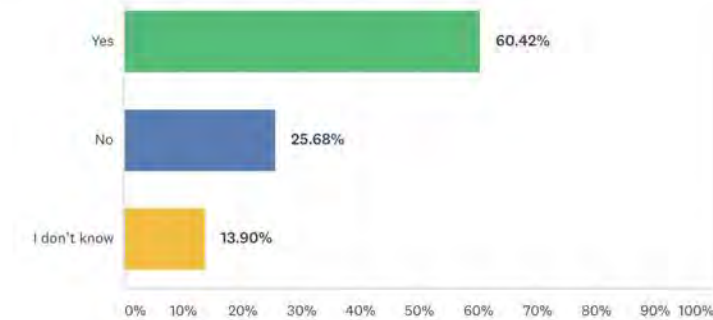
What recreation programs and facilities would you value the most? (Please rank based on highest importance)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0



Do you prefer directional trails (directional trails are loop trails that allow for one direction of use to reduce conflict)? (Select One)

Answered: 518 Skipped: 0



Optional Sections

Participants were prompted to select whether they wanted to answer questions specific to the following activities.

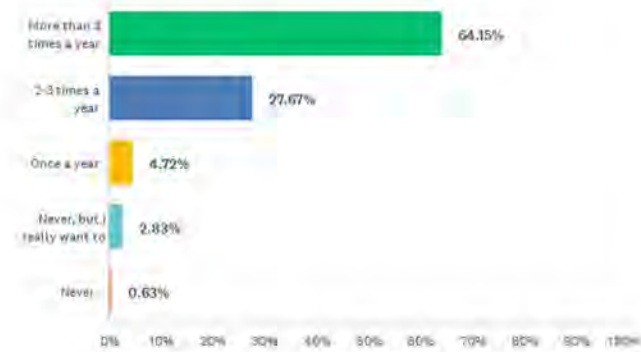
5) Camping

Overview:

- Participants typically camp more than 3 times per year (65%) and generally stay 2 nights (46%).
- Most prefer car/tent camping (42%) or RV/Van camping (26%).

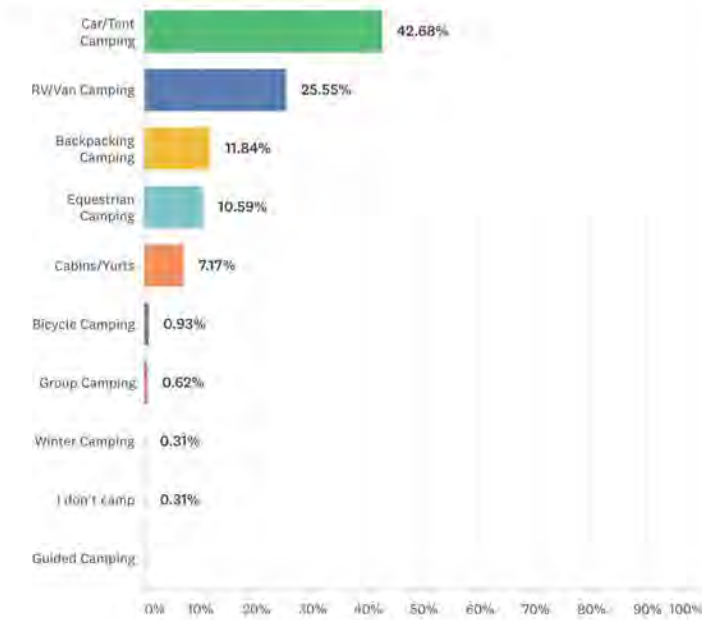
Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

Q23 How often do you camp? (Select One)



When you camp, you prefer (Select One):

Answered: 321 Skipped: 197



6) Mountain Biking

Overview:

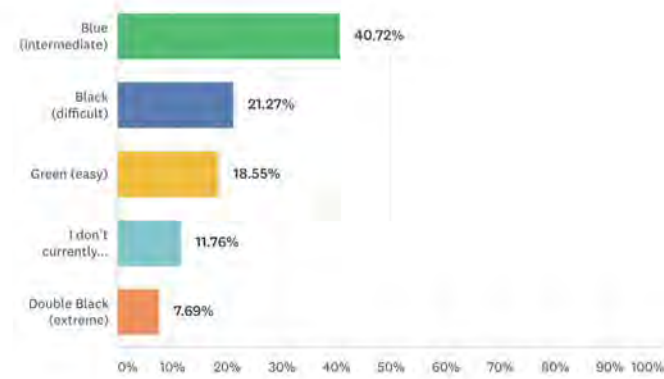
- Participants prefer blue (41%) or black (21%) difficulty level mountain bike trails and would prefer rides that offer opportunities to explore the backcountry and find solitude (56%), enjoy nature and experience the scenery (54%), or have fun with friends (47%).
- 77% of participants said they did not anticipate using an e-bike at Fishers Peak.

Differences between local and statewide participants: A smaller percentage (28%) of local participants opted to answer mountain bike-related questions compared to statewide participants (50%).



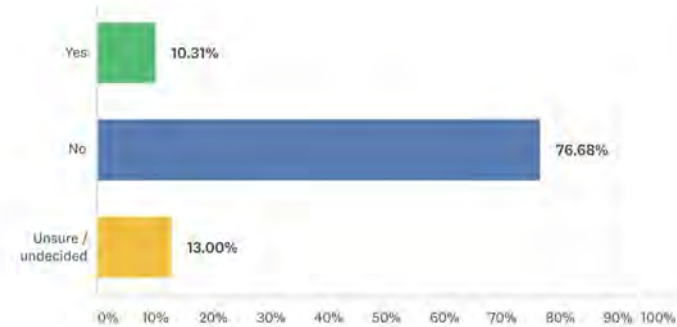
What difficulty level of mountain bike trail do you prefer? (Select One)

Answered: 221 Skipped: 297



As you envision visiting Fishers Peak, do you anticipate using an e-bike? (Select One)

Answered: 223 Skipped: 295



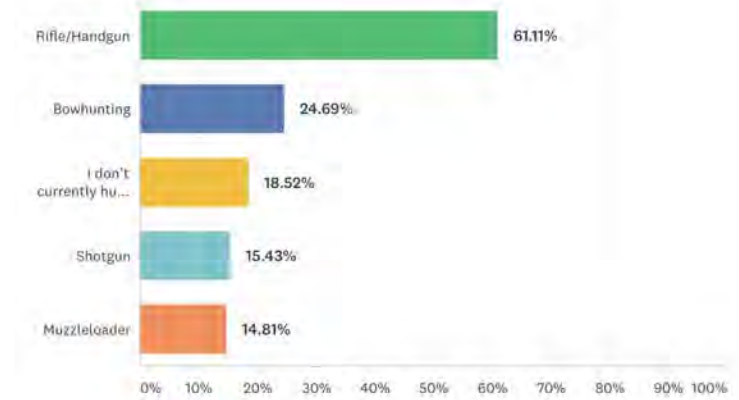
7) Hunting

Overview:

- 60% of participants have had a hunting license in Colorado within the past five years.
- Most respondents prefer big game hunting with a rifle/handgun (61%), followed by bowhunting (25%), and expect method of game retrieval at Fishers Peak to be on foot (50%).

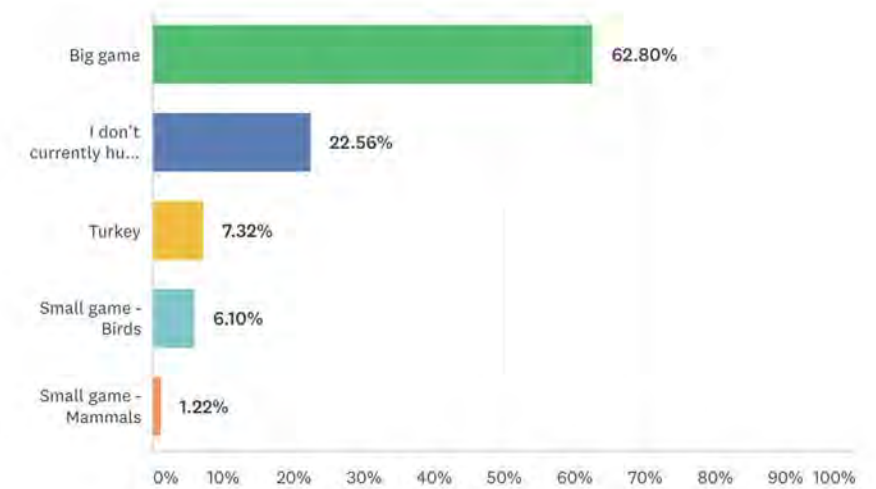
Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

Answered: 162 Skipped: 356



When hunting you prefer hunting: (Select One)

Answered: 164 Skipped: 354



8) Dogs

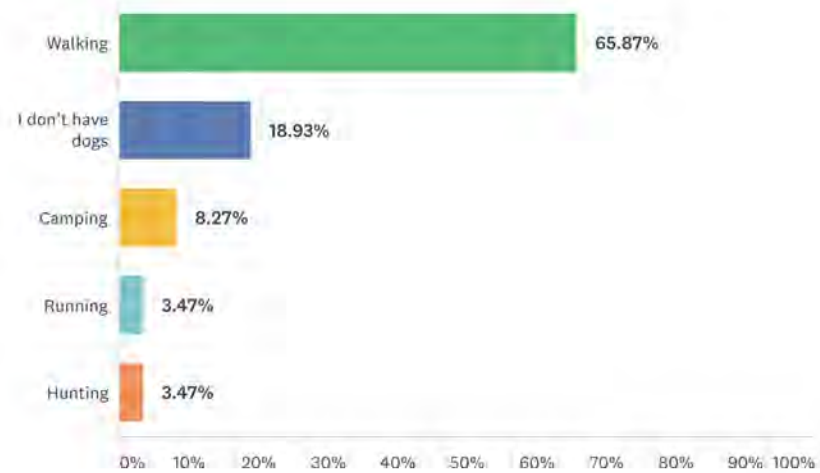
Overview:

- Most respondents take their dogs on trails outside of their immediate residence (67%) and walk with their dogs (66%) as a primary activity.

Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

For what purposes do you utilize trails with your dog? (Select One)

Answered: 375 Skipped: 143



Equestrian

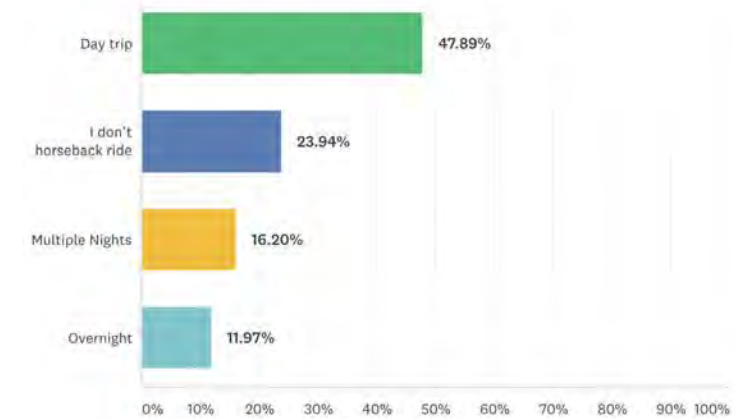
Overview:

- Most equestrians prefer day trips in state parks (48%) with one or two other riders (53%) and typically travel 5-10 miles (37%).
- The top three preferences for equestrian experiences at Fishers Peak are Opportunity to enjoy nature and experience the scenery (74%), Opportunities to explore the backcountry and find solitude (70%), and Opportunities for fun and engaging rides to share with friends (44%).

Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

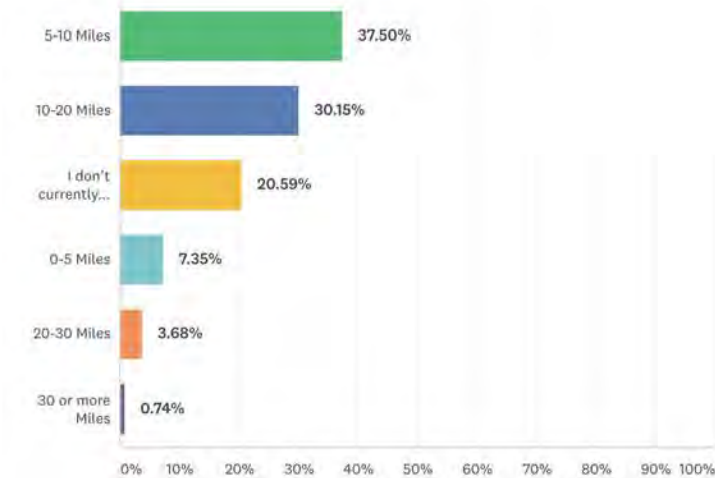
When horseback riding in a state park, how long is your typical stay? (Select One)

Answered: 142 Skipped: 376

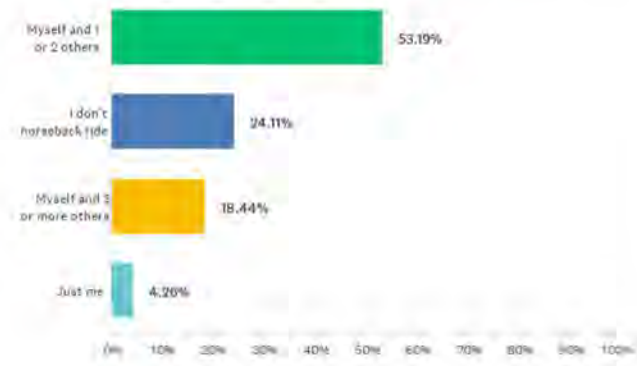


How many total daily miles do you prefer to ride when horseback riding? (Select One)

Answered: 136 Skipped: 382



Q40 When horseback riding in a state park, what is your typical group size? (Select One)



9) Rock Climbing

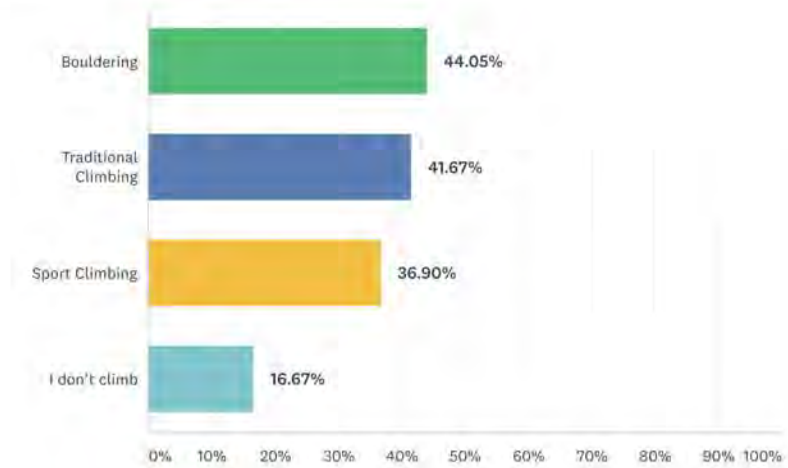
Overview:

- Most participants described themselves as intermediate climbers (40%) who typically engage in bouldering (44%) or traditional climbing (41%).

Differences between local and statewide participants: Local participants were more likely to describe themselves as beginner climbers (40%) and were tilted toward bouldering as the type of climbing they typically do (52%).

What type(s) of rock climbing do you typically do? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 84 Skipped: 434



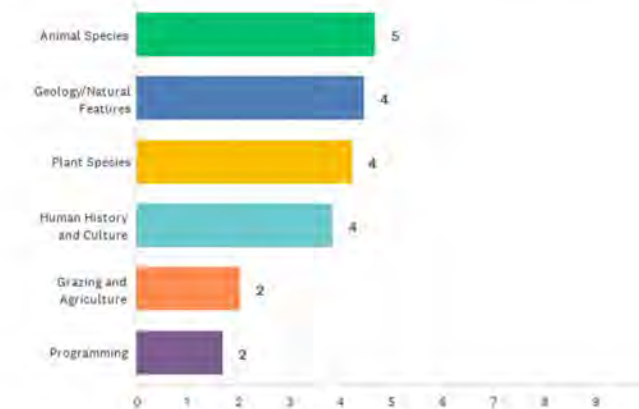
10) Education/Interpretation

Overview:

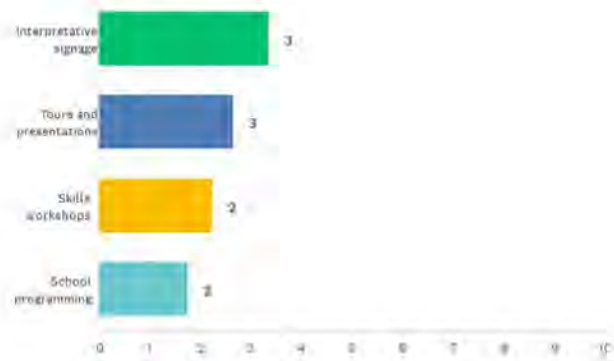
- Most participants listed animal species (33%) or geological and natural features (26%) as their top choice for educational topics offered by the Park.
- Interpretive signage was the top choice for educational initiatives and programming options, followed by interpretive tours.

Differences between local and statewide participants: No notable differences.

Q47 Please rank the following educational topics based on your level of interest. (Ranking)



Q48 Please rank the following educational initiatives and programming options based on your level of interest. (Ranking)



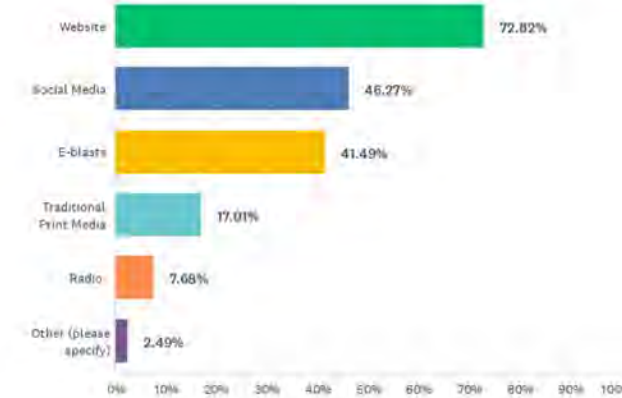
11) Future Engagement*

Overview:

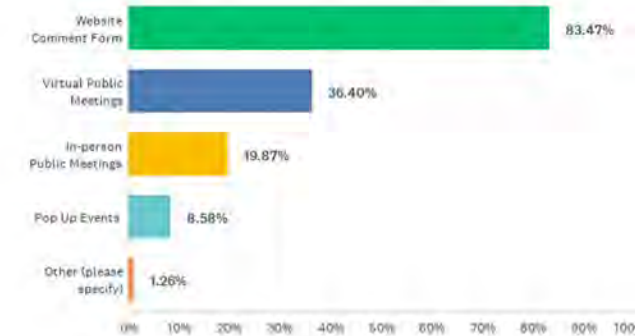
- 72% of participants listed the Fishers Peak website as a preferred method of receiving updates. This was followed by Social Media (46%) and e-blasts (41%).
- Participants prefer providing input to the Project Team through the website comment form (83%), virtual public meetings (36%), and in-person public meetings (20%).

Differences between local and statewide participants: Local participants were more likely to list in-person public meetings as a preferred method of providing input (39%) compared to statewide participants (12.8%).

Q49 What are your preferred channels of communication for receiving Fishers Peak State Park updates? (Select all that apply)



Q50 Keeping in mind that public health restrictions may apply, what are your preferred methods of providing input to the Fishers Peak Master Plan? (Select all that apply)



12) Anything Else

The final question asked participants to “Please provide [the Project Team] with any other information related to Fishers Peak State Park” and elicited 164 responses covering a vast range of topics. Below is a selection of the most prominent response themes and associated quotes in order of prevalence. All responses (both listed and unlisted) are being reviewed by the Project Team to inform future decision-making.

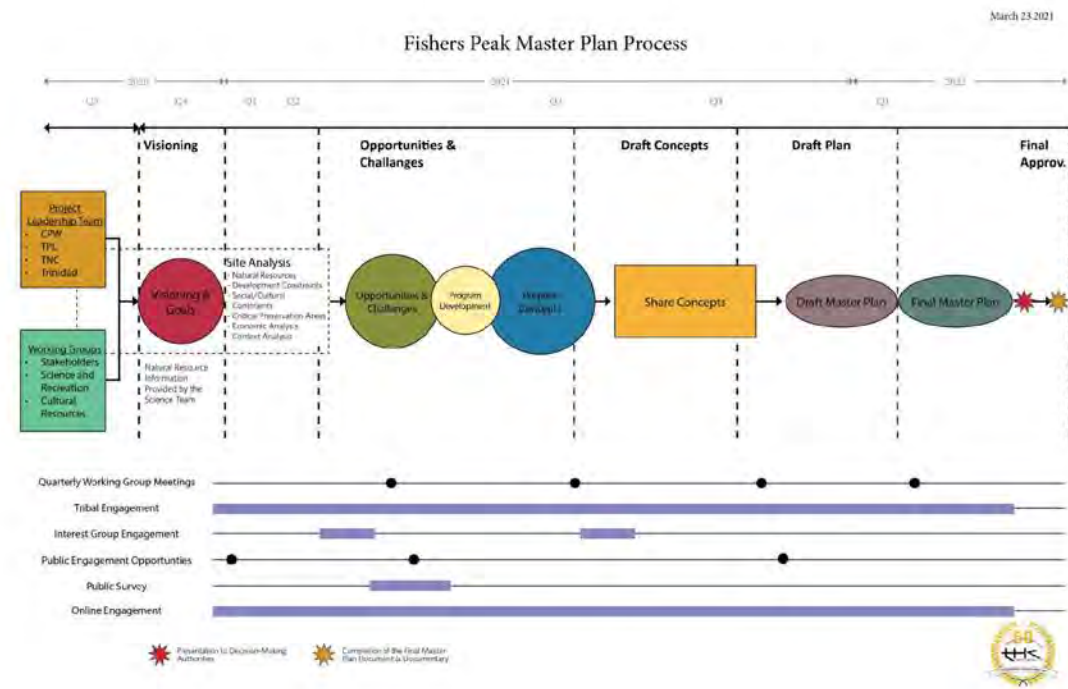
- **Accessibility and management of uses and activities** - Many participants requested that Fishers Peak State Park allow access to their activity of choice and/or limit access to activities that they view as harmful. Activities or uses frequently mentioned include: hiking, camping, mountain biking, dogs, off-highway vehicles, RVs, hunting, fishing, and equestrianism. Of these comments, a number requested that management practices be implemented to mitigate conflict between different types of user groups. Many requested that trails be single-use or that they limit access to a subset of uses (e.g., hiking-only trails, mountain bike-only trails, equestrian-only trails, dog-friendly trails, etc.). As of August 2021, no long-term decisions have been made about Park usage. Survey comments will help inform future decisions about these issues but will not be the sole determining factor.
 - “Please conduct an aggressive time and space management plan for hikers, hikers with dogs, hikers with pack animals, equestrians, mountain bikers and trail runners. These uses are incompatible at the same time. Make even/odd days for hiking and biking. Make some trails usable for equestrians and people with animals.”
 - “Please make some trails prohibit dogs, not all are comfortable. Dedicated trails for different purposes (biking vs walking/running can be helpful), but all activities should be supported!”
 - “Love directional trails. Downhill trails should have bikers separate from hikers. I do both hiking and biking but prefer single use trails if possible.”
- **Prioritize natural resource preservation, limit development** - Participants frequently emphasized the importance of preserving a large portion of Fishers Peak State Park from excessive development. Commenters under this theme requested that the Park “stays wild” and that a “remote experience” is preferable to a “shopping mall” (i.e., highly developed) experience.
 - “Please keep the Park as wild as possible. Wildlife have been accustomed to a peaceful, natural existence. A large influx of humans, and horses, and bikes, and camping will be disruptive at best and damaging at worst.”
 - “Please keep it as untouched and wild as possible. Just because you “can” doesn’t mean you “should” and Colorado’s wild spaces are crowded and becoming spoiled. Leave areas where humans aren’t allowed to go!”
 - “The ecosystems of this area are under-studied. It is important that the activities developed with Fisher Peak State Park preserve the natural habitats.”
- **Preserve and showcase area history** - Multiple comments voiced support for preserving and showcasing the unique history of the land on which Fishers Peak State Park exists. In particular, participants emphasized the importance of the Santa Fe Trail and its significance to travelers in centuries past. There was also mention of the importance of Tribal history and Spanish influence in the region.

- “Please keep the historical perspective of the people, many families have lived in the area long before Colorado was ever a state. And that parcel of land is very special and important.”
- “I rarely hear the Santa Fe Trail and its history mentioned in FPSP discussions. Great opportunity to center the parks development/connection to town historically!”
- **Accessibility for all** - A number of comments requested that accommodations be made for people with accessibility limitations, including elders and people with disabilities.
 - “Please include some recreation for physically disabled folk, e.g., wheelchair accessible, sensory trail for vision impaired.”
 - “Make sure there are options for mobility-impaired individuals.”
- **Other** - Other themes mentioned multiple times in the responses include:
 - Dark skies
 - Volunteer programs
 - Connectivity to other parks and SWAs
 - Detailed mapping
 - Water access
 - Adequate signage
 - Adequate restroom facilities and locations

Next Steps

Applying Survey Findings to Decision-Making: The survey findings described in this report are of substantial utility to the Project Team as the Master Plan progresses. While all survey data will be referred to over the coming months to inform decision-making related to concepts for facilities and Park policies, the key findings are worth reiterating here:

- **Importance of natural resource conservation balanced with recreation:** This overarching theme will continue to be paramount through the completion of the Master Plan. These survey results reinforce the assumption that stakeholders share CPW’s interest in having Fishers Peak become a Park that both preserves natural resources and offers meaningful recreation access.
- **Backcountry experiences:** Through this survey and other engagement avenues, stakeholders have expressed interest in Fishers Peak offering a range of recreation opportunities, including notable interest in backcountry experiences. This bolsters the Project Team’s charge to explore these types of opportunities in detail.
- **A typical Park user:** Fishers Peak public stakeholders are in no way monolith in their interests or demographics. However, understanding typical preferences—such as preferred trail design,



FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

CONCEPT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

For meetings occurring in October and November 2021

Last revised 12/23/2021

PURPOSE:

This document recaps the process and key input themes from the Draft Concept phase of the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan conducted in October and November 2021 by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the consultant team. The purpose of outreach during this phase in the planning process is:

- Project Team provides tours (virtual and in-person) of Fishers Peak
- Stakeholders and public understand decision-making criteria, landscape, and geographical features of FPSP relevant to key Master Plan concepts
- Project Team presents design concepts/preferred alternatives for discussion
- Stakeholders and public provide feedback on concepts to inform future decision-making

PROCESS OVERVIEW:

During the months of October and November 2021, the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan project team engaged over 200 stakeholders and members of the community to present draft concepts for the park, including an analysis on park feature alternatives including:

- Main Park Entrance
- Developed Camping
- Trailheads
- Visitor Center Location
- Back Country Camping
- Recreational Use
- Habitat Preservation

Members of the project Work Groups and Interest Groups, as identified previously in the planning process, were invited to participate in day-long on-site tours to tour specific locations and discuss concepts. For Work Group and Interest Group members unable to attend in person, the project team held a virtual presentation of concepts on November 9, 2021. An open house open to community members and the public was held on November 18, 2021, at the Community Center in Trinidad, with over 100 community members in attendance. The presentations and materials across these engagement opportunities were the same and can be found on the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan website under [Public Meeting Materials](#), including a virtual recording of the presentation.

The presentations included information on the following topics related to Fishers Peak:

- **Opportunities and Challenges:** An overview of stakeholder input received to-date that have informed the evaluation criteria and alternatives development process.
- **Framework Concept Map:** The Framework Concept Map depicts the location and layout of all current proposed recreational features for Fishers Peak State Park. This includes over 70-miles

of trails (multi-use, directional, equestrian, etc.), programmed camping areas, backcountry camping areas, trailhead locations, visitor center location, and the park entrance. It also shows habitat and wildlife protection areas, trail closure areas, and seasonal access areas.

- **Park Features Map:** The Park Features Map is a compendium of park features that were discovered as fieldwork was being completed for possible trail corridors. Site features include views, rock outcrops, and other interesting vegetative features. This map helped identify possible points of interest that could be connected with the trail corridor planning.
- **Park Feature Alternatives Maps:** This set of maps depicts locations within the park that were considered for the Main Park Entrance, Developed Camping, Trailheads, Visitor Center, and Back Country Camping. A high-level Benefits and Drawbacks chart provides information as to why certain locations for park amenities were preferable over others.
- **Slope and Aspect Maps:** The Slope and Aspect Maps provide a “heatmap” for both the grade and direction of existing slopes at the park. These maps helped plan sustainable trail corridors.
- **Habitat Sensitivity Map:** This map shows an overlay of sensitive environmental resources in the park. The most sensitive resources (e.g., riparian habitat, raptor nests, elk calving areas) are shown in darker shades of purple, while the least sensitive areas are shown in lighter shades. This illustration helps focus park planning to develop park infrastructure in areas with lower overall sensitivity while emphasizing habitat conservation in areas with higher sensitivity.
- **Park Scale Map:** This map shows two existing state parks that people may be familiar with – Cheyenne Mountain and Staunton – superimposed on top of Fishers Peak State Park at the same scale. This illustrates the vast difference in the sheer size of the park, as well as the scale of infrastructure and trails in comparison to the entire park property.

Meeting Attendance

October 21, 2021: Work Group Participants

- City of Trinidad
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)
- Las Animas County
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Trust for Public Land (TPL)

October 26-27, 2021: Interest Group Participants

- Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
- Bridledale Undevelopment Corporation
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- City of Raton
- City of Trinidad Office of Economic Development
- Colorado Dept. of Public Safety - Div. of Fire Prevention and Control
- Colorado Mountain Club
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Colorado State Forest Service
- CPW Southeast Region Sportspersons Roundtable
- CPW State Trails Committee (GOCO Rep)
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Green Latino
- History Colorado
- Kit Carson Riding Club
- Latino Outdoors

- National Park Service
- Overland Mountain Bike Association
- Phil Long Toyota
- Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
- Raton Gas Transmission
- Rocky Mountain Back Country Horseman's Association
- Santa Fe Trail Association
- Southern Colorado Trail Builders
- The Nature Conservancy
- COHVCO
- Trinidad Carnegie Library
- Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Trinidad Trails Alliance
- Trust for Public Land

November 9, 2021: Virtual Meeting Participants

- Boulder Area Trails Coalition
- City of Trinidad
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Department of Natural Resources
- Great Outdoors Colorado
- Indigenous Roots
- Rocky Mountain Back Country Horseman's Association
- Rocky Mountain Field Institute
- Trinidad State College
- Trust for Public Land
- Yale University

November 18, 2021: Public Meeting

- Over 100 community members

KEY THEMES

The following themes and questions were captured across all groups. The themes are broken down into park feature alternatives as general overarching concepts, and specific input from group members or the public are called out below each theme. For all of the presentations, participants were sent a link to a follow-up survey that asked the following questions to gather feedback in addition to in-person and virtual conversations:

- What did you like most about the concepts presented during the tours?
- Are there any red flags or is there anything the project team missed?
- What concepts are your main priorities as we look towards implementation?
- What additional questions do you have for the project team?

GENERAL INPUT	
Appreciation for being heard	Many participants noted to project team members that they felt heard and understood during the planning process and saw their input incorporated into the park concepts.

Excitement about the concepts	Most participants left the meetings excited about the concepts the planning team developed. Many saw themselves using the Park for various recreation activities, including but not limited to, mountain biking, hiking, hunting, and equestrian use. Participants were pleased to hear CPW anticipates between 75 and 100 miles of trail, and some of those trails are single-use and others are multi-use. Participants were excited by the skills courses (mountain biking and equestrian), as well as the trail connection from the northern part of the Park to the southern corner. Participants noted an appreciation for and focus on both providing diverse and robust recreational opportunities where appropriate as well as preserving blocks of natural habitat.
Data-Driven Decision-Making	The maps presented by the planning team were a useful tool to better understand the constraints and opportunities of the landscape. Data-driven decision-making, both from site analysis data and data collected through the public engagement process, enabled the team to create a robust and responsive plan to public interests. Participants noted their appreciation for the clarity the maps provide.
Interest in further discussion and information around seasonal closures	Participants were interested in learning more about the different seasonal closure options and the data that would be used to make decisions related to trail closures, in particular the north/south trail corridor. Questions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How will seasonal closures be managed related to habitat and hunting? ● How do closures impact recreation (e.g., equestrian, biking, etc.)? ● What are the broad options to be considered for seasonal closures?
Master and Management Plans	Participants asked questions about differentiating between the Master and Management Plans for the Park. Many outstanding questions, such as allowing dogs on the park; seasonal closure options; or interpretive programming offerings, are ultimately management decisions. The Master Plan seeks to provide as much



	<p>guidance and parameters as possible, but some of these outstanding questions will be determined in subsequent Management Plan(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest Group members indicated an interest to clearly delineate which guidance would occur in the Master Plan and the Management Plan(s) as to provide a better understanding of decision-making and timelines.
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MAIN PARK ENTRANCE	
Interest in decision-making process	In general, participants were supportive of the proposal to have the park entrance located at Exit 11. There were questions about why that selection was made and how that would impact uses of the Exit 8 facilities as well as Exit 6 and 2.

DEVELOPED CAMPING	
Location selection	On-site participants toured several locations proposed for developed camping and commented positively on the accessibility for vehicles as well as the natural surroundings. Participants noted the minimal highway noise and access to trail systems as benefits to the preferred campsites.
Amenities	Participants indicated a variety of preferences for amenities, including running water, ability to connect to power, size of campsites to accommodate larger vehicles, among other things. For developed campsites, there is a trend towards more amenities to accommodate all users, especially compared to backcountry campsites.
Number of sites	Participants during the on-site tours sought to ensure enough camping spots were available to accommodate interest. With 75-100 camping spots in the developed camping areas, this will likely accommodate demand based on current visitation projections.

TRAILHEADS	
Connection to New Mexico	There was ongoing interest in a connection between Fishers Peak and Sugarite State Park in New Mexico. Across all meetings, participants expressed excitement in the concept of a trail connection from the north to south ends of the Park. Many noted the importance of avoiding seasonal closures for this area to allow year-long access for equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers to connect between the two Parks.
Trail connection to the City of Trinidad	Several members of the public have raised questions about a potential connection between the City of Trinidad and Fishers Peak State Park, outside of the planned route along the Santa Fe Trail.

VISITOR CENTER LOCATION	
Location	On-site participants were appreciative of the location selected for the visitors center for multiple reasons, including the view from the location directly to the peak, low noise pollution from the highway, accessibility along the main park road, proximity to accessible trails, and proximity to campground sites. Participants recognized the Visitor Center location might be the farthest point many visitors will go.
Trail Access	Participants highlighted the importance of accessible trails located near the Visitor Center where families, individuals of varying abilities, elders, and others could enjoy the Park to its fullest.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING	
Amenities	Participants asked questions about the amenities for backcountry campsites, including the use of bear boxes



	and water access. Many of these decisions are still being considered and may fall under the purview of the park's Management Plan.
Overlooking developed areas	Work Group members noted potential disappointment related to the proximity of one backcountry campsite to a more developed camping location.

RECREATIONAL USE	
In addition to the key concepts and alternatives presented by the team, some specific recreation representatives provided input and feedback to improve the Park concepts for their specific user groups.	
Equestrian	Interest in as few trail closures as possible. Consider the amount of trails equestrian users will be able to access and whether there is opportunity to allow additional access along other trail corridors in the Park. Desire for enough trail mileage to make an overnight stay worth a trip. Interest in access as soon as possible for equestrian users. Desire for adequate parking and water access.
Mountain Biking	Considerations for Mountain Biking from the top of the Raton Pass to the Park Entrance (though the landscape makes this kind of ride challenging). Consider additional trail options for single-use mountain biking. General excitement about the skills course and downhill mountain bike trails.
Hunting	Interest in more information on types and number of hunters. Desire to maintain a backcountry feel means hunters should not have motorized access. May not be necessary to implement closures for hunting due to proximity of the trail corridor to hunting areas (more information needed on harvests).
Motorized Access	There was a desire and interest for motorized access and a potential OHV course in the northern portion of the Park as part of the Master Plan.
Large Events	Consider how the space can accommodate larger events (races, Ranger talks, etc.).

Dogs	Interest in bringing dogs to the Park, even if only on designated trails.
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HABITAT CONSERVATION	
Excitement to Maintain Habitat	Participants expressed appreciation for the team's emphasis on providing as many recreational opportunities as possible while maintaining important habitat for wildlife. Participants understood the need to keep trails away from large sections of the property and encouraged the project team to provide interpretation and information for the public on why these decisions were made.
Wildlife Corridors	Some participants asked to hear more about how wildlife corridors were considered as part of the planning process. Project team members highlighted the importance of wildlife connectivity to State Wildlife Areas as well as across I-25.

STAKEHOLDERS	
Participants noted an appreciation for stakeholder engagement and encouraged the planning team to continue outreach to fill in important gaps in the outreach process.	
Tribal Engagement	Interest Group members highlighted the importance of tribal engagement prior to the finalization of the Master Plan. In particular, participants were interested in understanding the sanctity of the Peak and surrounding areas as well as the most appropriate way to communicate the tribal history of the Park. Subsequent to the meetings held in the fall, the planning team hosted on-site and virtual site tours with four tribes with strong historical ties to the Park.
Accessibility	Access and inclusion for all abilities, ages, and races was an important theme discussed by interest group members and the public. Trails and public spaces built for families, accessible to elders, and accessible using



	wheelchairs were an important consideration and participants encouraged the team to ensure these spaces are inclusive to provide an engaging experience in nature.
Spanish Language	In addition to accessibility, participants highlighted the importance of language access for Spanish speakers, encouraging the Park Management team to consider signage and other communications in both English and Spanish.
Maintain historical integrity	The history of the Park is important to many groups and users. Participants commended the team for ongoing studies to better understand the history of the park and encouraged the inclusion of all facets of the history (indigenous, grazing, etc.) into the interpretation and education offerings.

NEXT STEPS:

As part of the Master Plan, the project team will use this input to make any appropriate changes to the concept framework as well as in identifying a phasing and implementation plan for the Park. When asked about priorities, participants indicated a few key priorities they would like to see implemented in the coming years:

- Trail to the Peak
- Additional trails and connectivity
- Visitor Center
- Additional recreational uses: Mountain Biking, Equestrian
- Campgrounds
- Equestrian facilities

The planning team will engage stakeholders at the beginning of 2022 to discuss prioritization, funding, and a schematic design for the Park.



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F. Trail Maintenance

1. Maintenance of trails is an on-going task and numerous tasks fall under this routine program:

- Bridge inspections and repairs
- Technical trail feature repairs
- Repair any damage to trail treads
- Clean drainage structures to help eliminate ponding or gully/hill erosion
- Remove hazard trees, fallen trees and debris
- Replace missing and damaged regulatory, directional and interpretive signage
- Maintain access to key interior roads for administrative and emergency use
- Clean and repair ditches, culverts and other drainage structures when needed
- Graffiti removal and general maintenance of support facilities
- Weed control and mowing where needed or removal of invasive species
- Trees and shrubs trimmed in particular areas to maintain adequate sight distance
- Keep log for scheduling future maintenance and estimating costs and labor requirements
- To help staff/volunteers, keep a checklist on routine maintenance so nothing is overlooked

Table 11
Trail Maintenance Programming

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE
CRITICAL (Major safety issues)
Major flood damage to roads, trails, trailhead & parking lots
Monitor Park for new social trails or rogue trails and close ASAP
Hazard trees adjacent or already fallen on trails or roads
Damage to signage especially regulatory and directional
HIGH (Minor safety issues, significant damage or potential for damage)
Serious erosion concerns on trails and roads
Significant sediment buildup in drainage features
Major vegetation encroachment into trail corridor
Old, barbed wire fencing too close to trail
Graffiti or dumping of personal trash
MEDIUM (Typical maintenance, minor visual wear, requires attention for long term)
Minor erosion concerns on trails & roads
Minor sediment in drains but still functioning
Slight encroachment of vegetation into corridor
Noxious weed management
Surface debris cleanup (sweep/rake off loose gravel, rocks)
Monitor drainage crossings (arroyos, creeks, seeps, springs)
Kiosk/Interpretive signage maintenance and repair
LOW (Preventative maintenance / general cleanup)
Bench/picnic table conditions (stain or paint if needed)
Minor litter removal
Dog waste system service (if dogs are permitted)
Regular trashcan/dumpster service
Regrading parking lots and trailheads
Consider removal of stock tanks, hunting blinds and other hazardous or man-made structures

2. Assigning Appropriate Maintenance Tasks

2.1 FPSP Trail Crew

- Routine monitoring program for protection of natural and cultural resources
- Monitor for social trail and rogue trail activity (including closed roads)
- Routine inspections of buildings, bridges and other major infrastructure
- Evaluate need for additional fencing, gates, signage and amenities
- Install, repair or replace park signage as needed
- Routine service of trail-related site amenities
- Mechanical or chemical weed control measures
- Remove litter and identify perpetrators, when possible
- Repair vandalism
- Install fencing
- Routine cleaning of culverts on trails and interior roads

2.2 Trail Stewards (Volunteers)

- Help staff monitor trail tread conditions, trail features and trail amenities and report to staff
- Help staff monitor areas of high erosion, especially after storm events
- Monitor social trail and rogue trail activity and report to staff
- Maintain beginner and interpretive trails to provide a firm, stable surface
- Help staff monitor trail drainages, bridges and culverts for vegetation and sediment build up
- Help staff monitor vegetation for safety (widowmakers, dead limbs, stumps, trees, roots, etc.)
- Help staff monitor trail surface for vegetation encroachment
- Help staff monitor fencing and gates within or adjacent to the trail corridor
- Remove litter
- Help staff monitor removal of old fencing and posts
- Document/submit hours to staff

2.3 Volunteer Coordinator

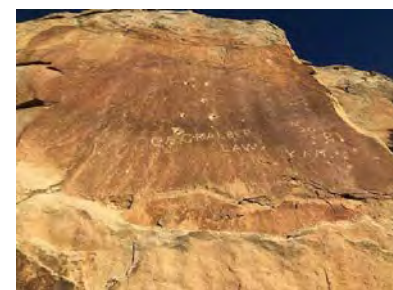
- Responsible for organizing and leading events
- Native seed collection days
- Native grassland restoration
- Manual weed pulling parties
- Litter clean-up days
- Ambassador or volunteer trail patrols (based on education for assistance not enforcement)
- Volunteer appreciation events
- Other community engagement events and activities



Trail Maintenance



Graffiti



Graffiti






ONE OF THE POTENTIAL TRAIL CONNECTION POINTS TO NEW MEXICO



MASTER PLAN REFERENCES

MASTER PLAN REFERENCES | 187



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