



JEFFERSON
COUNTY COLORADO
Open Space

2020 – 2025 Conservation Greenprint Public Comment Responses

GENERAL SUPPORT

- Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the revised Conservation Greenprint. The process seems to very well thought out, and I applaud the development of measurable objectives. I realize at this point, comments are not likely to have any bearing on the final product.
- Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft plan. Overall, I want to compliment the staff in producing an excellent long-range plan, which is well laid out, and easy to read and understand by the public. The plan provides good background about the park system. It provides excellent future long-range goals that are achievable, with measurable standards to evaluate whether or not the goals are being achieved. I like the organization of goals into Healthy Environment, Healthy Lands and Healthy People. I think all of the goals are worthy and well worth striving to achieve.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. I wish you all the best in implementing the Conservation Green Plan!
- Thank you for all your thoughtful work and taking so much care in the community involvement and allowing us to take more ownership in stewarding the lands around us. I really believe it creates more social capital and helps us in building stronger communities as well.
- Thank you for your thorough presentation about the 5-year plan for Jeffco Open Space.
- Thank you for your vision and work to take care of the open space. Jeffco open space is well maintained, volunteers on the trails are always friendly, and I appreciate the community connection.
- Good Morning, Our parks are one of the main reasons we moved to Evergreen, as well as the Evergreen Master Plan that set aside commercial areas and residential/agricultural areas to maintain business centric away from open space, ranches and residential. So

thank you for making this a priority and establishing a 5-year strategic plan as well as asking for public input.

RESPONSE

Thank you for your support of Jeffco Open Space. We're grateful for a community that values parks and open space. We believe providing avenues for people to connect with nature is more essential than ever.

GOAL 1 VISITOR STEWARDSHIP

- Visitor Stewardship: as the I-70 corridor becomes more crowded and hours long traffic jams are present Friday through Sunday, it is important to plan ahead that people will look closer in for recreation opportunities. The current COVID-19 use scenarios are a good "early warning" of what is likely ahead during the life of this plan. The Club does encourage even more outreach and education in Leave No Trace principles by JCOS staff and volunteers. We follow LNT closely in the Club. One thought: we appreciate people bagging up their animal waste. But then they forget to take the bags with them upon departure!!
- As someone who also likes to volunteer and learn about the landscapes I care about through stewardship programs. I would like to see that information disseminated via a newsletter or platform that doesn't require access to social media.
- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

Because of education people now pick up their dog poop but they think it is acceptable to leave the colorful bags along the trail. I have seen dozens of bags at the start of most trails. Even if they think they will pick up when they return they don't. There needs to be education that dropping a bag is littering. And enforce this.

- We live in the neighborhood west of Alderfer Three Sisters. This morning, my husband hiked into the park from our neighborhood and a glint caught his eye. He ended up going off trail to find a fire pit filled with beer cans. It was in the area where there used to be some charming rock formations, including one we called "the troll" but of course many of the rock formations have long since been pushed down and busted up. Heartbreaking. It's between Buffalo Creek on one side and the butte...between the old trail that used to lead up to the top of the butte and Mountain Muhly trail. If you were to go straight west from the end of Coneflower.

Anyway, Todd didn't have a bag with him but will go back later today or tomorrow morning to clear out the beer cans and disassemble the fire pit. Which is more disturbing – that there was recently a beer party in the park? Or that there was an illegal campfire just a few hundred yards from a neighborhood, lit by people who might have been drunk?

I don't know that there is anything that can be done...but I noticed in the paper that JCOS is working on a long-term plan that might address visitor education and behavior. Here is one more example of the uphill battle we face.

When Jeffco closed the dog park in Evergreen a serious problem was created. We are not dog owners, yet I pickup bagged dog poop and unbagged dog poop in 3Sisters on a regular basis. The unleashed dogs and poop have increased in the years since the dog park closure. I'm aware of the Friend of the Dog Park support and initiative to engage EPRD and Jeffco and I'm 100% opposed to EPRD's involvement. I pay EPRD taxes for their programs and Jeffco taxes for their programs. The dog park was and still in a Jeffco responsibility and relocating it to an appropriate open space property (maybe you end up identifying 2 sites and rotating between Evergreen and the new site every x years). EPRD is a district of limited tax paying customers who enjoy the benefits of a rec and park district. A dog park will bring people from all over and should therefore be covered by a Jeffco based tax revenue system. Please work this as a priority identifying a new space and with the Friends of the Dog Park establish a park ASAP. Jeffco should be planning for the dog park long term maintenance and land management with changing guidelines as determined by its use.

RESPONSE

JCOS being proximate to the largest urban population center in the State of Colorado, a State known for its world class recreation opportunities, means that over 7 million visitors per year enjoy JCOS parks, which is both a success and a challenge. Given the context in which we exist, and given the exponential increase in park visitation due to COVID-19, promotion of long-standing principles such as Leave No Trace and other stewardship messages have become even more imperative. We continue to spread a series of messages in the spirit of caring for the land, and we are committed to doing so heading into the next 5-year strategic plan window of time.

Stewardship campaigns centered on dog waste pick-up have included "There is No Poop Fairy" and "Let's Doo It" in recent years. On-the-ground work is a daily task for JCOS staff and volunteers at our parks, including signage, personal interactions with visitors and provision of bag dispensers. With an estimated 3 million annual canine park visitors, we are thankful that the norm is to leash and pick up after your pet. If it weren't the norm, we'd be up to our eyes in pet waste.

As for a JCOS dog off leash park, due to the high use and level of service/resources required, intensive impacts and that other dog parks in Jeffco are operated by local entities, the JCOS Advisory Committee and staff believe dog parks should be operated by other local entities not the County. In 2017, JCOS staff formed an 11-member working group, including members of the Friends of Evergreen Dog Park (FEDP) and other public agency partners. For close to three years we have worked together in the search for a suitable location for a dog off leash park. The latest developments include exploration of a private property to host a private, fee-based facility. Please stay tuned.

Posting maps and park regulations at major access points improved our ability to communicate essential regulations such as leashing and picking up after your pet. With proper posting, rangers are better able to enforce these critical regulations through written warnings and tickets, protecting natural resources and improving safety for pets and people.

Jeffco Park Rangers enforce posted park regulations through educational contacts, verbal warnings, written warnings and penalty assessments (tickets with fines associated with them). Enforcing the leash law is one of our top tickets. Catching people leaving poop bag behind is

tougher, but when we see it, we write tickets for this violation. Many of our visitors commit to “paying it forward” by picking up abandoned poop bags and carrying them out with their own pet’s waste. Rangers also pick up and track (new for 2020) the number of poop bags we collect along the trail. We hope this number will help us better understand compliance levels for proper waste management. It is our hope to make leaving a bag behind socially unacceptable so it does not take a ranger to get the few who can’t do the right thing to do it.

GOAL 2 INFORMATION SHARING

- The plan mentioned climate change on page 9 as a factor that will affect the park system. But the goals never really directly addressed how they may be impacted by climate change. For example, climate change will likely affect forest health, the war on weeds, and habitat restoration. Was climate change taken into account in the quantitative standards for these goals? How will Jeffco Open Space address climate change with respect to its management and operations-- will this be addressed in a separate plan?

RESPONSE

Thank you for asking about our response to climate change! Frankly we don’t have all the answers to this question and would like to engage the science world and community in a robust conversation about this issue, that’s one of the reasons we developed Goal #1 relative to community engagement. One example of such engagement is our work in 2019, with a student group from the University of Colorado at Boulder Masters of the Environment Program on the development of a Resiliency Framework for our park system. Please see our website for a copy of the framework, here is the link to this work:

<https://www.jeffco.us/DocumentCenter/View/21891/JCOS-Resiliency-Framework>. It is based on the State of Colorado framework as well as other jurisdictions addressing how to be as prepared as we can be for coming changes in the environmental, infrastructure and social spheres. Implementation of the recommendations contained in the framework will be forthcoming. Step one was to create the framework, of which we are very proud. We look forward to tackling this issue with the scientists and the community.

GOAL 3 PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

- The use of volunteers is mentioned (but only directly for Open Space). I believe JeffCo Open Space has failed to take advantage of partnerships with local organizations that share a similar mission and goals. This good greatly increase the support and work with JeffCo Open Space.

RESPONSE

While we always have room for improvement, like any organization, we have partnered with a long list of local and state organizations with similar mission over the course of the last several years including local schools, cities and districts in the County. Please check out the educational programs page on our website (www.jeffco.us/openspace). If you have specific ideas on partnerships, please contact our office and we would love to discuss them with you.

GOAL 4 LAND ACQUISITION

- We agree with the concept of acquiring 3,000 additional acres for public open space and parkland. We won't ask "where!!" since acquisition always depends on identification of willing sellers. We do ask, however, about JCOS' current thinking on conservation easements. The Club supports use of easements in conserving and protecting open lands from encroaching development. However, easements sometimes have terms that preclude normal public access. The Club has observed that Douglas County Open Space offers occasional ranger/staff guided hikes, via special use permits, into areas that do not have general public access, mostly due to easement terms. Does/will JCOS offer similar?

RESPONSE

We are willing and able to preserve land in a number of ways including conservation easements (CE's), fee purchases, leases, the land entitlement process, etc. Most of the landowners we encounter are interested selling their land. In fact, of the nearly 60,000 acres we have preserved since 1972 only about 1,000 acres are held in CE's. Also, we work regularly with our land trust partners to explore options for conservation easements where they make sense. Providing public access for nature-based experiences is important to our residents and therefore is central to our land acquisition criteria and mission. As for special accommodation areas that do not have general public access, these can be arranged by permit for scientific purposes and on a limited and occasional basis, for guided hikes. Hikes will likely not be offered in 2020 as we need our team to focus on our high visitation levels.

GOAL 5 WAR ON WEEDS

- Weed control: I found myself wondering if this was proactive or reactive, and how those two methods might work together. When you say "treat" weeds on x number of acres, does that just mean spraying? Or are there trail design and trail damage mitigation actions, and visitor education efforts, that will go hand-in-hand with spraying, to achieve that total impact? I've been in land and property management awhile, and am not adverse to spraying weeds, because I know how to do it safely; but I know a lot of people are, and when they see the figures, they'll be thinking, "does this mean all those acres will have chemicals on them??"
- Open Space has asked for input on its parks plan. My input is this: please take care of our parks so that we have them in the future. It is much more important to control the noxious weeds than build more trails. Otherwise we have trails through dry weed beds versus beautiful wildflowers. Why are we spending so much money on a peak to plains trail, ripping up what used to be a fairly pristine area on the south side of Clear Creek up the canyon to put in a trail? Why not use that money instead to nurture our open spaces back to health and beauty?

RESPONSE

The JCOS Natural Resource team and volunteers use many methods for treating weeds including hand pulling, mowing and use of herbicides. Prior to building new trails, JCOS will be

pre-treating the area where the trail will be built to help reduce the spread of weeds. Additionally, educational campaigns coupled with boot brushes at trailheads are important components to reduce the spread of weeds. Funding for both the treatment of weeds and construction of trails has already been identified and will be budgeted annually.

GOAL 6 FOREST HEALTH

- My one comment is about taking the underbrush in the forest out. It serves at least 2 purposes, to prevent erosion and home/food for the forest animals. Most of the forest are pine trees which drop needles and make the ground very acidic. Not much grows in that type of dirt. The Boulder Rose and just a few other shrubs do. Their roots hold the soil in place. Cutting these out will lead to erosion and also make cutting new neighborhood trails easier.

RESPONSE

Thank you for sharing your expertise on this topic. The JCOS Natural Resources team understands the importance of underbrush in the forest and will be sensitive to this as we continue our efforts to improve forest health.

GOAL 7 HABITAT RESTORATION

- Acquisition is great, but why isn't there a goal for managing current properties (outside of cutting trees). Better management of meadows to sustain biodiversity is needed (beyond weeds).
- As the monitor of WildAware in Coal Creek Canyon, I'd like to affirm that a avenue for posting wildlife sightings is extremely important. To share a sighting is to "own" an experience and feel important to the mission.
- I finally got around to watching the video. I don't really have any substantive comments. At first glance of the goals I saw an omission of a "wildlife" goal. But Nancy did a good highlighting the goals that either benefit wildlife, or ones that will take special considerations to address wildlife impacts.
- Wildlife.....Wildlife is everywhere in the county above the "urban flats." The Club is aware that Colorado Parks & Wildlife is in process of re-doing its 20 year old "Planning Trails With Wildlife In Mind" document. JCOS has been part of CPW's team in updating the document. Are we correct then in stating that JCOS knows the location of the wildlife and habitat "hot spots" in the county?

RESPONSE

Thank you for your comments in honor of our silent park residentswildlife and plant communities. Acknowledgement of the impact land preservation and the balance of providing nature-based experiences and the conflict this can pose is a daily conversation for us. Our "lot in life" on the frontlines of where the plains meet the foothills west of Denver, a metro population of over three million and growing, means we have our work cut out for us. Restoration efforts

have so many benefits to wildlife and the landscape level ecosystem. Wetlands, grasslands, and all types in between are part of this goal to make better what has been compromised by either nature or human activities. This could mean trail corridors are restored with native seed, or wetlands are enhanced to allow for natural processes to thrive. So much work and so much excitement exists around this goal.

GOAL 8 EASY & EQUITABLE PARK ACCESS

- I think more than ever equitable access to trails is necessary. When I consider the current environment we are living in and who has access to trails 10 miles from their home, this is an ideal priority, so thank you for addressing this.

I also like the plan for environmental stewardship and educating people about the land (and hopefully how to be an ethical hiker/biker/user of the land). I have noticed an increase of trash, poop bags, tissues on the trails since more people have been utilizing the trails.

One last thing concerning trail users right now, when I have been out hiking, typically very early in the morning, I've noticed most cyclists are not wearing face coverings. About 80% of the hikers/runners are using some kind of face covering. I'm on the trails not nearly as much as I was pre-COVID, though I'm wondering if there is any kind of enforcement of this norm?

- "Equitable Access to the Outdoors Throughout Jefferson County." We like your inclusion of this as it is important that all citizens have access outside, especially those with mobility impairments. During my 34 years of leading Club hikes, I have led occasional "mobility hikes" for individuals needing a motorized scooter, or a wheelchair, to get around. It is important not to forget these people. There is also a need for greater access by people of color, and disadvantaged populations in general, to the outdoors.
- Also, it's good to see the "10 minute" metric is still alive and well. I've been getting some mulch recently for our yard from the Lakewood Greenhouse. It feels good to hop in my car for an 8 minute drive. There's something about the psyche that likes 8 minutes more than 11...
- I have been a park visitor and volunteer for 25 years and thousands of hours in our parks. Here are my comments:

Connecting Trails: I have suggested (informally) in the past that it would be nice to have more connecting trails between parks. In fact, it would be very cool to have the potential to connect all the parks north to south as a goal for those want a longer or more varied hiking experience. I like the Black Bear Trail effort for example and would like to see more of that.

- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

- I do not agree with spending \$\$ on the 10 mile 'accessible' plan for the mountain area. I live a few blocks away from a jeffco open space park and i always drive to it. Why would a path to the park be helpful??? The purpose is to be in the park, not spend the first mile or so walking to it. The people who bike do not use the paved trails in town, they ride on the road and will continue to do so.

RESPONSE

JCOS is committed to access equity by offering a connection to nature for all. Evaluating what accommodations, we have is part of our systemwide plan heading into our five-year goals. For clarity, the draft Jeffco Trails Plan goal is to provide access within a 10-minute walk in the plains and 10-minute drive in the mountains. This connectivity will provide access to the outdoors closer to home, which is strongly desired by Jeffco residents.

GOAL 9 TRAIL EXPANSION

- I would like to encourage you to expand on goal number 9 to include additional trail in more popular parks. Recently, there has been trail creation at locations that, for various reasons, are not popular, and some requiring mowing to keep them clear.

In your 2018 trail proposal process 114 miles of trail per proposed and advanced for further study. Many of these trails hold merit and could easily double the new trail that is outlined in this Greenprint.

- Do you already know where the 38 miles of new trails and 11 new or improved parking lots will be located? Can you share this information with us?
- We have observed that the draft plan mentions creating 38 miles of new trail in the JCOS system. CMC is curious as to how this figure was arrived at. Is it the intent to have some of this new mileage be hiker/runner only trail?
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Jefferson County Conservation Greenprint. As an organization that promotes the protection of native plants and habitats in Colorado, the Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) supports the focus of the Greenprint to protect and preserve the native ecosystems of Jefferson County while encouraging the appreciation of these natural resources by residents and visitors.

In particular, we support the goals emphasizing the importance of controlling invasive noxious weeds (Goal #5) and habitat restoration (Goal #7).

For the goals of improving the trail systems (Goal #8, #9, and #10), CONPS would like to emphasize that all trails and associated structures should be carefully designed and maintained to protect sensitive plant communities and wildlife habitat.

Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to review the overall goals of the master plan plan. We will be particularly interested in seeing how you plan to implement these goals in

each individual park. So, to that end, we would appreciate the opportunity to comment on the action plan for each park as they are developed.

RESPONSE

Thanks to your many thoughtful responses, we are increasing our goal of trail miles in the next five years to 50 miles! This is a 12-mile increase above the originally proposed trail mileage offered in the coming five years. Many of the trail miles are part of the trail proposal received in 2018 and will very much be in partnership with community organizations, while being sensitively placed to honor plants and wildlife. This is what Jeffco residents expect us to do as public land stewards. Yes, we do plan to identify more designated and directional trails – both hiker/horse only and bike only - per the strong interest in this demonstrated in recent surveys.

GOAL 10 QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE

DESIGNATED TRAILS/PARKS

- Generally in agreement with the objectives. JCOS does a remarkable job and I am so happy to have access to their parks. I do have concerns however that in an effort to have so many multi use efforts, it is reducing the enjoyment of the parks for everyone. I would support more designated days or designated parks for just hiking or biking for example. I know you encourage us to “share the trail”. However it is almost impossible to execute in many areas. I also feel we have more and more need for quiet and solitude so I hope some parks will be allowed to be free of large group activities, etc.

Thank you for the magnificent job you do. Also I do enjoy the tweets of your Ranger/Poet, Jason.

- The purpose of my email is to submit some comments / ideas around trail usage and reinforce that while equestrians are a very small percentage of trail users.... we do still love to use the trails with our equine buddies. It seems too often that equestrians get left out of the equation.

Designated Use Trails / Alternating Use

o Horses and bikes don't mix really well when people don't yield to horses

o I have had a LOT of run-ins with bikers where they don't listen when I ask them to yield, blow right by us, freak my horse out, ride by way too close, etc.... it can get 'entertaining' quick when yielding isn't observed - some people just don't know, so I try to give them the benefit of the doubt

o I love the idea of designated use / alternating use - Hikers + horses get along great!

o I LOVE the designated use day proposal for Apex Park - I have yet to ride there because of all the horror stories I've been told by other horse riders - horses are getting pushed out by other trail using groups and it's a sad, sad thing

o Please allow horses on hiker only trails where possible and keep usage to hikers+horses combo (i believe this is happening, but just want to reaffirm that it's a good thing :))

- Just watched the video. It was encouraging. One of my concerns is e-bikes. Please don't ever allow them on the trails. As an equestrian it is hard enough with the regular mountain bikers. Most of them are polite, but it is still scary when they come up fast behind your horse or fast around a blind corner. My other concern is the signs for parking that use to read horse trailers and now read oversized vehicles. There will be an empty parking lot, room for lots of cars and regular little cars will be parked in the oversized space! We equestrians really feel like we are being squeezed out. I love the idea of certain days for bikes and others for horses or hikers like Centennial Cone. As I said before most hikers and bikers are polite and if we can get off the trails safely on our horses we do, but sometimes it is too steep on both sides of the trail to pull over safely. In that case the bikers have to pull off or wait behind us until we can get off. If the bikers have to wait behind us until we can pull off especially down hill they are not happy. Thanks and again please no e-bikes on the trails.
- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

In high traffic parks there should be designated trails for hiking and biking.

If Evergreen can not come up with any space for an off leash dog park, they should designate one trail in several different parks for an off leash experience. If this option was available in several parks it would spread out the demand. The rules would be pay for use to ensure control and user responsibility.

RESPONSE

Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and experiences with the desire for designated use trails, especially related to equestrian enjoyment of trails and group activities that impact your park experiences. Thank you for acknowledging the many challenges associated with this approach. On the topic of e-bikes, please check out our webpage on the topic: <https://www.jeffco.us/3618/e-bikes>. We try so very hard to be accommodating to the varied visitor interests at our parks.

Also know that JCOS is working with our partners, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks on a trail courtesy study. Funded by Great Outdoors Colorado, this study is looking at what messages work best to get visitors to SLOW DOWN and COMMUNICATE prior to passing other park visitors on the trail. We are hopeful a unified message based on research will help us improve poor passing behavior.

We, too, love our Ranger Jason.

OVERCROWDED PARKS & TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS

- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

The parking lots are not large enough to accommodate the amount of people that can safely be in the parks.

- In accordance with Goal 9, expansion of trails. It also makes sense to evaluate the parking situation. Many of these lots now require monitoring and issuing of tickets on the weekends. It would be nice if there were better plans for lot overflow parking as well as potentially adding bike racks at trailheads.
- As an Evergreen resident and neighbor to the upper 3 Sisters/Alderfer park my main concern is the over-use of our park. In our 6 years here the parking and traffic related to the parks has become a safety, trail/park management issue; dog poop in the park, trash along the road, parking filling the lots and on both sides of the road, not adhering to the trails and trail courtesy, etc. We don't even venture out to any Jeffco Open Space park on a weekend - it's not an enjoyable experience for us any more.

The pillars for "trails", "visitor info and management" and "access and trailheads" MUST consider the town where the parks are located and what traffic the local roads can accommodate. As Denver grows, the foothills will continue to get overrun with local as well as out of state visitors. As people go back to work, weekends will become more of a problem. The balance of a recreational get away for visitors and a livable residential neighborhood has to be kept in check. I welcome the visitors to the Evergreen businesses and the open space in Evergreen, however, there needs to be ways to curb the overcrowding. Hanging Lake took steps to protect this amazing resource - I believe Jeffco Open Space needs to look into similar measures to be sure we maintain our natural resources. The burden of our natural resource management should be shared with our out of state visitors - fee based visits should be considered. Parking permits for residents should be given priority in our parks - not unlike the coastal beach areas during the summers.

The "lot full - move on" signs during the "Stay at Home" order did nothing to curb the crowds. While Jeffco patrolled the parking lots and turned people away at the lot entrance, they just drove down the road and parked on the side of the narrow 2-lane Buffalo Park Rd.

I read the challenges of "closing" the Jeffco Open Space parks where there are hundreds of trailheads without a way to close them off and limited resources to patrol all parks. Jeffco will need to find a way to address this as a way to manage overuse of trails...starting with biker-only days and hiker/walker-only days. A volunteer program to help with controls, education, enforcement may also be necessary.

Engagement with the local fire departments is critical. Evergreen Fire is especially concerned about wild fire danger and evacuation routes. When we have cars parked everywhere along both sides of the road, evacuation of residents puts everyone at risk. Fire danger is at its highest during the summer when trail use is at its max.

- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

The park experience on weekends has become horrific. Most locals will not go near the parks on Saturday and Sunday. I now see Jeffco Sherriffs at the parking lots. This is not a job for Sherriffs. Jeffco open space needs to be proactive now and not continue to stick their head in the sand and act like these problems will resolve on their own. We need rules and solutions NOW or you will be reactive and close parks.

- I have been a park visitor and volunteer for 25 years and thousands of hours in our parks. Here are my comments:

The parks are seriously overcrowded. Even before Covid-19, popular parks nearest Denver are overcrowded on weekends and holidays. Its a function of the two P's: popularity and population. People need to connect with nature and exercise and JCOS has successfully provided many such opportunities. However, growth of the metro area and sheer numbers are creating a problem in the parks. Increasing trail and resource damage, parking safety, lack of solitude and quiet, disrespect among classes of park users, (especially dog walkers and mountain bikers) are degrading the experience. These problems continue to grow with popularity and population. This may not be comfortable with the mandate, but to protect park values, JCOS will need to consider a means to limit numbers in certain parks on certain days. This could be a parking fee, a permit system, temporary closures (going on now with Covid), OSMP has a parking permit system in place. Many national parks and some forest service trails have a permit system to camp and some to hike.

I have previously provided comments to the County Commissioners and JCOS Director on suggestions to limit overcrowding and virus exposure during the pandemic. We can only hope it gets better soon. Let me know if you can't find them.

- Sustainability. Although it's not directly mentioned in the goals, I think sustainability is an important concept to include in this long-range plan: sustainability as far as the parks' natural and cultural resources, visitation, and management. We need to ensure that all of the goals and related actions to implement the goals are sustainable for the 5-year timeframe of this plan and for the foreseeable future.

Visitor Capacity. Visitor capacity is another important concept that is not directly mentioned in the goals. With increasing visitation of all types, the parks are going to face more and more conflicts between users (e.g., bikers and hikers), between users and resources (e.g., visitor impacts on trails and on sensitive wildlife, increased social trails), and with inadequate or insufficient facilities (e.g., lack of parking spaces to meet demand). Visitor capacity will affect both the environment and the quality of visitor experiences provided in each of the parks. For example, can we provide a quality visitor experience while still providing for unlimited growth in use? I suggest the conservation plan acknowledge the need to develop visitor capacities for the parks.

- Clearly people management on existing properties is needed. Even during the Stay at Home Order, Elk Management and Three Sisters properties were beyond capacity with no intervention from JeffCo Open Space
- Regarding the new or improved eleven trailheads, will consideration be given to encourage people biking to trailheads where possible, rather than driving? It would seem that the county-wide trails assessment now underway with the JeffCo Trails Council would fit in very nicely to this trailhead effort. Our thoughts here reflect the regular overcrowding of JCOS parking lots on most weekend days of the year.

RESPONSE

Thank you for taking the timing to comment on the challenges associated with incredibly popular trailheads at such a trying time. Please take a look at the proposed trail projects related to Goal 9 in the web-based map that includes various foothills projects acknowledging visitors from the Denver metro area interested in closer-to-home get-aways. We are committed to a multi-modal, diversified set of experiences for people on the front line of creation in Colorado that is sensitive to the natural resources we are obligated to protect as responsible public land managers. Visitor pressures to the public lands we manage on a daily basis is not lost on us and we strive to be as responsive as we can be.

OTHER COMMENTS

VISION STATEMENT & GREENPRINT HEALTHY THEME

- My 1st comment pertains to the slide being shown at timestamp 2:00 with a title of “Our Goals for the Future”. I am a bit confused with the grouping of “Healthy Environment”. The goals underneath this category seem like they are very people focused and loosely relate to the Environment. I am wondering if there is possible a better grouping term than “Healthy Environment”. I understand why we would want the 3 categories of Environment, Lands, and People, but it feels like we are forcing the goals into the environment category.

My 2nd comment pertains to the adjusted vision statement “Nature, heritage & humanity thriving in wild harmony”, the “wild harmony” piece of this statement feels very much like a buzz word. I feel like our previous vision statement was clear from hearing it/reading it the point we are trying to get across (“Respect fosters collaboration which leads to innovation”). Our new statement is not as clear to me and feels like it warrants an additional statement to be made by what we mean.

- Vision: Hard to imagine in 2020 we adhere to the notion that we can live in harmony with nature. This is far too fluffy (just some sort of balance would be reasonable). This type of sentiment is proliferated in the theme of forest health - sound like community fire mitigation to me. For example work at Flying J seems extreme and actually is occurring during bird nesting season.

- We agree with the general mission of JCOS and have probably expressed said support sometime in the remote past: the mission to Preserve, Protect, and Provide. We also note, and like, the "catchy comment" now developed: Nature, Heritage, and Humanity Thriving in Wild Harmony." We further see, and endorse, the five Focus Areas: 1) Natural Resources, 2) Park & Heritage Resources, 3) Trails, 4) Access and Trailheads, 5) Visitor Information & Management.

RESPONSE

Absolutely acknowledge the varied response to the vision statement and organization of the themes of the Greenprint. That's where meaningful discourse exists. Wild + Harmony in the Front Range of the Denver metro area seems just that. It's the context in which we live and what we strive to offer for visitors, both human and wildlife. When we lose wild as an offering, we lose part of who we are as an organization and what we have to offer to the community. We could write a novel on this existence, especially in these current times. Thank you for sharing.

QUESTION ON HOW PLAN IMPLEMENTED - STRATEGIES

- Evaluation. The plan provides the vision and long-range goals. But it does not indicate the process by how the goals will be implemented or evaluated to determine whether or not they are being achieved or need to be modified. This may be addressed as part of other step-down plans, but I suggest this be indicated as part of the plan. (The u-tube presentation identified how this plan fits into the broader planning framework, but this was lacking in the actual document.)

RESPONSE

Each Greenprint Goal has a backup detail that outlines how it will be achieved. Also, evaluation of progress is going through a Dashboard and reported in our annual report *Preservation Progress*

COVID IMPACT

- Covid-19. I'm sure the draft plan was written before the spread of Covid-19. This is having, and will continue to have, a major impact, on visitation, park management, funding, etc. during the timeframe of this plan (at least the next couple of years). Although I think the quantitative goals were doable before Covid-19, I suggest relooking at them and seeing if they're still feasible as written--or if they need to be adjusted.

RESPONSE

Thank you for your , COVID-19 impact comments. Indeed, this plan was largely crafted before the pandemic. We are closely monitoring and adjusting to high park visitation, financial impacts and the like. At this point we see even more need to press on with our goals and are optimistic that our economy will recover. Again, we will monitor this situation closely and make adjustments to our goals as needed.

CONSIDER PARK PASSES

- Given the ambitious draft goals to 'preserve, protect, and provide,' it's time to implement a "pay for the privilege" fee for non-Jefferson County residents.

Funding these plans that are used by non-County residents solely on the backs of County taxpayers must end. Require parks passes for trailheads for all non-County residents. The City of Boulder provides you a model from which to draw.

Park resources, amenities, and broad goals will continue to suffer, and users will continue to have a degraded experience, as non-County residents flock to JeffCo parks in ever-increasing numbers. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

- I watched your video and have been following your developments. I have lived and hiked in the Evergreen area for 25 years.

Jeffco should adopt free or minimal parking fees to jeffco residents, and charge \$7 for all out of county parking. Boulder does this for their open space. It would at least encourage car pooling. I have seen groups of 4 meet up in separate cars. (Before Covid).

RESPONSE

Thank you for your comments centered on fees for non-resident park visitors. Please see Greenprint Goal 2 on the importance of having community conversations about such impactful topics. We plan to engage the community on this topic in the coming years. In order to do this there are many economic, logistical and social issues that will need to be addressed.

ADVERTISING PUBLIC COMMENT FOR GREENPRINT

- Just an FYI, your email was verified, quoted then sent out to the homeowners of 6 HOAs under me. I hope all other HOA managers would send out the information as well. Hopefully you get more responses because there are over 500,000 people in the county and 2,800 survey responses is a very small response. Teams were probably stopping people at trailheads to get that many though...

RESPONSE

So grateful for you spreading the word! Thank you! We try so very hard to reach as many people as possible in our asks and messaging. The more help, the more grateful we are.

FORMATTING

- On a few of the pages, the title has the bottom of the text cut off. This is probably the result of the sizing for the text box in the indesign file. Examples include: pg. 24 “Looking Ahead: Healthy People; Pg. 18 “looking ahead”; pg. 20 “looking ahead”..
- On pg. 11, bullet number 1. For emerging trends “providing open spaces and parkland” feels incomplete. We already provide open space and park land, so what are we trying to say that we will do in response? Are we going to provide more open space and park land? Different open space and parkland? New open space and parkland?
- The image of the runners on page 6 is a little blurry. Could this be a different image? Or scaled to be less pixelated?

RESPONSE

Thank you! Your attention to detail is so very appreciated.



Opening the Future for Business in Jefferson County, Colorado

May 12, 2020

Mr. Tom Hoby, Director
Jefferson County Open Space
700 Jefferson County Parkway
Suite 100, Open Space Building
Golden, CO 80401

Re: Conservation Greenprint

Dear Mr. Hoby:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Jefferson County Open Space 5-year Plan. The staff and board of the Jefferson County Economic Development Corp. have appreciated our partnership over the years and value the collaborative nature your department embraces as it moves through its planning processes.

As the economic development organization for Jefferson County, our mission is to strengthen the economic vitality through the attraction, retention, and expansion of primary jobs. We fully understand the importance of open space to the economic vitality of our region and state. Open Space provides Jefferson County residents and businesses a place to recreate, preserves natural resources, and contributes to the overall quality of life that has made Jefferson County the best locale to live, work and play.

As you continue to plan for the future, it is our sincere desire that many of the practices you have historically followed remain in the updated plan. Specifically, we would respectfully request the inclusion of the current Master Plan language as it relates to the following and is further detailed for written communication in Appendix 1:

- Willing sellers;
- No use of eminent domain for acquisition purposes;
- An allowance for landowners to request that the Open Space Department remove their property from any maps that identify future areas of acquisition; and,
- An acknowledgement that when land is purchased for open space, it is removed from property tax rolls which fund schools, law enforcement, fire protection, etc.
- Provide an opportunity and connection for Jeffco EDC officials to speak with the current landowners prior to showing their land as a potential acquisition to help them best understand options to prevent any unintended impacts.

In addition to the acknowledgements above, as Jefferson County continues to think strategically about its open space needs, we believe it is critical that existing open space lands are accessible through the creation of expanded trails, trailheads, and parking areas. Additionally, existing properties should



Opening the Future for Business in Jefferson County, Colorado

continue to be fully and appropriately maintained. As budgets are stressed at all levels of local government, we believe that operation and maintenance costs should include full consideration of Jefferson County Open Space financially supporting any fire and rescue needs it may utilize within its boundaries.

Finally, it is our hope that the full landscape of the County be taken into consideration. We firmly believe that land that is available for commercial development, residential development, and open space must be considered in unison to ensure informed decision making and an understanding of any trade-offs that result from preferring one land use over another.

The county has approximately 420,000 acres of land in unincorporated Jefferson County. According to Jefferson County's Comprehensive Master Plan, over 40 percent of this land falls within protected open space, which includes Jefferson County Open Space, Denver Parks, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Parks, and parkland owned by a variety of cities, and park and recreation districts.

According to our records, there is approximately 1,700 acres of vacant land in unincorporated Jefferson County that is zoned for commercial/industrial uses. It is critical to retain land uses that expand and diversify the county's economic base and create opportunities for primary job growth, as there is a limited supply of land available for office and industrial development. The ability to fully develop our limited amount of land zoned for commercial/industrial should remain unencumbered by any future acquisitions.

Additionally, commercial property taxes pay for a large portion of the services citizens receive from the county. Since Jefferson County does not rely heavily on sales taxes to fund its operations, future economic development opportunities should remain a primary focus for the county, as it is the mechanism for funding county services. The more diverse the tax base, the more resilient Jefferson County will be to withstand economic downturns and hardships, much like the one we are experiencing now.

Therefore, Jeffco EDC respectfully discourages the acquisition of land for open space that is recommended for commercial and industrial uses.

Thank you again for the opportunity to partner with you. We look forward to working together to ensure Jefferson County remains vibrant and economically sound for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Tidmore", is written over a light gray circular background.

Jansen K. Tidmore
President & CEO

Appendix 1

1. *Disclaimer: Jefferson County does not warrant the completeness or accuracy of this map and shall not be liable for damages of any kind arising from its use. This map has been created by Jefferson County Open Space ("JCOS") for planning purposes only and has no effect on zoning or property values. JCOS will only acquire property from willing sellers and does not use eminent domain. The private property shown on this map does not imply an owner's willingness to sell, nor does it imply that open space is the only appropriate use of the land. Upon written request by a landowner, JCOS will remove their property from consideration for open space acquisition. Properties that meet JCOS acquisition criteria and have willing sellers may be considered for open space preservation including those that are not shown on this map.*
2. *Acquisition Process. Any individual can submit a proposal for acquisition consideration. While one acquisition criterion is sufficient for property consideration, multiple criteria will usually build a stronger case for acquisition. Field trips to the site, financial and other considerations are used to compile a staff recommendation to the Open Space Advisory Committee and discussed at public meetings where citizen participation is encouraged. Jeffco Open Space works only with willing sellers and negotiates terms that meet the overall objectives and purpose of the acquisition. Once a project has received a recommendation from the Open Space Advisory Committee and approval by the Board of County Commissioners', staff can complete final terms. "*

PLANNING REVIEW MEMO

Date: June 1, 2020
To: Jefferson County Open Space
From: Dylan Monke, Planner
Re: Conservation Greenprint 2020-2025
Case no.: 20-108196 OA

Planning supports the endeavors of Open Space and enhanced collaboration between our divisions. While this document reflects a vision for Open Space in the County, we believe it could benefit from collaboration in several of our shared processes and documents.

For the Goals section:

- 1) The current Planning and Zoning referral process for ongoing and future land use changes is an excellent opportunity to reference the goals of this and other Open Space planning documents and offer details about how to refine incoming proposals.
- 2) The equitable access goals are admirable. Planning supports inclusivity and encourages Open Space to comment on this during referral comment periods for development proposals. Comments could encourage access easements or new trails where applicable and ways to sustain the existing network however possible.
- 3) How can Planning best support implementation for the 38 miles of new trails proposed? We encourage Open Space staff to consider how development projects can further the goals identified in the Conservation Greenprint when reviewing planning and zoning referrals.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the Conservation Greenprint. There are clear opportunities for Open Space and Planning and Zoning to work together to achieve stated goals from the Greenprint. Although the Greenprint does not contain specific references to other planning documents, the vision and goals should be used where appropriate to evaluate development proposals. Further, long range land use plans should be considered as a frame of reference when identifying property for acquisition and for future trail locations. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this aspirational document. We look forward to working with you to achieve the identified goals.,

Dylan Monke, Planner