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Summary of Public Responses to the Marshall Mesa-Southern Grasslands Trail Study Area (TSA) Questionnaire

8/12/05

The following is a summarized list of the comments OSMP received from the public concerning Management Goals, Assessment of the Existing Situation, Public Desires and TSA Project Goals on the Marshall Mesa – Southern Grasslands Trail Study Area. Fifty-eight different responses were received.

Management Goals:

1. Designate social trails
2. Add more port-a-potties at trailheads
3. Add an east-west trail in the plains close to town
4. Have composting toilets at all trailheads
5. Have watering troughs for horses at trailheads
6. Have larger gates
7. Add trails so people can bike to Eldorado off roads
8. Provide balance between Preservation and Recreation
9. Improve quantity, quality and safety of visitors
10. Recreation is priority
11. Resource protection is priority
12. Sustainability and access are priorities
13. Balance between access and preservation
14. Education to enjoy and protect environmental resources
15. Maintain existing agricultural uses
16. Minimize impact of dogs
17. Avoid private property conflicts
18. Access land via nice trails
19. New single track trails for bikes
20. Provide for multi-use, loop trails, dog walking, horses
21. Resource preservation consistent with historical ranching
22. Be specific how conflicts are determined and quantified
23. Maintain ecological integrity of southern grasslands
24. If restrict access, back it up with fact-based evidence of damage predicted to happen
25. Area should be open to dogs and horses
26. Manage resources
27. Lots of ranger presence
28. Need plenty of parking
29. Need better cattle management
30. Minimize impact of dogs
31. Extend trails
32. Keep existing trails open
33. Provide connections between trails

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34. Actively discontinue use of inappropriate social trails
35. Allow dogs access on new trails under regulations consistent with designation of area
36. Historic visitor access should be maintained
37. Prevent erosion
38. Observe management goals set forth in VMP
39. Monitor visitor use and its effects on resources
40. Quality of experience is important
41. Boulder residents should have car stickers for access to parking
42. Establish a pay-to-play system
43. Complete a thorough inventory of resources before any additional trails are built
44. Identify the best methods of preserving and protecting resources before any additional trails are built
45. Establish a comprehensive monitoring system

Assessment of the Existing Situation:

1. Use is concentrated along western edge
2. Coal Creek riparian corridor has high habitat value
3. Cattle are allowed in Community Ditch
4. High level of damage to landscape due to dogs
5. Trails are old roads which means low quality of experience
6. Area is over-protected
7. Parking lots fill up
8. Cattle are destructive
9. MM gets a lot of use but not much use in rest of area
10. About 100 bird species in cottonwood bottomlands and nearby grasslands
11. There are few undesignated trails
12. Trail users have to share with horses
13. Some trails are over crowded
14. There are lots of noxious weeds
15. Level of use is high relative to quality of experience
16. Heavy use by bikers
17. Dozens of peripheral and parallel trails
18. Some equestrian use in central and east portion of the area
19. Some foundations and old mines still exist
20. Fossil in both Fox Hills and Cretaceous formations
21. Upper Cretaceous geology and paleontology of upper Pierre Shale, Foxhills Sandstone and lower Larimie formations
22. Early spring wild flower displays (mustards and peas)

References:

1. Boulder County Audubon Society/BCNA bird survey of Coal Creek riparian area
2. BCNA long term wintering raptor surveys
3. Walking Through History on Marshall Mesa by Joanna Sampson

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Public Desires:

1. Extend Community Ditch Trail east to County property
2. Add a trail from 93/128 junction to east grasslands and then North to Baseline Reservoir and Teller Farms
3. Connect Coalton Trail to Greenbelt Plateau
4. Convert social trail that is next to Coal Creek into a designated trail
5. Add trail from Marshall Mesa Trail to Coalton Road
6. Tunnel under 93 to link MM with Community Ditch and Doudy Draw
7. Add links to County trails
8. Connect to Rocky Flats
9. Add trailhead at City Limits
10. Add trail connection from City Limits to Marshall Mesa Trail
11. Add trail around South side of Marshall Lake
12. Designate the old road grade up to Coalton Drive
13. Mark trails well
14. Expand Greenbelt Plateau Trailhead to accommodate horse trailers
15. Add connection from Greenbelt Plateau to Flatirons Vista through existing underpass
16. Add pedestrian bridge at 93 between Greenbelt Plateau and Flatirons Vista
17. Add a large parking lot along Marshall Drive
18. Designate as a trail the two track that is along the canal either side of Coal Creek downstream of Coal Creek Drive and 66th
19. Retain and protect the large unfragmented block of grassland and riparian habitat
20. Connect Marshall Mesa to South Boulder Creek Trail under 93
21. Control weeds in the TSA
22. Connect to Louisville Open Space, Boulder County Open Space, Louisville Marshall Mesa and continuation of Coal Creek Trail
23. Pull through horse trailer parking
24. Interpretive signs on the history of the area
25. Connect east end of Coalton Trail to Old Superior
26. Access to the area above coal fires
27. Avoid riparian areas
28. Add new trails only on the periphery
29. Add connection to Rock Creek
30. Protect prairie dogs, great horned owls and other wildlife
31. Add a connection from Marshall Mesa to Flatirons Vista without car traffic
32. Improve trail maintenance
33. Improve signs and education
34. Bridge Community Ditch east of 93
35. Designate undesignated trail that runs through 'Closed for restoration' area trending SSE from Community Ditch immediately north of where it enters Marshall Lake
36. Preserve old klinker beds
37. Add a couple of short spurs off Marshall Mesa that end a Fox Hills Sandstone exposure, with benches

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38. Increase disabled access
39. Increase dog-free trails
40. Do not fragment the area
41. Reroute trail from Marshall Mesa Trailhead so it doesn't go straight up the hill
42. Designate the undesignated trail from the west end of Greenbelt Plateau trail east to the bridge over Community Ditch
43. Undesignated trail from Community Ditch east of bridge SW to Marshall Mesa trail should be closed
44. Marshall Mesa Trail north to bluff that overlooks Marshall would be a good addition
45. Protect areas below the north-facing bluff
46. Access west and south sides of Marshall Lake
47. Access high spots for views
48. Add a short trail from Greenbelt Plateau for disabled people
49. Avoid the Coal Creek corridor
50. Put dog-proof fence on both sides of trails that go through sensitive areas
51. Eliminate cows
52. Encourage people to stay on trail
53. Rolling access restrictions
54. Loop trails
55. Dogs should be required to be on leash
56. Protect dinosaur tracks and 'rare' plant life
57. Protect riparian areas from livestock
58. Add bluebird boxes
59. In passive recreation areas, parallel trails to separate dog-users from those who want to use the area without dogs
60. In natural areas, require visitors to stay on designated trails and revegetate undesignated trails
61. In HCA's no trails should be allowed to cut into or use up acreage

TSA Project Results (must have products, outcomes, processes):

1. A trail plan for additional multi-use trail connections to both Coal Creek and Rock Creek
2. A trail plan providing for opportunities to observe and enjoy Coal Creek corridor
3. Resolution of safety issues
4. Firm, neutral conclusions
5. More trails
6. High level of interaction with public in the process
7. More information sharing and education
8. Stop the process and build a trail
9. Improved connectivity on narrow trails
10. Off trail access for horses
11. Dog poop bags and dog leashes
12. Access by all to more space
13. Strict enforcement of regulations

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14. Baseline conditions from which to make decisions
15. Complete and thorough resource inventory and study
16. Better understanding and practice of stewardship
17. Comprehensive monitoring
18. Consensus agreement on outcomes of the TSA
19. Allow appropriate access for dogs on new trails
20. Maintain historic public access
21. Educational signs for geology, paleontology and cultural sites
22. Preservation of HCA
23. New dog-free trails
24. Ecological sustainable plan
25. Process friendly to all people