

OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 1777 Broadway

MEETING AGENDA

(Please note that times are approximate.)

- 6:00 I.** Call to Order
- Oath of Office – Tom Isaacson
 - Election of Officers
- 6:10 II.** Approval of Minutes
- 6:15 III.** * Public Participation for Items Not on the Agenda
- 6:25 IV.** South Boulder Creek Action Group Presentation
- 6:40 V.** Matters from Staff
Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Area Designation Briefing
Progress report on projects
Budget briefing
Update on Google “Trailview” project
Upcoming schedule
- 8:00 VI.** Matters from the Board
Draft Board Editorial for the North Trail Study Area Plan
- 8:10 VII.** * West Trail Study Area Implementation: Towhee/Homestead Trail Reroute Due to 2013 Flood
- 9:00 VIII.** Adjournment

*Public Participation

OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

Meeting Date March 11, 2015

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Isaacson Shelley Dunbar Frances Hartogh Molly Davis Kevin Bracy Knight

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Tracy Winfree Jim Reeder Mark Gershman Kelly Wasserbach Mike Orosel
Steve Armstead Jennelle Freeston Greg Seabloom Linda VanDervort Lisa Dierauf
Dave Barry Kristin Weinberger Deryn Wagner Michele Gonzales Leah Case

GUESTS

Ian Coddington, NIST, Quantum Electronics and Photonics

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Approval of the Minutes

Tom Isaacson asked to change the language on page two to say, “. . . if that is the starting point.” He said on page two, the language in the second to the last paragraph should say, “. . . gave an update on the Joder Property.” On page three, “Gregory Canyon” should be changed to “Chapman Drive.” Frances Hartogh said on page four, it should read, “Frances said if it is worded that the county has sole discretion to maintain, she is concerned that OSMP is giving up the right to do any maintenance or enforce that the county maintain.”

Shelley Dunbar moved the Open Space Board of Trustees to approve the minutes from Feb. 18, 2015 as amended. Frances Hartogh seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

Joel Koenig, Boulder, expressed his gratitude to the Volunteer Services workgroup. He has enjoyed his time as a volunteer and has truly appreciated the immense time put in by the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) staff.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Staff Updates

Trail Sustainability

Greg Seabloom, Trails Supervisor, gave a presentation on criteria for sustainable trail building.

Frances asked if staff uses the mountain bike flow trail standard when building trails. Greg said staff may use this design when building a mountain bike specific trail, but more often staff will use a different trail standard. Frances asked how staff decides which user group to gear towards. Greg said staff will typically default to which design criteria fit most user groups. Frances asked when crusher fines are used. Greg said when existing natural soil type is not preferable; putting in crusher fines or road base can help with absorbing moisture. Kevin asked if rock substrate can affect the trail grade. Greg said depending on the rock and soil type, staff would choose to adjust the trail grade based on that. In areas where a steeper grade is needed, a binding agent can be used to help maintain material for longer. Shelley asked if there is a target grade percentage that staff aims for. Greg said not on a system-wide basis, but generally staff would aim to have each trail be at least 80% sustainable. Molly Davis asked how staff designs for this climate, while still including the possibility for flooding, or other significant changes in weather. Greg said trails that have been built sustainably hold up well in normal conditions and held up very well during

the most recent flood. Tom asked if staff has an inventory of trails that are not sustainable in the North Trail Study Area (TSA). Greg said trail monitoring staff will be gathering this information.

Progress Reports on Projects

Annie McFarland, Visitor Access Coordinator, gave a short presentation to let the Board know that the western portion of the Greenbelt Plateau Trail that connects to Highway 93 has temporarily been closed.

Jim Reeder, Land and Visitor Services Division Manager, gave a status report on various trail projects. He also reminded the Board that staff is in the process of hiring seasonal employees, and the 2016 budget conversation will begin next week.

North Trail Study Area Update

Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner, gave an update on the North TSA.

Frances asked what staff is doing to gain information about wildlife in the North TSA. Steve said in addition to the information staff already has about habitat needs, there have been additional surveys done in the area. Frances asked if staff feels confident they have enough data. Steve said yes; besides those properties that were newly acquired, staff has data from longer term studies. Kevin Bracy Knight suggested putting information on the website and provide a place for the public to comment. Shelley asked how many e-mails were sent out. Steve said 7500 e-mails have been sent out so far; those who are interested can opt in to continue receiving information. Frances suggested putting information in the paper as well. Tom agreed that any outreach staff can do is good.

Update Regarding Supplemental Appropriation to the 2015 Budget

Tracy Winfree, Interim Director, gave an update on the supplemental appropriation to the 2015 Budget. She noted that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement is in excess of \$5 million which will go back to the fund balance.

Additional Updates

Tracy said OSMP along with staff from the Public Works, Utilities Department will present on the South Boulder Creek flood mitigation in May.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Matters from the Board

Shelley Dunbar read a proclamation for Tom Isaacson. The Board and staff expressed their thanks to Tom for his immense time spent on this Board. Tom reciprocated his thanks to staff, the Board and the public.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Summary of 2014 Open Space and Mountain Parks Volunteer Services and Declaration to Honor Open Space and Mountain Parks Volunteers during National Volunteer Week, April 12-18, 2015.

Jennelle Freeston, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, gave a presentation to the Board recognizing Open Space and Mountain Parks Volunteers during National Volunteer Week.

Board members expressed their thanks to staff for their continued work in this program.

Public Comment

None.

Return to the Board

Tom Isaacson read the following proclamation: *The Open Space Board of Trustees joins the staff of the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Department in recognizing all of our volunteers during National Volunteer Week 2015. We salute the more than 2,000 Open Space and Mountain Parks*

volunteers who contributed their talents and efforts in helping the department carry out its mission. These irreplaceable individuals are an inspiration as they help to protect the resources that make Boulder's Open Space and Mountain Parks so special.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Consideration of a motion to modify an existing Open Space Board of Trustees approval of a conservation easement amendment on the property owned by the Graham Casden 2009 Trust at 5097 Flagstaff Rd.

Linda VanDervort, Conservation Easement Specialist, asked the Board to review a conservation easement amendment on the property owned by the Graham Casden 2009 Trust.

Kevin asked what the height limit includes. Linda said just structures; there are already a few structures in place and this limit should have been included in the first place. Responding to a question from Frances, Linda explained that landscaping can only occur within the building envelope.

Public Comment

None.

Return to the Board

No further comment.

Motion

Shelley Dunbar moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve a modification of section 18.4 of the original OSBT approval of the conservation easement amendment on the property owned by the Graham Casden 2009 Trust at 5097 Flagstaff Rd., as written in Attachment A. Molly Davis seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Consideration of a motion to approve the purchase of the Robert Oliver parcel consisting of 11.61 acres of land, all mineral rights and one share of Howard Ditch water located at 5893 Baseline Rd. from James C. Bish III for \$1,000,000 for Open Space and Mountain Parks purposes and an additional \$22,000 is recommended to be authorized from the acquisition budget for immediate needs for fencing, ditch culverts and irrigation infrastructure improvements.

Jim Schmidt, Property Agent, gave a presentation on a possible acquisition.

Tom asked how much this house would sell for if put on the market. Jim said the house has not been appraised, but would likely be between \$500,000 and \$700,000. Water rights alone would be worth \$250,000. Shelley asked if this land could be used for agricultural purposes. Jim said that is a possibility. Shelley asked if farming is taking place on the adjacent property. Jim said no, the land is too wet. Tom said at some point it would be worth having the conversation about management area designation.

Public Comment

None.

Return to the Board

No further comment.

Motion

Frances Hartogh moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve a motion recommending that the Boulder City Council approve the purchase of the Robert Oliver parcel consisting of 11.61 acres, all mineral rights and one share of Howard Ditch water located at 5893 Baseline Rd. for \$1,000,000 for Open Space and Mountain Parks purposes and recommended authorization of an additional \$22,000 from the acquisition budget for immediate needs for fencing, ditch culverts and

irrigation infrastructure improvements. Shelley Dunbar seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Consideration of a motion to recommend granting a nonexclusive license for a mirror stand proposed to be temporarily placed on Valmont Butte by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) for scientific purposes.

Doug Newcomb, Property Agent, gave a presentation on a potential nonexclusive license with NIST.

Tom asked if staff feels this license is consistent with Open Space purposes. Doug said yes. Tom asked how this structure could help understand flood plains. Ian Coddington said one could use general relativity to measure local gravitational field (*i.e.* clocks tick slower if they are next to something heavy); this has important implications in predicting flood plains. Shelley asked if OSMP is covered if this gets damaged. Doug said one condition in the license in memo is that the city is not liable for damage to unit. Shelley suggested posting information on the unit so the public knows what it is for. She asked if Open Space would be responsible for patrol. Ian said no.

Public Comment

None.

Return to the Board

No further comment.

Motion

Shelley Dunbar moved the Open Space Board of Trustees recommend that the city manager enter into a nonexclusive license agreement with NIST subject to the terms and conditions that are substantially in the form as shown in Attachment A to this Memorandum. Kevin Bracy Knight seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

These draft minutes were prepared by Leah Case.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Board of Trustees

FROM: Tracy Winfree, Interim Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor

DATE: April 8, 2015

SUBJECT: Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Area Designation Briefing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo describes a) the procedures for establishing Visitor Master Plan management area designations as approved by the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) in September 2013, and b) the considerations used by staff to formulate management area recommendations to the OSBT for newly-acquired properties.

BACKGROUND

The quality of the environment is an important attribute of the recreational experience for visitors to Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) lands. Environmental quality is broadly represented by healthy ecological systems, intact cultural resources and sustainable agricultural operations. Management area planning recognizes that the high-quality experience OSMP seeks to provide includes opportunities for visitors to interact with a healthy and functioning landscape. It also recognizes that in order to provide an acceptable level of visitor services, in some areas, there will be effects on other resources. Finally, management area planning also includes recognition that some resources and locales are more vulnerable, and that directing people away from these areas or placing conditions on access may be appropriate. The primary goal of area management is to find matches for a variety of visitor activities and experiences with management objectives for agricultural, cultural and ecological conservation.

Management areas were established in the [OSMP Visitor Master Plan \(VMP\)](#), and include Agricultural Areas, Habitat Conservation Areas (HCA), Natural Areas and Passive Recreation Areas. Special regulations apply to visitor access in areas with the HCA designation. City Council must adopt an ordinance describing the boundaries of open space properties in the HCA designation before such regulations can be enforced.

In August 2013, the OSBT requested that staff present a set of procedures for the designation of management areas—especially for HCAs on newly acquired properties. Staff returned to the Board with a recommended approach in September 2013 at which time the OSBT unanimously approved staff's recommendations (**Attachments A and B**).

On Feb. 18, an OSBT member requested that staff brief the OSBT on HCA designation procedures and explain the criteria used by staff to make recommendations regarding management area designations. The Board member expressed a special interest in understanding how staff developed management area designation recommendations for properties that had prior visitor use.

DESIGNATION PROCESS

Initial Management Area Designations

Prior to the acceptance by City Council of the VMP, there was no antecedent for management area designations on OSMP lands. During the development of the VMP and the area management planning approach, there was considerable community interest and involvement in crafting the final recommendations to the OSBT and City Council regarding the management emphasis and the geography (location and extent) of area designations. **Attachment C** contains excerpts from the VMP describing the criteria used to develop the initial management area recommendations.

To implement the regulatory conditions for HCAs, the boundaries of the HCA designations approved in the VMP were subsequently described in ordinances which were approved by council six months after the plan was accepted.

Subsequent Designation

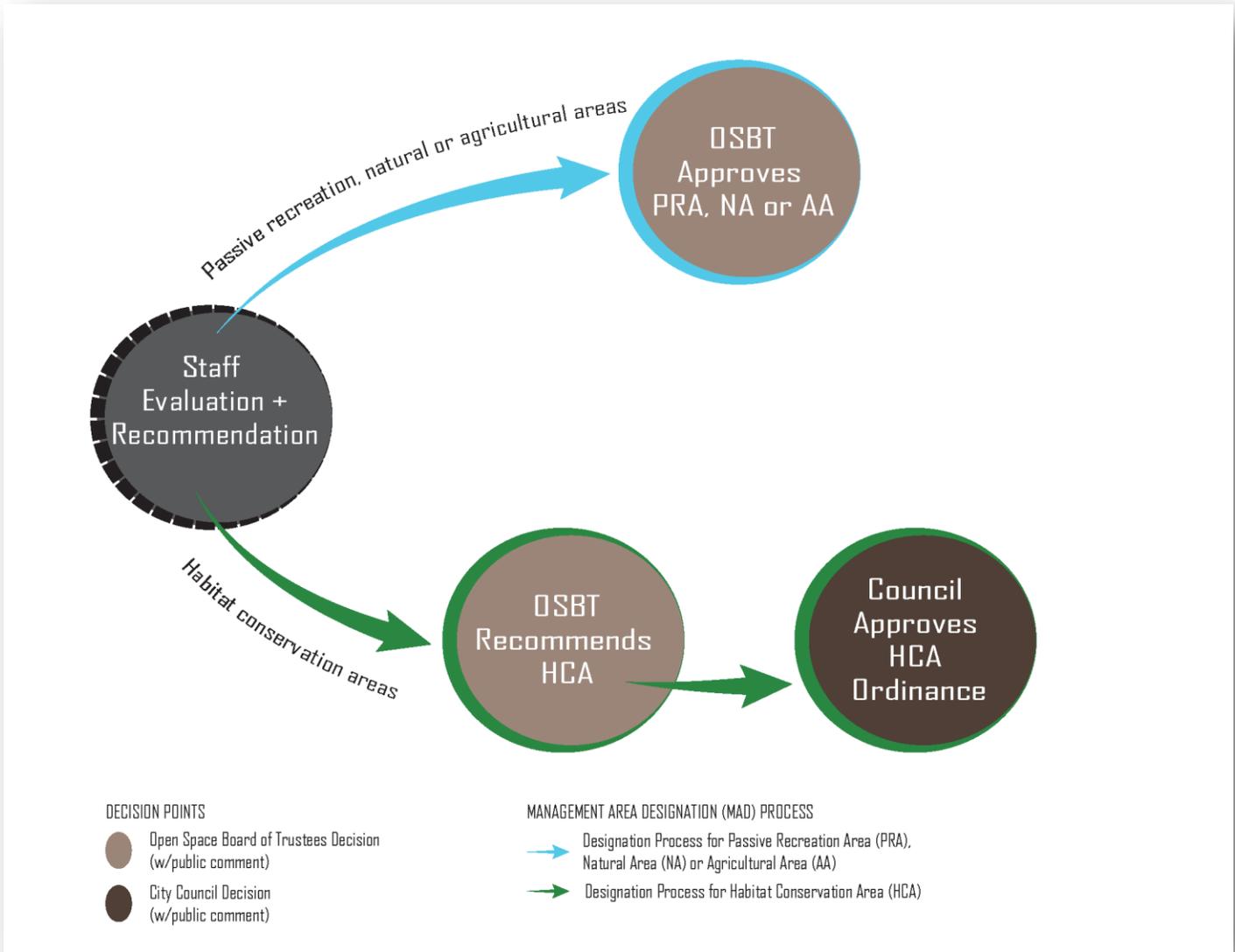
Since 2005, staff has encountered three types of situations when it is necessary to make management area designation recommendations to the OSBT.

- New Acquisitions
New additions to the OSMP land system require management area designations.
- Changes to Established Designation
Trail Study Area (TSA) plans can result in recommendations to change the management area boundaries. For example, trails are often the boundaries of management areas. When trails are rerouted, the management area boundaries must be adjusted.
- Undesignated Properties Held at Time of VMP
Approximately 20 city Open Space properties were recently found to have been omitted from the management area designation map approved in the VMP. The properties are relatively small, averaging less than four acres. The total extent of OSMP lands in this category is less than 70 acres.

Process for Management Area Designation

The work flow for designating management areas on newly acquired properties was approved by the OSBT in September 2013 and is summarized in the figure below.

Staff makes a recommendation to the OSBT and if necessary, City Council, regarding the appropriate designation for properties either at the time of acquisition or, if necessary, after a period of planning to determine the appropriate recommendation for the new property. Whether the recommendations from staff come at the time of acquisition or afterwards, the process is essentially the same.



Recommending Management Area Designations for New OSMP Properties

When making management area recommendations for new properties, staff considers many of the same factors described in the VMP for initial management area development (see table below). Staff also considers the setting of the new property and the adjacent management area designations. When neighboring properties have similar natural resources, historical land uses or management opportunities, staff tends to recommend the same designation for the new acquisition. This approach fosters integrated and continuous area management.

Factors Described in VMP for the Development of System-Wide Management Area Designations

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of infrastructure • Trail density • Levels of visitation • Regional trails & trail linkage opportunities • Diversity of recreational opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat blocks size • Rare or unique plant communities • Habitat for threatened, endangered, or rare species • Nature and concentration of biological diversity • Nature and intensity of nearby development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop production/irrigated hay fields/grazing areas • Agricultural efficiency/visitor safety conflicts • Opportunities for coordinating recreational access/trail linkages with habitat or agricultural conservation |
|--|--|---|

While developing management area recommendations for new properties is a site specific process, there are some general practices and principles that staff often uses to formulate a recommendation. When a new acquisition is characterized by resources, past land uses or management opportunities that differ significantly from surrounding OSMP properties, developing a recommendation is more complicated. This is often the case with larger acquisitions, where there may be a range of conditions and opportunities and where multiple designations may be appropriate. In these situations staff typically considers:

- The timeline for bringing the property up to OSMP facility and safety standards
- The nature and sensitivity of resources on the property
- The timing of TSA planning in the affected area.

If a TSA plan (or update) is anticipated to be completed relatively soon after acquisition, staff will usually recommend that a management area designation for the property be determined through the TSA process. Depending upon resource sensitivity and the presence of hazards on the property, staff may recommend that a property remain closed until the safety issues are addressed, or until a TSA Plan makes recommendations. In cases where resource sensitivity or hazards are localized or where none have been identified, staff may recommend smaller closures or seasonal protections but otherwise recommend that the property be opened to public access

Properties With Legacies of Recreational Activities

Most OSMP lands were held as private property before acquisition, and it is relatively uncommon for the city to acquire open space that had a history of public access or widespread recreational use. When this occurs, staff does consider the past activities and associated infrastructure and compares it to OSMP standards for service delivery. For example, OSMP purchased a property that had previously been used as a site where youth were taught mountain biking skills. This property had a mountain biking course with relatively high trail density, with trails ascending steep slopes. Staff's assessment found that the trails could not be made sustainable, that they were unlikely to provide access to destinations of community interest, and that the trails represented a threat for the spread of a nearby infestation of a highly invasive weed, the control of which was a priority statewide. Staff concluded that the property

should be closed until the trails were no longer evident, so visitors would not establish use patterns on an unsustainable trail system while potentially spreading especially noxious weeds. Some of the trails were left to revegetate without special intervention; others were the focus of active restoration efforts by the department. The property was recommended for designation as a Passive Recreation Area, not because of its past use, but rather because of its proximity to other similar areas with this designation, and the potential for further development of recreational use in this area through future Trail Study Area planning.

NEXT STEPS

Staff plans to return to the OSBT with recommendations to advance several properties through the management area designation process including:

- Fifteen of the approximately 20 properties missed as part of the 2005 Visitor Master Plan process that do not fall within the North TSA.
- HCA designations which have received approval in concept but for which ordinances have not been submitted to City Council.
- Properties which were acquired recently, for which staff needed to gather more information and is ready to return to the OSBT.
- Management area designations to be made as part of the North Trail Study Area Plan (including the five “missing properties” that fall in the North TSA).

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Management Area Designation Memorandum from the Sept. 11, 2013 meeting of the Open Space Board of Trustees
- B. Excerpted minutes of the Sept. 11, 2013 meeting of the Open Space Board of Trustees (pgs 1 and 4 only)
- C. Excerpts from the Open Space and Mountain Parks Visitor Master Plan (pages: 47-55 and A.17-A.19)

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ATTACHMENT A:
Management Area Designation Memorandum from the Sept. 11, 2013 meeting of
the Open Space Board of Trustees



**CITY OF BOULDER
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

MEETING DATE: September 11, 2013

AGENDA TITLE: Process for designating and modifying Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas.

PRESENTERS:

Michael Patton, Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Eric Stone, Resource Systems Division Manager
Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor
Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo describes the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) staff-recommended process for establishing and changing management area designations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Open Space Board of Trustees review and comment on the practices/process described in this memo for designating and modifying the designation of management areas.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS

- **Environmental:** Open Space and Mountain Parks is a significant community-supported program that is a leader in preservation of open space lands contributing to the environmental sustainability goal of the City Council. The department's land acquisition, land and resource management and visitor service programs help preserve and protect the Open Space values of the surrounding publicly-owned lands.
- **Economic:** Open Space and Mountain Parks contributes to the economic vitality goal of the city as it provides the context for the diverse and vibrant economic system that sustains services for residents. The land system and the quality of life

it represents attract visitors and help businesses to recruit and retain quality employees.

- Social: Because Open Space and Mountain Parks lands, facilities and programs are equally accessible to all members of the community, they help to support the city's community sustainability goal because all residents who live in Boulder can feel a part of and thrive in this aspect of their community.

OTHER IMPACTS

- Fiscal: There are no expected costs associated with adoption of these procedures.
- Staff time: Initially it would take a small additional amount of staff time to gather input from the community regarding management area designations.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

This item is being heard as part of this public meeting advertised in the *Daily Camera* on Sept. 8, 2013.

BACKGROUND

At the Aug. 14, 2013 Open Space Board of Trustees' (OSBT) meeting, the Board approved a Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) designation for the ERTL property. Some OSBT members expressed a desire to discuss and receive public comment on the process used by OSMP to develop recommendations for management area designations.

The *criteria* for designation and use of management areas is defined in the Visitor Master Plan (VMP) and summarized on pages 47 through 55 and described in greater detail in Appendix 4.1 (pages A.17-A.19). The VMP is available on the OSMP Website at <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/visitor-master-plan>.

The *process* for establishing management area designations is not included in the VMP. However, since establishing or changing an HCA designation is done by ordinance, those actions require City Council approval. Because of the importance of an HCA designation for the community, and the need for City Council action; staff brings HCA recommendations to the OSBT for its review. Other management area designations do not require council action. OSMP conducts resource assessments that inform proposed area management designations and support on-the-ground management of newly acquired properties. Some of these practices precede acquisition while others occur after acquisition.

Prior to a property purchase, OSMP staff inspects the property to observe its overall condition. An assessment of natural resources, buildings and infrastructure is completed to better understand the general conditions of the natural and physical resources of the property. The assessment also is intended to identify public safety issues and evidence of contamination from past land uses. The general assessment is necessary to ensure property conditions are appropriate for acquisition.

After a property is acquired, the department prepares more in-depth resource assessments and develops preliminary management direction. As endorsed in the VMP, new

properties are either closed or may have some restricted public access to allow for existing public access while OSMP completes resource assessments. During this time, the department also takes actions to secure the property, addresses potential hazards and if appropriate, develops infrastructure to provide for any proposed visitor access. Preliminary management direction is presented to the OSBT for review and comment.

Trail Study Area (TSA) plans provide the long-term direction for developing and managing visitor access on the property while resource plans direct specific resource management actions. Determining management area designations for new properties has occurred in several ways depending on the level of knowledge about the property at the time of acquisition, unique circumstances related to the property, direction and consistency with TSA and resource management plans and the management area designations of neighboring properties. In some cases, sufficient information is available at the time of acquisition for staff to make a management area recommendation. In other cases, staff finds it necessary to complete additional post-acquisition assessments and gather more information from community members before making a management area recommendation to the OSBT and City Council.

An example of this second approach took place in 2008 when staff completed plans for 24 properties not included in the VMP or that were acquired shortly after its adoption. The process included individual property assessments and proposed management area designations. These recommendations were presented for a community review and comment, and then considered by the OSBT. The HCA designations recommended by the OSBT were then considered and adopted by City Council. Some of the properties included in this process were along Bison Drive and were added to the Western Mountain Parks HCA. Although no longer “new,” the project information is available on the OSMP Website: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/new-property-planning>.

The department has also recommended area management designations at the time acquisitions are brought forward to the OSBT and City Council. This has occurred for properties recommended as HCAs when there are known and significant sensitive natural resources consistent with the criteria for determining HCAs and when the neighboring properties are in an HCA. The acquisition of the Schnell and ERTL properties are examples of properties where staff recommended at the time of acquisition that the properties be designated as HCAs.

Recently, staff has relied upon the public hearing at OSBT meetings as the opportunity for community members to provide comment on staff’s recommendations, or make recommendations of their own regarding the appropriate management area designation. Staff has the tools to gather public input prior to the OBST meeting. The recommendations below include such a step.

ANALYSIS/RECOMMENDATION

Management Area Designation Scenarios and Options

This section of the memo describes scenarios for both establishing and changing management area designations.

Establishing Management Area Designations

Scenario 1: Management designation of new acquisitions to the OSMP land system where immediate designation is appropriate and desirable. *The memos and motions for the acquisition of a property and consideration of the management area designation will be separate actions with the acquisition preceding the recommendation for management area designation.*

Key Factors

- Natural resources are known and consistent with the criteria in the VMP for a particular management area designation.
- Direction in Trail Study Area or Resource Management (Grassland, Forest) plans.
- Neighboring OSMP properties have similar natural resources, historical land uses or management opportunities and maintaining an area management designation consistent with neighboring properties fosters integrated and continuous area management.
- The level of community interest in the management area designation

Process

1. Staff review of property assessment information during the acquisition period and including available natural resource and public access information.
2. Staff consideration and integration of available resource and visitation information and direction from OSBT- and City Council-approved plans.
3. Staff notifies the community and stakeholders of area management recommendation during the acquisition process.
4. OSBT public hearing and recommendation to City Council.
5. City Council public hearing and consideration (required for HCAs, optional for other management area designations).

Scenario 2: Management designation of new acquisitions to the OSMP land system where a designation is not immediately needed and/or a recommendation cannot be developed without additional assessments and planning.

Key Factors

- Natural resources are not well known or consistent with the criteria in the VMP for a particular management area designation.
- Implications for consistency with approved plans is not straightforward (e.g., tradeoffs must be considered, new and unanticipated situations)
- Neighboring OSMP properties have varied natural resources, historical land uses, management opportunities and management area designations and further property information is needed for recommending a management area designation.
- The level of community interest in the management area designation.

Process

1. Staff reviews the property assessment information during the acquisition period and gathers the known natural resource and public access information.
2. Staff considers the level of known information about the property and if key factors are consistent with recommending area designation after the acquisition process and additional property assessments.
3. Staff completes new property assessments and planning and recommends management area designations.
4. Staff notifies the community and stakeholders of the new property plan and management area recommendation and assesses the level of community interest to determine if additional community engagement is needed.
5. OSBT public hearing and recommendation to City Council.
6. City Council public hearing and consideration (required for HCAs, optional for other management area designations).

Changing Management Area Designations

Scenario 3: Change in management designation for an existing OSMP property.

Key Factors

- Typically small scale adjustments to allow desirable and feasible changes identified in a TSA plan or required for the rational management of OSMP.

Management Area Designation Steps

1. Because of the typically extensive public process associated with the development of a TSA plan, staff recommends that the changes in the management area designation be included in the plan which would be recommended for OSBT approval at a public hearing and recommendation to City Council.
2. City Council public hearing and consideration of the TSA plan.
3. Changes to HCA boundaries (which also affect other management area boundaries) will be described in a separate agenda item, either concurrent with the approval of a TSA plan, or at subsequent public hearings before the OSBT and City Council.
4. Changes outside of the TSA process will follow the following steps:
 - a. Staff notifies the community and stakeholders of the management area recommendation and assesses the level of community interest to determine if additional community engagement is needed.
 - b. OSBT public hearing.
 - c. City Council public hearing and consideration (required for HCAs, optional for other management area designations).

Submitted by:

Michael Patton, Director

Eric Stone, Resource Systems Division Manager

Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor

Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner

ATTACHMENT B: Excerpted minutes of the Sept. 11, 2013 meeting of
the Open Space Board of Trustees (pages one and four only)

Approved as amended October 9, 2013

OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

Meeting Date September 11, 2013

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Allyn Feinberg Tom Isaacson Shelley Dunbar Frances Hartogh Molly Davis

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mike Patton Dean Paschall Eric Stone Mark Gershman Jim Schmidt
Mike Orosel Phillip Yates Dave Kuntz Steve Armstead Leah Case
Cecil Fenio

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

GUESTS

Marni Ratzel, Senior Transportation Planner
Clay Douglas, Senior Assistant City Attorney

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Approval of the Minutes

Tom Isaacson said on the first page, “she said” is printed twice on the next to last line. He said on page 2, the first sentence of the fourth paragraph, “how” needs to be added before “it should be set.” Shelley Dunbar said in the second paragraph on page 1, the wording in the third line from the bottom should say “economic boon” instead of “economic boom.” She said on page 3, the second to last sentence should read, “If it is not, then the Board should ask if it promotes other charter purposes.” She said on page 4, the language in the middle of the last paragraph should read, “Shelley said then designating ERTL prior to the TSA would be jumping ahead in the process.” Molly Davis said on page 3, the second sentence of the last paragraph can say, “She would like to focus on the burden to land and the volume of people.”

Tom Isaacson moved to approve the minutes from August 14, 2013 as amended. Shelley Dunbar seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Public Participation for Items not on the Agenda

None.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Director’s Updates

E-Bikes

Mike Patton, Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Director, gave an update to the Board regarding a request from City Council for staff to initiate an accelerated process to consider a pilot project that would allow electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes) on city property where they are currently prohibited. This meeting is an opportunity for the Board to consider the proposal and get any clarification needed. At the Oct. 9 meeting there will be an opportunity to hold a public hearing and make a formal recommendation to City Council regarding the potential use of e-bikes on OSMP property. This memo is saved in S:OSMP\admin\Memos\Memos 2013\13-0911.

Tom said the proposal needs to be clear whether the e-bike motor can be used while on Open Space, or if it would have to be turned off while riding through Open Space. Mike said the Board can choose which they prefer, but that could be a hard line to enforce. Tom asked if there is any information on whether it is more serious to get into an accident with an e-bike versus a regular bike. Marni Ratzel, Senior

Public Comment

Gwen Dooley, Boulder, said she was on the OSBT when this was initially purchased. She encourages the Board to go forth with this additional purchase.

Ray Bridge, Boulder, on behalf of Friends of Boulder Open Space (FOBOS) said they support this recommendation. He said these are important mineral rights to acquire. He also noted that there are working wells right now, and if it gets re-drilled there will be a lot of new technology applied, as well as unhappy people.

Return to the Board

No further discussion.

Motion

Tom Isaacson moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve a motion recommending that the Boulder City Council approve the purchase of 685 acres of land, associated water rights and oil and gas mineral estate interests located at 8323 Valmont Road, Boulder, CO from ERTL, Inc. for \$7,575,000 for Open Space and Mountain Parks purposes. Molly Davis seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Process for designating and modifying OSMP Management Areas. * Eric Stone, Resource Systems Division Manager, gave a presentation regarding modifying OSMP management areas. This memo describes the OSMP staff-recommended process for establishing and changing management area designations. Saved in S:OSMP\Admin\OSBT\Minutes\Minutes 2013\September.

Public Comment

Ray Bridge, Boulder, on behalf of FOBOS, said they support the way the department has been managing this process. He said Schnell was good example of this situation and urges the Board to adopt this process.

Return to the Board

Tom said he basically feels that this is the right approach. He noted that it will be impossible to have all processes be the same. Shelley asked if the community might be interested in reconsidering Joder as it immediately became a Habitat Conservation Area (HCA). She said this is a trail connection to other properties and used for recreation along with agriculture. Eric said having Joder as an HCA will not restrict improving existing trail or recreation opportunities. Shelley said people who are interested in this property are bikers and equestrians and they might want a different designation. She asked what would change in the future for reconsidering items. Mike said the Board would have to make a motion to ask for reconsideration.

Motion

Tom Isaacson moved the Open Space Board of Trustees approve the practices/process described in this memo of September 2013 for designating and modifying the designation of management areas. Molly Davis seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – Consideration of a motion to approve an easement allowing use of the planned Community Ditch Multi-Use Trail. This is a disposal of Open Space land under City Charter Section 177. *

Jim Schmidt, Property Agent, gave a presentation regarding this easement. This easement will allow, along with a license from Farmers Reservoir and Irrigation Company (FRICO) will get from Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), FRICO maintenance staff to move its rubber-tired maintenance

Management Areas: A Geographic Framework for Implementing the Plan

Open Space and Mountain Parks will use an area management system as a framework for implementing Visitor Master Plan implementation strategies. Key policies, programs, and projects are targeted to area-specific needs throughout the system.

The Open Space and Mountain Parks area management system provides a framework for implementing management strategies and setting priorities for visitor infrastructure improvements and service delivery. Under the umbrella of area management, certain key policies, programs, and projects are targeted to area-specific needs in different parts of the Open Space and Mountain Parks land system. Area management defines the geographic context for deciding which visitor activities are most suitable in a given area and what conditions will minimize impacts on other visitors or resources.

Protection, preservation, and management of city lands and provision of passive recreation opportunities, as defined by the City Charter, are fundamental goals for the Open Space and Mountain Parks Program. Management area designations define a management emphasis for different areas within the Open Space and Mountain Parks land system, based on a primary open space purpose (e.g., provision of quality passive recreational opportunities, preservation of agriculture, and protection and restoration of natural systems). The management designation defines suitable visitor activities in each type of area and under what conditions those activities can occur. The management designation also defines the management strategies needed to enhance visitor experience and ensure compatibility of visitor activities with resource protection.

Specific management strategies are applied in a given management area. The set of strategies applied in a given management area is based on the land characteristics (e.g., physical and ecological qualities, existing and anticipated visitor use patterns, existing and potential visitor infrastructure, and others) and the management needs that exist in that area. A flexible approach for applying strategies to a given management area is necessary, as exceptions may be needed to meet special circumstances.

A Description of the Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Area Designations

The primary goal of area management is to encourage visitor use in areas that can best accommodate the use, which includes areas that can provide a high-quality visitor experience and ensure compatibility of visitor use with natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Areas with highly vulnerable resources require a higher level of protection: directing people away from sensitive resources, placing conditions on the use that avoids or minimizes impact, or providing visitor infrastructure to ensure acceptable levels of impact.

The quality of the environment--the "naturalness" of an area--is the foundation of the recreational experience on Open Space and Mountain Parks lands. Consequently, both the quality of the environment, and the quality of visitor experience, should be preserved and maintained in all Open Space and Mountain Parks management areas.

Four management area designations are defined on Open Space and Mountain Parks lands: Passive Recreation Areas, Natural Areas, Agricultural Areas, and Habitat Conservation Areas (see Map 4.5). These management area designations provide the overall context for how visitor

activities should occur. See Map 4.6 for a delineation of dog management strategies applied within management areas. Management areas are delineated for each of the designation categories. The characteristics, goals, and criteria used to delineate the management areas are described below.

Passive Recreation Area Designation

Characteristics

- Generally in close proximity to city or county development.
- Higher level of visitor use and density of existing trails.
- More evidence of human use and impacts.
- May include some interspersed patches of high-quality habitat.

Goals

- Provide a high level of public access to destinations and connection through designated trails.
- Maintain or improve passive recreational and educational opportunities, while protecting and preserving natural lands and resources.
- Accommodate high levels of visitor use with appropriate management, trails and trailheads, and services.
- Reduce conflicts among visitor activities.
- Minimize the number of undesignated or “social trails;” eliminate undesignated trails when they are duplicative or damaging to resources.

Criteria for Inclusion of Management Areas in the Passive Recreation Area Designation

- Higher level of visitation.
- Trails and trailheads that accommodate high levels of visitor use.
- High density of trails.
- Offers destinations for a wide range of different passive recreational activities.
- Compatibility with adjacent land use (i.e., opportunities to coordinate with neighboring or nearby landowners/managers in providing recreational services).

Natural Area Designation

Characteristics

- Locations can be both close to and remote from development.
- Varying levels of visitor use, types of activities, and availability of facilities.
- Conditions of natural ecosystems are variable--many areas with ecological systems in good condition, some with evidence of human use and impacts.
- May be in proximity to agricultural production and operations.

Goals

- Accommodate low-impact visitor activities where adequate trails exist or can be built, and resource impacts can be minimized.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreational and educational activities that require topographic relief or a natural setting (e.g., hang/paragliding, climbing/bouldering, nature study, scenic viewing).
- Protect the quality of natural and agricultural resources (especially where high value resources exist).
- Eliminate undesignated trails when they are redundant or damaging to resources.

Criteria for Inclusion of Management Areas in the Natural Area Designation

- Interspersed recreational and natural values require that management determine the appropriate mix of open space purposes and manage multiple uses accordingly.
- Relatively high resource and recreation values.
- Compatibility with adjacent land use (i.e., opportunities for coordinating habitat protection and connections and passive recreational activities/trail linkages).

Agricultural Area Designation

Characteristics

- Rural areas in the Boulder Valley.
- May be in proximity to areas of either high or low visitor use.
- Areas of intensive agricultural production or operation.

Goals

- Maintain the efficiency of agricultural production and operation.
- Manage agricultural production and operation to ensure safety for operators and visitors in the vicinity.
- Provide, where appropriate, public access and passive recreational opportunities that have minimal impacts on agricultural production and operation or other resources.
- Manage visitor access in areas of intensive agricultural production or operation to ensure visitor safety.
- Eliminate undesigant trails when they are redundant or damaging to resources.

Criteria for Inclusion of Management Areas in the Agricultural Area Designation

- Crop production and irrigated hay fields and grazing areas.
- Areas where conflicts with visitors and their pet companions could or do adversely affect the efficiency of agricultural production and operations or endanger visitor safety.
- Compatibility with adjacent land use (i.e., opportunities for coordinating agricultural protection and recreational activities/trail linkages).

Note: Areas of concentrated livestock activity (corrals, horse boarding, etc.), private residences, machinery storage areas, etc. will be addressed in a separate policy.

Habitat Conservation Area Designation

Characteristics

- Tend to be located in more remote areas.
- Typically represent the largest blocks of an ecosystem type with few, if any, trails or roads.
- Lower level of visitor use; no or few trails and trailheads.
- Naturally functioning ecosystems (but may contain areas with evidence of human use and impacts).

Goals

- Maintain, enhance, and/or restore naturally functioning ecological systems.
- Maintain, enhance, and restore habitat for species of concern identified in the Boulder County and the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plans.
- Provide public access and passive recreational opportunities that foster appreciation and understanding of ecological systems and have minimal impacts on native plant communities and wildlife habitats or other resources.

- Eliminate all undesignated trails, unless they are made part of the designated trails system or provide specialized access to appropriate low-use destinations.
- Where sustainable infrastructure exists, continue to allow public access to appropriate destinations.

Criteria for Inclusion of Management Areas in the Habitat Conservation Area Designation

- Large habitat blocks with a low density of trails, roads, or development.
- High potential for restoration of natural ecosystems (including areas with restoration underway).
- Plant communities that are rare or unique on Open Space and Mountain Parks lands.
- Habitat for species of concern such as threatened, endangered, rare, and other species.
- Areas with high biodiversity such as wetlands and riparian areas (especially un-trailed riparian reaches).
- Comparatively lower visitation levels.
- Compatibility with adjacent land use (i.e., opportunities for coordinating habitat protection and connections and recreational activities/trail linkages).

Management Area Strategies

The management strategies associated with each management area designation are summarized in Table 4.1.

Note: The following table identifies strategies **normally** applied in specific management area designations. (*That does not preclude localized application in any of the management areas where needed*).

Table 4.1: Management Strategies for Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas				
Management Issue	Passive Recreation Area Strategies	Natural Area Strategies	Agricultural Area Strategies	Habitat Conservation Area Strategies
<p>On-Trail Visitor Use</p> <p>Note: Management <i>in all areas</i> may include seasonal or local requirements for visitors to stay on-trail or seasonal/local closures to address environmental sensitivity or trail sustainability.</p> <p>All designated trails will be signed and indicated on trail maps.</p>	<p><u>Encourage on-trail use.</u> Require on-trail use in sensitive areas and/or at specific times, unless an off-trail permit is obtained.</p>	<p><u>Encourage on-trail use.</u> Require on-trail use in sensitive areas and/or at specific times, unless an off-trail permit is obtained.</p>	<p><u>Encourage on-trail use.</u> Require on-trail use in sensitive areas and/or at specific times, unless an off-trail permit is obtained.</p> <p>Consider/provide designated on-trail access to selected destinations.</p>	<p><u>Require on-trail use</u> except:</p> <p>(1) in a limited number of designated off-trail activity areas; or</p> <p>(2) if an off-trail permit is obtained for OSMP-sponsored activities or other limited and approved public use.</p> <p>Consider/provide designated on-trail access to selected destinations.</p>

Table 4.1: Management Strategies for Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas

Management Issue	Passive Recreation Area Strategies	Natural Area Strategies	Agricultural Area Strategies	Habitat Conservation Area Strategies
<p>Trail Functions, New Trails, and Interconnected Trail System</p> <p>Note: In all management areas, OSMP will provide different classes of trails. Trail classes are matched to the specific travel needs / opportunities and the environmental context in a given area. Trails will provide different levels of access, offer different types of travel experiences / challenges, and use different physical designs and materials. Trails will accommodate different types and levels of use, but all are intended to accommodate use without undue maintenance demands and to minimize impacts on the environment.</p> <p>OSMP will make management decisions based upon the best available information and evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of management actions.</p>	<p>Build and maintain a hierarchy of trails that encourage visitors to travel on-trail and minimize impacts. New trails to important destinations will be considered.</p> <p>Improve and construct sustainable trail linkages to create an interconnected trail system.</p>	<p>Build and maintain a hierarchy of trails that encourage visitors to travel on-trail and minimize impacts. New trails to important destinations will be considered.</p> <p>Improve and construct sustainable trail linkages to create an interconnected trail system.</p>	<p>Minimize new trails and trail density; locate new trails to minimize impacts on agricultural operations.</p> <p>Consider designating/building trails that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not impinge upon agricultural operations • Provide appropriate access • Include appropriate linkages and connections 	<p>Minimize new trails and trail density; locate new trails to minimize impacts on habitat quality.</p> <p>Consider designating/building trails that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not impinge upon ecological systems • Provide appropriate access • Include appropriate linkages and connections
<p>Trail Design for Level of Use</p>	<p>Design and construct trails and other facilities to sustain a <u>higher</u> level of visitor use.</p>	<p>Design and construct trails and other facilities to sustain a <u>variable</u> level of visitor use.</p>	<p>Design and construct trails and other facilities to sustain a <u>variable</u> level of visitor use.</p>	<p>Design and construct trails and other facilities to sustain a <u>low</u> level of visitor use.</p>

Table 4.1: Management Strategies for Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas

Management Issue	Passive Recreation Area Strategies	Natural Area Strategies	Agricultural Area Strategies	Habitat Conservation Area Strategies
Undesignated Trails	<p>Lower priority for management of undesignated trails. Minimize new undesignated trails. Management actions for existing undesignated trails include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate best management actions • Designate • Re-route • Close and reclaim • Retain undesignated trails • Monitor newly established or developing undesignated trails 	<p>Variable priority for management of undesignated trails. Minimize new undesignated trails. Management actions for existing undesignated trails include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate best management actions • Designate • Re-route • Close and reclaim • Retain undesignated trails • Monitor newly established or developing undesignated trails 	<p>Variable priority for management of undesignated trails. Minimize new undesignated trails. Management actions for existing undesignated trails include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate best management actions • Designate • Re-route • Close and reclaim • Retain undesignated trails 	<p>High priority for management of undesignated trails. Minimize new undesignated trails. Management actions for existing undesignated trails include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate best management actions • Designate • Re-route • Close and reclaim
Access to Areas Normally Closed to Visitors	Provide guided educational hikes in areas normally closed to visitors.	Provide guided educational hikes in areas normally closed to visitors.	Provide guided educational hikes in areas normally closed to visitors.	Provide guided educational hikes in areas normally closed to visitors or require permits for off-trail use.

Table 4.1: Management Strategies for Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas

Management Issue	Passive Recreation Area Strategies	Natural Area Strategies	Agricultural Area Strategies	Habitat Conservation Area Strategies
Dog Management	<p>Visitors are strongly encouraged to keep dogs on-trail.</p> <p>Dog management is predominantly voice-and-sight control. Dogs on-leash, dogs prohibited, or seasonal dog requirements may be implemented.</p>	<p>Visitors are strongly encouraged to keep dogs on-trail.</p> <p>Dog management is predominantly voice-and-sight control. Dogs on-leash, dogs prohibited, or seasonal dog requirements may be implemented.</p>	<p>Visitors are strongly encouraged to keep dogs on-trail.</p> <p>Dog management is predominantly voice-and-sight control. Dogs on-leash, dogs prohibited, dogs on-corridor voice-and-sight control, or seasonal dog requirements may be implemented.</p>	<p>Dogs are required to be on-trail, with some exceptions allowing on-corridor voice-and-sight control.</p> <p>Dog management is predominantly on-leash. Dogs on-leash, dogs prohibited, dogs on-corridor voice-and-sight control, or seasonal dog requirements may be implemented.</p>
Nighttime Use	Trailhead parking prohibited 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. (except Panorama Point and Halfway House).	Trailhead parking prohibited 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.	Trailhead parking prohibited 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.	Trailhead parking prohibited 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. and a nighttime curfew encouraged one hour after dusk to one hour before dawn.
Emphasis for Education and Enforcement Activities	Target educational and enforcement services to reduce visitor conflict, foster appreciation and protection of the OSMP environment, and support resource protection.	Target educational and enforcement services to reduce visitor conflict, foster appreciation and protection of the OSMP environment, and support resource protection.	Target educational and enforcement services to support on-trail visitor use and foster appreciation and protection of agricultural resources.	Target educational and enforcement services to support on-trail visitor use and foster appreciation and protection of natural resources.
Visitor Services and Facilities Matched to Level of Use	Provide a level of visitor services and facilities to support <u>higher use levels</u> and a quality visitor experience (interpretive signs, scenic pull-outs, picnic tables, toilets, etc.).	Provide a moderate level of visitor services and facilities.	Provide a variable level of visitor services and facilities matched to the levels of use encountered.	Provide a low level of visitor services and facilities, except those supporting basic protection and maintenance services.

The management areas within the Passive Recreation Area, Natural Area, Agricultural Area, and Habitat Conservation Area designations are listed in Table 4.2, and their boundaries are shown on Map 4.5. These management areas share a set of management strategies appropriate for different situational contexts.

Table 4.2: Management Area Designations and Management Areas on Open Space and Mountain Parks	
<p>Passive Recreation Area Designation: Management Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Boulder County • Lefthand Canyon • Boulder Valley Ranch • Wonderland • Sanitas Valley/Red Rocks • Elephant Buttriss • Flagstaff/Chautauqua • South Mesa • West Marshall Mesa • Dry Creek • Gunbarrel/Heatherwood Passive Recreation Area 	<p>Natural Area Designation: Management Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Tier • East Beech • Sanitas • Anemone Hill • Flatirons/Mountain Backdrop • Shanahan • Doudy Draw • East Marshall Mesa • South Boulder Creek • East Boulder • Creek Confluence • Valmont Reservoir • Diagonal • Gunbarrel/Heatherwood Natural Area • Outlots
<p>Agricultural Area Designation: Management Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Boulder Valley • North Boulder Valley 	<p>Habitat Conservation Area Designation: Management Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Foothills • Western Mountain Parks • Eldorado Mountain • Jewel Mountain • Southern Grasslands • Tallgrass Prairie East • Sombrero Marsh • Cottonwood Grove • Lower Boulder Creek

Appendix 4.1 includes information on: the process used in developing the Open Space and Mountain Parks area management system, the specific criteria attributes that apply to each of the management areas, the relationship of management areas to Environmental Conservation Areas designated in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan, and references to the documents and analyses that provide information about the management areas.

Appendix 4.1 also includes detailed information about the management areas, including: natural resources, recreational use, management issues, and recommended management actions.

Appendix 4.1: Detailed Information on Management Areas

Process Used in Developing the Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas

Delineating the Open Space and Mountain Parks land system into management areas is based on information overlays and professional judgment about the recreational and resource values of an area. When analyzing these suitability factors to delineate an area, consideration of the larger landscape context is required, i.e., the functional relationships or interactions among areas and how surrounding areas are managed. The practicalities of implementing varied management strategies among different areas need to be taken into account in the area designation process.

The concepts and map boundaries for the Open Space and Mountain Parks area management system were developed through staff collaboration and public participation. An interdisciplinary staff team conducted a visitor use-resource inventory and impact assessment process. The outcomes of this process were: a documentation of the co-location of resource values and visitor use, an assessment of where there are existing or anticipated impacts that the Visitor Master Plan should address, and a designation of management areas with shared management strategies. The specific steps included:

- Identification of areas with existing and anticipated visitor use and facilities.
- Identification of significant natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Natural resources included: unique ecosystems, critical wildlife habitats, rare and sensitive plant communities, riparian and wetland areas, forest interior habitat areas and mature forest areas, and large habitat blocks.
- Identification of areas of potential compatibility and conflict.
- Analysis of specific threats and impacts.
- Identification of management areas and appropriate management strategies.

Expectations/Intentions

- Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas are intended to support both the provision of high quality visitor opportunities and reduction of resource impacts from these visitor activities.
- Designating management areas should make implementation of strategies more feasible and make on-the-ground management understandable for visitors.
- Management Areas provide coarse-level strategies to protect resources.
- The best information available will be used to define Management Areas.

Criteria Attributes for Mapping Management Area Designations

✓ Indicates a significant presence of the criteria attribute

Passive Recreation Areas	High level of visitation	Trails and trailheads for high use	High density of trails	Multiple-activity destination(s)	Opportunities for coordinating recreational activities/trail linkages
Western Boulder County	✓	✓		✓	✓
Lefthand Canyon	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Boulder Valley Ranch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wonderland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sanitas Valley/Red Rocks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elephant Buttress	✓	✓	✓	Mostly climbers	
Flagstaff/Chautauqua	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Mesa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Marshall Mesa	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ped underpass needed
Dry Creek	✓	✓	✓	Mostly dog walkers	✓
Gunbarrel/Heatherwood PRA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ Indicates a significant presence of the criteria attribute

Natural Areas	Interspersed recreational and natural values	Relatively high resource values	Relatively high recreational values	Opportunities for coordinating habitat protection and recreational activities/trail linkages
Northern Tier	✓	✓ In some pockets		
East Beech	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sanitas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Anemone Hill	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flatirons/Mountain Backdrop	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shanahan	✓	✓	✓	✓
Doudy Draw	✓	✓	✓	✓
East Marshall Mesa	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Boulder Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓
East Boulder	✓	✓	Potential trail linkage	✓
Creek Confluence	✓	✓	Potential trail linkage	✓
Valmont Reservoir	✓	✓		
Diagonal	✓	✓		✓
Gunbarrel/Heatherwood NA	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outlots	Variable	✓ In some pockets		

✓ Indicates a significant presence of the criteria attribute

Agricultural Areas	Crop production/irrigated hay fields/grazing areas	Agricultural efficiency/visitor safety conflicts	Opportunities for coordinating agricultural protection and recreational activities/trail linkages
East Boulder Valley	✓	✓	✓
North Boulder Valley	✓	✓	✓

✓ Indicates a significant presence of the criteria attribute

Habitat Conservation Areas	Large habitat blocks/low density of trails, roads, development	High ecosystem restoration potential	Rare or unique plant communities	Habitat for threatened, endangered, or rare species	Areas with high biodiversity	Comparatively lower visitation levels	Opportunities for coordinating habitat protection and recreational activities/trail linkages
North Foothills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Mountain Parks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eldorado Mountain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jewel Mountain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southern Grasslands	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tallgrass Prairie East	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sombrero Marsh		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Cottonwood Grove		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lower Boulder Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Open Space and Mountain Parks Management Areas and Their Relationship to Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Conservation Areas

As defined in the *Boulder County Comprehensive Plan Environmental Resources Element* (Boulder County 1995), Environmental Conservation Areas are “large and relatively undeveloped areas of the County that possess a high degree of naturalness, contain high quality or unique landscape features, and/or have significant restoration potential. Their size, quality, and geographic location make them an important tool for combating the effects of fragmentation.”

Primary factors used to evaluate potential Environmental Conservation Areas include:

- Naturalness--Relatively undeveloped landscapes offer greater opportunities for maintaining natural processes, protecting sensitive and wide-ranging animal species, and minimizing landscape fragmentation caused by development and roads.
- Quality and Uniqueness--This includes high quality plant communities such as native prairies or old-growth forests, and unique landscape features such as elk winter concentration areas and winter raptor concentration areas.
- Size--Bigger is better, more capable of supporting natural disturbance regimes, meeting the needs of wide-ranging animals, and protecting a mosaic of landscapes.
- Restoration Potential--Ability of a site to be restored to a native plant community and/or good wildlife habitat.

Mapping criteria for Environmental Conservation Areas:

- They should be centered on undeveloped landscapes and include high quality and unique landscape components as revealed in the biological and ecological assessment.
- Environmental Conservation Areas should be a minimum of 2,500 acres in size in order to be effective management units.
- They should cover all life zones and habitat types.
- Boundaries of Environmental Conservation Areas are influenced by the following:
 - The larger the Environmental Conservation Area, the greater probability of meeting the needs of wide-ranging species, allowing natural disturbance regimes, and minimizing adverse impacts from development. Environmental Conservation Areas should include all contiguous undeveloped land and nodes of high quality or unique landscape features.
 - Boundaries should avoid areas with significant existing development.
 - The shape should minimize fragmentation and edge effects.
 - The shape and geographic location of Environmental Conservation Areas should facilitate connectivity within the regional landscape.

Habitat connectors or wildlife movement corridors between Environmental Conservation Areas should be preserved--riparian and stream ecosystems, large-mammal migration corridors, and undeveloped land around Environmental Conservation Areas that provide a matrix of dispersal and movement options for wildlife. Land uses around Environmental Conservation Areas should be low intensity to buffer the impacts of development.

The Environmental Conservation Area designation has provided an important context for defining Open Space and Mountain Parks management areas.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Board of Trustees

FROM: Tracy Winfree, Interim Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner, Open Space and Mountain Parks

DATE: April 8, 2015

SUBJECT: Draft Board Editorial for the North Trail Study Area Plan

During the February 2015 study session on the North Trail Study Area Plan, the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) discussed the idea of the board hosting the plan. There was support for this concept and conversation about ways the board could fulfill this role. One suggested action included the OSBT writing a guest editorial explaining the plan, goals and inviting the community to participate in the process.

With the first community engagement opportunity possibly occurring later this month or in early May, the April board meeting is the opportune time for the OSBT to prepare an editorial that invites the community to participate in the development of the plan. OSBT members Tom Isaacson and Frances Hartogh have assisted in preparing a draft editorial for the board to review and endorse.

Staff recommends that the editorial be submitted to the Daily Camera during the week of April 13 and be posted on the North Trail Study Area Plan project website.

ATTACHMENT

A: Draft OSBT North Trail Study Area Plan Editorial

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Creating a new plan for our community's northern open spaces

We live in a special place. We see and *feel* it every time we step out on to the City of Boulder's diverse open spaces. That feeling, a sense of responsibility for being stewards for the land and the rich habitat it provides for wildlife and plants has united generations of Boulder residents to conserve our area's landscapes. It has also motivated them to create a world-class open space and trail system for a variety of recreational experiences.

That incredible legacy is one that few American cities have and is a shared heritage of which we, as a community, should be incredibly proud. As stewards of that legacy, our community must work together to make sure that our trails and our open spaces are sustained for future generations. Indeed, ensuring the continuing sustainability of our open spaces and our trails is one of the most important issues facing our system today.

Yes, realizing that lofty goal can be a challenge. But it is a challenge our community is able to solve together if we all engage in the City of Boulder's planning processes known as Trail Study Area plans. Trail Study Area plans are an important part of the city's open space planning processes and implementation efforts because they provide the framework for creating sustainable trail systems across the 45,000 acres the city conserves. At the same time, these plans evaluate valuable and sensitive natural resources for preservation.

Later this month, the city's Open Space and Mountain Parks Department – which manages the city's open space program – will kick-off the North Trail Study Area Plan. The process will begin with a series of workshops to lay the groundwork for a community vision of the city's open spaces and trails north of Linden Avenue and north of the Diagonal Highway.

With the North Trail Study Area Plan, the city aims to improve the visitor experiences on our northern trails – such as the paths that wind around Wonderland Lake and that stretch north of Boulder and west of the Boulder Reservoir—while ensuring the continuing conservation of the area's diverse agricultural, natural, and cultural resources.

Specific recommendations that may be included in the plan are new trail connections, and trail and trailhead improvements, along with possible recreational opportunities on Joder Ranch that will complement an interim trail now being built on the property. Other plan recommendations may include re-routing trails around sensitive wildlife or plant habitats, restoration of disturbed areas, removal of redundant paths, and minimization of erosion on trails.

As members of the Open Space Board of Trustees, we ask that all interested people – visitors, neighbors, or anyone else interested in our northern open space – participate in this planning process. We want you to share what you treasure about our shared northern open spaces, your concerns about those spaces, and what *you want* included in the plan.

Open Space and Mountain Parks is committed to engaging the public for this important plan and wants to hear your interests and creative ideas. Throughout the North Trail Study Area Plan process, the department will invite the community to workshops so residents can share ideas on specific recommendations and offer feedback as the plan is shaped. If you are too busy or can't

attend a workshop, you can still provide input and ideas about the plan online by logging on to [Inspire Boulder](#), the City of Boulder's digital town hall or by submitting a comment at [NorthTSA.org](#).

While we all may enjoy different experiences on the city's open spaces, we all have a common desire to ensure that our open spaces continue to provide high-quality experiences and that our rich natural, cultural, and agricultural resources are conserved. Only by working together and sharing our creative ideas constructively will we realize a shared community vision for our trails and open spaces that sustains them for the future.



**CITY OF BOULDER
OPEN SPACE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: April 8, 2015

AGENDA TITLE: West Trail Study Area Implementation: Towhee/Homestead Trail Reroute Due to 2013 Flood

PRESENTER/S:

Tracy Winfree, Interim Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Jim Reeder, Land and Visitor Services Division Manager
Annie McFarland, Visitor Access Coordinator
Don D'Amico, Ecological Systems Supervisor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

With the completion of the Towhee and Homestead Trail reroutes in 2012, Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) considered this portion of the West Trail Study Area (West TSA) Plan to be complete and these trails were placed on a maintenance schedule. However, the flood of 2013 literally changed the ground beneath our feet. Portions of the Towhee and Homestead trails became the path of least resistance for floodwaters, leaving behind extensive trail damage, including damage to trail structures, the exposure of entire lengths of culverts and severe trail erosion resulting in multiple gullies. Water continues to flow down a portion of the Towhee Trail, which is now the stream channel. This section of trail remains closed (see Attachment Map A – Towhee/Homestead Trails Current Condition). On the Homestead Trail and on the portion of Towhee Trail that is open, current trail conditions are forcing hikers to walk around eroded areas causing vegetation damage, trail widening and braiding. With consideration to how the flood changed this landscape, Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) staff developed a trail plan that best meets the driving factors identified in the West TSA for the two trails.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests Board consideration of this matter and action in the form of the following motion:

The Open Space Board of Trustees recommends that staff: 1) implement the staff recommendation as shown on Attachment Map B: Towhee/Homestead Trails – Staff Recommendation and 2) install an interpretive sign highlighting birding opportunities of the area.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND IMPACTS

- Environmental: OSMP is a significant community-supported program that is recognized as a leader in preservation of lands contributing to the environmental sustainability goal of City Council. All trail construction has an impact to natural resources. However, staff will work to create a final trail alignment that provides a quality visitor experience while minimizing those impacts.
- Economic: OSMP contributes to the economic vitality goal of the city as it provides the context for the diverse and vibrant economic system that sustains services for residents. High-quality recreational opportunities for visitors help attract and support businesses and residents who seek these opportunities.
- Social: The OSMP land system is accessible to all members of the community and thus it helps support council's community sustainability goals. All members of the community can feel a part of, and thrive in, this aspect of their community.

OTHER IMPACTS

- Fiscal: OSMP staff explored a variety of options in this area. Cost of implementation ranged from a large initial investment, with continued maintenance costs being high, to a cost that was in-line with past projects of this scale. The financial impacts of the staff recommendation are in line with past projects of this scale.
- Staff time: Final trail alignments will need to be fine tuned by staff. A wetland permit and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Preble's meadow jumping mouse consultation will need to be completed before trail construction can start. OSMP seasonal trail crew(s) will complete trail construction, which is anticipated to start mid-July and wrap-up in November. This timeline is approximate and may shift due to other project progress/staging, weather conditions and potentially shifting flood-related priorities. Restoration and closure efforts will also be accomplished by the OSMP seasonal restoration crew and will be done at a time of year most conducive to restoration to coincide with the opening of the new trail sections.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND PROCESS

This item is being heard at this public meeting, advertised in the *Daily Camera* on April 5, 2015.

BACKGROUND

The West TSA Plan provided recommendations for both the Homestead and Towhee trails. Generally, the West TSA Plan identified reroutes for both trails to decrease the trail length in the riparian area, increase the riparian habitat block size and increase trail sustainability. Specific guidance for each trail can be found in the West TSA Plan on page 34 (westtsa.org). Also, in conversations during the Community Collaborative Group (CCG), the importance of this area for birding was noted. In 2012, OSMP completed the reroute for each trail and put them on a typical maintenance schedule. However, the flood of 2013 substantially altered the ground conditions of the area. The lower section of Homestead Trail and the entire middle and lower sections of Towhee Trail were heavily impacted by the flood. Without the extensive use of costly and impactful structures, such as a boardwalk over the lower section of Towhee which is now the creek, portions of these trails cannot be repaired in place. For this reason, staff explored a variety of approaches to balance the new landscape, feasibility and the guidance provided in the West TSA Plan.

ANALYSIS

Of all possibilities considered during multiple site visits to this area, staff proposes a solution that strikes the best balance of three main foundational elements: resource protection, trail sustainability and visitor experience. The redesign considering these three elements is significantly informed by the experiences from the 2013 Flood event. Although the following analysis breaks the recommendation into two parts, Towhee Trail and Homestead Trail, it should be considered as one complete project which strikes a balance between resources. Please reference Attachment Map B Towhee/Homestead Trails – Staff Recommendation, to help match the following text to locations on the map. Trail reroutes shown on the maps represent conceptual alignments and will be refined by staff using the trail design process.

Homestead Trail

Trail Sustainability: A large portion of Homestead Trail was rerouted in 2012 as called for in the West TSA Plan, and received little damage during the flood. However, lower Homestead, the section of Homestead Trail between the Dunn House (location D) and the Towhee/Homestead Trail junction (location C), was heavily damaged during the flood. Visitors have stopped using the original Lower Homestead Trail tread and have created multiple trails, resulting in a trail tread that is approximately six feet wide. This section also has exposed culverts, gullies, and old log stairs that are either now parallel to the trail, and not functioning, or severely undercut. Therefore, staff is recommending Lower Homestead Trail be rerouted. The reroute will allow staff to create a sustainable trail that will connect with the Mesa Trail.

Natural Resource Protection:

Natural resources in the area of the damaged lower Homestead Trail are of lower quality than the surrounding landscape. Much of the vegetation has been previously impacted due to the historic use of the area as a homestead. Because of this, trails in this type of habitat have a lower impact on natural resources. However, to provide for trail sustainability, and based on the passive recreational designation of the area, the ecological systems staff is working with trails staff to

identify the best route to relocate the connection to the Homestead Trail (see Map). The final alignment will balance impacts to shrublands and higher-quality native grassland to the best degree possible. Most of the new route is within the regulatory buffer for Preble's meadow jumping mouse. The sections of trail closest to the drainage will impact occupied Preble's habitat. In these areas, timing and shrub removal will be planned to reduce the risk of directly harming any mice.

The new route will require a new crossing of the Towhee drainage. This crossing will be located in an area of sparse shrub growth to minimize impacts to Preble's habitat and wetlands. However, the crossing will require both a city wetland permit and Preble's consultation with the USFWS. Ecological systems staff will complete these regulatory steps once a final, agreed upon alignment is available.

Visitor Experience:

The reroute will be constructed to the same standards as the rest of Homestead Trail and will provide a single-track trail experience, which was expressed as an interest during the West TSA planning effort.

Towhee Trail:

Trail Sustainability:

The northwestern portion of Towhee Trail was rerouted, as called for in the West TSA Plan, and was minimally damaged during the flood. However, the rest of Towhee Trail was heavily impacted by the flood. The section of trail between the 2012 reroute (location A) and the drainage crossing (location B) was heavily damaged. Most of the rock stairs are no longer safe, the trail is heavily gullied resulting in visitors creating a parallel trail to avoid these obstacles. The reroute of this section of trail, with the use of some structures to help avoid natural resource impacts, will allow staff to build a sustainable trail that will require little future maintenance.

Natural Resource Protection:

The area along the Towhee Trail that was damaged is extremely high quality from an ecological standpoint. The area supports substantial riparian vegetation, high-quality native grassland, extensive shrub communities and wetland areas adjacent to the stream. This habitat is also all contained within the regulatory buffer for Preble's meadow jumping mice and largely is comprised of likely occupied habitat for the mouse.

To balance natural resource protection with trail sustainability, staff is working to identify trail alignments that best meet trail standards while avoiding close proximity of the trail to the riparian area, minimizing fragmentation and impacts to shrub communities, wetlands and native grassland to the degree possible. The staff recommendation avoids using the north-facing shrubland which represents one of only two highly suitable habitat patches for shrub-nesting birds on the OSMP system (the other is adjacent to Long Canyon at a much higher elevation).

The entire length of the trail reroute sits within the Preble's meadow jumping mouse regulatory buffer and much of it likely sits within occupied Preble's habitat. As a result, consultation with USFWS will be necessary. This consultation process can begin once a final, agreed-upon alignment is available.

Visitor Experience:

The reroute will be constructed to the same standards as the rest of the Towhee Trail and will provide a single-track trail experience. Also, to highlight the birding opportunities in the area, a bird/birding themed interpretative sign will be placed along the trail. It is expected that the location of the reroute will provide for better birding opportunities than the old alignment because visitors will be less likely to flush the birds.

Submitted by:

Tracy Winfree, Interim Director

Jim Reeder, Land and Visitor Services Division Manager

Annie McFarland, Visitor Access Coordinator

Don D'Amico, Ecological Systems Supervisor

ATTACHMENTS:

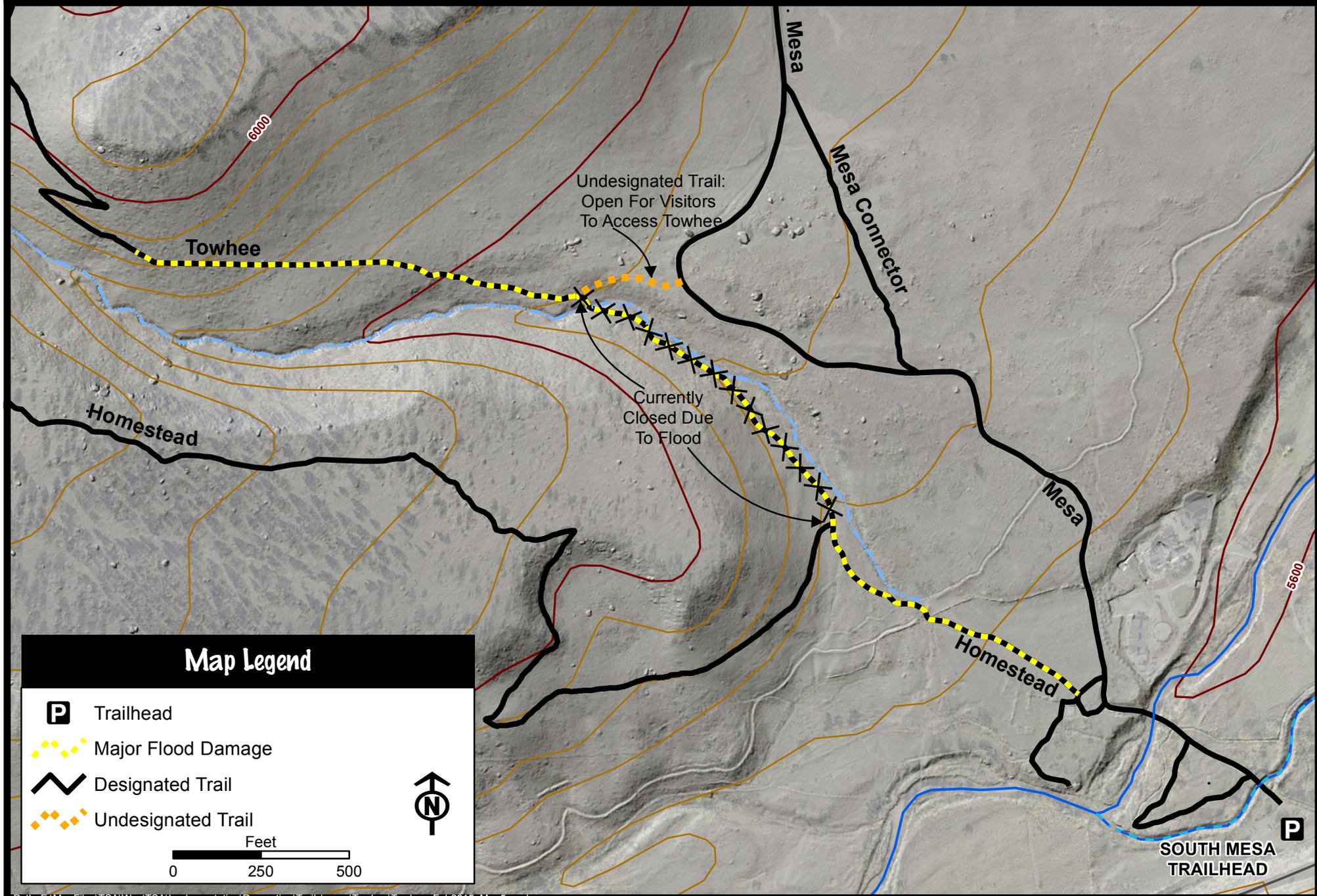
Map A. Towhee/Homestead Trails – Current Condition

Map B. Towhee/Homestead Trails – Staff Recommendation

Map C. Towhee/Homestead Trails – Staff Recommendation with Resource Overlay

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Towhee/Homestead Trails - Current Conditions



Map Legend

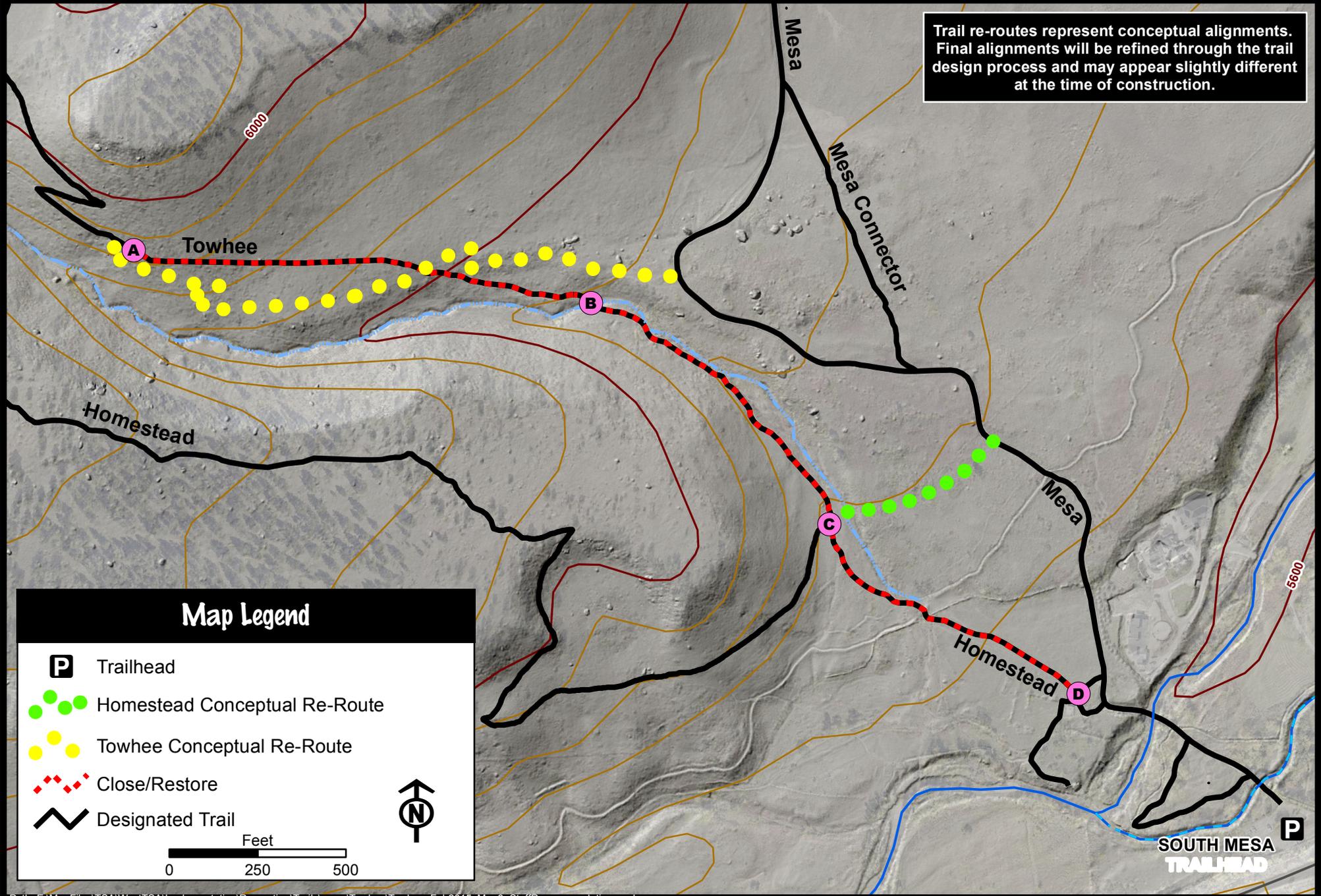
- Trailhead
- Major Flood Damage
- Designated Trail
- Undesignated Trail

Feet

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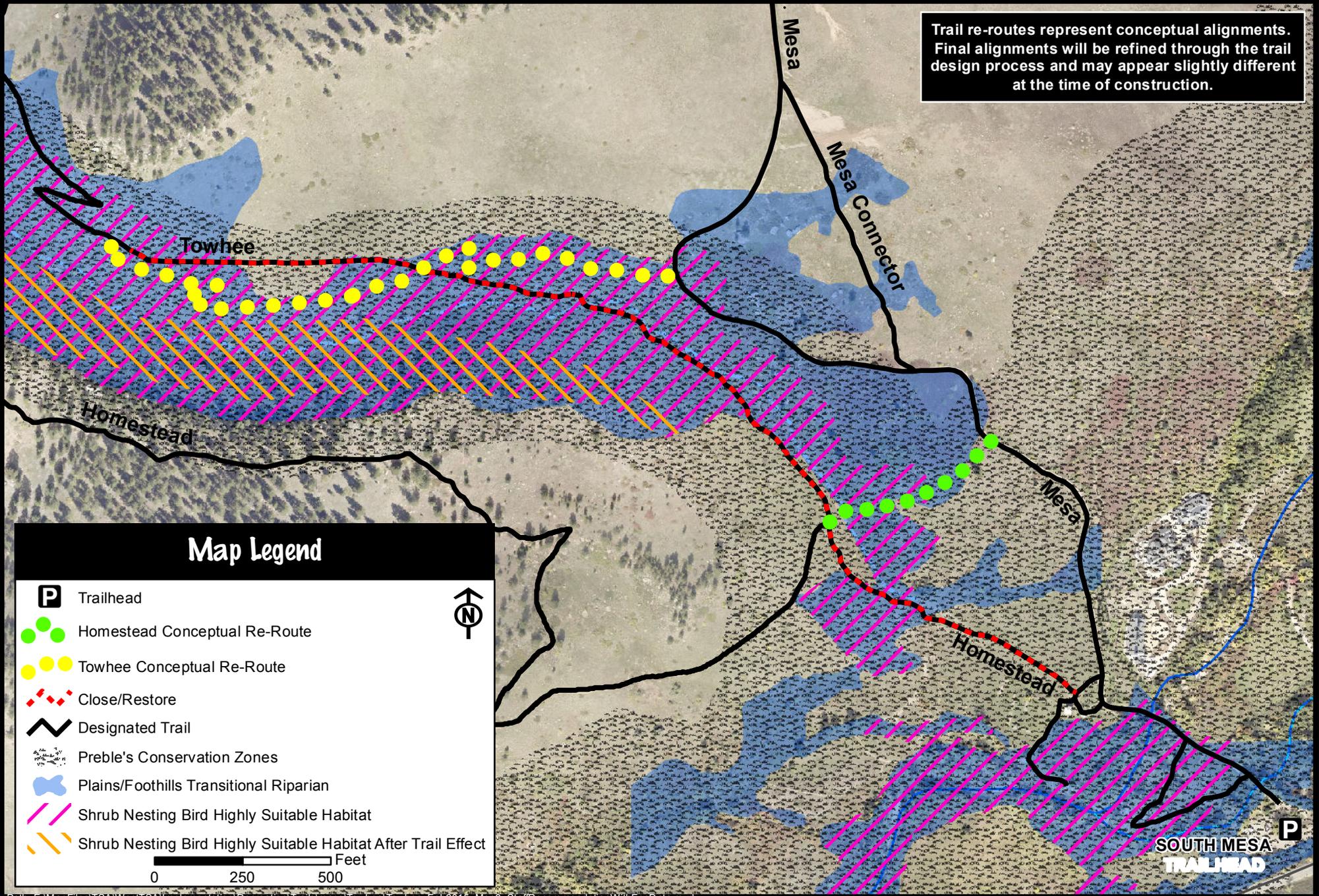
Towhee/Homestead Trails - Staff Recommendation



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Towhee/Homestead Trails - Staff Recommendation With Resource Overlay

Trail re-routes represent conceptual alignments. Final alignments will be refined through the trail design process and may appear slightly different at the time of construction.



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