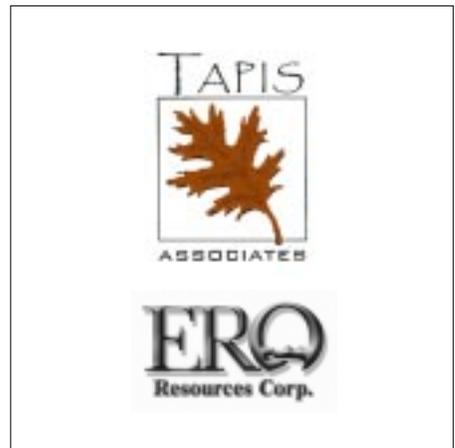


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Introduction



The Colorado Springs Park System is the direct result of the far-sighted actions of General William J. Palmer, the city's founder, who was dedicated to the preservation of the natural environment and maintenance of the high quality of life in Colorado Springs. The Citizens of Colorado Springs decided by vote to continue this legacy in 1997 with the passage of the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Ordinance with its accompanying one-tenth of one percent sales tax. The Blodgett Open Space was purchased through the TOPS process and funding in March 2001.

Blodgett Open Space is a 167 acre property covered by a diversity of vegetation communities including foothills shrubland, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir. Located at the foot of the Front Range, the property has outstanding views of Colorado Springs to the east and Blodgett Peak to the northwest. The property is also bordered on three sides by the Pike National Forest, which provides an excellent natural buffer and habitat continuity for wildlife.



Background and History

The year round flowing water in the Blodgett Open Space has gained the attention of the regions human habitants for hundreds of years. Native Americans may have used the area for hunting. The property and surrounding lands are near the western boundary for Plains Indian occupations. The Apache dominated most of what is now eastern Colorado until about 1700. Following the Apache movement south, the Comanche dominated this area until about 1820, when the Cheyenne and Arapaho gained prominence that lasted until the 1870s.

Explorers, such as the famed Zebulon Pike, visited the area in the early 1800s. Soon thereafter, fur trappers flocked to the region. In 1859, Colorado City was established to serve prospectors, and by 1870, farming and ranching began to grow in El Paso County. By the 1880s the Pikes Peak region began to grow and diversify as railroads provided access to distant markets and a steady supply of settlers. Blodgett Open Space derives its name from Blodgett Peak, which was once part of the ranch owned by the Blodgett family dating back to mid to late 1800s. The Blodgett family was one of the earliest settlers in the area that is now the Air Force Academy.

During the early 1900s, the Modern Woodmen Sanatorium used the property for water collection and diversion. Many of the old jeep trails connect to cisterns that are located on and off the Blodgett Open Space. As a turn of the century institution, it is likely the Sanatorium made every effort to be self-sufficient. Collecting its own water would have decreased reliance on outside sources. More recently, the property was owned by Peregrine and platted for a number of residential homes.

The 1997 Colorado Springs Open Space Plan targeted Blodgett Open Space as a candidate area for conservation because of its location in the foothills and diverse plant communities and valuable wildlife habitat. It was the only such area in the north-west area of the city on the Open Space Master Plan. Blodgett Open Space also falls within Queen's Canyon, one of three critical preservation candidate lands identified in the 1998 Front Range Mountain Backdrop Study. It was also identified in the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan because it offers a potential connection to two proposed trails, the Woodmen Trail and the Foothills Trail.

In March 2001, the City of Colorado Springs purchased Blodgett Open Space from Peregrine for \$2.4 million. The funding for the acquisition came from the City's Trails, Open Space, and Parks (TOPS) sales tax. The Blodgett Peak Open Space Committee and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) supported the purchase.





Regional Setting

Blodgett Open Space is located within the City of Colorado Springs city limits, about 8 miles northwest of downtown Colorado Springs in El Paso County. The property adjoins Pike National Forest to the north, south, and west and the Peregrine subdivision to the east. A portion of Peregrine is also to the north of the property. Southwest of the property is the privately owned Blodgett Ranch property. The property is located in portions of Sections 3 and 4, Township 13 South, Range 67 West.



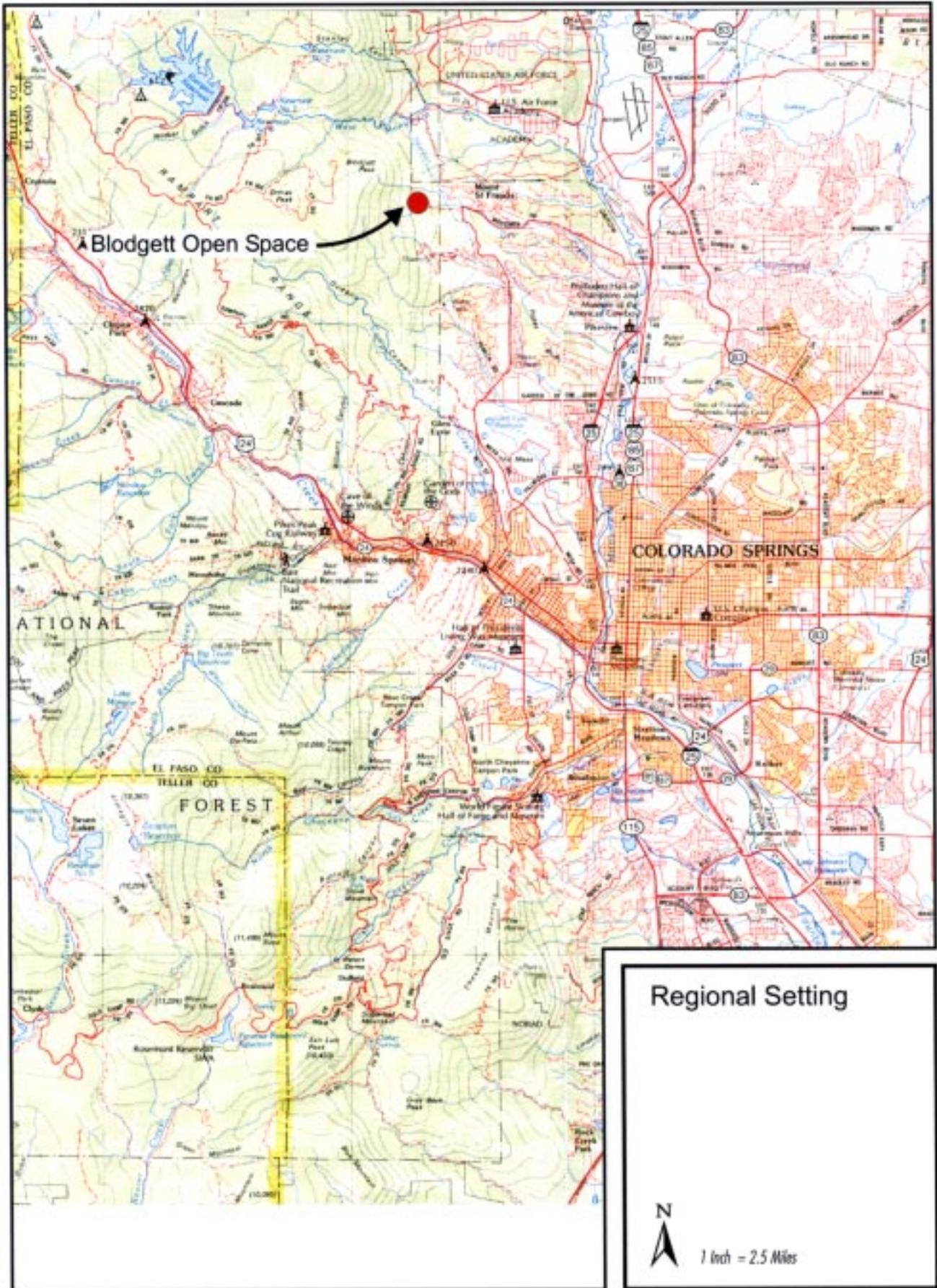
Purpose of the Plan

This is the first master plan prepared for the Blodgett Open Space. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department endeavors to update the master plans for all open spaces. This is necessary in order to evaluate the condition of the resource, impact of current uses on the park and plan for new and future uses.

The following objectives were considered during the master planning process:

- Resource inventory
- Design criteria and priorities
- Public access
- Site enhancements and programming
- Resource conservation
- Public involvement and consensus
- Accurate cost estimates
- Identification of management planning needs







Planning Process

The basic framework for the planning process was determined by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. The public process served to identify critical issues, concerns and priorities and the citizens and the Planning Team jointly determined the final preferred plan. The Planning Team was comprised of city staff with specialties in natural resources, maintenance, interpretation, and forestry; Colorado Springs Utilities representatives; and consulting natural resource, trail, landscape architecture and planning specialists.

The planning process for the Blodgett Open Space Master Plan began with a field meeting on April 18, 2002. City staff met with natural resource specialists from ERO Resources Corporation and a landscape architect from Tapis Associates to tour the property and identify significant issues. The Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department supplied local records and documents applicable to the property including information about the property's conservation values. Subsequent site visits and research by the consultant team finalized the baseline inventory, existing property sensitivities and potential property opportunities.



The first Public Open House was held June 6, 2002 at the Fire Station 18 Community Room. The Open House was structured to gather thoughtful constructive input from interested and affected parties for its subsequent evaluation and integration into the final master plan. It was successful in educating the public regarding the baseline inventory and site analysis findings, identifying issues of concern, allowing people and agencies to express their preferences about how the concerns fit into the physical master plan, and considering alternatives for the open space design and future management. The master plan documents all public inputs and integrates appropriate inputs. This meeting was publicized in the media and interested parties identified by the Planning Team were notified by mail. All citizens attending the Public Open House were added to the mailing list.



The Planning Team met to discuss the public input and to choose from among alternative plan recommendations several times in June and August. The planning process was suspended during the fire danger closure in June and July. Because no divisive issues were raised at the initial Public Open House, it was determined that the final master plan presentations should take place during established public forums. The TOPS Working Committee recommended submission of the master plan to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on August 28, 2002. The master plan was unanimously approved (with comments) on September 12, 2002.

Vision and Goals

After the first site visit, the Planning Team established a Vision Statement and Project Goals to guide decision-making during the master planning process.

Vision Statement

Blodgett Open Space contains a diversity of vegetation communities, wildlife habitat, and geological features and preserves a highly visible foothills property. It provides an opportunity to enrich people's lives through discovery and appreciation of these values.



Effective conservation and management of the Blodgett Open Space will protect the integrity of its resource values while allowing individuals to seek inspiration through their interaction with our natural environment

Ecological Goals

1. Preserve Blodgett Open Spaces' natural resources.

- Base all decisions on thorough resource documentation and an understanding of the interrelationships among current natural systems on the open space.
- Preserve and protect the conservation values of the property as described in the Baseline Inventory. These values identified Blodgett Open Space as important for conservation because it is:
 - a. Visually significant along the Front Range;
 - b. A natural area containing significant wildlife habitat;
 - c. A good example of foothills shrubland, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir, and
 - d. A good example of local geological formations.
- Implement holistic planning and management processes that lead to a balanced approach between natural resource conservation and public access.

2. Promote the conservation and restoration of natural communities.

- Encourage the naturally occurring functions and processes that enhance and regenerate the ecosystem and the biological diversity that it supports.
- Prevent degradation of the native plant communities and encourage restoration of degraded areas.
- Promote public awareness about the ecological consequences of visitor access to the area.

Community Goals

3. Provide an inspirational wildland interaction.

- Provide passive recreation activities where opportunities exist that do not degrade the conservation values of the property.
- Encourage conscientious, enjoyable, and rewarding visitor use.
- Promote safety, courtesy and respect among visitors.

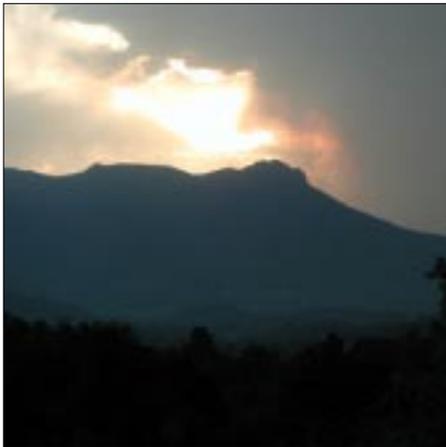
4. Provide engaging interpretive and educational opportunities.

- Stimulate inquisitiveness with viewing opportunities, interpretation, and programs.
- Encourage each individual's non-damaging interaction with the land, cultural artifacts, vegetation, and wildlife.
- Expand visitors' awareness of the balanced approach between natural resource protection and public access.

5. Maintain and enhance connectivity and stewardship of Colorado Springs' Open Space.

- Create a visionary - yet implementable and sustainable - master plan.
- Encourage region-wide connectivity with the open space, trails, and parks network.
- Demonstrate Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation's role as an effective land steward and responsible neighbor.

6. Adhere to the guidelines established in the Colorado Springs TOPS Ordinance and Open Space Master Plan.



Resource Analysis

The conservation values of the property are scenic, open space, wildlife habitat, and unique geological features as identified in the baseline inventory. More importantly, preservation of the Blodgett Open Space protects a highly visible foothills parcel identified within the Front Range Mountain Backdrop Study. Blodgett Open Space is also covered by a diversity of vegetation communities including ponderosa pine, scrub oak, and Douglas-fir. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) identified Blodgett Open Space as a candidate for further site-specific studies (Colorado Springs 2001).

Topography

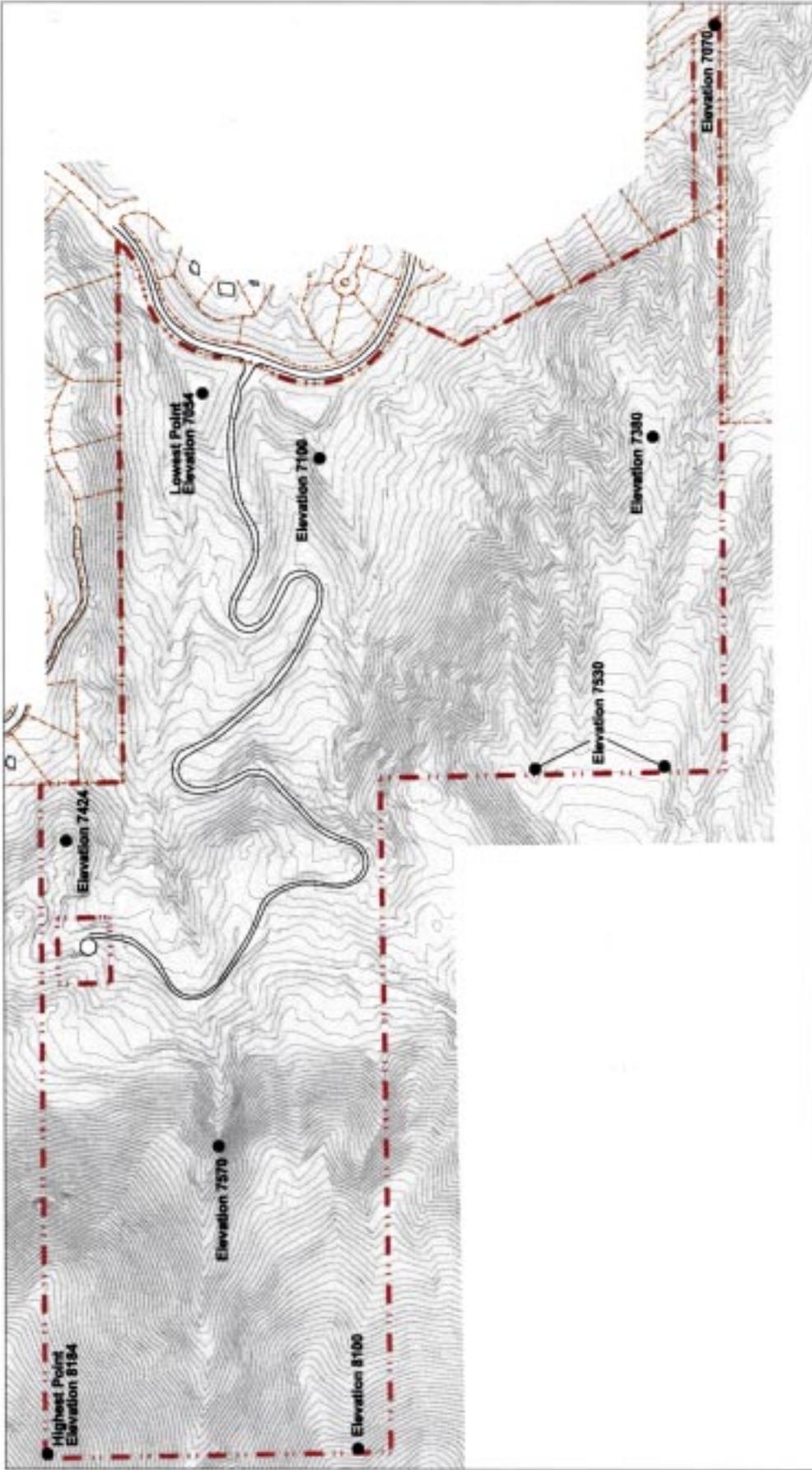
Blodgett Open Space contains a number of significant geological features. The USFS rated the rock formations as “unique” (possible ratings include unique, distinct, and common). The property also contains distinctive land forms and rock formations that are visible from numerous points around Colorado Springs. An access road begins at the eastern boundary with Woodmen Road between two drainage basins, and winds up through the scrub oak community until reaching a large water tank. The property’s lowest elevation is 7,054 feet in the northern drainage basin on the eastern boundary. The western portion of Blodgett Open Space rises sharply from the water tank to the property’s highest point at 8,184 feet elevation near the western boundary.



Geologically, the property is underlain by bedrock formations consisting of Pikes Peak granite and sedimentary bedrock of the Manitou Limestone, Fountain Formation, Morrison Formation, Dakota Formation, and Pierre Shale. The Rampart Range Fault separates the sedimentary bedrock formations from the granite. Overlying the bedrock formations are surficial deposits consisting of artificial fills, alluvium, colluvium, alluvial/debris fans, landslides, and ancient alluvial terraces.



There are no significant water bodies on the property; however, there are four east-west drainages on the property, the largest drainage being Dry Creek. Dry Creek is intermittent and the others are ephemeral. All of the drainages flow east toward the Peregrine subdivision. The two drainages flowing into the detention areas are considered waters of the U.S. because they have defined beds and banks. Based on 1949-1997 weather data from the Colorado Springs station, average annual precipitation in the area is about 16.2 inches and area temperatures range from a mean low of 35°F to a mean high of 62°F.



Topography

- - - Property boundary
- 10ft Contour
- 2ft Contour





Vegetative Zones

General Vegetation Description

Much of the property is dominated by gambel oak and ponderosa pine. On the north facing slopes, Douglas-fir dominates because of the cooler temperatures, higher relative humidity, and greater moisture availability. The access road defines a corridor of introduced and disturbed vegetation. These vegetation communities are described below and mapped on the following page. A list of plant species identified during the site visit appears in the Blodgett Open Space Baseline Inventory under separate cover.



SO (SCRUB OAK SHRUB LAND)

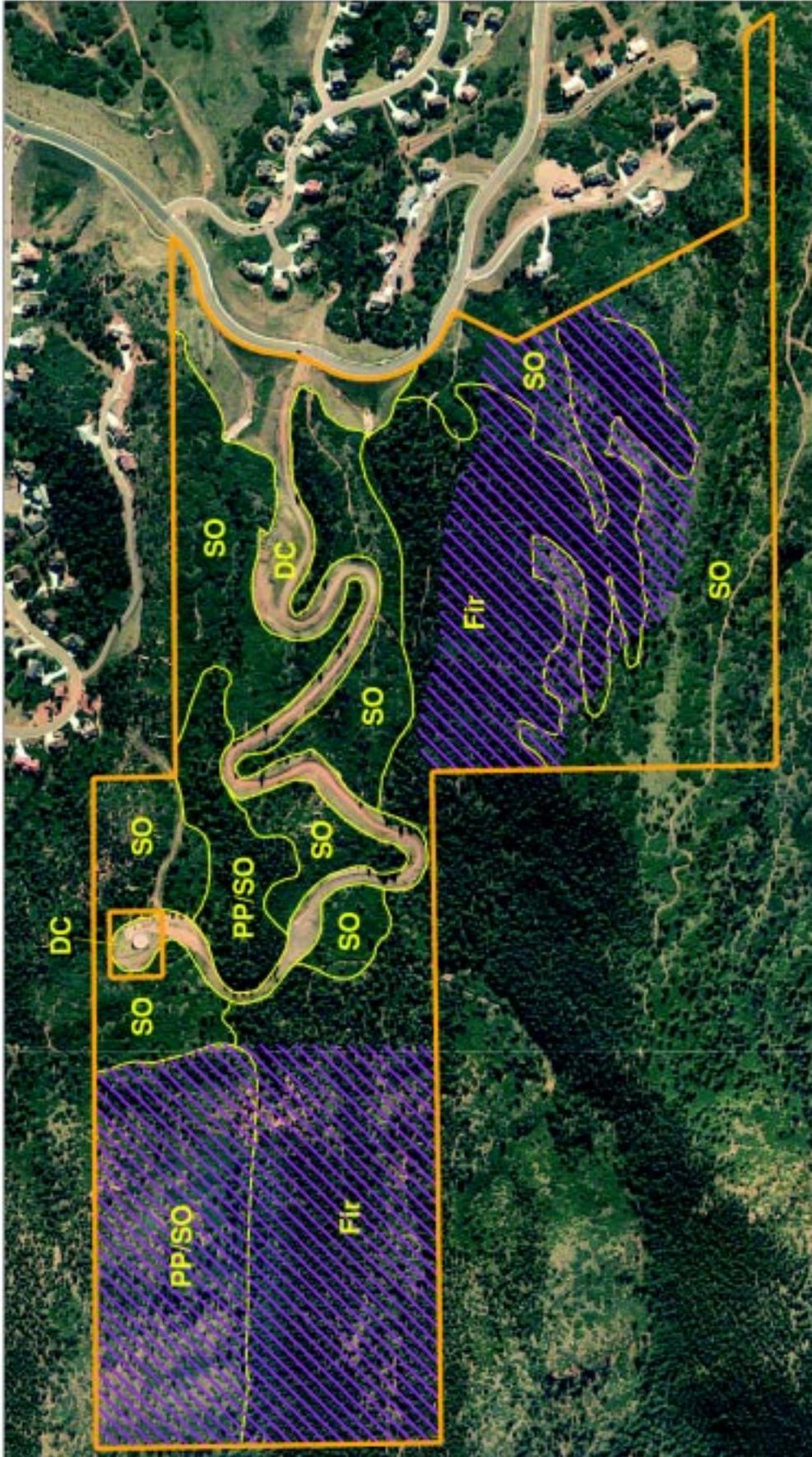
Scrub oak communities are significant resources for many animal species. They are stable communities and characteristic of the mountain shrubland environment found in the southern Rockies. On the Blodgett Open Space, this community is dominated by gambel oak and other shrubland species including mountain mahogany and wax currant. Ponderosa pine is also interspersed throughout this community.

Fire stimulates vegetative reproduction in gambel oak, which results in a thickening of existing stands and the formation of new thickets. The variation in gambel oak size and shape on Blodgett Open Space indicates that fire may have played a role in shaping this community in the last 50 years.

PP/SO (PONDEROSA PINE/SCRUB OAK)

Ponderosa pine is scattered throughout the property. It is the dominant community along the dry, south-facing slopes in the northeastern portion of the Blodgett Open Space. The understory is composed of gambel oak, wax currant, kinnikinnik, and mountain mahogany. On gentle slopes, native grasses such as blue grama, western wheatgrass, and little bluestem are common.





Vegetation Communities and Wildlife Sensitivity Zones

-  Property boundary
-  Vegetation community boundary
- DC - Disturbed Corridor
- SO - Scrub Oak Shrubland
- PP/SO - Ponderosa Pine / Scrub Oak
- Fir - Douglas Fir
-  Wildlife sensitivity zones





Vegetative Zones—continued

FIR (DOUGLAS-FIR)

Fir forests are those areas where ponderosa pine may be co-dominant or a seral dominant. Often, the Douglas-fir community occurs on north facing slopes while ponderosa pine occupies south-facing slopes. This pattern is evident on the Blodgett Open Space. Gambel oak and mountain muhly are common understory species. Rocky mountain juniper, common juniper and Ross' sedge may also be common understory species in Front Range communities found on the property.



DC (DISTURBED CORRIDOR)

The disturbed corridor is the vegetation community directly associated with the access road. It is dominated by species used during revegetation and noxious weeds spread during maintenance activities. Grasses and forbs in this area include blue grama, western wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass, smooth brome, intermediate wheatgrass, mullein, yellow sweetclover, and prickly pear. Noxious weeds present in this area include diffuse knapweed, Canada thistle, and musk thistle.

Rare Plants and Plant Communities

There are no known rare plants or plant communities on the property.

Wetland Plant Communities

There are pockets of wetland vegetation located in the storm water detention areas near the eastern boundary of the property. At this time, the jurisdictional status of these areas is undetermined. The two drainages flowing into the detention areas are considered waters of the U.S. because they have defined beds and banks.



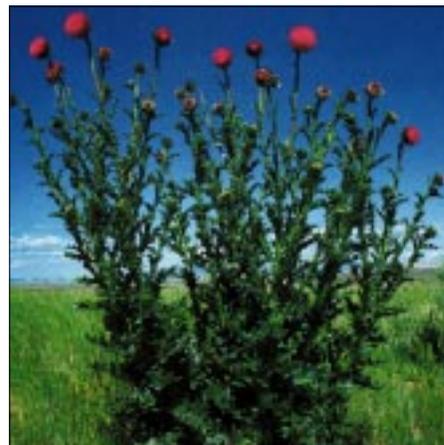
Noxious Weeds

Based on the site visit, four noxious weeds listed by the State of Colorado and El Paso County occur on or directly adjacent to the property:

1. Canada thistle occurs along the margins of the access road and possibly has spread into adjacent drainages.
2. Diffuse knapweed occurs along the margins of the access road and possibly has spread into adjacent drainages.
3. Musk thistle occurs along the margins of the access road and possibly has spread into adjacent drainages.
4. Yellow toadflax occurs near an old campsite close to the southern boundary of the property. It also along the main jeep trail that runs north-south through the property.

Due to the season of the site visit, several weed species that potentially may occur on the property were not observed. The property should be surveyed again in mid-summer for additional occurrences of yellow toadflax, diffuse knapweed, and Canada thistle.

While most of the property appears to be free of noxious weeds, there are numerous yard and domestic waste piles along the edges of the property. The piles are visually obtrusive, and may provide a foothold for the establishment of weed species throughout the property. The piles are generally located where the property boundary meets the adjacent residences, especially along the eastern part of the property's northern edge. Several waste piles are also located away from the edges along the property's main ridgeline. The large foundation spoil dump in the north-eastern part of the property also has the potential to be a significant source of weeds on the property.





Wildlife

The diversity of vegetation communities on Blodgett Open Space provides for high quality wildlife habitat. Among the scrub oak community and ponderosa pine, typical wildlife species include Colorado chipmunk, golden-mantled ground squirrel, Abert's squirrel, mountain cottontail, striped skunk, and mule deer. Mule deer and mountain cottontail were observed during the site visit. Many of these species are also found in the Douglas-fir community in addition to little brown bat, red squirrel, and the long-tailed weasel. Large carnivores that may frequent the property include black bear and mountain lion.

Birds observed during the site visit include red-winged blackbird, spotted towhee, Steller's jay, western scrub jay, magpie, American robin, downy woodpecker, broad-tailed hummingbird, black-capped chickadee, mountain chickadee, common raven, white-breasted nuthatch, northern flicker, turkey vulture, gray-headed junco, and prairie falcon.

A list of animal species observed during the site visit and likely to be present according to the NDIS database appears in the Blodgett Open Space Baseline Inventory under separate cover.



Threatened, Endangered, and Forest-Service Sensitive Species

A pair of peregrine falcon, recently delisted as an endangered species, was released through a captive breeding program by the Colorado Division of Wildlife at Eagle Peak. Eagle Peak is located north of Blodgett Peak and west of the Air Force Academy Visitor Center. Although the released falcons did not nest nearby, the north cliffs of Blodgett Peak were rated a six out of ten for potential peregrine falcon habitat by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The south cliffs were rated a five out of ten for potential habitat.



The Blodgett Open Space falls within the designated critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl, a federally threatened species. Critical habitat is the specific geographic area that is essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations. Although no individuals have been observed

on the Blodgett Open Space, there is potential for the Mexican Spotted Owl to occur. A Request for Concurrence regarding the proposed construction of trails within potential Mexican Spotted Owl habitat was submitted on 26 August 2002 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with the requested documentation. This letter is included in the Appendix on page 37. At this printing, we are waiting for a response.



Forest Service sensitive species that may occur on Blodgett Open Space include the flammulated owl and northern goshawk. The property's vegetation communities, topography, and proximity to the Pike National Forest provide adequate habitat for these species.

The flammulated owl is generally associated with montane forested habitats with a brushy understory. The flammulated owl prefers nest sites in woodpecker holes or natural tree cavities. Near Woodland Park, researchers identified old-growth ponderosa pines as key habitat. Another survey in Boulder County indicated a habitat preference for ponderosa pine/ Douglas-fir forests and dense shrubs along streams. The owls occur between 6,000 and 10,000 feet.



Northern goshawks inhabit coniferous and mixed forests in much of the northern hemisphere. Timber stands selected by goshawks for nesting are usually mature or old growth. Most nest sites have been located in stands with canopy closure exceeding 60 percent. The minimum size for suitable nest stands is 25 acres. Stands of 125 acres or more are considered optimal. The availability of suitable nesting habitat is the most limiting factor in the reproductive success of northern goshawks. In Colorado, goshawks occur in mature stands of aspen, lodgepole pine, and spruce/fir forests at elevations ranging from 7,500 to 11,000 feet.

According to the Natural Diversity Information Source database for the area, the Blodgett Open Space does not support any other current or potentially threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.





Site Analysis

Scenic Values

Blodgett Open Space encompasses a large segment of the foothills beneath Blodgett Peak. Outstanding views are attainable from forest clearings including views of Blodgett Peak to the northwest and Colorado Springs to the east and south-east. In addition, preservation of Blodgett Open Space protects a highly visible and unique foothills property along the Front Range. The Colorado Springs Open Space Plan and the Front Range Mountain Backdrop Study identified the parcel as visually unique because of its high visibility from the I-25 Corridor.

Structures, Infrastructure and Accessories

There is a 3 million gallon water tank and equipment building located on a separate tract of land within the property owned by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). An old cistern located south of the water tank was used to collect water for the Modern Woodmen Sanatorium and is likely connected to the old piping exposed along the access road just south of the water tank. In addition to the access road leading to the water tank, there are a number of old jeep trails and hiking trails. There are also numerous social trails on the property.

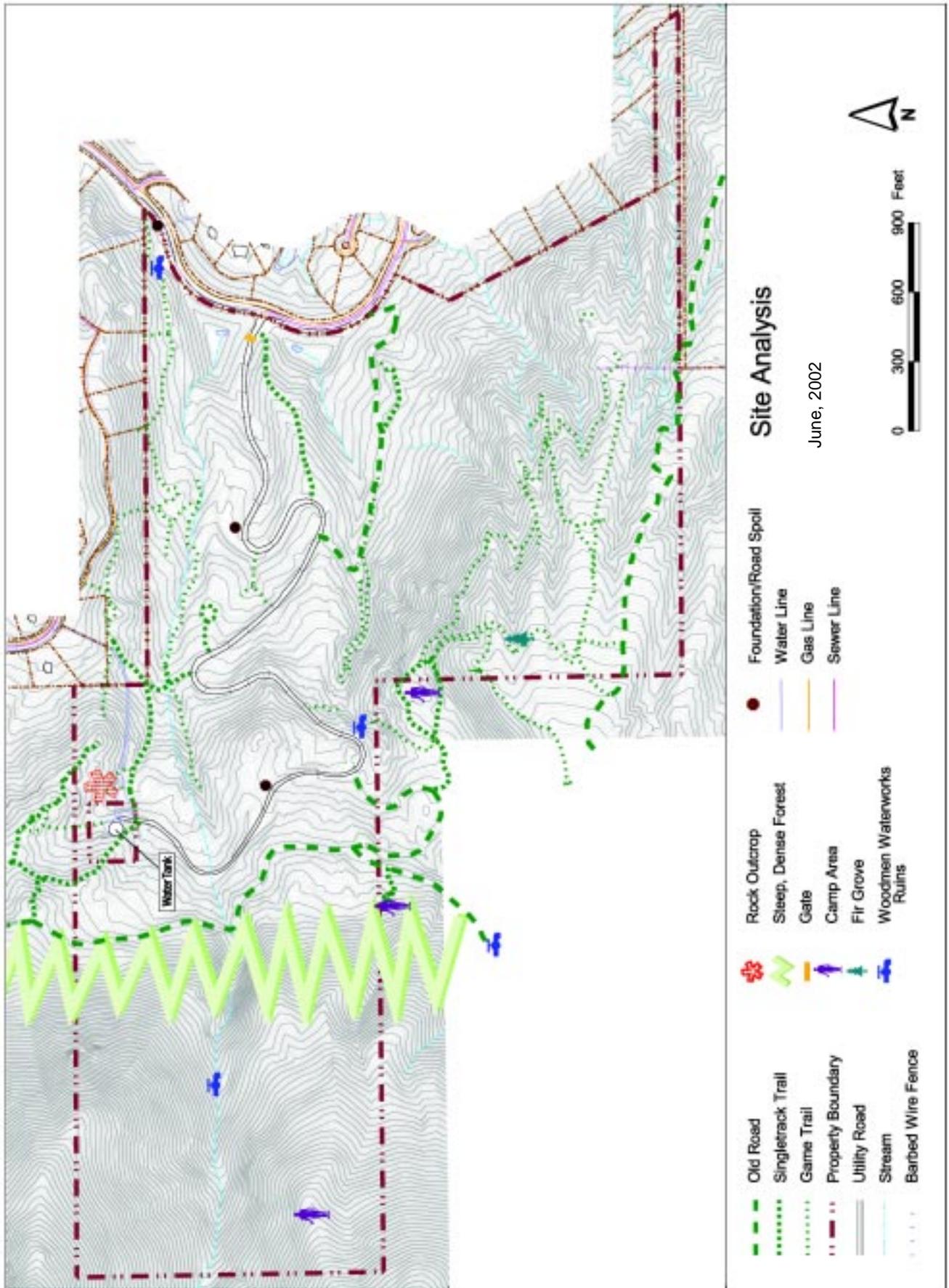
Also located on the property: several abandoned hunting camps, party spots, fire rings, numerous household dump sites, interior and perimeter fences, children's "forts", a test well, several smaller and one large construction and excavation spoil site.

Cultural Resources

An old cistern located south of the water tank was used to collect water by the Modern Woodmen Sanatorium appears to be the most obvious cultural resource on the property. However, beneath the network of sanatorium-era access trails, numerous stone, drainage-crossing structures are evident. In addition to the structures mentioned, numerous smaller drainage and stabilization structures dot the drainages throughout the property.

The Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's (OAH) database contains no entries on the Blodgett Open Space. A historic habitation was identified approximately ¼ mile north of the property that contains numerous features such as a root cellar, stone foundation, and a two-track road. This site is not officially eligible or field eligible for listing on the National Historical Register. Because no actual surveys have been conducted on the property, potential unidentified cultural resources may exist within the property boundaries. A thorough Archeological Assessment is recommended.







Regional Trail Connections

The Blodgett Open Space is located at the intersection of the Woodmen and Foothills Trails. These connections will improve access to the property and enhance the trail network in northwestern Colorado Springs.

The Woodmen Trail will cross Blodgett Ranch in a previously determined easement and enter the open space along the eastern most south property line. The Foothills Trail will enter the open space along the south property line. The Foothills Trail connects all of the major east-west trails which in turn connect with the Pikes Peak Greenway Trail—the backbone of the Colorado Springs Trail System. The Woodmen and Foothills Trails will meet and terminate on the Blodgett Open Space.

A trailhead for Blodgett Open Space will be constructed at the eastern boundary where the utility access road enters the property. Current access points are from several points along the eastern edge of the property and Angelfire to the north. The currently blocked access from Blodgett Ranch to the south requires crossing an existing fence.

Easement and Right-of-Way Information

Colorado Springs Utilities owns a water line easement on the far northeast corner of the property and an access road to the water tank on the northern edge of the property. These encumbrances are not considered to have any substantial negative impact on the property or its use as open space.

Existing Trails

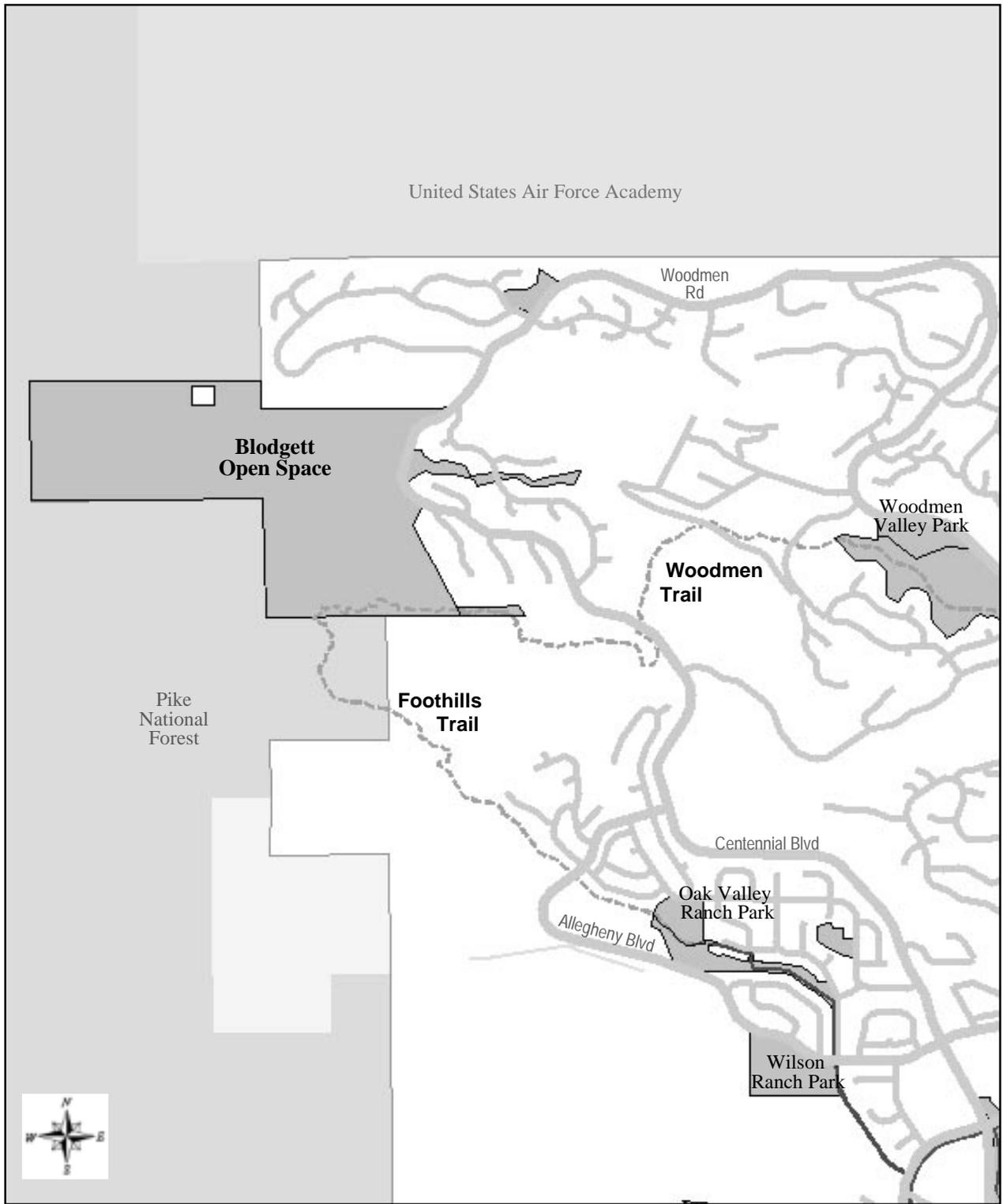
Blodgett Open Space offers outstanding opportunities for passive recreation including hiking, dog walking, birdwatching, and wildlife viewing. Historically, the property has attracted hikers and walkers from the nearby residential communities. The existing old roads and single-track trails already provide access throughout the majority of the property. Numerous social trails are also present on the property and present a threat to the property's conservation values. Existing trails were extensively surveyed and documented as part of the site analysis. The mapping of these trails included definition of three existing trail types.

Old Roads are characterized by trail widths of 6 to 8 feet, consisting of entrenched and gravelly sand, compacted tread and loose disintegrated granite. Many of these roads are abandoned Modern Woodmen Sanatorium waterworks access roads. Most traverse into the US Forest Service property and return to Blodgett Open Space. Corridor dimensions are generally 6 to 10 feet wide with 10 to 20 feet overhead clearance. In some areas, the Old Roads concentrate runoff and create eroded gullies.

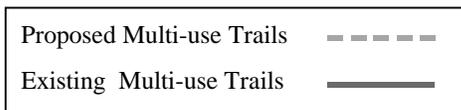
Singletrack Trails are characterized by trail widths of 1.5 to 2.0 feet, consisting of entrenched and gravelly compacted tread. Braiding occurs among many of these trails. General corridor dimensions are 2 to 6 feet in width with 6 to 10 feet overhead clearance.

Game Trails are characterized by trail widths of less than 1.5 feet, consisting of compacted non-vegetated tread. These trails are generally hard to follow and start and stop with extreme "grade breaks" and abrupt steep slopes. General corridor dimensions are 0 to 2 feet in width with 0 to 8 feet overhead clearance.

Areas of significant trail concern include: braiding trails, degraded and trampled areas especially in riparian drainages and at rock outcrops; individual homeowner access trails directly from their property; entrenched existing trail conditions and soil types not able to support additional trail traffic especially in wet conditions.



Regional Multi-use Trail Connections





Master Development Plan

Both the extensive study and the public process suggest minimal development of the Blodgett Open Space. The Master Development Plan is focused on balancing resource conservation with visitor recreation and interpretive opportunities.



The conservation values of the property are scenic, open space, wildlife habitat, and unique geological features. Blodgett Open Space encompasses a large segment of the foothills beneath Blodgett Peak. Outstanding views are attainable from forest clearings including views of Blodgett Peak to the northwest and Colorado Springs to the east and southeast. In addition, preservation of Blodgett Open Space protects a highly visible and unique foothills property along the Front Range. The Colorado Springs Open Space Plan and the Front Range Mountain Backdrop Study identified the parcel as visually unique because of its high visibility from the I-25 Corridor.

The Blodgett Open Space is also an important recreational resource. Proposed trails on the property will provide a link to the existing Colorado Springs trails system, enhancing the growing network of trails in northwestern Colorado Springs. Trails on the property will also provide opportunities for passive interaction with the diverse ecosystems while not encouraging additional activity in the adjacent US Forest Service lands.



The Master Development Plan recommendations are described on the following pages.

Resource Management

The largest threat to the Blodgett Open Space is lack of effective, proactive resource management. The threat is greatest from:

- Increased visitor usage on unsustainable trails;
- Noxious weed dispersal onto the property via wind, pets, shoes, clothing, bikes and horses;
- Incompatible road grading and facility maintenance practices, and household dumping which provide a stable seedbed for weed seeds and are unsightly;
- Wildlife displacement due to recreational use and domestic pets and;
- Declining forest health over time.

In the short term, the City should begin limited weed control measures in infested areas, and should employ an integrated pest management approach to controlling weeds during and after the construction of trails and facilities. For long-term resource management, a detailed and comprehensive forest and weed management plan that considers the connections between weed control, forest health, shrubland integrity, wildlife habitat, and visitor use is recommended. A management plan could provide specific guidelines for the continued long-term resource management, social trail revegetation and degraded areas restoration.

Resource degradation from increased visitor usage can be minimized by enforcing citywide policies including:

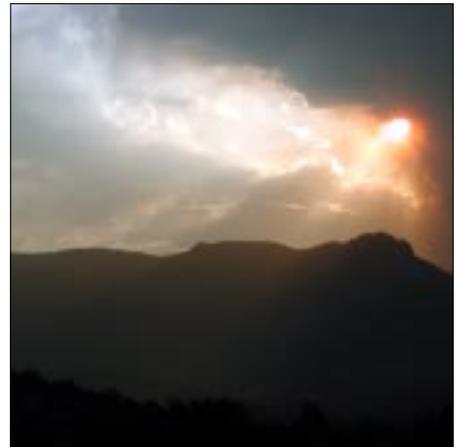
- Pets must be on leash to minimize wildlife disturbance;
- Visitors and pets must remain on designated trails;
- No dumping or slash disposal;
- Behavior and enforcement penalties defined by citywide policy; and
- Use and behavior parameters set forth in the Colorado Springs Open Space Master Plan and the TOPS Ordinance.

Perimeter Fencing

The barbed wire fence will be entirely removed where it exists both in the interior and at the perimeter of the property. Barbed wire fencing along the south property line currently obstructing motorized vehicle access will be replaced with smooth wire fencing and remain until the adjacent residential development obstructs this access. Fencing may be utilized to control vehicular access at the trailhead

Trailhead along Woodmen Road

The trailhead along Woodmen Road will provide vehicular parking, informational and interpretive signage, and comfort facilities for Blodgett Open Space visitors. A detailed illustration and description of the trailhead is included on page 27.





Trail System

The Blodgett Open Space is an important recreational resource, complementing adjacent residential and Forest Service land uses and the regional trail network in northwestern Colorado Springs. The multi-use trails are intended to concentrate traffic on sustainable tread surface and minimize off-trail traffic. Trails on the property also will provide opportunities for passive interaction with the property's diverse ecosystems.

During the trail planning process, special consideration and attention was given to trail safety, sustainability, resource sensitivity, construction cost, structural integrity, and maintenance. It also incorporates Tapis Associates' "Conscientious Trail Experience." This means each trail decision and the final trail design strives to:

- Be fun and rejuvenating;
- Provide passageway - not simply a transportation route;
- Provide compatibility for various trail user types – hikers, cyclists, horses, elderly, children, and physically challenged individuals;
- Integrate with the land, vegetation, wildlife;
- Interact with the environment; and
- Stimulate inquisitiveness through view opportunities and alignment – interpretation without signs along the entire corridor.



Pike National Forest Access

Many visitors to this property utilize its trail system to access the Blodgett Peak summit located in the Pike National Forest. Blodgett Open Space shares all of its western half boundaries with the Pike National Forest. Several well-established trails loop over the property line. This entire area of the forest is designated Management Area 5B which emphasizes big game winter range. This USFS prescription also requires *closure and obliteration* of all existing roads and trails. Existing roads and trails leading from the open space into the national forest are considered unauthorized routes on USFS property. See the Appendix for the Pike National Forest Master Plan Prescription for Management Area 5B.



Obtaining a **designated** trail route through Blodgett Open Space and Pike National Forest to the Blodgett Peak summit was a primary theme during the public meetings for this Master Plan. While authority to establish a designated trail to the summit of Blodgett Peak resides solely with the USFS and is outside the purview of the Blodgett Master Plan, the master plan process has provided an opportunity for meaningful dialogue between the City of Colorado Springs and USFS. The City and USFS share concerns of established, unauthorized and off-trail uses continuing to degrade the area's natural resources.

Discussions to date indicate the looping Waterworks Trail and Douglas-fir Trail crossing of the Pike National Forest corner may be authorized through a simple USFS Special Use Permit. The extension of the Waterworks Trail north of the open space, the network of social trails being established between it and the Peregrine development, and social routes to the summit require organized public dialog with the USFS and extensive environmental analysis.

Hierarchical Organization

The trails will be organized in an easy to understand system. Because of the property's existing trail system and central utility access drive, secondary trail loops and spurs radiating from the central spine drive/trail will best balance visitor opportunities with resource protection. The recommended trail system includes some, but not all existing trails defined in the Site Analysis section of this report on page 16.

The Woodmen, Foothills, Contour and Waterworks Trails will be constructed to comply with the Colorado Springs Trails Master Plan Tier 3 trails standards. A trail width of 4 feet is recommended for the Foothills and Woodmen Trails. A trail width of 3 feet is recommended for the Contour and Waterworks Trails. The existing Waterworks and parts of the Contour Trail are 8 feet wide and may be maintained. All other trails will be natural surface 24 inch wide single-track trail with a 5 feet wide and 12 foot high corridor. The 12 foot corridor height will allow equestrian use. These trails will include several reroutes, new trail construction, closure of braiding and paralleling trails, erosion control structures, filling entrenched tread, weed eradication, wayfinding signage and corridor clearing and pruning.

Trail Access Points

Connections between trails, trail user destinations, and neighborhoods must be sustainable, make sense to trail users, and be adequate without being too numerous. The Blodgett Open Space Trail System will be accessed at the following locations:

- East Property Edge – Trailhead connects to Peregrine open space trail system;
- South Property Edge – Foothills and Woodmen Trails connections through Blodgett Ranch;
- North property edge – Spur connection to Peregrine's Open Space along Angelfire; and
- North Property Edge – Consolidate individual residential access trails to one trail.





Safety

Trail etiquette signs should be installed at the trailhead and interpretive overlooks reinforcing the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) motto "Respect other users. Expect other users." along with the national yielding standard for multi-use trails. This safety oriented trailhead signage will inform trail users of groups that have trail access. In addition, this is an opportunity to post open space and regional trail rules and regulations.

Wayfinding

In general, the wayfinding system will be characterized by non-obtrusive high quality design, material and construction. Compatibility with the Colorado Springs Regional Trails System signage is imperative although it should also communicate the unique interpretive theme for the Blodgett Open Space. A Trail System informational sign at the trailhead should include:

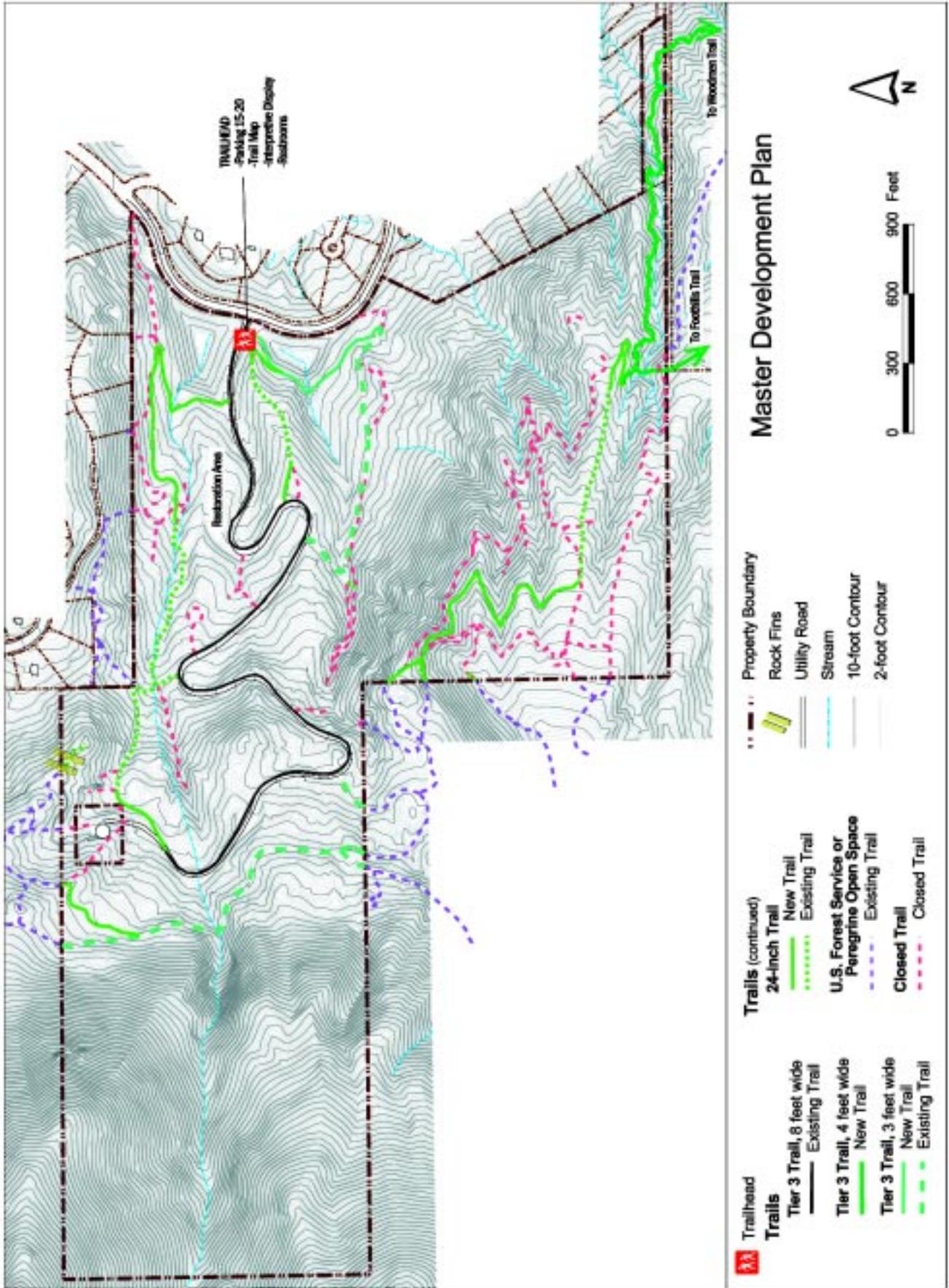
- A map of the regional trails including the Blodgett Open Space trails;
- US Forest Service information;
- Trail names;
- Trail distances; and
- A "you are here" indicator.

The Woodmen/Foothills Trail junction and Waterworks Trail junction should display small maps including:

- Blodgett Open Space trails;
- Trail names;
- Trail distances; and
- A "you are here" indicator.

Small identification/direction signs are appropriate at trail intersections.







Trail Construction and Maintenance

Trail construction should follow the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services standards. The United States Forest Service, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, and The International Mountain Bicycling Associates' trail construction standards and techniques can provide supplemental trail construction information.

The Jarre-Tecolote complex, Tecolote very gravelly sandy loam, Sphinx-Rock outcrop complex, and Legault very gravelly coarse sandy loam soils prominent on the Blodgett Open Space are characterized by medium to rapid surface runoff and moderate to extreme erosion hazard. These characteristics are evident along the existing trails. Implementing the following recommendations can alleviate many erosion problems:



- Trails should be constructed to an appropriate grade that disperses water runoff along the entire outslope of the trail edge whenever possible;
- Reinforce water diversion structures to withstand equestrian traffic and place them frequently to avoid runoff concentration;
- Fill entrenched trails to alleviate off-trail traffic and further resource degradation;
- Avoid importing trail fill to minimize additional weed introduction, avoid soil incompatibility, avoid site soil contamination, and to minimize construction costs;
- Eradicate weed species in disturbed site areas prior to excavation for trail fill;
- Install properly located frequent water diversion structures to avoid significant runoff concentration;
- Reinforce all concentrated outfall locations to minimize erosive water action; and
- Maintain trail obstacles and challenges to mitigate speed, acceleration and braking for mountain bikes, runners and equestrians.



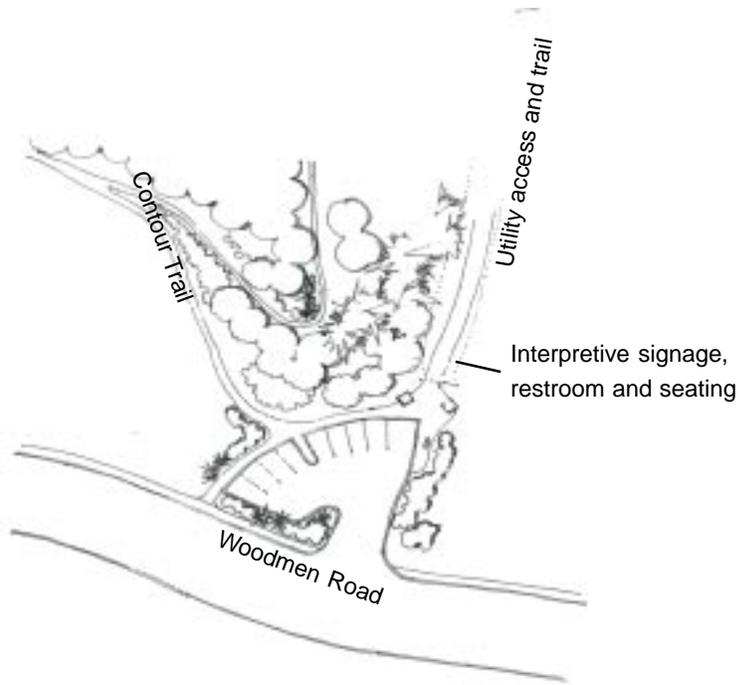
Trail construction proposed for Blodgett Open Space presents an array of management issues. Items to be considered prior to implementation include:

- Plant species and seed mixes to revegetate trail closures;
- Temporary barricade structures and signs at trail closures;
- Restoration of on-site trail fill borrow sites;
- Initial maintenance to eradicate weeds that find a foothold in the newly constructed and closed trails; and
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance for restoration areas.

Trailhead Plan

The trailhead will provide a quality starting point for the Blodgett Open Space visitors. Passing traffic on Woodmen Road is excellent surveillance and inhibits inappropriate use. The trailhead plan includes an open site with parking, a restroom, benches, and interpretive and regulation signage. Crusher fines may be necessary to stabilize heavily used trail surfaces immediately adjacent to the trailhead. Fencing will assist in controlling pedestrian and vehicular traffic until vegetation is established.

Colorado Springs Utility and City Public Works maintenance vehicles require access through the trailhead. Locking gates and mountable curbs will control motorized access. Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, Colorado Springs Utilities and Public Works will coordinate design details at the trailhead.





Master Plan Implementation Guidelines

Phasing

The two greatest threats to the Blodgett Open Space are the introduction and establishment of noxious weeds and overuse resulting in social trails. Noxious weeds are dispersed via wind, wildlife, shoes, pant legs, horses, dog fur, and bikes. Newly constructed trail and newly restored areas can be footholds for weeds. This concern elevates weed control actions to the top of the Implementation Phasing. The recommended Implementation Phasing is:

Phase I

- Formalize the Adopt-an-Open Space volunteer group.
- Establish interagency agreements with Colorado Springs Public Works and Colorado Springs Utilities to avoid further resource degradation and use of incompatible materials.
- Identify and eradicate weeds by employing integrated pest management practices.
- Formalize a forest, shrubland and weed control management plan including implementation schedule and restoration guidelines. The comprehensive resource based view provided by a Management Plan would guide resource restoration to minimize conflicts between all resources and surrounding land managers.
- Initiate a Historic and Archeological Survey.
- Continue dialog with US Forest Service regarding public access to Blodgett Peak, resource management and pursue a special use permit for the Waterworks Loop Trail and Douglas-fir Trail.
- Construct Blodgett Open Space Trailhead and adjoining Contour, Ridgeline and Riparian Trails.
- Close dispersed social trails.

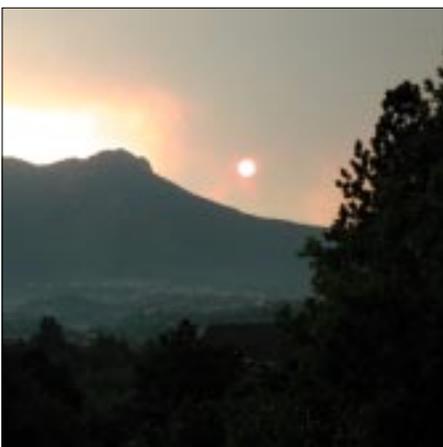


Phase II

- Design and implement interpretive opportunities and programs.
- Construct trail and wayfinding signage.
- Identify and remove dispersed and concentrated debris. Restore impacted areas.
- Remove fencing, hunting and camping structures.

Phase III

- Construct Foothills, Woodmen, and Douglas-fir Trails and close associated social trails to correspond with trail extension on Blodgett Ranch.
- Construct rock formation trails and close associated social trails.



Recommended Management Plan Issues

The comprehensive resource based view provided by a Management Plan guides resource restoration to minimize conflicts between all resources. It will assist the Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources Department in the long-term management of the Blodgett Open Space. The following Management Plan issues were identified during this Master Plan process and should be included in the Management Plan scope:

- Clear direction for forest and shrubland management;
- Clear direction for US Fish and Wildlife and US Forest Service procedures regarding designated animal habitats;
- Method to mitigate impacts of surrounding development including: Trash control, Non-designated access trails, Noxious Weed Control;
- Fire;
- Wildlife displacement due to recreational use and domestic pets;
- Private property interface; and
- Enforcement issues including: off-trail uses, hunting, congregation in areas other than trailhead, and non-designated access points.



Interpretation Opportunities

The diverse use of this property opens up collaborative interpretive opportunities between Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, Colorado Springs Utilities, US Forest Service, Public Works and School District 20. The following interpretive opportunities were identified during this Master Plan:

Historic Use Themes

- Native American
- Early ranches
- Woodmen Sanatorium self-sufficiency and water distribution system
- Colorado Springs Water distribution system

Ecological Themes

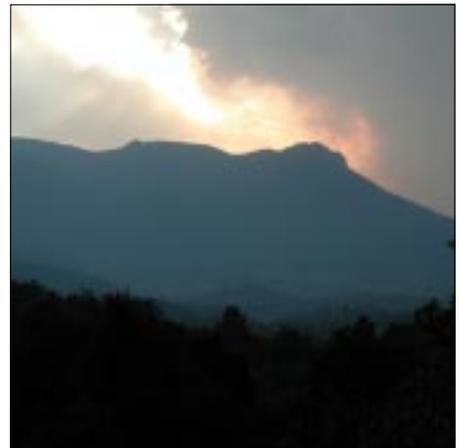
- Foothills Vegetative Patterns - gambel oak, ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir Ecosystems
- Plant identification – riparian wildflowers
- Wildlife identification
- Geology of the Front Range
- Forest Management

Development Impact Themes

- Impact of development on foothills: NORAD scar, housing, water
- Ecological patterns prior to development
- Wildfire interface
- Impact of domestic pets on wildlife

View Themes

- Eastward expansive views
- Blodgett Peak





Budget Estimates

Blodgett Capital Cost **\$231,400.00**

Item	Subtotal
Phase 1	\$174,800.00
Initial Weed Eradication for 3 years	\$7,500
Forest Management Plan	\$15,000
Historic and Archeological Survey	\$5,000
Revegetation of degraded areas	\$3,000
Trail - Service Road	\$32,000
Trail - Contour Trail	\$7,200
Trail - Ridgeline and Riparian Trail	\$10,900
Close dispersed Social Trails	\$4,200
Trailhead	\$90,000
Phase 2	\$24,900.00
Design interpretive opportunities	\$5,000
Install trailhead and wayfinding signs	\$7,500
Remove Debris Dumps	\$5,000
Restore disturbed areas	\$7,000
Fence Removal	\$400
Phase 3	\$31,700.00
Trail - Foothills and Woodmen Trails	\$16,000
Trail - Douglas Fir Trail	\$13,000
Trail - Rock Formation Trails	\$2,700

**Blodgett Operational Costs
on an Annual Basis** **\$17,000.00**

Item	Subtotal
Resource Maintenance	\$11,100
Development Maintenance	\$5,900

Appendix

Public Input

Open House 06 June 2002

Marker Chart Comments

Experiences

- Does the road need to be so big and ugly? Can it be downsized?
- Provide trail access to rock formations south of Angelfire and north of the water tank.

Uses and activities

- Allow horses
- Mountain bikers would prefer one directional Mountain Bike Trails
- Create complete loop: start at Woodmen/jeep road and go south and west to get trail the eventually goes to fire pits, than back down to the utilities road.
- One trail up Blodgett Peak (from water box) - One trail Map post (or post with paper maps) Volunteers could make sure it's filled.
- Require pets to be on leash
- Allow property to be no leash
- Allow access into USFS property (2)*
- Retain jeep road access in USFS property
- 10-15 parking spaces off of Woodmen Road

Environmental/preservation actions:

- Initiate fire mitigation clearing
- Trash Control – recommend carry in-carry out.

Concerns:

- Access through private property is a concern – possibly sign can resolve
- Can Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services coordinate with Public Works and Colorado Springs Utilities to avoid further asphalt use – interagency agreements?

Comments:

- Master plan on WEB for review
- Adopt-a-Park – contact Brad Freiden

* Number of people who voiced that opinion





Appendix—continued

Public Meeting Verbal Comments

Experiences

Aesthetics

- Does the road need to be so big and ugly? Can it be downsized?
- Views - the awesome views - The views from heights
- Rock formations - geologic varieties
- Beauty of it

Wildlife

- Enjoying the wildlife
- Wildlife - no changes

Naked land (i.e. no building!!)

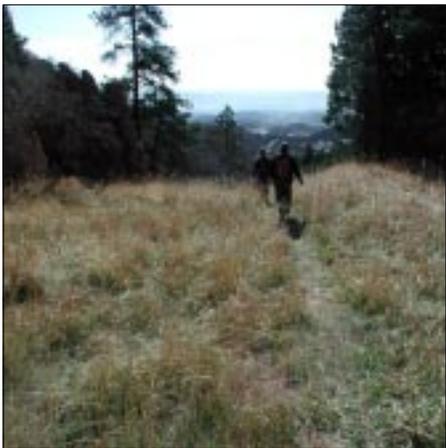
Sitting to enjoy the wilderness

Solitude

Recreational diversity

Vegetation

- Douglas-firs



Uses and activities

Hiking

- Establish trails to minimize scrambling trails
- Signs are needed to direct trail use
- Trails a real desirable amenity
- Hiking - great in the winter when mountains have too much snow
- Hiking with dogs - Taking dogs for walks
- Official trail to the back dead end
- Like to see trail to Blodgett Peak
- Like trail to southwest corner
- Provide trail access to rock formations south of Angelfire & north of water tank
- Mountain bikers would prefer one directional Mountain Bike Trails
- Create complete loop: start at Woodmen/jeep road and go south and west to get trail that eventually goes to fire pits, then back down to the utilities road

Multi-Use

- Recreational diversity: hiking, climbing, photography, non-biking
- Family recreation, Hiking, Access for mountain climbing, photography, pet recreation, and winter hiking
- Some for myself; I also see walking, hiking, biking, for others



Appendix—continued

- Running
- Bird watching
- Allow horses - Will horseback riding be allowed?
- Mountain biking - Mountain bike up the back road to the dead end, and then ride back down, hike Blodgett Peak
- Could we make a picnic area, i.e. table, up by the old fire pits?
- No camping
- No motorized vehicles - protect trails, and vegetation from misuse

Self-guided Interpretation

- Trailhead signs
- Signs
- Signs indicating shrubs, and trees, wildlife
- Wildflower identification
- Map post (or post with paper maps) Volunteers could make sure it's filled

Creature Comforts

- 10-15 parking spaces off of Woodmen Road
- A paved parking area with 12-20 space will keep mud off Woodmen Road
- Provide trailhead parking
- 16 space parking lot

Pet Control

- Require pets to be on leash
- Allow property to be no leash (3)*

USFS access

- Allow access into USFS property (2)*
- Retain jeep road access in USFS property
- Trailhead for Blodgett Peak
- One trail up Blodgett (from water box).
- Access to Blodgett Peak and Ormes Peak
- Mountain biking, hiking, access to Blodgett Peak and Lone Pine Peak
- Ease of entry to Pike National Forest
- Hiking access trails to National Forest remain open
- Please coordinate with uses to develop a single trail, using good trail design, to the top of Blodgett Mountain

Environmental/preservation actions

Vegetative restoration

- Invasive weed eradication (13)*
- No tree cutting, depending on final outcome
- Keeping abreast of beetle problems - the beetle has started to invade Peregrine along Orchard Valley Road

* Number of people who voiced that opinion





Appendix—continued

Initiate fire mitigation clearing

- Forest management in light of high fire conditions

Erosion control

- Make utilities road into a wide “path”
- Some trail improvement
- Erosion controls along existing road/roads

Trash and debris

Trash Control – recommend carry in-carry out trash

Trash receptacles possibly needed

Closing certain areas to access is OK (4)*

Concerns:

Outside influences and impacts

- Access through private property is a concern – possibly sign can resolve,
- Intrusion on private property
- Can Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services coordinate with Public Works and Colorado Springs Utilities to avoid further asphalt use – or other non-compatible uses/materials – interagency agreements
- Will forest service allow us access to Blodgett Peak? Will we have hiking path?

Traffic

- Traffic in the neighborhood
- Jeeps
- Motor bikes

Parking

- Parking for those wishing to use trails
- Organized parking
- Would we get a nice parking area like Ute Valley?

Trash

Abusive use

Invasive weeds

Pine beetle

Fires

Pet Control

- How do we control loose dogs that endanger other wildlife?
- Loose animals

How will disabled folks get to upper part of open space?



* Number of people who voiced that opinion

Appendix—continued



Comments:

Property Delineation

- Protect private property

Enforcement Issues

- Littering
- Stop open fires - fire* - no fires or grills - *noticed some campfires, don't know how to police, but at minimum a large sign with stiff penalties noted!
- No overnight camping,
- Close park at night (11:00 p.m.)

Improve access road to minimize erosion and add visual value

Master plan on WEB for review

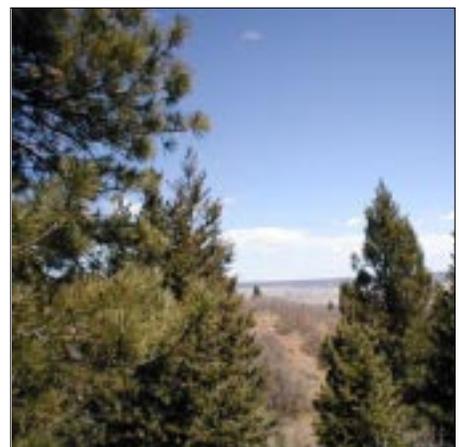
Adopt-a-Park – contact Brad Freiden

Nothing drastic, keep simple

- Area is great, little improvement is needed. Keep as natural as possible

Praise

- Love the jeep trail above the water tank. Thanks for the open meeting
- This is a great project
- Thanks
- We put a lot of effort into raising money to purchase this property because of its beauty and locations.
- We want to keep it open to citizens.





Appendix—continued

**TOPS Working Committee
12 June 2002—selected notes**

Blodgett:

Question: Why are trails not encouraged trails by Forest Service

Response: No system trails within corridor because of sensitive habitat

Question: It would make sense to put the Douglas-fir areas off limit until survey is done and do the trails in stages

Response: There are not many trails right now

Comment: Keep on going - get studies

Comment: Good job at getting everything going quickly



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board
13 June 2002—selected notes**

Blodgett:

Question: Meeting place at trailhead for kids, neighbors concerned about more kids' activities once developed

Response: Are aware of the problem, have already fixed the gate 3 times

Question: Gate issues?

Response: Worked with Stratton to share cost, have not yet brought up issue with neighborhood but could later.



Appendix—Request for Concurrence

August 26, 2002

Mr. LeRoy Carlson, Field Supervisor
USFWS/ES/Colorado Field Office
755 Parfet St. Suite 361
Lakewood, CO 80215

RE: City of Colorado Springs Blodgett Open Space Request for Concurrence Regarding Potential Effects to Mexican Spotted Owl Habitat

Dear Lee:

On behalf of the City of Colorado Spring, I am submitting this request for concurrence regarding the proposed construction of trails within the Blodgett Open Space and potential habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*). Blodgett Open Space is a 160-acre property located in portions of Sections 3 and 4, Township 13 South, Range 67W (Figure 1). It is surrounded by Pike National Forest to the north, south, and west. A subdivision lies to the east (Figure 2). Elevations on the property range from 7,054 feet on the eastern boundary to 8,184 feet near the western boundary.

Colorado Springs acquired the property as open space and is currently designing the proposed trails. The property has been used for years by the surrounding residents for hiking and walking their dogs. As currently planned, the proposed trails will lie predominantly in the scrub oak and use the existing utility road corridor and other existing trails. A potential new trail spur will likely run along the western perimeter of the southeastern area labeled "Fir" (see Figure 4). This new trail spur will support hikers and mountain bikers and have an approximate width of four feet. The trail will be constructed by a combination of volunteer hand crews, four-wheelers and other small mechanical equipment. This will be a natural surface trail consisting of decomposed granite, and constructed according to Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Forest Service standards. No trails are proposed in the western third of the property.

As part of the master planning process, ERO Resources completed a baseline inventory for the property. One of the findings of this report was the presence of designated critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl on the adjacent National Forest property. Based on this information and the existence of potential habitat on Blodgett for the Mexican spotted owl, ERO began an informal consultation with Leslie Ellwood of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Charles Johnson of ENSR. Upon review of an aerial photo of the property, mapped vegetation communities, site photographs, and numerous discussions it was determined that the property does not provide excellent habitat for the owl. Based on this determination, the proposed trail on the property may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Mexican spotted owl.

We request that you review the enclosed documentation and issue your concurrence that the proposed trail may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Mexican spotted owl.

Sincerely,

Justin Spring
Natural Resource Specialist

Attachments

cc: Leslie Ellwood, FWS
Chris Lieber, City of Colorado Springs
Priscilla Marbaker, Tapis Associates



Prescription for Management Area 5B (Emphasis is on big game winter range)

Management Prescription Summary

General Direction and Goals

Management emphasis is on forage and cover on winter ranges. Winter habitat for deer, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats is emphasized. Treatments to increase forage production or to create and maintain thermal and hiding cover for big game are applied. Tree stand treatments can be clearcut, shelterwood, single tree selection or group selection. Commercial and noncommercial stand treatments occur. Specific cover-opening ratios, and stand designs are maintained. Treatments to grass, forb, browse and noncommercial tree species including seeding, planting, spraying, burning, falling and mechanical chopping or crushing. A variety of browse age classes are maintained. Continuous forest cover is maintained on some sites.

Investments in compatible resources occur. Livestock grazing is compatible but is managed to favor wildlife habitat. Structural range improvements benefit wildlife. Management activities are not evident, remain visually subordinate, or dominate in the foreground and midground but harmonize and blend with the natural setting.

New roads other than short-term temporary roads are located outside of the management area. Short term roads are obliterated within one season after intended use. Existing local roads are closed and new motorized recreation use is managed to prevent unacceptable stress on big game animals during the primary big game use season.

The mineral and energy resources activities are compatible with goals of this management area subject to appropriate stipulations as outlined in the general Forest Direction.

Bibliography –

Aerial Photographs. 1966. Column 1: numbers 52-55, Column 2: numbers 52-56, and Column 3: numbers 48-52. Pikes Peak Library District, Carnegie Library Collections. Colorado Springs, CO.

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