



PLAN JEFFCO UPDATE

MAY 2008

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Conference on the Economic Impacts of Preserving Open Space Lands

Sponsoring organizations:

PLAN Jeffco
Jeffco Open Space Foundation
First Bank of Lakewood
Colorado Mountain Club
Clear Creek Land Conservancy (honorarium assistance)
Denver Parks and Recreation
American Planning Association
League of Women Voters of Jefferson County
Jefferson County Open Space
Audubon Society of Greater Denver

Conference on the Economic Impacts of Preserving Open Space Lands

Welcome and Goals - Margot Zallen, Chair, PLAN Jeffco

Some of the issues and concerns that we are going to hear about today date back to 1972 when we, PLAN Jeffco, were trying to convince the County Commissioners to put a tax increase on the ballot to raise funds to preserve open space lands. They were concerned about the effects of taking lands off the tax roles and other potential negative impacts to the county's economy. We prepared a report for the commissioners, using the scanty data that existed at that time, which showed that positive economic benefits accrued as a result of acquiring and preserving open space lands. Apparently this report lessened their concerns, as they agree to put the issue on the ballot and the voters overwhelmingly agreed to tax themselves to protect the disappearing open lands.

This year, 2008, marks the 36th year of the Jefferson County Open Space program. With over 50,000 acres of lands preserved and 100's of miles of trails developed, we thought it was time to reassess how the open space program affects the economy of Jefferson County and answer some reoccurring questions. "Does it tie up lands that are needed for development? An important question in times of reduced tax revenues and increased demand for county services. Do we continue to buy open space lands and if so, where? What role does it play in the county? Will the maintenance costs outstrip the tax revenues?" To answer these and other questions, we invited a number of experts to discuss these issues with us today.

Opening Remarks, Greg Stevinson, Jefferson County Open Space Advisory Committee

Jefferson County attracts business owners, employers, and employees because of our lifestyle opportunities and amenities. We are near the foothills and mountains and easily accessible. We have seen that businesses often locate where a CEO wants to live and Jefferson County attracts these types of businesses. Jefferson County is blessed and cursed with wonderful highways and accessibility. We have five major highways intersecting in this county allowing for ease of access; however, this places an extra burden on the Open Space lands by bringing visitors to our county for recreation and open space enjoyment opportunities. Some other counties do not have as much open space and/or do

not allow the multiple uses. Our accessibility can be good economically. Cities live off sales tax and the Open Space program is funded by sales tax. If we keep our county and cities vibrant, people will want to locate, live, and shop here, paying sales tax while they shop. If we have a healthy economic base, it will continue to support the health of the open space program, which is then also based on the health of Jefferson County.

Another question I want to address is: "What is the impact of taking property off the tax roles?" The Open Space program has strategically made acquisitions that are of the lowest economic impact. Potential losses are offset by the increased value and sales of properties next to open space parks. Every time the program looks at acquiring property we do myriad of analyses, one is cost of maintenance. We can and have continued to afford the stewardship of the properties we have. We can acquire more provided the economy stays strong, encourage the public to leave Open Space sales tax as it is, and provided we don't get into the park and recreation business.



**Keynote Address: Dr. John Crompton,
Distinguished Professor of Recreation, Park &
Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M**

This County was a pioneer in dedicating funds for conservation back in 70's and still today, is one of the only counties in the country that have that kind of dedication to open space preservation. The rest of the world is catching up: the last few years have seen incredible progress for open space preservation. For example, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) noted there have been 1,500 open space bond issues in last eight years and 77% passed, which is a higher pass rate than any other public service. Every opinion poll says America wants to spend more money on parks and conservation. From 1995 to 2004 America experienced a 64% increase of real dollar expenditures by local governments on parks on recreation, again, higher than any other public service.

There now are 1,700 Land Trusts in the nation, an increase from only 400 just 25 years ago. There is \$400 million more for trails than there was 20 years ago. According to the Army Corps budget, the biggest polluters of the past, now spend 25% of their budget on clean up or greening projects. The last farm bill had \$20 billion in conservation programs. This is the golden era for conservation.

Officials frequently view parks and open space as costly investments from which they see no economic return. They often also believe that it is development that brings prosperity to a community and that while there is social merit for parks and open space; those amenities are secondary at budget time. Too many community leaders feel they must choose between economic growth and open space protection. But no such choice is necessary. Open space protection is good for a community's health, stability, beauty, and quality of life. It is also good for the bottom line.

In some of our studies, we assumed there are four different sets of folks in a community:

- Proximate residents within three blocks of the park (Property Capitalization)
- Other residents who use the park (Contingent Valuation)
- Other residents who do not use the park (Psychic/Opportunity Value Contingent Valuation)
- Residents from out side the city who use the park (Economic Impact)

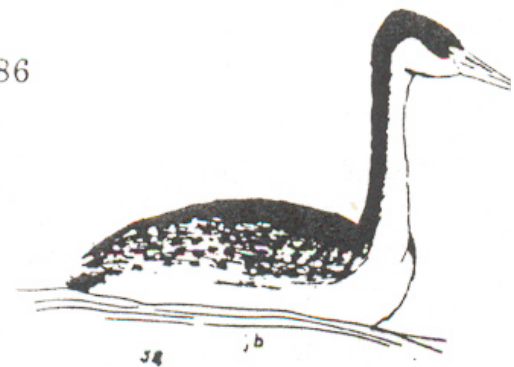
The questions in these studies went to users and asked them if they can measure the value of a home that is attributable to a park. Even if an individual doesn't utilize the park, there is a value there. We measure the economic impact by looking at visitor use. We have done dozens of studies that measured user values and how much users got from the park.

We realized that looking at only users and user satisfaction might be insufficient to justify parks and conservation. Measuring users proved to be inadequate because most taxpayers are not direct users of most of the facilities so why should they pay for them. For this type of nonuser, it's the offsite benefits rather than the onsite benefits that give them value for the park.

A park performs necessary service for the community beyond responding to the demands of particular user groups. Originally parks were to clean the air from pollution, serve as a place where workers could regenerate themselves and be more productive, increase real estate values, serve as tourist attractions, etc. The purposes of the parks did not include rationale for user-related values like walking dogs or picnicking.

The value of parks and recreation is that they perform a necessary service for the community beyond responding to the demands of particular user groups. Around 1990, there was a shift to a new era focused on community benefits, see figure, and making a case for a whole community, not just those that are going to use the parks. This work identifies the following 19 possible community-wide benefits related to economic prosperity due to open space.

86



4. Western Grebe. 27".

have the quality of life stuff that also benefit existing residents.)

- Recreation opportunities
- Ambiance
- Beautification Retention of GRAMPIES is as valuable as recruitment.

Q: Is there a correlation of property values between parks and proximity to them? What is the applicability of that study to larger scale open space program where the residential area is necessarily close to the recreation areas?

A: In an urban area and a hypothetical park, the zones around the park have increased property values that correlate to the distance from the park. If you use the key assumption that 20% increase in Zone A, a 10 % increase in Zone B and 5% increase in Zone C and then apply premiums. Once you apply the premiums, you find that the park pays for itself because homes closer have higher values and higher taxes. This does not work in every situation. It works for natural/passive parks, but not for ball fields, etc. For natural, open space areas it shows that it will raise the value of all homes in an area so when one measures proximate values, it becomes difficult as the comparison is not as legitimate when all of the homes values raise, not just adjacent ones.

However, a lot of work has been done in the area of cost of services and fiscal impact analysis. The developer mentality is that they can cut trees because it will raise the tax base and income and then be able to go plant other trees. If you look at median values from 98 studies addressing revenues versus service costs for three areas: commercial and industrial, farm and forest open space, and residential, for every revenue dollar generated, the service cost was \$0.27 for commercial, \$0.35 for open space, and \$1.16 for residential. Not one study case showed residential with less service cost than revenue. It nearly always costs more to service residential than is received in revenue. An exception sometimes is with senior citizen developments because they have higher income houses and taxes with fewer services. Commercial is low cost, but needs to balance with residential needs for the employees. You can save money by having open space to prevent houses because in the long term it is cheaper to buy open space than to allow houses to be there.

When new businesses move into an area, they cause residential growth.



- Attracting tourists
- Attracting businesses
- Attracting retirees (affluent retirees are the new economic development tool in America)
- Enhancing real estate values
- Reducing taxes
- Stimulation of equipment sales
- Cleaning water
- Controlling flooding
- Cleaning air
- Reducing traffic congestion
- Reducing energy costs
- Preserving biological diversity
- Reducing environmental stress
- Community regeneration
- Cultural and historical preservation
- Facilitating healthy lifestyles
- Alleviating deviant behavior among youth
- Raising levels of educational attainment
- Alleviating unemployment distress

Critics who argue there is inadequate evidence to support the potential contributions of these benefits are wrong. There is strong empirical support for all of the benefits listed to justify their advocacy in formulating policy. There is plenty to support the benefits. Communities can take the various benefits and apply them into their planning processes as appropriate for that area.

We also need to ensure we're using effective vocabulary in psychological repositioning for parks and conservation:

- Water: clean water, preserving water quality
- Protect wildlife habitats: not 'endangered species', which is more polarizing
- Natural areas: avoid 'open space' cf. empty space of no benefit to people; 'urban space' cf. an abandoned lot or bench among big buildings
- Hiking, biking and walking trails: not 'trails'; attaching uses to it makes it more resonant
- Creating parks and other places where children can play safely: not 'neighborhood parks' or 'playgrounds'
- Protecting quality of life and carefully planned areas: not 'sprawl', 'unplanned growth', or 'reducing sprawl'
- Our and we imply ownership and inclusion: e.g., "WE need to protect OUR beaches, lakes, and natural areas"
- Protect natural areas for future generations ·Talk about ourselves as conservationists not

environmentalists

In a study of business executives, we gave the participants 100 points and asked them to allocate points across six elements (government incentives, quality of life, labor, proximity to customers, operating costs, and transportation). Most interesting analysis: when we look at small companies (10 or less) and large companies (40 or more employees) among small companies: quality of life is most important and proximity to customers next, for large companies: labor and operating costs were most important; probably because they have stockholders and are mandated to make the highest bottom line so they operate by different criteria.

This shows that parks and recreation have a lot to do with business relocation in Jefferson County.

Quality of life - what is it? Primary and secondary education, recreation and open space, cost of living and housing, personal safety and crime rates, culture opportunities, health and medical services are elements . For small companies recreation had the highest importance, 26.4 versus 12.1 for large companies.

The retirement migration is the new clean growth industry in America today. People want these retirees to move to town as an economic driver.

They are called GRAMPIES: **G**rowing number of **R**etired **A**ctive **M**onied **P**eople **I**n **E**xcellent **S**hape

GRAMPIES are an appealing economic target market. The economic inflow of 100 retired households with \$40,000 annual income is equal to a new \$4 million annual "payroll." And-Social Security and Private Retirement incomes are stable - not subject to the vicissitudes of economic business cycles

- 'Positive' taxpayers, i.e., generate more tax revenue than the cost of serving them (e.g., schools, criminal justice)
- Contribute to development of the health care industry
- Volunteer pool - active in churches, service organizations, and philanthropic organizations
- GRAMPIES stimulate housing and retail, but do not put pressure on local job markets or social services. The advantages of attracting GRAMPIES over Business Relocations are that:-retirees do not require incentive packages.
- capital investments by city can focus on quality of life amenities (so if they don't come, you still

Gambel Oak



The second half on the Conference included six local presenters.

Matt Cohen, a Realtor with REMAX Alliance discussed how ‘Open Space Sells.’ “Customers ask about proximity to open space areas and recreation opportunities. In housing, people demand choices and proximity to open space provides the perception that they have the choices for a lifestyle they want. I have out of state clients and deal with relocation companies and individuals. Many want to be near or close to the mountains. I appreciate that I can show them a development where the residents are focused on ensuring that the area has protected open space that they steward the area (cut trails, work in their HOA’s, etc.) They have made the area a draw for relocation.”

Mark Weston, an independent appraiser with Hunsperger & Weston Ltd. Discussed how residents in Douglas County and developers focus groups reached consensus that living next to protected open space was better than next to a private golf course.

Dan Pike, President of Colorado Open Lands discussed trends in open space. “If your community isn’t threatened with change, nobody wants to be there. Land protection is a really bad way of controlling development. Haphazard conservation is as bad or worse than haphazard development. The highest priorities will not get protected if we only spend resources on haphazard conservation to control development. The effort will focus on sound planning, not opportunistic growth or conservation. We need to be creative and open to incorporating planning and preservation together. For example, the preserving parks or open space makes sense for the ultimate landowners. Countywide planning: needs to identify what we need to protect. Developers don’t want to get into long-term fights with the community over a property. Developers want certainty; they want to know where they can go to build.”

Preston Gibson, President of the Jefferson Economic Council talked about economic development and the relation of open space to economic development. “There is an important balance of recreation, open space, and housing. We promote our area through job growth and generally in high tech segments. It is not just about open space when we are looking at the jobs we’re trying to attract, we’re looking for people who want opportunities and our second to none quality of life. We have a majority of small businesses here; 18,500 businesses here and most are four or fewer employees.”

Amy Ito, Manager of Planning & Development for Jefferson County Open Space discussed how Jeffco set priorities on land acquisitions. “Jeffco works with other

public open space programs. Adjacency, open space, vistas, etc. are all values and we use a lot of stakeholders and contributors to help us protect natural areas.”

John Wolforth, Planning & Zoning Director for Jefferson County discussed how they try to balance development. “We look for sustainability and we like it when economic development and open spaces are combined into one project. We aim to get a lot of community input and focus on balancing the community needs, an applicant’s proposal, community plans, agency objectives such as open space, economic development, health department, urban drainage, etc. “
OSAC Notes



94. Rocky Mountain Birch

Conference Proceedings

A visual transcript of the conference, about 2.5 hours long, is available on DVD for \$6.00.

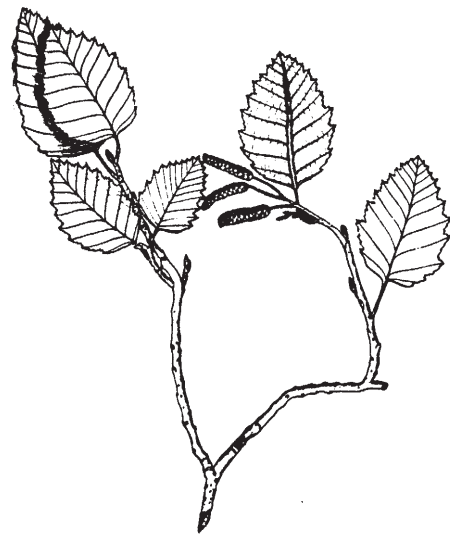
An edited to 30 minutes synopsis of the conference also is available on DVD for \$6.00

A written proceedings of the conference, about 25 pages, is available for \$5.00

The PowerPoint slides presented by Dr. Crompton are available. The file size is almost 10 meg. Send an email to John Litz at jkclitz7@ix.netcom.com

Proceedings can be ordered from:

PLAN Jeffco
11010 W 29th Ave
Lakewood, CO 80215



92. Mountain Alder

*OSAC NOTES**OSAC NOTES**OSAC NOTES*

October 4, 2007 - Study Session The study session was an update of the Volunteer Services. Volunteers serve in 40 different capacities including: park hosts, park patrollers, tour guides, receptionists, avian census, trail building, park cleanup, and trail inspection. In 2006, 924 volunteers contributed 22,331 hours. Volunteer positions are posted on the Open Space web-site. All volunteers have an orientation, training for their task, and training continues as they volunteer.

Regular Meeting Approval was given to proceed with due diligence and negotiations on a 63-acre parcel between Pence Park and the East end of Evergreen. The property would serve as a key link in the Bear Creek trail.

An exchange of easements with the Denver Water Board was approved. Open Space granting the Water Board an easement along Ralston Creek to improve the Long Lakes diversion structure and bury the Long Lakes Feeder Ditch. The Water Board grants Open Space an easement for access to the Cathedral Spires and South from Reynolds Ranch Park to the Colorado Trail.

Final terms were approved for purchasing 7.83 acres of fields from the South Sheridan Baptist Church. The fields will be transferred to Lakewood for further development and use as a supplement to Ray Ross Park.

A draft North Table Mountain Park Management Plan was presented. The Plan now includes much of the information and recommendations developed by the AdHoc who spent 18 months in their study and deliberations.

November 1, 2007 - Study Session The draft North Table Mountain Park Management Plan was reviewed in detail.

Regular Meeting When the Lair o' the Bear

Park was acquired, 30 shares in the Hodgson Ditch also were acquired. Fifteen had been sold earlier and the remaining 15 are not of benefit to Open Space. A motion to sell the rights was approved.

Final terms were approved to acquire 410 acres adjacent to the South and West sides of Reynolds Ranch Park. The addition will allow for a loop and other trails.

December 2007 - no meeting

January 3, 2008 - Study Session There was continued review of Open Space Policies. This night's review included telecommunications, utilities, private roadways, commercial advertising, and other non-Open Space facilities. A retreat reviewing all policies was held later in January.

Regular Meeting - Approval was given to dispose of 0.06 acres that were encroached by a residence prior to Open Space acquiring the Evergreen Mountain portion of Alderfer-Three Sisters Park.

Approval was given for final terms for purchase of 107 acres on the Southwest side of Mt Tom above Guy Gulch.

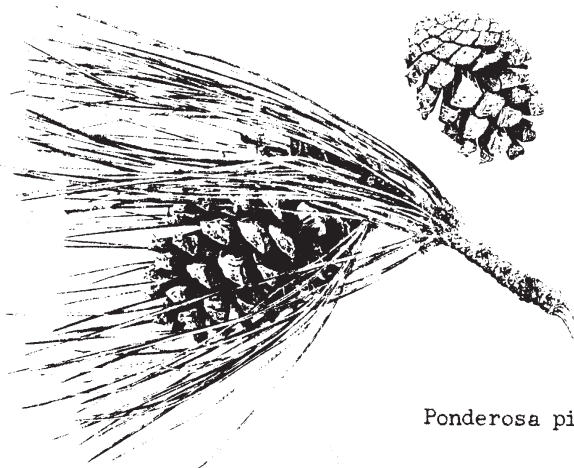
February 7, 2008 - Study Session The study session consisted of a review of the process being used to update the Master Plan. There was considerable discussion on the mission statement and other content that will be in the Plan. The Plan is updated every five years. Public hearings on the Master Plan will be held April 12 9:00-11:00 a.m. and April 17 6:00-8:30 p.m. at the OSAC hearing room.

Regular Meeting Consideration of a 1.5-acre property along Highway 74 near Idledale was tabled until OSAC members could view the

property.

Approval was given to the acquisition of the mineral rights under lying 766 acres of Mt Galbraith park.

March 6, 2008 - Study Session A draft update of the South table Mountain Park Management Plan was presented. Parking for this park is difficult. Parking is available in the Pleasant View Park North of Camp George West and potentially a lot can be built on the South side off of Quaker Avenue. Otherwise all other access points come out of neighborhoods with only on-street parking available. Two loop trails are planned on the top and most of the social trails will be closed and revegetated.



Ponderosa pine

accept the staff recommendation not to accept the donation. The assessed valuation on the property is excessive and staff is to contact the Assessor to try to get a more realistic valuation.

Approval was given for due diligence and negotiation on 7 acres adjacent to the South side of Elk Meadow Park near the Lewis Ridge parking lot.

April 3, 2008 - Study Session Results of the 2007 visitor surveys were presented. Parks surveyed included Apex, Crown Hill, Mt Falcon, Look Mountain Nature Preserve, and Van Bibber. The surveys show that the users

are aging, about one or two years since these same parks were surveyed. Apex is dominated by male bikers. Only 28% of the respondents were hikers. Mt. Falcon had 53% hikers. 94% of the Van Bibber users are from Jeffco; while only 33% at Lookout Mountain are from Jeffco. Interestingly, 25% of the visitors to Lookout Mountain were from out-of-state. Apex and Mt Falcon get a lot of Denver visitors, 32% and 25% respectively.

Regular Meeting - Resolutions were approved to discuss amending the trail easements from Deer Creek to Hildebrand Ranch Parks with the affected land owners. The South Table Mountain Management Plan was presented. The plan treats the entire mountain as a “natural area.” The only entrances with off-street parking will be on the South side along Quaker and from Pleasant View Park North of Camp George West and possibly some parking in Denver West. Large loops are planned on the East and West sides - separated by the Highway Patrol track.



Balsam Fir

South Table Mountain Park Management Plan

The Open Space staff completed the preparation of the Management Plan for South Table Mountain earlier this year and presented it to OSAC at the March 6th Study Session and the April 3rd Regular Meeting. In preparation of the Plan staff held two open houses, met six times with stakeholder groups, and met with Golden and Pleasant View staff.

At present the facilities at the park include:

Mini kiosk at Foothills Circle

Trash can at Foothills Circle

Park bench at Foothills Circle

Gated maintenance vehicle access at Foothills Circle

Gated maintenance vehicle access at Quaker Street

Approximately 2.5 miles of trails.

The entire park is designated as a Natural Area. Natural areas primarily are managed for multiple-use, trail-based recreation, but not to the detriment of the natural and cultural resources. The resources on South Table include native plant species, paleontological resources, mule deer, and Golden Eagle nest sites. The conceptual plan is to develop a trail system of large loops that include portions of the Welch Ditch, corridors across State and DOE easements, and easements along roads. Existing jeep roads and social trails will be utilized for trails where possible and the remaining jeep roads and social trails will be closed and reclaimed. Two interconnecting loop trails are planned West of Quaker they will connect access points from Golden, Golden Hills Road, and Quaker Street. Two interconnecting loop trails are planned East of the State track connecting with access points from Applewood, Denver West, and Pleasant View. There also will be a trail connecting the two sets of loops.

Most of the access points to the park will be from neighborhoods. Parking is available in the Pleasant View Community Park, just North of Camp George West. There is potential for a parking lot off of Quaker Street and there is possibility for utilizing parking in Denver West.

The park is constrained by three parcels of private property. These parcels are marked with signs indicating private property and will have developed trails closely paralleling them.

The park has significant infestations of diffuse knapweed, Canada thistle, and Dalmatian toadflax. Weed control has been started and will ongoing for a number of years.



WESTERN MOUNTAIN MAHOGANY
Cercocarpus ledifolius

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

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 watchdog 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.

PLAN Jeffco works for open space and we work for you! Please sign up or renew your membership now! Your address label shows the date of your last renewal. Call 303.237.9493 for membership information.

Our membership rate is:

\$25 per year

Name: _____

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Thanks





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Jefferson County Citizens for
Planned Growth with Open Space

PLAN JEFFCO NEWSLETTER