

# Open Space Division • Management Report

Oct. - Dec.  
**2006**

JEFFERSON COUNTY

## Priority Land Acquisition

- North Table Mountain Water and Sanitation District started construction on the 1.5 million-gallon underground water tank located on the northwestern side of North Table Mountain Park. Staff worked closely with the District in locating the tank to minimize visual and natural resource impacts to the Park. County staff will continue to monitor the project until it is completed in the fall of 2007.
- The County completed the acquisition of approximately 11.02 acres located northwest of the intersection of 100th Avenue and Simms Street that adjoins Westminster Hills Open Space. The property is suitable for natural habitat and scenic preservation, potential trails and as an addition to an existing open space area. The property was purchased jointly by Westminster and Jefferson County Open Space, with each paying \$660,000.



*Park addition required formidable team work.*

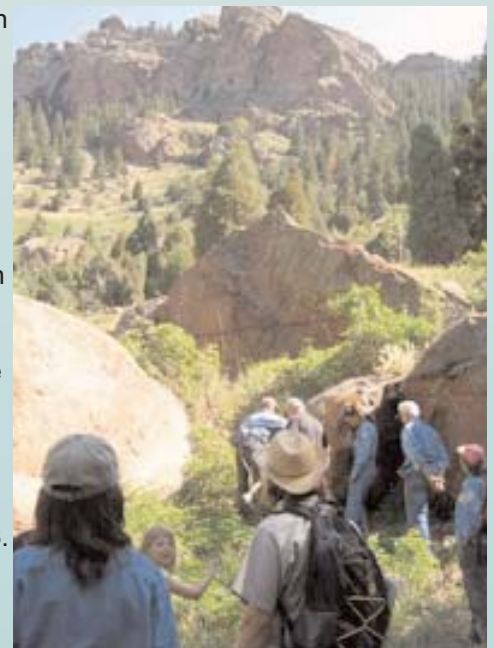
- The County completed the acquisition of approximately 58 acres located west of Highway 73 and southwest of the County's Flying J Ranch Park on December 22, 2006, despite over 36 inches of snow in the area. A Countywide effort assured the closing would be completed. Park Ranger, Mark Oline plowed the County's Park road to meet the Landowner half way onto the property. The Treasurer's office provided funds when a bank wire was stalled and the Clerk & Recorder's staff recorded all the documents as closing time approached. This property is suitable for potential trail linkages to the adjacent Denver Mountain Park lands, preservation of a scenic meadow, increased opportunities for more effective forest/wildfire management and elimination of undesirable vehicular traffic through the Park.

## Leadership

- Park Management Plans (PMPs) define individual Open Space properties, the Open Space vision of a park and serve as a tool for making organizational priority and budget allocation decisions. There are currently 28 endorsed plans that are updated annually. This review allows for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the management actions, adjust the budget recommendations to reflect the coming year's workplans and ensure the overall plan is on track. Significant changes to Plan recommendations will be reviewed by the Open Space Management Team and presented to the Open Space Advisory Committee for endorsement. All 28 PMPs are currently in this annual update process.

## Quality Visitor Experiences

- Open Space issued 297 special activity permits in 2006. On-going permits by repeat users throughout the year totaled 26 and are usually renewed year after year.



*Park visitors enjoying a hike on an Open Space trail.*

*Continued on back*

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### Quality Visitor Experiences (continued)

- Permit applicants include schools, colleges, youth programs, government agencies doing research and training, commercial classes, non-profit groups, clubs, fund raisers, church groups, business groups, weddings and family events. Many single event permit holders (families, clubs and non-profits) enjoy our parks so much they return year after year.
- Visitor Experience Surveys were completed in 2006 at Flying J Ranch Park, Pine Valley Ranch Park, Reynolds Park and South Valley Park. A total of 1020 surveys from park users were collected at the conclusion of their visit. Survey collection has largely been facilitated by volunteers, particularly the Volunteer Park Hosts.



### Environmental & Cultural Education

- Attendance at Hiwan Homestead Museum during fourth quarter 2006 was 3,575 guests participating in Museum tours, education programs, special events and outreach programs.



"Harvey Girls" appear at Hiwan's Adventure Trails on Colorado Rails event.

The Second Annual Outdoor Quilt Festival held in September featured nearly 100 colorful handmade quilts loaned by local quilt makers and quilting organizations. The Hiwan Halloween Celebration on October 30 drew ghosts, ghouls, witches, fairy princesses, dinosaurs and a host of other creepy crawly guests to the Museum to enjoy scary music, children's crafts, prizes for everyone in costume and the old-time radio show Inner Sanctum. The Southwestern Splendors Indian jewelry, on loan from the Humphrey Memorial Park and Museum, proved to be very popular with visitors.

- The Evergreen Holiday Walk which stopped at Hiwan Homestead Museum on December 1 featured chestnuts roasting on an open fire, hot cider, beautiful Christmas decorations, crafts for kids and music by the Highline Silver Cornet Band. The Hiwan parking lot is traditionally one of the shuttle locations where visitors board the buses to enjoy the other sights and sounds in Evergreen.

Hiwan's annual Christmas Tea on December 11 incorporated the train theme used in the museum's Christmas decorations. Many people loaned toy and model trains to fill the Museum. The theme created a colorful and historic atmosphere for the log mansion. Volunteers dressed as the "Harvey Girls" from the Fred Harvey restaurants at western train stations served the guests. Photographer Ron Ruhoff shared his excellent slide show entitled "Adventure Trails on Colorado Rails."

- In the year 2006, visitation to the Nature Center and attendance at programs within the parks reached 43,000. The Lookout Mountain Nature Center served 6,700 people during the fourth quarter through programs such as "Nature Gifts" for kids up to 8 years old. Although the three scheduled offerings were compromised by winter weather, those that were able to attend enjoyed the event. As part of continuing education for our volunteers, a Winter Solstice Hike took place with nearly 70 volunteers. The Park Rangers, Citizen Outreach and Volunteer Services provided an enjoyable, winter evening at Lookout Mountain.

### Natural Resource Management & Conservation

- Pile burning of debris from forest management activities occurred at White Ranch Park. Hunting closures were implemented in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife at

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**Natural Resource Management & Conservation (continued)**

Centennial Cone Park in December and will continue through January 2007. In anticipation of seasonal closures effecting a portion of Centennial Cone Park, staff created signage to be posted at seasonal boundaries to explain the Division's elk management objectives.

- Research by staff and the County Attorney's office documented water rights at Hildebrand Ranch Park and offered water management options within the Park Management Plan (PMP) recommendations. Management Team will review those recommendations at the time of the PMP annual update.

**Regional Trail System Contiguity**

- Open Space staff is meeting with the primary stakeholders along Clear Creek Canyon Park (City of Golden, Church Ditch, Colorado Department of Transportation, Clear Creek County, School of Mines, Condo HOA) to receive comments on conceptual plans for segment one of the 12.5 mile trail and scenic corridor. This conceptual plan includes schematics for construction and placement of a non-vehicular bridge for trail users, that crosses Clear Creek. The bridge structure, previously located in Evergreen, will be utilized to connect Golden's existing trail on the north side of Clear Creek to Grant Terry Park, a Jefferson County Open Space Park, on the south.



*Hildebrand Ranch Park structures under historic assessment.*

**Funding Partnerships**

- Assessment of historic structures at Hildebrand Ranch Park, Alderfer Three Sisters Park, Lookout Mountain Nature Preserve, White Ranch Park and Centennial Cone Park continue with evaluation of the physical conditions of the buildings. The Colorado Historical Society State Historical Fund provided \$50,000 grant for this work.

**Trail Development, Maintenance & Improvement**

- Planning and Development is completing design work to employ sustainable building techniques for partial earth-sheltered structures at the Centennial Cone Park trailheads with the goal of minimizing impacts on resources. Anticipated completion of construction is scheduled for summer 2007.



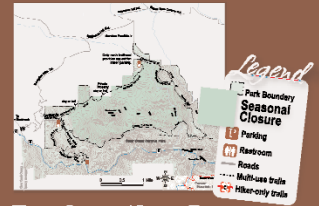
*South Table Mountain Open House.*

- Creation of an updated Park Management Plan (PMP) for South Table Mountain Park will include the former Coors Brewing Company properties. An Open House held in October 2006, plus meetings with neighborhood associations and other stakeholders have provided additional comments. These comments will be documented on the Open Space Web site. Anticipated by early summer 2007, the updated plan will allow for additional public input at that time. Open Space will also be erecting some fencing to delineate private property on the mesa.

**Denver/Jeffco Management Plan Implementation**

- Ralph Schell, Director of Open Space, met with Denver Parks and Recreation Manager Kim Bailey and Denver Mountain Parks Foundation President Bart Berger to discuss future activities of the Counties in Partnership group. Staff level operations and management continue to meet objectives between the two entities. ■

**Elk herds rely upon the grasslands, forest cover and resting areas of Centennial Cone Park.**



**During the Seasonal Closure Elk Range Trail will be closed.**

To promote strong, healthy herds, Open Space implements seasonal closures in the winter and spring to minimize human disturbance during important times in the animals' lifecycle.



*Elk management objectives explained through signage at Centennial Cone Park.*