North TSA Plan

BOULDER CITY COUNCIL

JUNE 7, 2016

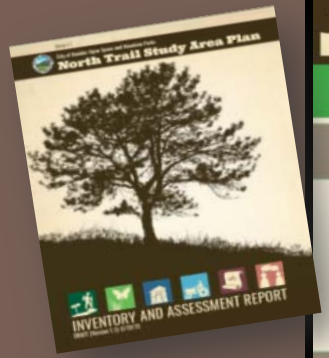
North Trail Study Area Plan

GOALS:

Improve Visitor Experiences

Increase Sustainability
- Trails
- Trailheads
- Other Visitor Infrastructure

Conserve Resources
- Natural
- Cultural
- Agricultural



City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks

North Trail Study Area Plan

PLANNING PROCESS

Phase 1 Inventory and Assessment

PURPOSE: Share knowledge of the current conditions of recreational, natural, cultural and agricultural resources.

RESULTS: Inventory and Assessment Report.

KEY INPUTS:

- Community knowledge of visitor experiences, resources, what is functioning well in the North TSA and what needs improvement.
- Staff-prepared information on recreational, natural, cultural and agricultural resources.

Phase 2 Interests and Issues

An interest is the WHY behind the WHAT.
An issue is WHAT may need to be changed.

PURPOSE: Share knowledge about desired outcomes and topics that will guide the development and assessment of alternative scenarios and recommendations for the draft plan.

RESULTS: Desired actions for consideration in scenario development.

KEY INPUTS:

- Community interests about desired plan outcomes and why the outcomes are wanted.
- Discussion of issues that could pose a challenge in the North TSA.
- Community dialogue about what is learned and can be implemented in the North TSA and why.

Phase 3 Draft Plan Development

A scenario is a set of potential actions that addresses interests and issues.

PURPOSE: Assess alternative scenarios and integrate preferred recommendations into a draft plan.

RESULTS: Preferred scenarios compiled into a draft plan.

KEY INPUTS:

- Draft alternative scenarios developed by staff to achieve identified interests and objectives.
- Community feedback on draft scenarios to inform preferred scenarios and recommendations.

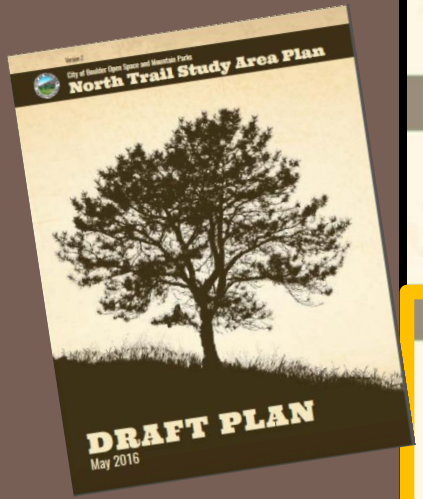
Phase 4 Plan Acceptance

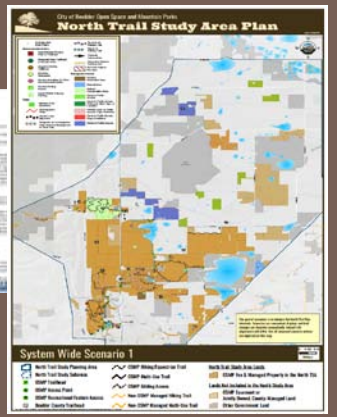
PURPOSE: Review draft plan and approve final plan.

RESULTS: Final North Trail Study Area Plan.

KEY INPUTS:

- Community review.
- Open Space Board of Trustees review and approval.
- City Council review and acceptance.





High Level of Community Engagement

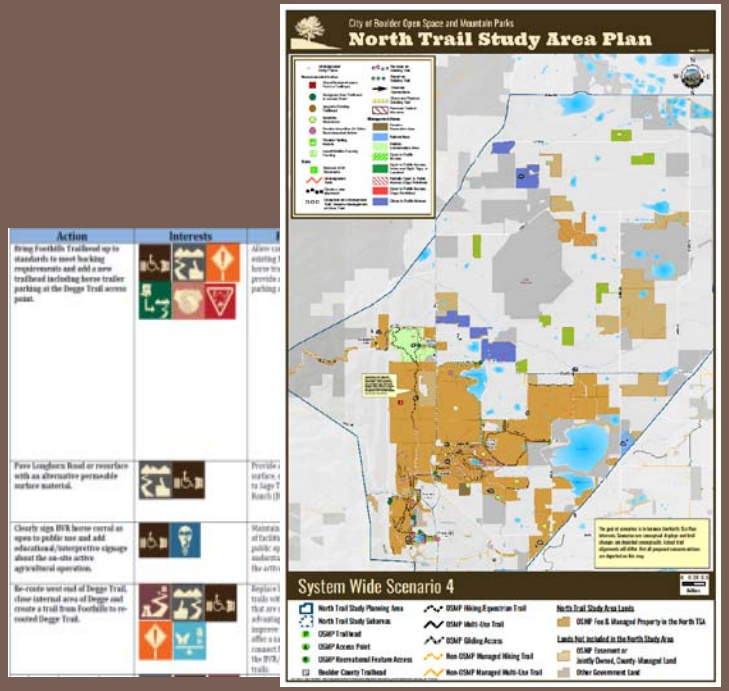
- Nine Community workshops
- Online feedback and on-site
- Partner agencies
- Youth (Growing Up Boulder)
- OSBT participated in every step

Community-shaped plan

Scenarios: *Conceptual vision of a set of actions that balance interests*

Developing North TSA vision through refining scenarios

- Four Preliminary scenarios
- Two Refined scenarios
- Revised both scenarios
- Draft plan based on preferred scenario



Converging Ideas that Balance Community Interests

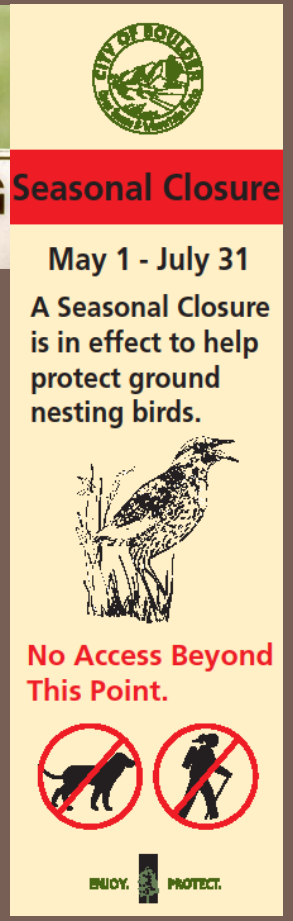
Recommendations in draft plan and alternative scenario:

- Retain the Joder Ranch Trail
- Single Joder loop (Mahogany Loop)
- Redesign Boulder Valley Ranch (BVR) trails
- Antler Loop (Wonderland Hill loop trail)
- Wrangler Trail

Continuous Improvement

Applying what we've learned:

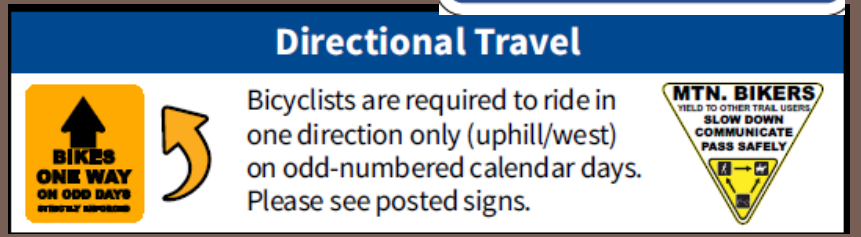
- Seasonal visitor access closures and restrictions
- Creating new trail connections to successfully reclaim undesignated trails
- Parallel single track trail (Sage and Eagle loop)



Continuous Improvement

Creative ideas and approaches:

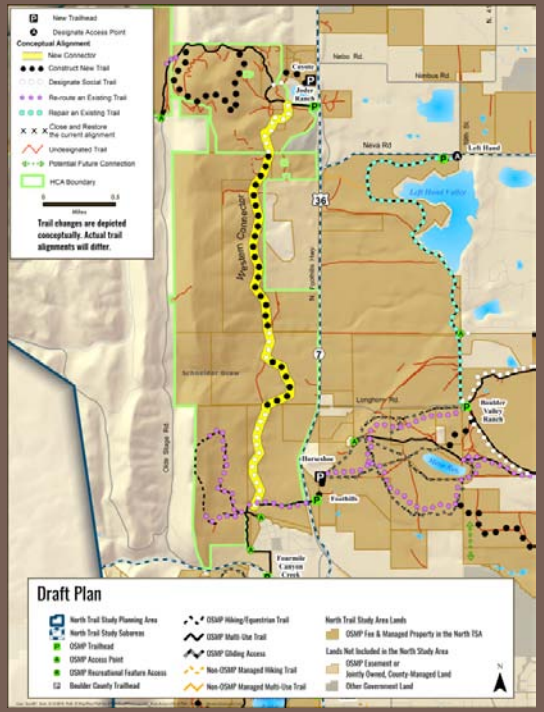
- Voice and Sight on Corridor (off trail dogs on leash)
- Not allowing off-trail permits in most of the HCA
- Directional and temporal requirements for bikes
- Conservation-oriented trail design for North Sky Trail (bike dismount trail sections)



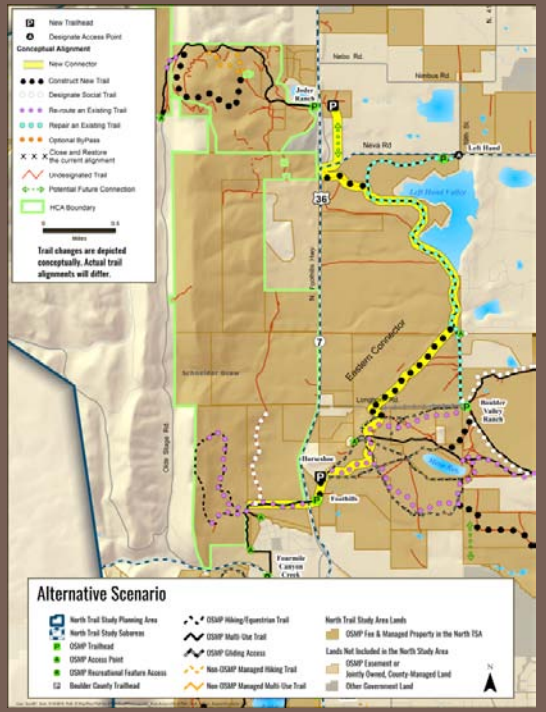
Challenge of Balancing Community Interests

Determining a trail connection to the Joder property

North Sky Trail



Alternative Scenario

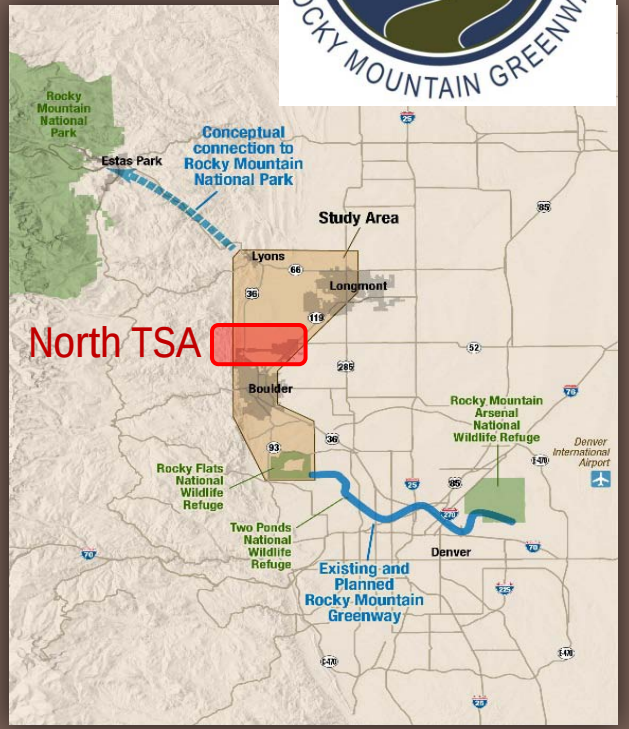


Study Session Follow Up Topics

- Rocky Mountain Greenway
- Highway 36 underpass
- Visitor Master Plan guidance on trails in HCAs
- Maintenance of Joder Connector alternatives
- Area III Planning Reserve

Rocky Mountain Greenway and the North TSA

- Support locally-driven projects and existing trails
- Section from Boulder to Lyons pending outcomes of North TSA
- Generally family-friendly trails
- North TSA Plan provides connection options



Highway 36 Underpass

Co. Hwy 93 underpass at Community Ditch Trail

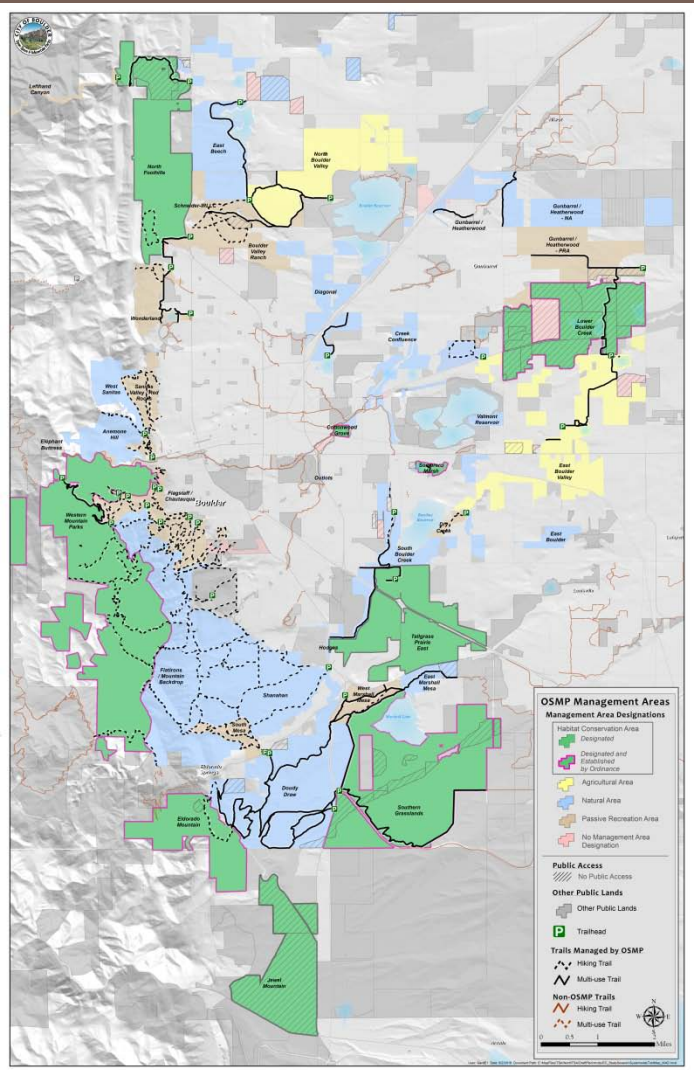
- Not in Draft Plan
- Included in alternative scenario with the east route
- Additional costs, resource impacts and marginal benefit if included in the draft plan
- Uncertainty of partners for potential cost sharing

HCA Guidance for Trails

- Visitor Master Plan (VMP) framework with defining characteristics and goals
- Strategies for management area designations

“Minimize new trails and trail density; locate new trails to minimize impacts on habitat quality.”

“Design and construct trails and other facilities to sustain a low level of visitor use.”



HCA Guidance for Trails

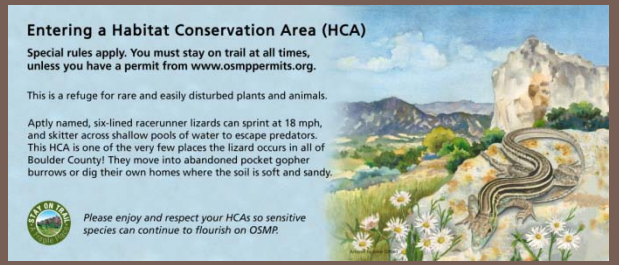
The VMP anticipated the need for flexibility

Introductory statement:

"….strategies normally *applied in specific management area designations. (That does not preclude localized application in any of the management areas where needed.)"*

Provide higher levels of protection in areas with greatest vulnerability

- Draft plan includes protective strategies



Joder Connection Trail Maintenance Cost Factors

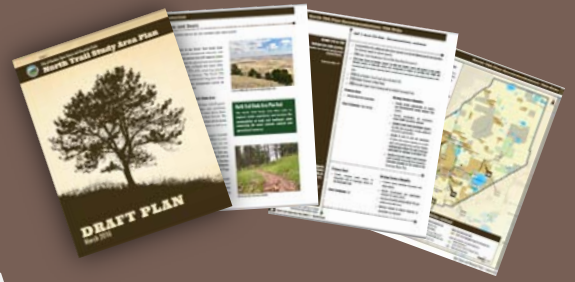
- Trails require maintenance and repair even with sustainable trail design and engineering.
- In areas of less sustainable soils and slopes, design and construction practices can help minimize erosion and frequency of repairs.

Access Point near Area III Planning Reserve

Factors to be considered:

- Terrain
- Natural Resources
- Visitor Experience

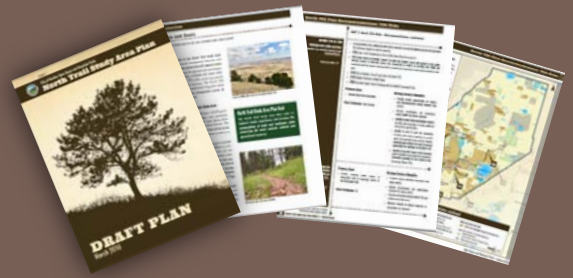
Implementing the North TSA Plan



Draft Plan includes many positive enhancements to the visitor experience and resources of the North TSA.

- ✓ 8 New Trails
- ✓ 7 Rerouted Trails
- ✓ 23 Miles of Undesignated Trails Reclaimed
- ✓ 5 Miles Integrated into North TSA Trails

Implementing the North TSA Plan



- ✓ Additional trails with Voice and Sight control
- ✓ A new trail where dogs are prohibited
- ✓ Additional trails accessible to bikes
- ✓ All trails open to equestrians with one exception

Implementing the North TSA Plan

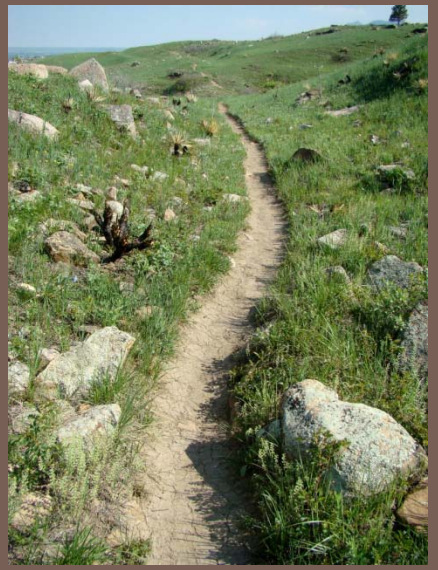
Projects that coincide with flood repairs and implementing the West TSA

- Reclaim the flood damaged section of Old Kiln Trail
- Design and build the Shale Trail
- ADA access improvements and bring trailheads up to standards
- Initial design and alignment field assessments for priority new trails

Implementing the North TSA Plan

Focus projects for 2018 – 2022

- North Sky Trail and restoration projects
- New Horseshoe Trailhead
- Mahogany Loop and the new Coyote Trailhead
- Begin work on redesign of the Boulder Valley Ranch trails



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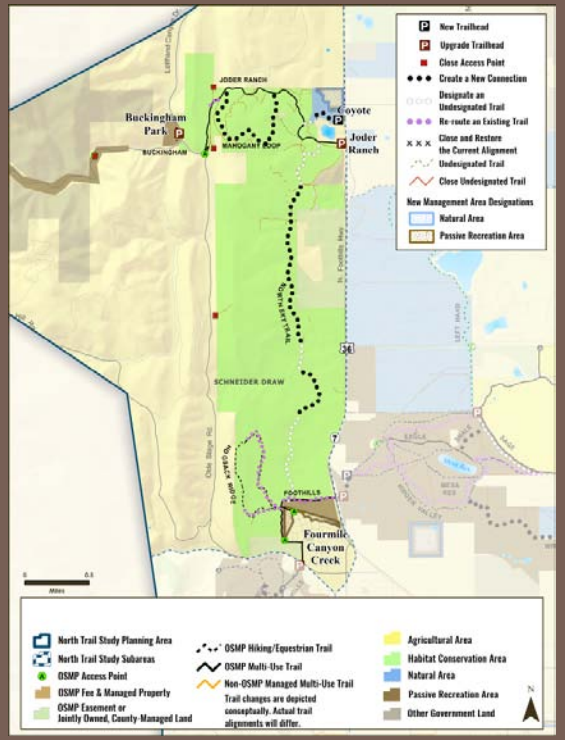
Next Steps:

- Finalize the plan
- Return to City Council with HCA ordinance recommendation
- Return to OSBT with monitoring recommendations
- Prepare for implementation



Staff Recommendation:

Staff requests the Boulder City Council accept the North Trail Study Area Plan.

Questions?

Boulder Valley Ranch
Trailhead

Welcome to
Wonderland Lake