

Open Space Division · Management Report

December
2004

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Priority Land Acquisition



The acquisition of 736 acres on South Table Mountain was a joyous celebration for Open Space.

- Acquisition of the Coors Brewing Company property on South Table Mountain was completed adding 736 acres to the 765 acres of County's preserved lands on the mesa. Coors Brewing Company sold the property to The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and The Trust for Public Land sold the property to Jefferson County. In addition to the purchase price, the County reimbursed all the expenditures for TPL's costs of transaction and professional services fees for a total acquisition cost of \$10,125,000.
- The State Land Board Evergreen Mountain property was acquired by Patent signed by Governor Bill Owens. This property adds 440 acres to the Jefferson County Open Space Alderfer/Three Sisters Park.
- The Denver Water Board Fehringer Ranch South property consisting of approximately 135 acres, located in unincorporated Jefferson County, between Kipling and Simms Street was acquired. The County will enter into an agreement with Foothills Park and Recreation District for the development and management of recreation facilities on the property.
- In 2004, total acres acquired was 1,082 in fee, 120 in Conservation Easement and \$13,355,627 was spent.

Leadership

- The Volunteer Park Patroller and Bike Right programs were awarded the American Trails Outstanding Trail Sharing Award for the successful trail sharing efforts demonstrated in these programs. The award was given at the National Trail Symposium in Austin, Texas in October.
- 2004 Annual Achievement Awards recognized staff members for their achievements. Kelly Bowser, Park Maintenance, was recognized for Special Achievement by an Individual, particularly for his leadership in completing the Apex/Mother Cabrini fence project. Special Achievement by a Team recognized Clay Malcolm, Brian Conty and Ryan Jackson, from Trails Team 2, for their work on some very difficult trail excavation at Centennial Cone Park. Ken Foelske, Thea Rock, Kelly Keena and Tim Sandsmark were recognized for their participation in the Grasslands Bio-Blitz as a Heck-of-a-Try Award that was successful in its partnership, but fell short in attracting significant public participation.



Visitor Resource and Protection received the Outstanding Trail Sharing Award for addressing user conflict issues.



Lookout Mountain Nature Center staff and volunteers participated in the Wonderfully Wild (and popular) Halloween Trail event.

Quality Visitor Experiences

- Flying J Ranch newsletter was mailed to households within 1.5 miles of the Park, detailing the construction process at the park and timeline for completion.
- Open Space All Staff meeting featured Dr. Kirk Johnson, from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Dr. Johnson spoke to the group about the paleontological history of Jefferson County and opportunities for fossil/bone finds as well as interpretation.
- North Table Mountain Park Management Plan was completed by a cross section of Open Space staff members. Public comments were received on two occasions as well as at the final presentation to the Open Space Advisory Committee in December.

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Environmental and Cultural Education

- The Lookout Mountain Nature Center presented the Wonderfully Wild Halloween Trail event that drew a record attendance of 643 people.
- From September through December, Hiwan Homestead Museum served 3,077 people through education programs, special events and outreach programs. Examples of those programs include a tea with famed historical presenter Barbara Daubenspeck portraying Eugenia Mitchell, founder of the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum.
- In the fourth quarter of 2004, the Lookout Mountain Nature Center reached 8,367 people through nature visits and programs. Overall, 2004 established a new all-time record in total visitor contacts of 50,511, up 3% from last year.
- Hiwan Homestead Museum was featured as a wedding destination in World Class Weddings magazine, along with such locations as the Biltmore Mansion and Graceland.
- Natural resource exhibit panels have been completed and will be placed at the Lookout Mountain Nature Center for visitor education.

Natural Resource Management & Conservation

- Open Space resource crews finished a 50-acre ponderosa pine forest restoration project at White Ranch Park which included thinning of forest overgrowth from 300 trees per acre to 20 trees per acre.
- The Colorado Department of Health and Environment issued a smoke permit to burn 800 slash piles at Elk Meadow Park. The first 50 piles were treated January 5, 2005.



A successful forest restoration project was completed at White Ranch Park.

Regional Trail System Contiguity

- Following community discussions and exploration of connection options, the Bear Creek Trail Bridge at the Evergreen Dam was removed and will be stored for recycling on other trail projects. The design of the trail connection will be incorporated into the larger Bear Creek Trail plan for downtown Evergreen.
- Trails Task Force met on October 14 to discuss feedback from user groups regarding representation, term limits, communication with constituents and to respond to the North Table Mountain Park Management Plan recommendations.

Funding Partnerships

- Jefferson County Open Space was awarded a \$5,000,000 Large-Scale project acquisition grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, to be targeted toward the South Table Mountain component of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop/Foreground Preservation application.
- The County issued the remaining \$30 million of \$160 million authority in bonds for priority Open Space acquisition.

Denver/Jeffco Management Plan Implementation

- Working sub-groups proceeded with task assignments (Events, Strategic Leadership, Management Strategies) and will report at the next meeting of the Counties in Partnership group, January 12.