

## River Bluffs Open Space Management Plan

### Public Meeting 1 Comments and Management Response

Subject	Comment	Management Solution
ADA accessibility	Allow the use of electric wheelchairs and make trail accessible to the disabled.	The trail and trailhead will be ADA accessible throughout. Electric wheelchairs will be allowed.
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	The bluff and riparian areas should not be developed.	The bluff and riparian areas contain unique environmental and cultural resources and are the highest protection priorities on the property. Current trail and trailhead plans will not impair these areas.
Bluff Overlook	An overlook of the eastern plains should be built at the top of the bluff area.	While the top of the bluff provides an excellent view of the eastern plains, the bluff area would be fragmented by building a trail from the toe of the slope to the top of the bluff. A pull-off and short hike from County Road 3 to the top of the bluff would also impact the bluff area. The bluff area is one of the most important natural areas of River Bluffs Open Space and development in this area should be avoided.
Continuation of Trail Northward	The trail needs to be completed between Greeley and Bellvue as soon as possible.	Larimer County is discussing trail easements with willing landowners between County Road 32E and Harmony Road. The Poudre River Trail project between Harmony Road and SH 392 is the Open Lands Program's highest priority project. Timnath will begin widening Harmony Road, including new bike lanes and sidewalks, in April of 2008 with a proposed completion date of November 2009. The trail from Harmony Road through Wal-Mart is planned for 2009. Fort Collins will continue the trail from I-25 to CSU's Environmental Learning Center in 2010-2011 and then the Poudre River Trail will be complete from Greeley to Bellvue.
Eastern Side of Property	Explain the use of the property east of the Poudre River.	The property east of the river is leased for livestock grazing. Livestock are fenced out of the riparian area.
Equestrian Use	Equestrian use of trail is desired.	Larimer County allows equestrian use on over 58 miles of trail, including the Soderburg Trail, trails at Horsetooth Mountain Park and Devil's Backbone. Equestrian use will also be allowed at Red Mountain Open Space. Equestrian use of the trail on River Bluffs may not be compatible with suburban plans for this area. All parcels north of River Bluffs Open Space to I-25 are located in an urban growth area and are planned as residential or commercial developments. In addition, the trail south of River Bluffs currently does not allow equestrian use. Larimer County is working with Windsor to clarify this restriction and if equestrian use becomes acceptable, equestrian access to River Bluffs will be considered.
Equestrian Use	Equestrian use may not be compatible with dogs.	Although horses are not anticipated for this trail, horses and dogs are compatible for a number of Larimer County's Parks and Open Lands. Dogs must be leash restrained on all parks and open lands. In addition, trail users are asked to yield to equestrians on all properties. Although there may be occasional conflicts, horses and dogs can co-exist on trails.

Future Trail Amenities	Where are other trailheads/parks planned along the trail?	A parking area dedicated for the Poudre River Trail is planned at the Harmony and I-25 Wal-Mart. No other trailhead or parking areas are planned between River Bluffs Open Space and I-25. Along the trail in Fort Collins, there are trailheads at the CSU Environmental Learning Center, near Prospect Road, at Lee Martinez Park, at Taft Hill Road and Lion's Park near Overland Trail Road. In Windsor and Greeley, there are trailhead parking areas at Weld County Road 13, Eastman Park, Highway 257, 83rd Avenue, at the Poudre River Ranch Natural Area and at Island Grove Park.
Poudre River Heritage Alliance	The Poudre River Trail is important to sharing the history of the Poudre River.	The Poudre River Heritage Alliance is a project partner and will participate in the development of educational materials about the Poudre River, especially regarding the development of western water law and the prior appropriation system.
Project Costs	Minimize costs by using volunteers, simplifying trailhead design and avoiding the relocation of infrastructure.	Costs will be minimized when possible, without reducing the safety, comfort and overall trail experience. Volunteers will be used to prepare the trail area for construction. Infrastructure such as fences and ditches will only be relocated if necessary. This trailhead is designed as a major trail access point for the Poudre River Trail and therefore includes essential amenities such as a vault toilet, informational kiosk and water fountain.
Ranger Patrol	Concern about after hours use, parties, overnight camping and unwanted use of pasture and ditches by public.	The trail and trailhead will be patrolled by Larimer County Rangers and volunteers will be used as Volunteer Trail Ranger Assistants. The trailhead will also have an electric gate that will be closed from dusk to dawn.
Trail Design	The trail should be fenced on both sides to prevent users from entering the irrigated pasture and bluff areas.	A fence with gates will be installed between the trail and irrigation ditch to prevent users from falling into the ditch and to prevent livestock from entering the trail corridor. Educational signage will be used to inform the public about the fragile nature of the bluff and to discourage access onto the bluff. If necessary, a fence will be erected between the trail and bluff area to keep people off the bluff.
Trail Underpass	The underpass should be located beneath the State Highway 392 bridge.	Locating the underpass beneath the State Highway 392 bridge was considered when the Bison Arroyo section of the Poudre River Trail, just south of 392, was designed in 2005. An underpass at this location is not ideal because of expected ground water intrusion and flooding of the trail, because of the limited width of the floodplain beneath the bridge and high cost of rebuilding the bridge and because of the impact the trail would have on the riparian area if it was located along the river.
Trailhead Design	If picnic tables are located near Fossil Creek, a fence may be needed to prevent children from playing or falling into the creek.	The section of Fossil Creek that runs through the area planned for the trailhead contains tall, steep banks and in some places, the bank is sloughing into the creek. If the trailhead is located here, the stream bank will be stabilized and a fence will be erected if needed. The site will be engineered to prevent further erosion of Fossil Creek.
Trailhead Design	Urban amenities make the trail experience more comfortable and convenient.	Since the trailhead is designed as a major trail access point for the Poudre River Trail and is envisioned as a commuter trail connecting Greeley and Fort Collins, a vault toilet, informational kiosk and water fountain are considered essential amenities.

Trailhead Design	The trailhead should not contain urban amenities such as a water fountain, restrooms, picnic tables, street trees and pavement.	This trailhead is designed as a major trail access point for the Poudre River Trail and therefore includes essential amenities such as a vault toilet, informational kiosk and water fountain. Street trees will provide shade and refuge from the sun and pavement is required to meet county code.
Trailhead Design	Picnic tables are too numerous, the trailhead should be a staging area, not a picnic area.	The trailhead is designed as a destination point along the 40+ mile Poudre River Trail and will allow users to stop for lunch or regroup before continuing down the trail. The three picnic tables proposed will be oriented as not to dominate the site and will provide a relaxing and pleasant setting.
Trailhead Design	Trees and unnecessary plantings should be avoided since the site is located in a semi-arid environment.	Since no indoor facilities, such as a pavilion or visitor center are planned, trees are proposed to provide shade and refuge from the sun. Landscaping is required to meet county code. Only drought tolerant plants and plants native to Colorado's Front Range will be planted.
Trailhead Location	Location is not ideal because of additional noise and traffic expected.	River Bluffs Open Space and surrounding properties are located within either Timnath's or Windsor's urban growth areas and are expected to become residential or commercial in the future. The trailhead at River Bluffs Open Space will be limited to passive recreation uses (walking, biking, bird watching) and therefore should not be loud.
Trailhead Location	Move trailhead away from County Road 3.	Larimer County is evaluating locating the trailhead farther off of County Road 3, either east and into the irrigated pasture, or northeast into the dry land pasture.
Trailhead Location	Consider a temporary trailhead until trail alignment north of River Bluffs is secured.	Larimer County is considering this option. Locating the trailhead on the east side of the river is contingent on securing trail easements on the east side of the river, north of River Bluffs. If these easements can be secured within the construction schedule, this location will be evaluated.
Trailhead Location	Consider locating the trailhead at the Frank State Wildlife Area or expanding the trailhead at County Road 13 instead of at River Bluffs.	River Bluffs Open Space was bought with public funds in 2004 with the intention of building a trailhead on site. The trailhead at County Road 13 is located along a high traffic road and expansion is not likely. According to the Division of Wildlife, there are no plans to provide a trailhead at Frank State Wildlife Area.
Use of River Bluffs as Open Space	Is River Bluffs permanently protected as open space?	River Bluffs Open Space is owned and managed by Larimer County and was bought in 2004 with funds provided by the Help Protect Open Space sales tax and Great Outdoors Colorado. It is protected by a conservation easement that is held by the City of Greeley and cannot be used for any purpose other than open space, agriculture and trail related recreation.
Water and Mineral Rights	Who owns the water and mineral rights and can ditches be piped?	Improvements to the irrigation ditch that runs through the area planned as the trail and trailhead will have to be approved by the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District, as this ditch is used by the District to deliver water to Joe De Reservoir. All water and mineral rights associated with River Bluffs Open Space are owned by Larimer County.