

Ute Valley Park Master and Management Plan Comments Submitted June 2014 – January 2015

The following letters and e-mails regarding the Ute Valley Park Master and Management Plan and the planning process were submitted to the City of Colorado Springs from June 2014 to January 2015. They are included in chronological order, beginning with the most recent submittals. Names of those submitting comments and their e-mail addresses have been removed.

Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 12:18 PM

Subject: Master & Management Plan

Hi all, first, please pass this on to Priscilla. For some reason, I don't have her email address.

I just wanted you all to know how pleased I am personally with the draft M&M Plan. You have listened very well to the public and done a great job of incorporating their wants & needs. I look forward to seeing the finished product finally accepted by the City.

Thanks again for all your hard work in getting us to where we are today, and please let me know if there is anything I can do to help the process.

Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 5:33 PM

Subject: Ute Valley Trail Closure feedback

Sarah,

I wanted to thank you for your openness to public input into the future of Ute valley. I've lived beside and have been using Ute for 15 years. When I moved to COS, I chose to move to this corner of town because of this park. My current house backs up to its western property line.

As a long time user of the park I have seen trails come and go over the years. There are some trails that have been used for a long time and not that many people knew about and some of them are now slated for closure. I would like to make the request to hold onto some of these gems. I've attached a pdf with these trails labeled as A, B & C.

A. We refer to this trail as its "Strava" name as Jamie's Trail. This trail was on the original master plan. It just happens to be hidden around the corner because of a tree and wasn't used by many riders. This is one of my favorite trails. It has interesting trail features and a great challenge with completely natural features. It has been there since I have used the park in 1999.

B. This is one of the new trails in the park. It has great manmade features with great flow. Most of it is not very steep and actually hand erosion quite well. It ends with a jump over a "canyon" and has one of the most challenging trail features in the park. The bottom portion including the canyon jump have been around for at least 12 years when I first discovered it.

C. This trail has been around for a good 12 years. We used to refer to it as "spools" and it is now known as four loco. It has some great challenges for advanced riders and allows you to make the ride into a loop. You can cross the bottom of the canyon to the other side in an area where the canyon doesn't hold water.

I'm an expert mountain biker and one of the great things about Ute Valley are these expert level trails. These offer challenges to me to improve that many other trails just don't. They also help spread out the mountain bike traffic away from high use areas to prevent any biker/hiker conflicts. In my opinion, the more trails, the better.

Thanks again for your willingness to hear the communities input.



Date:01/27/2015 7:47 PM (GMT-07:00)

Subject: designated, fenced-in, off leash dog park within Ute Valley Park

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for taking the time to hear our questions and concerns regarding a designated, fenced-in, off leash dog park within Ute Valley Park. Several community members voiced their interest at all the prior meetings only to find out this evening that it is not currently on the Master Plan. We are very disappointed to hear this.

Please reconsider adding a dog park. We would be interested in meeting with the Advisory Board to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Date:01/27/2015 7:47 PM (GMT-23:17)

Subject: designated, fenced-in, off leash dog park within Ute Valley Park

Ladies,

First off, thank you for all your comments. I am going to respond to you all in one message verses separate messages. I apologize for just sending you an email now, I only work part time and was off yesterday and today I have been in meetings...I am just now getting to emails.

We very much appreciate the feedback that you have provided us. We are currently reviewing all the comments we received through email and at the public meeting.

I think it would be very helpful in the near future to set up a meeting to continue our discussion about potential dog parks within our community. If we are able to sit down and talk about the requirements for making a dog park successful, it will help narrow down locations that are appropriate fits and logically make the most sense. Here are some times that we have available. Please let me know if any of these times work for you and we will get a meeting set

up. If you could let me know sooner rather than later that would be great. I would like to have Chris Lieber also attend the meeting and his schedule has a tendency to fill up very quickly.

Monday, February 2 at either 3, 4, or 5
Wednesday, February 4 at 11
Wednesday, February 11 at 1 or 2

Again, thank you for your comments and for your passion about Ute Valley.

Thanks, Sarah

Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 7:52 PM
Subject: ute valley trail comments

Sarah, I missed this section in my previous email.

On the western ridge trail, there is a connector that descends down a steep rocky pitch towards the creek where there is a small bridge currently. This short piece of trail is critical in how we currently loop the ridge trail. The ridge trail generally descends from Vindicator to this connector (North to South) and descends from the southern tip (near the gravel access road) going north towards this connector. So, (see red line for our typical route) typically we will ride north along the technical ridge and descend to the connector, ride down the connector to what will be the regional trail in the future, then pedal north to vindicator and then climb back up to the ridge trail and descend south to the connector. Sort of a figure eight. This connector really opens up the possibilities. Also, I have friends who really don't enjoy riding the section south of the connector trail, but love the section north. So often we ride the trail as shown in blue in the attached map.

If possible, please keep this short section for both the technical challenge and the added variations in how the ridge trail can be ridden.

Thanks for your consideration and hard work.

Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 5:01 PM
Subject: Feedback on the proposed Ute Valley Master Plan document.

Hello Sarah-

I wanted to provide some feedback on the Ute Valley Master Plan document. I live and work right by Ute and have enjoyed riding my mountain bike there for about 5 years now. It was actually the main reason why my family and I bought our house right next to Ute Valley Park. I spend about 2 to 5 hours per week riding in Ute. Here are my suggestions:

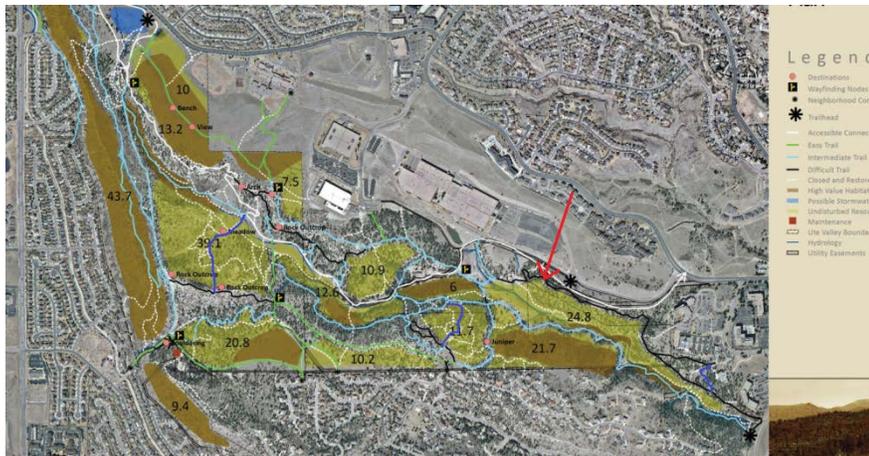
1. Three of my favorite trails in Ute look to be getting closed down. I drew them below on the map in dark blue. I believe that the one on the far left was actually on the very original Ute Master Trail map. Two out of the three have held up great to weather and erosion. The one on the far right has some erosion at the bottom, but we could re-route and fix that one.
2. I would request that the trails that remain open are not changed. One of the best parts about Ute is the challenging trails. I would be disappointed if the trails were made "easier".

3. It would be great if we could have more “difficult” trails in Ute. The trail that I pointed to with the red arrow below is one of the easier trails in Ute. I don’t think it should be listed as black.

4. This one is more of a question than suggestion. From my experience, Ute is already getting fairly crowded with bikers and hikers. With all of these trail closures, how will the extra traffic be managed? I’m afraid there may be more trail conflict now that there will be the same amount of traffic on roughly half the trail space.

These are just my opinions. But many of my co-workers feel the same. I have asked them to voice their concerns as well so hopefully you will be receiving more of the same requests.

Thanks for making your way through my message.



Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2015 4:43 PM

Subject: RE: Ute Valley Park: Master & Management Plan

My comments regarding the Ute Valley Park Master & Management Plan are as follows:

- Sarah Bryarly, as Ute Valley Park Master & Management Plan Project Manager, should be fired.
- The members of the Planning Team should resign or be dismissed and the Master Plan be discarded.
- Karen Palus should also consider resigning from her position as the Director of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services.

As a citizen who has attended all of the meetings including the September and November Community meetings as well as two of the neighborhood “in the-box-meetings” (Northwest Residents at Fire station #18 and TOSC Members), I feel personally insulted. Citizens were invited to participate in Community Meetings and led to believe that their participation and good faith efforts would be valued.

Instead we have been treated with utter disregard and dismissal as we have been presented with a Kabuki Theatre that gave the impression of citizen involvement while the outcome appears pre-ordained. The citizen input process has been a waste of time and energy of the citizens and a violation of the community trust. As an example of this breach of trust, look no further than:

- ‘Proposed’ Regional Trail Connection Route for Ute Valley Park

At the September 23 Public Meeting, a majority (13 of the 15 Groups) recommended routing the regional trail on routes other than through the only, current, hiking-only trail. Most groups suggested keeping the regional trail on the current service road which follows an historical road through the park and which provides access to electrical and

communications lines along that route. Only 2 Groups had suggested using the hiking-only trail and 1 Group had asked for No Regional Trail at all.

However at the November 12 Community Meeting the Regional Trail Route Proposal was presented that ignored the majority of the citizen input and ran the trail right through the center of the park and on the only hiking-only trail in the park. When the Citizens were asked if there were any Fatal Flaws / Red Flags / Show Stoppers there was overwhelming opposition (including 8 of the 12 Groups) to the Proposed Route of the Regional Trail.

And now in the Proposal submitted for our approval on January 20, the Planning Committee, once again, deaf to the citizen voices, proposes the Regional Trail Connection Route running smack dab through the middle of the park on the only, current, hiking-only trail and without making full use of the existing, historical, service trail that has to be retained in any case.

Other Concerns:

- The fact that the 'Draft Plan' already uses terms such as "reviewed", "endorsed", "recommended" and "approved" for dates and events that occur in the future, exposes the fact that these plans have been preordained prior to any community involvement
- Various Issues were raised at Community Meeting #1. However at Community Meeting #2 we were told there were no significant issues raised, therefore no changes to the list of Issues. All of the issues raised at Community Meeting #1 were summarily dismissed as 'insignificant'.
- Proposal ignores mutual requests from different constituencies for some dedicated-use trails. To reduce conflicts between groups hikers requested some hiking-only trails and bikers requested some bike-specific trails. The only, current, hiking-only trail, the quiet 'middle road' path has been replaced in the proposal by a major Regional Trail.
- Closing of all of the trails through areas such as the "western meadow" has been attempted in the past, in the 90s and again in the 00s. But this approach failed and only encourages park users to create multiple other trails to replace it. Rather than close all of the trails, maintain one trail that suits the need.
- Insufficient attention to the issues of enforcement of rogue trail policies and pet leash and waste ordinances.

Regards,

Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 3:36 PM

Subject: Ute Valley Park Community Meeting omission

I just left you a voice message regarding last night's Ute Valley Park Master Plan meeting. I am the Pinecliff HOA President and also serve on the Friends of Ute Valley Park board. I attended the first community meeting on September 23rd and personally brought up the need to replace the existing split rail fence that parallels the property lines between the HP Open Space and the Pinecliff neighborhood. During last night's meeting, I completely forgot to look for this "feature" in the base Master Plan. I also forgot to ask about it during the 10 minute "omission" session. Replacing the fence has become even more important since a new trail is being proposed to connect the Hunters Ridge access point with the Popes Valley access point. Such a trail would be in an open field and border 4

homeowner property lines. At this point, I need your guidance in how best to communicate this omission to the Master Planners working on Ute Valley Park and to get their feedback.

I would also appreciate receiving the phone numbers and email addresses for the 3 key Tapis Associates who working on the plan (e.g. Priscilla Marbaker).

I have been very pleased with the Master Plan process and progress so far, however, it is quite clear that the trail biking community is having a strong influence on the work group results.

Best regards,

Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 2:09 PM

Subject: Ute Valley Park Update and Process

We would like to remind everyone about the upcoming 1st public master plan meeting on Tuesday, September 23, 2014 at Eagleview Middle School. The meeting will be from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Please come prepared for a very packed agenda!!

There is some incorrect information that is floating around that Ute Valley Park is going to be closed to bicycling through the master plan process and that the public process is almost over. Please note, that future cycling within Ute Valley Park is not on the table to be removed as a recreational use in Ute Valley Park. However, during the meetings we would like to discuss various master planning topics such as, proper alignment/placement of trails, appropriate recreational uses for the park/open space, and park amenities (i.e. wayfinding signage, interpretive signage, benches, parking). We are also at the very beginning of the master plan process. In total there will be 3 separate public workshops where people can learn about the park and participate in small group activities to determine how the master plan will be shaped and 2 public hearings to adopt the new master and management plan, public comment will be taken at both hearings. The following is a list of all the future public meetings:

September 23rd: 5:30-8:30 p.m. (Eagleview Middle School)

November 12th: 6:00-8:00 p.m. (Eagleview Middle School)

January 27th: 5:00- 7:00 p.m. (Eagleview Middle School)

TOPS Working Committee: February 4th: 7:30 a.m. (Parks Department Headquarters: 1401 Recreation Way)

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: March 12th: 7:30 a.m. (Parks Department Headquarters)

Please remember that unless you participate in these meetings, your ideas and comments cannot be heard. When more people participate in the process, the master and management plan will ultimately reflect the community's vision.

On September 23rd, please come prepared to listen to the experts give an overview of the studies and surveys that have been conducted to date, an overview of the existing condition of Ute Valley Park, and to participate in two separate small group activities, which will include a report out to the larger group. All voices are heard equally during this process.

In the next day or so we will have all the comments collected during the Meetings-in-a-Box and through the Intercept surveys posted on the website. If you would like to review the comments, please visit:

www.springsgov.com/UteValleyMP. This information will also be reviewed at the meeting on September 23rd.

Thank you and we will see you on the 23rd.

Sarah

Sarah A. Bryarly

Landscape Architect
Design, Development and TOPS
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 12:22 PM
Subject: Ute Valley Park master plan feedback

Hi,

I wanted to voice my concern about the UVP master plan meeting coming up. I'm not going to be able to attend, but I feel strongly about the park and have been one of its most active users over the time I've lived near the park.

I've lived near the park for the last 17 years and have been a daily user of it, frequently multiple times a day - running or walking my dogs or both. It has saddened me to see the destruction that has occurred from what I feel is mountain bike abuse of the trails. Not only do they ruin existing trails, but they make new trails wherever and whenever they want. It's especially pronounced when it's wet over there - they don't want to get their bikes muddy, so they ride off the trail and only make it wider. A semi could be driven down many of the trails they've become so wide.

And now, erosion is ruining many of these trails. Had they remained singletrack and limited to pedestrians, they trails would be in far better shape and more likely to handle the heavy rains over the last 2 years.

There have been a series of illicit mt bike trails created at the SW end of the park near the bouldering area. There have also been a series of illicit trails in the SE area where they've created "downhilling" trails from the ridge down into the valley. Note that many of those trails are now defunct, but they're still left to erode and scar the area.

I urge you to please ban mountain bikes from Ute Valley Park.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 11:27 AM

Subject: Ute Valley Park Master Plan

I plan on attending next Tuesday's UVP Master Plan public meeting. I understand from a recent post on Facebook that you are allegedly getting a number of people wanting to ban mountain bikes from the park. It's true, the number of hikers, runners, walkers relative to mountain bikers is much higher. The park has always been used by both hikers and mountain bikers. As a biker myself, I have never had a conflict with a hiker and am very conscientious about following proper trail etiquette. I know that there are a few bad apples out there who tend to spoil it for us all. I don't like those kind of rude riders either.

Here's a few potential issues that could possibly be discussed:

- 1) Headphones/ear buds. So many hikers and bikers wear them and are completely oblivious to their surroundings. These should be banned before any sporting activity is. They are not mandatory and they are a distraction. I have to yell at the top of my lungs for some runners to even hear me. One time I had to get off my bike and run along side of one before he even realized I was behind him. I didn't dare pass him without him knowing I was coming from behind.
- 2) Strava. Running or Riding, we call them Strava-assholes. People who are virtually racing and are unwilling to follow proper trail etiquette. Strava should be strongly discouraged. It's not a closed course, and again, this applies to runners as well.
- 3) Inexperienced downhill mountain bikers. Downhill riders are different from a regular cross country mountain bikers. These are typically the teenagers or young adults who ride long-travel/suspension bikes with or without helmets, who have to walk their bike up the hill and then blast down a technical section in motocross-type protective gear. They also are oblivious to their surroundings or unconcerned about blind sections where they can't see ahead of them. They tend to be reckless and do not yield to other riders or pedestrians.

Jefferson County has come up with a solution by alternating days for hiking/biking use. They also have bike patrols and I and others would be happy to volunteer to patrol trails and hand out warnings or citations for reckless riding.

I truly do understand why some hikers hate mountain bikes, but we all must learn to co-exist. Those of us who ride respectfully do not deserve to be punished because of a few bad apples. I will voice my opinion at the public meeting, but ask that the City take into consideration that just because we are the minority doesn't mean we should be banned from using the park.

Excuse me for writing if the threat of a ban is all BS. It's going viral on Facebook and sometimes people get all riled up and rally support for their cause. I'm not being critical of a plan I haven't seen yet. But if it is true that you are getting a lot of support for a bicycle ban, please take my thoughts into consideration.

Thank you and have a great day!

Sent: Monday, September 15, 2014 11:16 AM
Subject: Ute Valley Master Plan and Mountain bikes

It has come to my attention that it under consideration to ban Mountain Bikes from Ute Valley park. I'm unable to attend the upcoming meeting, but wanted to put in my support for keeping Ute open to Mountain bikes. I say this as a local resident who lives just south of the park and as a biker who uses the park daily.

Ute Valley and Palmer Park have some of the best in town trail riding of any city in the country. Keeping and expanding biking in our area is very important to our city and our economy. Limiting or banning has a very negative effect not just to users, but to the local economy. Let me give you my reasons.

1. The first area is the local real estate market.
 - a. This might not sound like it makes sense, but let me explain. I've owned a local real estate brokerage for 18 years in town. Our town has two major draws for people who relocate to our area. Military and outdoor life. Fortunately, the physical requirements of the military often fit well with the utilization of our outdoor spaces for fitness. Any action that curtails the use and expansion of use of our public lands is a big negative to Colorado Springs and it's prospect for growth. Any loss of the ability to get out and experience our natural spaces creates less of an incentive for people to come here or to stay here. Reducing one of the major draws, outdoor activities, in our area will result in a negative effect on the local real estate market value via reduced demand.
 - b. In my opinion, Colorado Springs has enough trouble keeping folks here and attracting new people. Our business community is not thriving. Taking away or reducing outdoor trails is a huge blow to our region especially after our recent fires. Losing this space and access would even put me in the category of others who would consider leaving the area and I'm a native. Colorado Springs really can't afford to lose anybody or any more talent to other areas of the country.
2. The second area I'm involved in is the local mountain bike racing community.
 - a. I am a sponsor of the local Sand Creek Series Mountain Bike races run by Mr. Andy Bohlman. Andy has been involved for years with hosting a USA Cycling sponsored mountain bike races. I sponsor the series because Colorado Springs is home to some of the best mountain bike racing talent in the country. The talent locally very deep even at the amateur level. Since sponsoring the series, I've helped several racers with real estate needs. Curtailing the major trail systems these athletes use to train would be a big mistake. They will simply leave the area for other places to train/ride for another area which would be one more blow to the local economy. Fewer local cyclists will be bad for my business as well as many others not directly connected to the cycling industry.
 - b. Outside of my business, losing cyclists is a huge loss to many local bike shops; not to mention national outfits like Rockshox, SRM, SRAM which have a big presence locally. Rockshox/Sram are actually just outside the park and actually use it to test products.
3. Personal note:
 - a. For me losing biking in Ute would be a huge blow. I moved to the area to ride it regularly. In addition my 8 year old son and I bond over bike lessons/rides in Ute. It's trails range from tame to extreme and I can see his eyes light up each time we enter the park.

Bottom line is Ute needs to be open to all users. Last I checked we all live in a free country and really should be allowed to use our open space equally in the manner that isn't inconsistent with the environment. Picking one favored user over another when we all love a space is just wrong.

I believe we have a local resource in the Medicine Wheel that could assist not only in repairs to problem areas, but in expanding the opportunities for all types of use in the area. Truthfully, it's time to open up more options and trails and make our area a true "Mecca" of outdoor use that it has the potential to become. We are often touted after all as the "fittest city in the nation" and this trail system is directly responsible for that rating.

Opening this system and expanding it is good for the business community, residents, tourists, and ultimately I believe the conservation of the forest. Having more people in love with nature ensures its ultimate protection.

Thanks

Date: September 12, 2014 at 6:39:39 PM MDT

Subject: RE: Ute Valley proposed MTB ban

Thanks for the information – this is something that we can discuss at the Super Friends meeting and I will let those leading the Master Plan process know. We hear many voices and opinions during the Master Plan process, but it does help when we can stay directed, focused, and constructive.

Sent: Friday, September 12, 2014 6:14 PM

Subject: FW: Ute Valley proposed MTB ban

Hi friends,

Please be aware, if you 're not already, of this mis-information about the Ute master plan process.

Bizarrely it seems this has been propagated by one of the board of FUVF, who is saying the sept 23 meeting is the end of the process.

I am doing my best to educate folks about the reality that we are at the beginning of the master plan process, but if you can think of other ways to get the word out please do.

I have been telling people that there is no chance that bikes will be banned in Ute. I'm glad to see people getting passionate and want to participate in the process but we should be directing our energy more constructively.

Thanks

Date: September 11, 2014 at 7:50:01 AM MDT

Subject: Ute Valley proposed MTB ban

Thought I'd share this with you guys. I can't be at the Parks & Rec meeting later this month, so I drafted the following letter that I'm having someone share regarding the proposed ban of mountain bikes in Ute Valley Park. If you have the time and desire, let them know your opinion.

This is from my friend

On another note, throughout this summer, the City has been seeking public input for the Master plan concerning Ute Park. I've been to several of these meetings and there appears to be an overwhelming desire from a large portion of the public to ban mountain bikes from Ute Park. Parks and Rec are holding a public meeting (one of the last) before writing the first draft of the Master Plan on Tuesday, Sept 23 from 5:30 – 8:30 PM at Eagle View Middle School, 1325 Vindicator Drive. Since a large portion of the public meetings and information gathering sessions has resulted in more and more people calling for the ban of mountain biking, it is very important that mountain biking be represented at this meeting.

Best,

To: City of Colorado Springs Parks & Recreation
Re: Ute Valley Park Proposed Mountain Bike Ban
Committee Members:

It has come to my attention that there's been some community lobbying and discussion centered around the ban of mountain bikes in Ute Valley Park. While its[sic] not surprising that there will always be prejudiced, irrational, and outspoken groups in any community, it's a bit alarming that an idea like this is being entertained in a city with such a beautiful, natural backdrop, and the potential to be incredibly progressive. I can think of a number of reasons why removing mountain bikes from the park is a bad idea, ranging from the perspectives of health, morality, open mindedness, and the city's ongoing progression.

In a day and age when childhood obesity numbers top 35%, physical education class has been removed from many school curriculums, and adult obesity and morbid obesity break the 60% mark in many regions of the country, why would our city consider removing such a rich, active opportunity from one of our best park resources from its community members? Mountain biking is a much safer cycling pastime for parents to share with their children due to lack of vehicle traffic, and is an amazing way to experience nature. This is quite pertinent in our current decade as many publications have surfaced surrounding "nature deficit disorder" in children. This is a pastime that transcends into a child's adult life.

The adult cycling culture in our town is strong and vibrant due to the presence of groups like USA Cycling, USA Triathlon, the US Olympic Committee, a number of local professional cyclists, and major industry manufacturers. One of the primary reasons Colorado Springs ranks lower than the national average for obesity is this healthy cycling culture. I can personally validate that cycling has transformed the mental state, eliminated disease, and saved the lives of many Colorado Springs residents.

Closing a segment of Mother Nature to a specific group of people seems nothing short of immoral, prejudice, segregating, and close-minded to say the very least. Our country has done a fair bit of work to move past its immoral, prejudicial, and ostracizing acts of the past. Why now consider taking a step backwards and banning a segment of the population? While I don't dispute that shared trails certainly need direction and rules of etiquette to coexist, isn't that a more logical solution than removing a group because one simply has an irrational dislike of the other? Park signage that includes rules, slow zones, or traffic direction are all possibilities. Would this same discussion be taking place if it were to remove a group of hikers? I often hear that trail erosion due to bikes is an argument used by many prejudicial hiking groups. Yet plenty of current research shows that mountain bikes cause no more erosion than foot or horse traffic.

I've been in the cycling, coaching, education, and wellness industry for 25 years now, and thankfully my work and employers have afforded me the ability to travel around the world, coaching some of the finest athletes, Olympians, World Champions, senior executives, and working with major corporations on developing a successful wellness plan. These experiences have also allowed me to witness the impact of a progressive community's health and wellness vision that is always open-minded, all-inclusive, and always incorporates a strong cycling infrastructure. The primary reasons I was drawn to our town were its beauty and cycling opportunities. I never envisioned there would be a discussion to remove a group of cyclists from an area in a city in Colorado, where cycling is part of it's [sic] DNA.

When I scan publications like Outside magazine for it's[sic] reviews on "healthiest cities in the US," I see places I've traveled where cycling is an integral part of the city's fabric. I recognize that we have the potential to be on those pages as well. My ongoing travels to Europe and other parts of the world have also refined my beliefs that a strong cycling culture is incredibly healthy for a community, as evidenced by their lower rates of obesity and disease. As you convene for your discussion, I urge you to consider the big picture of this decision, and the thought processes of how you make decisions like this going forward. Is it logical to let the opinions of an outspoken few sway thinking so far that it negatively impacts the masses? How does a group's exclusion help the city's ultimate progression? Is this the legacy we want to leave for our community's health and children? Is coexistence a better solution than segregation?

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dear Sir, Mam: I am writing to inform you of my concerns with Ute Valley Park. My back yard backs up to it and we are having issues with people biking and hiking and letting dogs run free on undesignated trails. There is a utility and game access from Bourke at Atherton to the park. This is not a designated trail for hikers, bikers and dog walkers. They are destroying the area by unauthorized usage and allowing their dogs to chase local wildlife. With the issue of keeping our park clean of trash and natural looking, this is a deep concern for me and my fellow neighbors. I pick up numerous amounts of trash and dog feces on a daily basis, not to mention the disturbance this creates. It would be nice to have a sign or gate placed at the utility access point to eliminate this. We use to have an abundance of wildlife and it is dwindling every year due to this unauthorized activity. If there is anything you can address to correct this issue it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely

The following comments were submitted via email in response to the draft Ute Valley Park Master and Management Plan posted on the City website on 20 January 2015.

I am concerned that in all these plans, there is no mention of dogs. With all this land and all these trails, it seems that it would be prudent to have one trail for off leash and under control dogs. The designated dog parks and the trail for dogs at Palmer Park are overflowing with dogs all the time and there is never a place to park. Please consider one off leash trail in Ute.

Thanks for taking my email as I have I think an important item of input for the Ute Valley Park development having to do with bathroom facilities provided at strategic points <entrances/exits> to the park...there is one located on Vindicator entrance...I think that other entrances planned should have the same...many walkers, runners and bicyclists need to have this access at convenient points and the consequences of not providing facilities is probably obvious. I anticipate much heavier utilization of the park going forward and planning for this necessity is essential....

We really need a off leash trail for dogs while walking on trails. This allows them to have much more fun and exercise while hiking.

I am a former president of the Pinecliff Homeowners Association, however, I no longer live in the Pinecliff neighborhood. I have looked through this master plan, and it is a good one! I do have a few comments for you:

- 1) In the listing of wildlife, the rattlesnake population is omitted. Rattlesnakes are definitely out there and should be recognized as threats to the trail using public. In the latter 1990's there was a rattlesnake infestation at Eagleview Middle School.
- 2) For wildfire prevention, please mention that fireworks are NOT allowed at any time. I have seen parents taking their children out along the Hewlett-Packard trail immediately N of the houses along Popes Valley Drive to shoot off bottle rockets.
- 3) Off-leash dogs have been an ongoing problem from day one. In the late 1990's to early 2000's, we periodically made note in the quarterly PHOA newsletter for dogs to be kept on leash and for owners to pick up after their pets. There were even explanations of how to use a newspaper bag to pick up after one's dog. For a while, there were bicycle police who would ride through the park to monitor park usage. None of this seemed to slow down, much less stop the abuse by dog owners.

Of course, the fireworks prohibition and off-leash dogs are ignored by many of those who 'know better.' One neighbor always walked her dogs without leashes, and when I mentioned the city leash ordinance to her, she told me in no uncertain terms that she would *never* use a leash on her dog - it is inhumane. It takes all kinds!
Thank you for all the hours you have put into this project!

I STRONGLY believe there should be an off-leash trail for dogs in UVP. I understand this issue was raised at one of the public meetings and you promised to investigate the Boulder, CO program. I mentioned my concern to a neighbor yesterday and he was shocked to find out that he could be fined for walking his dog off-leash in UVF. He said, "I guess I must be suffering from blissful ignorance. I have been walking my dogs off-leash in UVP for over 10 years and had no idea the Master Plan process would change that." I am sure you will ultimately receive a similar reaction from the many other dog owners who frequent UVP. Unfortunately, the dog owner's response may not come until after the Master Plan is finalized. Dog owners are not represented by a club like the bikers and runners. Therefore, there is no easy way to make them aware the Master Plan process may change their daily routine.

My daughter has a rescue dog and I have walked her dog in UVP at least 5 times a week for the last 5 years. I can assure you I meet more dogs that are off-leash than dogs on leash. As an example, we walked 2.5 miles in UVP each of the last two days around noon. Because of the weather, we encountered limited traffic as follows:

- 8 Dogs off leash
- 2 Dogs on leash
- 5 Runners
- 5 Hikers
- 1 Bikers

With over 500 acres available, we surely can find a trail that can be designated for off-leash dogs. We can't expect dog owners who have been walking their dogs off-leash in UVP, and the adjacent HP land, for decades to suddenly drive to Palmer Park.

I was looking over the master plan for Ute Valley Park and noticed that there used to be a nice disc golf course on this property. Is there any chance of getting that course back being part of the plan? It would be a very nice addition to the city park system.

As a Colorado Springs citizen for 35 years I would like to take the time to thank you for working on the Ute Valley Master Plan. I love seeing the TOPS program (and other programs) build so many wonderful places for our unique people to go play in and be one with nature. Another thing I love is the growth in areas where our people can take their furry friends to let them be dogs in their natural state. I would like to voice how much it would mean to me and all Colorado Springs dog lovers that a special area be considered in your planning where dogs can be off leash to act as they naturally do. I am proud to be a Citizen of Colorado Springs especially when we can boast one of the best dog parks in America. I would love to see the growth of ideas like these for all the years to come, and currently at Ute Valley.

I have just been informed about the meeting coming up next Tuesday January 27th and that nobody has talked about dogs on or off leash.

I know that Ute Valley is now an on-leash dog park. I have had my current dog for almost 3 years now (I had my other dog for 10 years). My current dog and I walk in Ute Valley every day. I just can't see having to take her freedom away now when she's

used to being off-leash. She is on-leash for our walk to and from Ute Valley. I'm just wondering if anyone has brought up to you about off-leash possibilities.

There are many trails in Ute Valley that could be dogs only. I walk my dog on them all the time and hardly see anyone else (sometimes bikers).

We could easily make a 2 to 3 mile loop for dogs off-leash on less traveled trails.

Ute Valley could also be an excellent location for a dog park. This would bring more people to Ute Valley on a more regular basis.

There are 3 good places that I can think of in Ute Valley to have a dog park. There is not another dog park near Ute Valley. Colorado Springs is well known for loving dogs and there are so many dogs in this city that owners would travel for a high quality dog park.

I am for off-leash options in Ute Valley Park.

I have read the Ute Valley Master Plan draft and would like to express my concern for the lack of off-leash areas. I have worked with a professional trainer for off leash manners. She behaves well, comes when called and wears a remote collar. We walk in Ute 7 days a week and have not had any problems.

I think the city has a responsibility to provide opportunities for all it's [sic] citizens whether majority or minority. As a city tax payer and avid hiker, I would ask that the planners set aside areas for off leash hiking, just as they have for cyclists and hikers. In researching I have found that other cities have found solutions in: authorizing certain trails for off leash hiking, offering off leash hiking hours on all city trails, providing off leash licenses.

I agree that off leash (and on leash) dogs need to be: under control and well behaved, excrement needs to be removed, need to be able to be called off the trail for bikes, hikers and on-leash dogs to pass.

Many opponents to off-leash areas site the dog parks. However, dog parks are not a good place for certain dog personalities and I don't think they take the place of off-leash hiking areas. I have noticed an increase in the number of dog park users since the city began ticketing for off-leash dogs. The dogs parks are becoming more dangerous due to the overcrowding. On 1/17/15 between 3-4:30 there were over 75 dogs at Bear Creek despite the cold temperatures and icy/muddy conditions inside the park. Thank you for considering. I hope the planners will provide off leash areas.

I understand that the city is considering a provision for dogs walking off leash at Ute Valley Park. The park is such a nice park with a natural setting which makes for a great place for dogs to run and play. I hope that dogs will be allowed to walk off leash at the park.

I heard that you are taking comments about off leash dogs in ute valley park [sic].

I walk in Ute Valley nearly every day. My walks and runs are considerably happier after seeing the joy that off leash dogs have in Ute Valley. I have never had a dog frighten me on the trails. All the dogs I've seen are well behaved. I've never been bitten or harmed by off Leash dogs.

It would be very sad to not allow these well behaved dogs to be free to run. Many of my friends and their dogs also love using ute valley. [sic] Please continue to allow dogs off leash in ute[sic]!

I believe responsible dog owners should be allowed to walk their dogs in some parks off leash. Someone emailed me about this issue which I had never heard about. I hope there has been information out to the public re [sic] considered changes which will

affect many people. Perhaps the local news stations could give some voice to this because as I understand your office has had little feedback.

I'm in support of having dogs off leash in parks. I know some people are against this. I would love a compromise since so many citizens have dogs and enjoy taking dogs to parks. The city could provide more off leash areas or perhaps certain days where dogs are free to be off leash at different parks.

I use the trails at Ute Valley park regularly. It is a beautiful place to feel nature. I walk my dogs there too and they love it. I would like to request an OFF-LEASH area for the dogs to run and play. I feel if there were an off leash area, people would follow the rules more closely and leash there[sic] dogs in all other areas.

I am a teacher and dog owner who lives here in Colorado Springs. My job requires me to put in long hours during which my dog stays at home in his kennel. When I finally do get home and on the weekends, I like to give him the opportunity to run around outside and get some exercise. We both enjoy going to the park to enjoy nature, get some fresh air, and exercise. I often run with him following close behind me.

I like that neither of us has to worry about the constraints of a leash while enjoying time together outdoors. I urge you to make this continue to be a reality. I would really like to enjoy even more opportunities to be outdoors with my dog without a leash.

I didn't see any reference in the master plan to clearly mark the sealed mineshafts of the Neer, Last Chance, and New Cottonwood mines as they are very close to high traffic areas. People routinely go out-of-bounds in the park, and they need to stay clear of these areas. Also, there is an ancient Utah Juniper tree maybe 100' S of the Last Chance mine and immediately adjacent to a well known trail. I'm no dendrologist but have been told that it could be 600-1000 years old. I was hoping that we could install a sign and/or reroute the trail 25-50' to the south. There is a lot of erosion at its base, some of which can be attributed to the trail.

Lastly, there are a lot of prairie rattlesnakes in the park and they tend to den on the S facing slopes and sun themselves on the trail in the spring and fall. I almost stepped on this guy on the trail that overlooks Eagleview and arguably the most heavily trafficked. I like the way the State has installed educational signs in Cheyenne Mtn State Park...maybe we could something similar. Thanks for doing great work. Photos included.

I am in support of allowing dogs off leash at Ute Park Park (Rockrimmon). Can you please consider this?

I am a member of the Mutts Welcome Meet-up group and want to express my opinion about having off leash areas in the parks for dogs and their humans to hike. I realize not every trail can be off leash but to allow at least some trails to be (off leash) or maybe have some parks that would allow this and other parks not, that would seem to satisfy all factors in this issue.

I know it is late in the game to become more involved in this issue so please feel free to keep my email or post on the Mutts website any other meetings that involve pro off leash hiking trails.

Thanks for your time & consideration.

I am writing for Pro off-leash plans for Ute Valley Park. I am the proud owner of two dogs. My Doberman Koa has passed his Canine Good Citizen test, taken 3 obedience classes and is my best friend. I believe that the United States is becoming too restricted by having so many rules. I think this country is not as "free" as it claims to be. I am an avid traveler and have been all over Europe and have seen how well dogs are integrated into the communities. Dogs are treated like family in other countries. Dogs are better behaved in other Countries because of their socialization. Not here in the US, dogs are never allowed in restaurants, State Parks, National Parks and now our City Parks are becoming restricted. Do you think that dogs should only be allowed in their owners back yards? Instead of making more rules, why doesn't the City patrol and ticket offenders that can't verbally control their dogs and kids for that matter? Please reconsider banning off leash dogs.

I would like to ask that you have an area in Ute Valley Park for off leash dogs. The dogs need an area to run and get the exercise they need. Being on a leash is good for a nice walk but dogs need to run in order to stay healthy and live a long life. I know I'm only one vote but please consider my request.

I Just wanted to add my comments to the meeting tonight if not too late. I am against having dogs off leash with the full run of Ute Valley Park. My property at 5775 Bourke Dr, backs up to the park on the west side. There is not an official trail as far as I know right behind my house but we do have people walk back there. Many times they have their dogs off leash and let them run chasing the deer and rabbits behind my house besides coming up to my fence and bothering my dogs. I also run in the park with my 2 dogs on a leash. Many times I've had to yell for an owner (seen or unseen) to call their dog and leash them. Sometimes I can see that the dog is friendly, sometimes they are not-scuff on neck is up, tail not wagging etc. Some owners are apologetic, some are not and can be quit rude acting like it is their right to have their dog run off leash. My dogs don't like when a dog off leash comes up to them and get aggressive-then the other owner says my dog is the problem. Once I went searching for an owner who's dog I had just seen chasing a fawn and the mother was chasing it. Found the owner told him to leash his dog and his response was to ask if his dog caught the fawn then ignored me. Some owners have excellent control of their dogs and I admire them greatly. They are not a problem. I heard one solution was to certify dogs and their owners if they showed good control to be allowed off leash. How would that be policed? Another to have certain times or locations for off leash dogs. Again, how would that be policed? I think the only solution is to ban off leash dogs in the park completely, just like Bear Creek, and have a dog park made in the Ute Valley Park for those owners who want to have off leash time.

Is a frequent user of Ute park I feel it is critical that there is an area for dogs to be off leash. The park is vast and is a good, safe place for well behaved dogs to work on training, play fetch or socialize under the supervision of their own. It should be incumbent on the owner to take responsibility for their Pet and have only those off leash that are safe and capable. It should not be mandated by government or bureaucracy.

I would like to make a comment regarding the proposed enforcement provisions of the Ute Valley park Utilization Plan. My concern is the proposed pet/leash policy. I have been walking my dog, sans leash, for the past six years without incident. My experience has been that dog owners will use a leash for control when they deem their pet needs that positive control. Others chose to allow their dogs to walk with them without being on a leash. Owners know their dogs and how they react while using the trails. I believe it's best to allow the users to assume responsibility for their pets...the onerous costs and ill will that will undoubtedly come to pass as enforcement is implemented can be avoided by simply stating to those who use the trails that they are responsible for the pet's actions/behavior. Do any of the board members with dogs use the Park? Has there been any incidents that warrant such "Enforcement Solutions" to be contemplated. Again, allow the owners/users to take individual responsibility for the behavior of their pets.

I wanted to thank you for your openness to public input into the future of Ute valley. I've lived beside and have been using Ute for 15 years. When I moved to COS, I chose to move to this corner of town because of this park. My current house backs up to its western property line.

As a long time user of the park I have seen trails come and go over the years. There are some trails that have been used for a long time and not that many people knew about and some of them are now slated for closure. I would like to make the request to hold onto some of these gems. I've attached a pdf with these trails labeled as A, B & C.

A. We refer to this trail as its "Strava" name as Jamie's Trail. This trail was on the original master plan. It just happens to be hidden around the corner because of a tree and wasn't used by many riders. This is one of my favorite trails. It has interesting trail features and a great challenge with completely natural features. It has been there since I have used the park in 1999.

B. This is one of the new trails in the park. It has great manmade features with great flow. Most of it is not very steep and actually hand erosion quite well. It ends with a jump over a "canyon" and has one of the most challenging trail features in the park. The bottom portion including the canyon jump have been around for at least 12 years when I first discovered it.

C. This trail has been around for a good 12 years. We used to refer to it as "spools" and it is now known as four loco. It has some great challenges for advanced riders and allows you to make the ride into a loop. You can cross the bottom of the canyon to the other side in an area where the canyon doesn't hold water.

I'm an expert mountain biker and one of the great things about Ute Valley are these expert level trails. These offer challenges to me to improve that many other trails just don't. They also help spread out the mountain bike traffic away from high use areas to prevent any biker/hiker conflicts. In my opinion, the more trails, the better.

Thanks again for your willingness to hear the communities input. On the western ridge trail, there is a connector that descends down a steep rocky pitch towards the creek where there is a small bridge currently. This short piece of trail is critical in how we currently loop the ridge trail. The ridge trail generally descends from Vindicator to this connector (North to South) and descends from the southern tip (near the gravel access road) going north towards this connector. So, (see red line for our typical route) typically we will ride north along the technical ridge and descend to the connector, ride down the connector to what will be the regional trail in the future, then pedal north to vindicator and then climb back up to the ridge trail and descend south to the connector. Sort of a figure eight. This connector really opens up the possibilities. Also, I have friends who really don't enjoy riding the section south of the connector trail, but love the section north. So often we ride the trail as shown in blue in the attached map. If possible, please keep this short section for both the technical challenge and the added variations in how the ridge trail can be ridden.

Thanks for your consideration and hard work.

I wanted to thank you again for giving us "doggy" people some of your valuable time tonight and really "listening" to us. It meant a lot to all of us, I'm sure. We appreciate all the hard work you and your team do to make things so great for the City of Colorado Springs, and that our little quadrant on the northwest part of town is not forgotten. We all love our dogs. They are our family. We want to enjoy the great outdoors WITH them, just like they are our children, and you take your children to the park to play. We want to have a space for our best friends, our family members, to "play" without worry or concerns. We just would like to have what all the other areas in the Springs have, and that is a place for us to take our best friends, our dogs, to run and play and interact with other dogs in a safe environment. We appreciate anything and everything you can do to get us a dog park. Thanks again for your time, and your promise!!

Thank you for talking with me tonight at the Ute Valley Master Plan Open House. I was disappointed that a dog park/off-lead area was not considered in the draft plan. I sent an email to you regarding this issue back in September because I wasn't able to attend the September meeting. Then again, the dog area idea was discussed at the November meeting and I know several people voiced their interest. My small group also included potential areas for a dog park or voice command area on the map at this November working meeting. I know I am not the only one voicing this idea. It is frustrating that the public input process seems to be lip-service. At a minimum, the dog park idea should have been addressed in some manner tonight - even if the City decides the area is not suitable - at least they should acknowledge the public comments on this. I am very glad to hear that you will bring up the dog area to the planning

committee. I would appreciate a written response on their decision, and the reasons as to why or why not it will be considered for Ute Valley. The NW quadrant of the City is in desperate need of an area where dogs can legally run free. The City needs to address this and I would like to work with them. Please let me know what steps I can take to help make this a reality.

For starters, thanks for helping to keep Ute Park available to the public. It's a great park and provides nice easy access to some wilderness without leaving the city. I am a heavy user of Ute Park for mountain biking. During 8 months a year I ride there 4 times a week. I really enjoy the park and have been riding there for about 7 years now. I have ridden almost everywhere in the park and know fairly intimately the locations that see erosion. After looking over the map that shows the trails that are going to be shut down there are many places that are going to be shut down that see very minimal erosion. I am also concerned about how trails are deemed difficult and that those trails will be considered part of the "downhill" specific trails. I would not consider the trail that runs out by the hotels and HP to be a difficult trail and I just want to make sure that is not considered when counting the downhill specific trails. Also, I think that some of the trails over by the Juniper need to be reassessed because that whole area has some very minor erosion but most of the older trails there don't need to be completely shut down, just some minor sections rerouted. I would like to see as few trails shutdown as possible. Hopefully there can be some more time spent in the evaluation stage to ensure only trails that are actually eroding get shutdown. On a safety note, I have a possible suggestions for the trails that are more difficult and have higher speeds when descending them. Instead of directional signs or even designating for one use discipline, it would be nice on the difficult trails that there are signs at top and bottom that warn the users that there may be fast moving users on these trails. This could stop some of the abrupt encounters that can startle people between user groups. One approach taken by Whistler bike park is to designate on green and blue trails that the slower moving traffic has right of way. On the more difficult trails the faster moving traffic has right of way. I've had very few poor experiences but maybe some signage could help alleviate conflicts and improve safety. I am very excited about the future of Ute Park and hope that we can keep the park challenging for all skill level riders and hikers.

I wanted to provide some feedback on the Ute Valley Master Plan document. I live and work right by Ute and have enjoyed riding my mountain bike there for about 5 years now. It was actually the main reason why my family and I bought our house right next to Ute Valley Park. I spend about 2 to 5 hours per week riding in Ute. Here are my suggestions:

1. Three of my favorite trails in Ute look to be getting closed down. I drew them below on the map in dark blue. I believe that the one on the far left was actually on the very original Ute Master Trail map. Two out of the three have held up great to weather and erosion. The one on the far right has some erosion at the bottom, but we could re-route and fix that one.
 2. I would request that the trails that remain open are not changed. One of the best parts about Ute is the challenging trails. I would be disappointed if the trails were made "easier".
 3. It would be great if we could have more "difficult" trails in Ute. The trail that I pointed to with the red arrow below is one of the easier trails in Ute. I don't think it should be listed as black.
 4. This one is more of a question than suggestion. From my experience, Ute is already getting fairly crowded with bikers and hikers. With all of these trail closures, how will the extra traffic be managed? I'm afraid there may be more trail conflict now that there will be the same amount of traffic on roughly half the trail space.
- These are just my opinions. But many of my co-workers feel the same. I have asked them to voice their concerns as well so hopefully you will be receiving more of the same requests.
Thanks for making your way through my message.