

**North Trail Study Area (NTSA) Plan  
Assessment Public Meeting 2  
Municipal Services Center (City Yards)  
5/6/2015**

**ATTENDANCE**

Steve Armstead  
Heather Bergman  
Juliet Bonnell  
Kevin Bracy Knight

Rachele Difebbo  
Mark Gershman  
Alycia Knutson  
Annie McFarland

Phil Yates  
Deryn Wagner  
Katie Waller

There were approximately 40 members of the public in attendance.

**INTRODUCTION**

Kevin Bracy Knight, a member of the Open Space Board of Trustees, welcomed the public and explained that the board is dedicated to utilizing public input gathered at these meetings when reporting to the City Council. He encouraged the public to stay involved in the entirety of the NTSA (North Trail Study Area) process as community input is important.

Steve Armstead, a planner with Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP), explained the goal of the NTSA process is to improve visitors' experiences and increase sustainability of trails while conserving natural, agricultural and cultural resources. The West TSA was completed recently, and the NTSA will continue the Trail Study Area process. There are four stages of the NTSA process: inventory and assessment, interests and issues, draft plan development and plan acceptance. OSMP is currently in the inventory and assessment stage, which assesses the "what" of identifying current conditions and management practices. The next stage is interests and issues, which address the "why" and will include expert panels on applicable topics. The third stage is draft plan development, in which OSMP staff will collaborate with the public to assess the "how" of trying to solve the issues identified in the first two steps. After this step is complete, the draft plan will be presented to the Open Space Board of Trustees for approval and taken to City Council for acceptance. The plan approval process will start in early 2016.

There are multiple ways for members of the public to stay involved throughout the NTSA process. Additional public meetings will be held during the next stage of the process. Mr. Armstead stressed the importance of public participation and noted that providing input during meetings is not the only way to participate. Members of the public can also provide input via [www.inspireboulder.com](http://www.inspireboulder.com) or [www.northtsa.org](http://www.northtsa.org), or interact with OSMP staff in the North TSA. To stay informed throughout the process, members of the public can sign up for the OSMP newsletter at <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/north-tsa-email-list>.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Mr. Armstead addressed a few frequently asked questions regarding the NTSA process; these questions and the associated responses are below. Following the FAQs, Mr. Armstead answered questions from the participants in the meeting. Responses to these questions are also below. Additionally, some participants wrote questions down on comment cards and answers to these questions are below as well.

### **Is the North TSA process similar to the West TSA process?**

*The North TSA process does not have a collaborative group like the West TSA process did. The NTSA is a broad and inclusive process designed to generate many opportunities for public input. We are also looking to reach different groups within the community.*

### **Are outcomes predetermined?**

*No. OSMP staff needs your help in identifying issues with current conditions and management practices within the NTSA. We want to improve the area for all visitors.*

### **What is happening with the Joder property?**

*The process of opening the Joder interim trail is currently underway. The NTSA will not revisit the decision that there will be an interim trail. It will instead focus on evaluating the long-term role of the Joder property and the interim trail.*

### **What is the community role in developing and selecting preferred scenarios?**

*OSMP needs public input in combining and manipulating the pieces of the alternative scenarios. This will ensure that all options have been explored and the proper pieces come together to accomplish the mission of the NTSA process.*

### **Where is the Joder Property?**

*It is a new acquisition from 2013 and is on the north and west side of the NTSA and north of the Beech Property.*

### **How do we find more information on the location of the Joder trail?**

*This information will be on the OSMP website soon. It is also in the Open Space Board of Trustees [minutes from December](#).*

### **To whom should a user report a conflict?**

*All emergency situations and serious safety concerns should be reported by calling 911. All non-emergency violations can be reported by calling the City of Boulder's non-emergency dispatch number: 303-441-3333. Other non-emergency issues and conflicts can be reported to OSMP administration by calling 303-441-3440 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. OSMP rangers are notified through the City of Boulder dispatch or OSMP administration of violations and complaints. Issues requiring less immediate response can be reported through the [OSMP Website](#).*

**Will there be integration between the NTSA Plan and the Agricultural Resource Management Plan?**

*Yes. The OSMP department is concurrently developing an [Agricultural Resource Management Plan](#). Recommendations and information from the Agricultural Resource Management Plan related to properties in the NTSA and topics relevant to visitor access and services will be integrated into the NTSA Plan.*

**What was the purpose of Open Space purchasing an easement at the north end of the Luchetta property?**

*The OSMP department has a conservation easement on the northern part of the Luchetta property which also includes an easement for a possible future trail.*

**Does Open Space continue to be interested in the Luchetta property should it become available?**

*Potential acquisitions are guided by the [Open Space and Mountain Parks Acquisition Update 2013-2019](#).*

**Is there any possibility of a horse retirement facility as a lease in the NTSA, possibly as part of Boulder Valley Ranch or Joder Ranch?**

*Most of the horse related facilities on the Joder property were removed prior to the City of Boulder owning the property and as such this property would not be a suitable location for a horse retirement facility. Possible future uses of the Boulder Valley Ranch would depend on the evaluation of all lease bids submitted to OSMP when a change in agricultural management or agricultural tenant takes place.*

**Are there any marijuana growing operations in NTSA?**

*There are no marijuana growing operations on lands owned or leased by OSMP. There are privately owned lands with OSMP conservation easements where marijuana is grown.*

**For the sake of dispersion of users, could recreation coexist with agricultural properties?**

*Recreational access can coexist on agricultural properties. There are examples of this throughout the OSMP system including areas in the NTSA such as the Boulder Valley Ranch.*

**What is possible with Boulder County, Forest Service, and BLM for trail connections?**

*There are a number of different regional and interagency trail connections that would require collaboration between the agencies listed above and others. The NTSA Inventory and Assessment Report will have information available on proposed regional connections.*

**GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Participants broke into small groups to discuss three main themes related to the NTSA: natural resources, recreation, and cultural and agricultural resources. A summary of key themes from the discussions follows.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### What natural resources are important to the NTSA?

<b>Geological Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water (e.g., Wonderland Lake, Mesa Reservoir)</li> <li>• Landscape west of Highway 36</li> <li>• Old Kiln</li> <li>• Geomorphic and vegetative characteristics of the first hogback</li> <li>• Springs and seeps on hogbacks</li> <li>• Rock formation bordering Four Mile Creek</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife and Vegetation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prairie dogs</li> <li>• Raptors around Luchetta and Axelson</li> <li>• Large predators around Luchetta and Axelson</li> <li>• Bald eagles</li> <li>• Hawks</li> <li>• Coyotes</li> <li>• Osprey nests</li> <li>• Rabbits</li> <li>• Bell's Twinpod</li> <li>• Prairie ecosystem</li> </ul>

### What currently works well with the protection and management of natural resources within the NTSA and what would you like to see improved?

<b>Current Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife is a positive addition to the user experience.</li> <li>• Weeds are pervasive on trails, perhaps because of voles.</li> <li>• Investigate large amounts of weeds east of Boulder Valley Ranch on mesa tops.</li> <li>• Mixture of natural land and agricultural land adds to the user experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails widen when they are used in muddy conditions and damage vegetation.</li> <li>• Access to Joder Ranch and Beech will reveal more species.</li> <li>• Mountain bikers are creating single-track impacts surrounding vegetation.</li> <li>• Recreation diversity provides good exposure to natural resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Prairie Dogs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prairie dog burrows damage trails.</li> <li>• Prairie dogs affect public health and should be fenced.</li> </ul>
<b>Habitat Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cactus presence has decreased.</li> <li>• Native vegetation should be maintained along trails.</li> <li>• Trail closures due to muddy conditions protect vegetation.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use livestock to maintain land.</li> <li>• Use signs to inform visitors of area natural history.</li> <li>• Do not use signs.</li> <li>• Remove signage when conditions revert back to their original state.</li> <li>• Create more programming like the post-flood hikes.</li> <li>• Do not exclude people from natural resources for their own good.</li> <li>• My greatest concern is that the area will be overdeveloped to the detriment of the wildlife. If there was a way to give OSMP visitors a way to appreciate and not love an area to death (think Mt. Sanitas) that would be great. I think, but am not certain, that many trails will fragment, thus affecting wildlife in its environment. This is a beautiful wild area that I hope does not one day need to be rewilded.</li> </ul>

**What natural resources would you like to know more about?**

<b>Wildlife and Vegetation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warn visitors about the presence of rattlesnakes, especially in Lake Valley.</li> <li>• Educate visitors about seasonal closures for Golden Eagle nests.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply more information about working ecosystems.</li> <li>• Allow access to unique landscape west of Highway 36.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the public about the use and impact of fire.</li> <li>• Organize nature hikes with Dave Sutherland.</li> <li>• Give advanced warning for closures or policy changes due to natural resources.</li> <li>• Provide an informative guide like in other OSMP areas.</li> <li>• Provide information about fishing.</li> <li>• Identify conservation easement properties.</li> <li>• Organize field trips to properties that are closed to the public.</li> </ul>

**RECREATION**

**What types of recreation are important in the NTSA?**

<b>Multi-use Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog walking in Boulder Valley Ranch and north of Wonderland Lake</li> <li>• Biking trails that are not too technical</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Hang/Paragliding</li> <li>• Horseback riding</li> <li>• Hiking on the hogbacks</li> <li>• Lagerman Reservoir Trail (<i>OSMP staff note: This is a Boulder County Trail</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautiful vistas</li> <li>• Diversity of parks</li> <li>• Flat terrain conducive to horses</li> <li>• Geomorphology diversity</li> <li>• Quiet and solitude</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different types of terrain</li> <li>• Diversity of natural features</li> <li>• Direct access via dirt roads</li> <li>• Loop trails</li> <li>• Incorporation of agriculture</li> <li>• 24-hour access during the full moon</li> <li>• Good winter access</li> <li>• Easy access from neighboring homes.</li> </ul>

**Regarding recreation opportunities in the NTSA, what would you like to see remain the same and why?**

<b>Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet nature of the NTSA</li> <li>• Limited visitor conflicts on Foothills Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Trails</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current trail management, especially on Foothills and Hogback post-flood</li> <li>• Parking situation</li> <li>• Current signage levels</li> <li>• Double Dove horse infrastructure</li> <li>• Boulder Valley Ranch road conditions</li> </ul>

## Where can management of recreation opportunities be improved?

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Access</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Joder Ranch would enhance user experience.</li> <li>• Create access west of Highway 36.</li> <li>• Improve fishing access.</li> <li>• Use gates that provide easier access for bikes and horses.</li> <li>• Open more lakes and reservoirs to the public. Joder Ranch should be an “equestrian focus area” with horses allowed off-trail at Boulder Valley Ranch and Joder Ranch.</li> <li>• Restore public use of the outdoor horseback riding arena at Boulder Valley Ranch.</li> <li>• Consider restoring horse rental at Boulder Valley Ranch as it is a historic use.</li> <li>• Consider restoring riding lessons at Boulder Valley Ranch through Parks and Recreation.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trails</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design trails to disperse visitors.</li> <li>• Develop regional connectivity options, both in and out of the NTSA:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lyons</li> <li>• Longmont</li> <li>• West Beech &gt; Joder &gt; Heil</li> <li>• Hall &gt; Heil &gt; Rabbit Mountain</li> <li>• Beech &gt; Joder loop with alternating days</li> <li>• Pella Crossing</li> <li>• Boulder Valley Ranch &gt; South</li> <li>• Joder loop through cement plant &gt; West Beech &gt; railroad bed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This area offers more potential to connect to other areas of the county than anywhere else. The Foothills Trail is a great example of this. I would like to see more connections from one area to the next.</li> <li>• Extend trails beyond Neva Road connections.</li> <li>• Create a north-south connector via the canals.</li> <li>• Create non-road access from Boulder to Joder Ranch.</li> <li>• Improve rutted trails as Eagle Trail descends into Boulder Valley Ranch due to bike use.</li> <li>• Create pass-through trails instead of loop trails.</li> <li>• Improve off-road trail access to Boulder Reservoir.</li> <li>• Coordinate with Boulder County on alliance through feeder canals.</li> <li>• Acquire more land to create more access.</li> <li>• Create loop trails instead of out-and-back trails.</li> <li>• Add trail loops to the west side of Highway 36.</li> <li>• Trail improvements are necessary and should include loops, especially to some of the ridge tops.</li> <li>• The trail from Wonderland Lake to North Foothills is in abysmal condition and needs to be regraded and graded.</li> <li>• One thing that is great about the Mesa Trail is that there is a “high” road and a “low” road along a lot of it that allows loops and hikes of differing lengths. It seems there could be much more of that north of Wonderland Lake towards the Joder property that would make this more a “jewel” in Boulder Open Space.</li> <li>• Maintain trails more efficiently and provide flood restoration.</li> <li>• Increase rolling single-track trails, like in Dowdy Draw.</li> <li>• Focus on excellent trail design in Joder Ranch.</li> <li>• Develop sustainable and interesting trail designs.</li> <li>• Create trails on the perimeter of agricultural land.</li> </ul>

<b>Visitor Conflicts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control bike activities in non-bike areas.</li> <li>• Address visitor conflicts on dirt roads, trail crossings and gate areas.</li> <li>• Address conflicts between horses and mountain bikers due to narrow trails.</li> <li>• Increase signage and yield pattern information.</li> <li>• Segregate trail activities based on trail, direction and day.</li> <li>• Biker etiquette has improved.</li> <li>• Increase education about different visitor interactions.</li> <li>• Educate visitors about how to report conflicts.</li> <li>• Design trails to reduce conflicts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider trails</li> <li>• Grading, not bumps</li> <li>• Sharper turns to reduce bike speed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Segregate horses and mountain bikers.</li> <li>• Mitigate negative interactions between horses and out-of-control dogs.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain an area for paragliders and hang gliders.</li> <li>• Manage weeds.</li> <li>• Use management to control erosion on trails.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more parking, especially off Longhorn Road.</li> <li>• Create better landscaping.</li> <li>• Provide more amenities, like toilets.</li> <li>• Create parking for horse trailers at Joder Ranch.</li> <li>• Provide good signage to Degge Trail from Foothills parking lot.</li> </ul>
<b>Horses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide parking for horse trailers.</li> <li>• Improve gate crossings at Boulder Valley Ranch for horses.</li> <li>• Explore options for horse rentals.</li> </ul>
<b>Dogs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require that dogs be leashed when they are around horses.</li> <li>• Allow dog walking west of Highway 36.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate impact on wildlife of loop trails versus pass-through and out-and-back trails.</li> <li>• Increase stewardship opportunities with a sense of ownership.</li> <li>• Boulder Valley Ranch trails east of Highway 36 are dull and better suited to biking.</li> <li>• Lefthand Valley is not interesting.</li> <li>• The Parks and Recreation Department has plans to finish the trail around Boulder Reservoir.</li> <li>• Horses and their owners are not threatening.</li> <li>• Show other agencies' property on map to show possible future trail connections.</li> <li>• Document social trails on base map.</li> </ul>

## AGRICULTURE

### **What agricultural resources are important in the NTSA?**

<b>Water Storage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesa Reservoir</li> <li>• Boulder Reservoir</li> </ul>
<b>Agricultural Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hay production</li> <li>• Animals</li> <li>• Irrigation</li> </ul>
<b>Farms and Ranches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boulder Valley Ranch</li> <li>• Old farms between 75<sup>th</sup> and St. Vrain</li> </ul>

**What existing management practices of agricultural resources would you like to see improved or changed in the NTSA and why?**

<b>Boulder Valley Ranch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active agriculture is important for a diverse experience.</li> <li>• Open Boulder Valley Ranch barn and riding arena to the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Land Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize properties that sell products at farmers markets.</li> <li>• Lease more OSMP property for organic farming.</li> <li>• Evaluate impact of prairie dogs.</li> <li>• Do not limit trails because of conservation easements and leased agriculture lands.</li> <li>• Reevaluate Ted Turner’s bison proposal.</li> <li>• Evaluate agricultural water sources for fishing potential.</li> <li>• Share agricultural land with recreation.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unnecessary gates and fences when animals are not present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Boulder Valley Ranch</li> <li>○ Near the coffee roaster business</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Remove perimeter fencing from open properties.</li> <li>• Keep leases affordable for cattlemen.</li> </ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase opportunity to interact with land through food stands.</li> </ul>

**What agricultural resources would you like to have more information about?**

<b>Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mesa Reservoir</li> <li>• Boulder Reservoir</li> <li>• Clover Basin</li> <li>• Lagerman Reservoir</li> <li>• Ditches and irrigation</li> </ul>
<b>Properties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiate between lands that are open and closed to the public.</li> <li>• Provide more information on Berman Brothers’ property.</li> <li>• Incorporate history of agriculture into the user experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look to UK as an example of how to incorporate recreation and agriculture.</li> <li>• Education is essential to understand human interactions with agriculture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Calving season</li> <li>○ Bulls</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agricultural land is good for horses because it is flat.</li> </ul>

**CULTURE AND HISTORY**

**What cultural or historic resources, sites or uses are important in the NTSA?**

<b>Agricultural History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granges</li> <li>• Old Kiln</li> <li>• Boulder Valley Ranch</li> <li>• Joder Ranch</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fossils at Dakota Ridge faults</li> <li>• Natural prairie ecosystem and its history</li> </ul>

**What is currently working well with the protection and management of cultural resources within the NTSA and what would you like to see improved?**

<b>Preservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserving buildings would add to the user experience (Lappin cabin, Old Kiln and Cobalt Mine)</li> <li>• Preserve the history of Joder Ranch and incorporate into the NTSA.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use interpretive signs to explain cultural and historical significance.</li> <li>• Utilize technology to make information accessible (e.g., QR codes in Mesa South).</li> <li>• Use motion-controlled technology to tell story of the resource.</li> <li>• Create ranger or volunteer-led hikes.</li> </ul>

**What cultural or historic resources would you like to have more information about?**

<b>Structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the Cobalt Mine ruins.</li> <li>• Provide more information on the old stagecoach station.</li> </ul>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create programming around food sustainability in Boulder County.</li> <li>• Explain modern history of ranching and farming.</li> </ul>
<b>Area History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Native American history in the NTSA, including burial and hunting grounds.</li> <li>• Educate users on natural history of the area.</li> <li>• Explain equestrian history of Joder Ranch.</li> <li>• Incorporate Boulder Valley Ranch history into the user experience.</li> <li>• Explain Cobalt Mine ruins.</li> <li>• Provide more information about the old stagecoach station.</li> <li>• Explain the history of the old railroad grade with an undesignated trail.</li> </ul>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create programming with Boulder Valley School District regarding local food.</li> <li>• Include NTSA properties in Boulder County farm tours.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little is known about the cultural and historical resources within the NTSA.</li> <li>• Recreationists do not have time to read signs, so make them interesting.</li> <li>• SKIP bus stops use interpretive signage effectively and could be incorporated.</li> <li>• Equestrians need more places to board horses.</li> </ul>

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

- Can have off-trail use in designated HCAs.
- Create Joder and West Beech HCAs.
- Change the designation of West Beech and Joder from HCAs to Natural Areas (NAs) as they meet few criteria for the former and many for the latter.
- Dogs are our friends. More dog-friendly trails and/or days off for mountain bikers. Both can share, but there are more and less effective methods.
- If the Olde Stage Trail, near Buckingham Park, connects to the Joder Ranch, please continue to allow dogs on the trail. Many residents walk that trail every morning and night with their dogs and I do not want to see that change.
- It would be nice to have some more historical information on new and old acquisitions (e.g., Lefthand Canyon used to be closed to pioneers or stories about Joder Ranch and Heil Trail).
- Before any areas are designated as open or closed for wildlife reasons, proper studies should be done to show that recreation and wildlife can or cannot coexist. Things should not be assumed, but rather studied and empirically decided.

- Recreation needs to take advantage of flat spaces with more lakes, fishing, trails, horse parking, parking, canal area, and arena for horses.
- Eliminate unnecessary fencing and gates.
- Inventory maps need work and are incomplete.

### **PANELIST SUGGESTIONS**

Participants were invited to provide suggestions for individuals outside Boulder who could bring fresh ideas and expertise to the process. The following suggestions were provided:

- Kim Frederick from Jefferson County Parks and Open Space regarding trails
- International Mountain Biking Association
- Area history specialist

### **SIDEBOARDS**

Participants were invited to provide feedback on the proposed “sideboards” (legal and policy constraints) for the NTSA process. One person suggested that OSMP incorporate the Boulder Valley Area Management Plan from the mid-1980s.