



PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

APRIL 2021

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CRAZY ABOUT CONSERVATION?

SERIOUS ABOUT LAND

STEWARDSHIP?

**CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE
CHANGE?**

JOIN US FOR OUR 7-WEEK STEWARDSHIP ACADEMY!

During this time you'll learn about:

- * Jefferson County and what makes it so special
- * The Jeffco Open Space Program and how it came to be
- * The Open Space Parks, how they are organized and maintained
- * The Jeffco Open Space GreenPrint and what it means for the parks' future
- * Ecology, land preservation and citizen science in Jeffco
- * The Open Space Advisory Committee what it is and what it does
- * Threats to biodiversity and ecosystems, how to mitigate them
- * Human activity and its impact on open spaces
- * Visitor experience in Jeffco Open Space Parks
- * Taking care of our precious lands

More details on the next page >>>>>

The seven-week program meets once a week in a virtual classroom setting plus in-person field experience in Jeffco Open Space Parks.

Enrollment is open now . . . Classes start Tuesday, May 4th from 6 to 8 p.m.

The \$35 enrollment fee includes:

- Six weeks of virtual presentations by knowledgeable staff
- Preliminary observations in the parks prior to each class
- Opportunity to observe the Open Space Advisory Committee in Action
- A group stewardship project to be completed in one of the Jeffco Open Space Parks

One-year full membership in PLAN Jeffco

For information on how to register for the Academy, go to <https://planjeffco.org/stewardship-academy/>

PLAN Jeffco Stewardship Academy

Example Course Curriculum

<u>Week</u>	<u>Section Title</u>	<u>Section Topics</u>
Week 1	Intro to Stewardship Academy & JCOS	Getting to know Jefferson County lands Jefferson County Open Space, today & in the future Benefits of Open Space
Week 2	Jefferson County Ecology	Overview of Jeffco ecology Land preservation in Jeffco Citizen science in Jeffco
Week 3	Threats to Biodiversity & Ecosystems	Climate change Invasive, non-native species Wildfire Pollution Human activity Habitat fragmentation & disruption
Week 4	The Visitor Experience	The Parks, a multi-use system Courtesy & community to avoid clashes Diverse communities in open space The visitor role in keeping trails safe for all Sharing stewardship information with other visitors Appropriate response in an emergency
Week 5	Visit to Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting	OSAC meeting Post-meeting discussion
Week 6	Taking Care of Our Lands	Conservation in Jeffco Being a responsible steward Open space in your community
Week 7	Stewardship Project	Becoming Stewards of open space Stewardship Project – hands-on Wrap-up & Recognition

WHEN IS ENOUGH??

When the original PLAN Jeffco board and committees were considering the 1972 enabling resolution, we debated whether the resolution should include an ending of the tax. We decided that there was no way to predict when build out would occur or what the magnitude of funding requirements for continuing operations and maintenance would be.

Once the sales tax was approved, PLAN Jeffco spent over a decade protecting its revenue stream from being diverted for other uses, i.e. a new jail and cultural centers. In the next decade, there was pressure to stop acquisitions, create a reserve to fund continuing operations, and terminate the sales tax. The program had about 10,000 acres at that point. The promoters of these ideas also were ignoring that fact that about one-third of the sales tax revenue was going directly to the cities and towns for park, trail, and other open space uses within their jurisdictions.

So, now, after almost five decades and more than 56,000 acres protected, it is not unreasonable to ask; "How close is the program to build out?" A primary goal in 1972 was land conservation. With respect to protecting wildlife, there is no developed park that is not over-visited. A present goal of the program is to make it convenient for people to get outdoors and exercise to keep healthy and enjoy the wonders of the outdoors. Open Space is working with the cities and districts to get a trail or park within a 10-minute walk of every urban area resident. Visitor counts in the parks are way up. A relative measure is the fact that Open Space purchased 170% more toilet paper in 2020 than 2019. This confirms that more parkland needs to be acquired and developed.

The 2020 Conservation GreenPrint (goals for the next five years, located online at <https://www.jeffco.us/3960/References>), includes redevelopment of trailheads to allow for more parking, the development of the acreage adjacent to Coal Creek, and the development of three parks

along the hogback. This will allow for wider distribution of visitors but will not satisfy the ultimate demand. PLAN Jeffco and Open Space Staff separately have identified about 20,000 acres in the foothills that would make good sites for additional passive-use parks. So, there will be capital demands for probably the next thirty years.

The Jefferson County Open Space Program has a positive impact on the economic well-being of the County. PLAN Jeffco continues its strong support for the continuation of the JCOS program and its efforts to expand accessibility to natural areas for all county residents.

John Litz



ME, MY DOG & THE GREAT OUTDOORS



Sharing the outdoors with your dog—it's one of the most enjoyable things I know! For that reason—and because our open lands and trails are used by wildlife plus an ever-increasing number of people for a variety of activities, and also because of dogs' natural inclinations—there are rules to be followed when you and your dog

are outdoors, outside the bounds of your private property. Those rules vary by location based on political boundaries, land ownership, and land management.

Open lands provide habitat for all sorts of wildlife that collectively comprise an ecosystem. The creatures in that ecosystem rely on it for food and water, shelter, and successful seasonal reproduction. People enjoy these open lands for their beauty and the personal renewal they enable, so they add permanent trails that they use for hiking, birding and other critter watching, enjoyment of plants, running, bicycling, horseback riding, and...you guessed it...sharing with their dogs. These activities occur at different speeds and with various degrees of disruption to each other and to the native inhabitants.

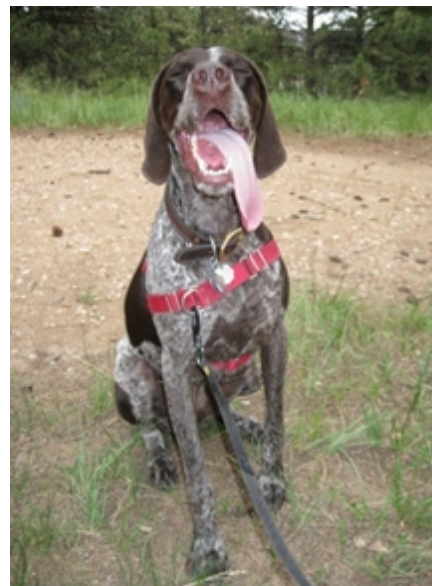
How do dogs fit into such a busy place? On their own, in a healthy ecosystem, wild dogs do just fine. They have mice, chipmunks, and perhaps an occasional fawn or elk calf to feed on. That fits into the food web so, when food becomes scarce there would be fewer surviving dogs until food becomes abundant once more.



Once people enter the picture, however, that balance is disrupted. The pressure on wildlife increases, especially if they bring well-fed dogs, most of which—if running free-- will display hunting behavior...just because it's their nature to do so. The pressure increases if the people or their dogs stray from the trails. In addition, what is fun to one person may be terrifying to another. Hence the rules.

Statewide, there are many laws that basically make a dog's owner responsible for their dogs' actions. Within many counties and cities there are additional rules that require dogs to be on a leash at all times. For example, this is true within Jefferson County, Jeffco Open Space Parks, and the cities of Arvada, Wheat Ridge, and Lakewood. Links to these rules and regulations are posted on our website at <https://bit.ly/3sv7uNA>.

In addition, both Jefferson and Boulder Counties have seasonal restrictions in specific locations to minimize damage to breeding wildlife.



Ah, BUT....dogs love to run and dog owners love to see their dogs having fun. Plus, many dog owners enjoy training their pets and take pride in having a well behaved and obedient dog. Therefore, IN SOME LOCATIONS the leash rules

governing dogs have been relaxed. This is true in designated dog parks, most of which are fenced. It is also true on SPECIFIC TRAILS within Boulder County IF the dog and owner have successfully completed the Voice and Sight Education Class and the dog is wearing a current Voice and Sight Program tag (<https://bit.ly/3r54shH>). There are also private dog trainers within Colorado who focus on helping dog

ME, MY DOG & THE GREAT OUTDOORS Continued



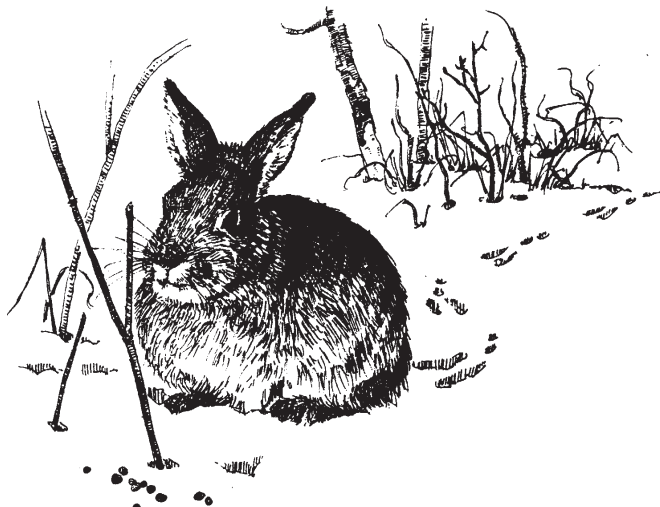
owners work toward excellent off-leash control of their dogs and provide certificates upon successful completion of their classes. While this training certainly aids owners' successful communication with their dogs, it does NOT supersede the location-specific rules

or give the owner and dog carte blanche to overlook dog-on-leash regulations.

WHAT'S THE POINT of this message? KNOW where you are and what the RULES are AT THAT LOCATION....and PLEASE remember that in ALL Jefferson County Open Space Parks dogs must be on leash at all times unless otherwise indicated, no matter what certifications you and your dog may hold.....

Then ENJOY sharing the outdoors with your dog!!

Jean Tate



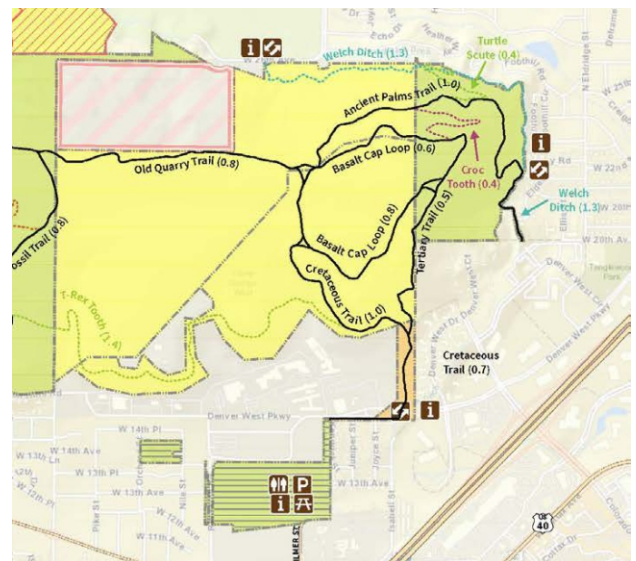
Cottontail with scats and chewed twigs

South Table Mountain Trailhead

Parking for South Table Open Space Park has been an issue for a long time. A major limitation with the Park is that it is closely surrounded by developed neighborhoods and the National Renewal Energy Laboratory (NREL). Other than the access from Quaker Street, the slopes are too steep to be developed for parking. Quaker Street is not suitable for the amount of traffic that a trailhead will attract. Over the years, JCOS has negotiated agreements with NREL for use of portions of their property, mostly along the east border of the park. The adjacent map shows the trails on the east side of STM which exit to the south across NREL property to the Denver West Parkway.

A virtual public meeting was held April 8, 2020, detailing the negotiations with NREL. A land transfer to JCOS at the southeast corner of the NREL property will allow development of a trailhead with a large parking lot and restrooms. More details will be available in the next PLAN Jeffco newsletter.

This new trailhead will allow access to the park from a non-residential street and from the RTD Route 20 that connects with Lakewood, Edgewater, and Downtown Denver and Route 125 (if it gets restored).



OSAC Notes

December 3, 2020

Study Session: Eric Krause, Visitor Relations Coordinator, presented an overview of Jeffco Open Space's new Recreation and Activities Management Guide. With existing park regulations as its foundation, the Recreation and Activities Management Guide shapes potential land uses while protecting park and natural resources and the visitor experience.

Regular Meeting: COVID-19 has not slowed JCOS from planning for or advancing many projects. Planning completed in 2020 included:

- South Table Mountain Park – 2020 Action Plan
- Alderfer/Three Sisters Park – Parking Management Plan
- Mount Galbraith Park – Plan Update, Access & Trailheads Component
- Elk Meadow Park – Plan Update, Access & Trailheads Component
- Tincup Ridge Park – Trails Component

Planning projects for 2021 include:

- Coal Creek Canyon Study Area Planning Accessibility Audit & Transition Plan
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Program
- Peaks to Plains Trail (P2P) Collaborative

Major projects completed in 2020 include:

- South Valley Park – Trailhead Renovation
- Mount Falcon Park Morrison – Trailhead Expansion
- Elk Meadow Park – Former Dog Off Leash Area Restoration
- Dinosaur Ridge – Croc Creek Improvements and Rockfall Mitigation
- Beaver Ranch Park – Cabin Removal and Entry Improvements

Major projects for 2021 include:

- Clear Creek Canyon Park – Gateway Segment and Gateway to Huntsman Segment
- Windy Saddle Park – Mount Zion Stairs
- Colorado Front Range Trail
- Hildebrand Ranch Park – Ditch Improvement

The Committee approved accepting the donation of 0.44 acres on the South side of Beaver Ranch Park adjacent to Foxton Road. The small parcel was purchased by and donated by the Jeffco Open Space Foundation and will allow a “no trespassing” Park entrance at the end of the Valley Trail.

January 7, 2021

Study Session: A review of the Forest Management was presented by Steve Murdock. Maps were developed by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at CSU showing general risk levels of wildfire and specific risks to homes and drinking water. Mapping of risk initially is done on a broad landscape, then a local landscape, and finally to tree-stand treatment units. JCOS completed a significant fuel reduction at Flying J Park last year and is acquiring a second masticator this year for removal of small trees and seedlings.

Regular Meeting: Approved an agreement with the Town of Morrison for land exchanges to allow creating a direct access to the lower Mount Falcon Trailhead from Highway 8. This will allow JCOS to add additional parking that can be shared with the Town. Some additional parking was developed last fall.

February 4, 2021 - Meeting Cancelled

March 4, 2021 -

Study Session: - Mary Ann Bonnell presented an update of the Park Regulations. The Regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that they keep up with increasing park usage. Three new regulations will provide clarity to the Park Permit process, where they previously were buried in the fine print. The regulations relate to 1) Group size on trails, 2) Soliciting, advertising, and canvassing, and 3) Commercial activity.

Regular Meeting: Starting in 2020 the previous grants program to cities, districts, and other eligible entities was terminated and replaced with

OSAC Notes, Continued

a Trails Partnership Program starting in 2021. The goal of this program is to increase access to trails and parks and improve the experience quality of using the trails. The following eligible entities will receive cost sharing for their projects.

City of Arvada
Rocky Mountain Greenway Trailhead at
Standley Lake Library \$300,516

Buffalo Park Improvement Association
Buffalo Creek Trailhead Restroom \$29,160

City of Lakewood
Bear Creek Trail and Greenbelt
Improvements \$1,920,312

Leawood Metropolitan Recreation & Park
District
Bridge Re-decking at Weaver Park \$1,500

City of Wheat Ridge
Clear Creek Trail & Wadsworth
Boulevard Improvements \$466,141
TOTAL \$2,717,629

All projects were approved.

Approved the acquisition of a 58-acre parcel from the Ramsetters. The parcel is on the top of the ridge east of Guy Gulch and south of Golden Gate Canyon Road . The parcel is key to additional acquisitions north of Clear Creek and east of Centennial Cone Park.

April 1, 2021 - Meeting cancelled

PLAN Jeffco is the county-wide volunteer citizen's group that organized and drafted the Open Space Resolution that resulted in the formation of the Jefferson County Open Space Program in 1972. We currently function as a monitoring group, observing meetings of the Open Space Advisory Committee, participating in subcommittees, and issues groups, proposing and working for important acquisitions, and keeping citizens informed of what is going on in their Open Space Program. PLAN Jeffco provided the leadership for the successful vote for bonds in 1998.

If you have not!!! Join PLAN Jeffco or renew your Membership today!

Our membership rates are:

Member: \$35/year - Hardcopy newsletter, voting
Friend: \$10/year - Hardcopy of newsletter
Acquaintance: \$0/year, informed when newsletter has been posted on website.

Make checks payable to PLAN Jeffco and send to:
PLAN Jeffco
11010 W 29th Avenue
Lakewood, CO 80215

The online payment will only accept full memberships.

Name: _____

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Jefferson County Citizens for
Planned Growth with Open Space

PLAN JEFFCO NEWSLETTER



“Clear Creek in March”, photo courtesy of Carbon Fibre Photo, Peter Morales