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An Open Letter to Open Space Trail Users,

Thank you for your comments and interest in the trail maintenance activities Open Space is currently undertaking. Our efforts at multiple locations are to conduct standard trail maintenance and to manage the impact that thousands of park visitors bring to the trails and provide a safe recreational environment. Trail users over the last few years have not had the benefit of regular, periodic trail maintenance as the Division's focus has been on new construction. Our trails are multiple-use and not designed for one particular type of user, therefore, our intent is not to make the trails easier for a specific user group, but to make the trails sustainable for all users.

One of the many challenges in managing a multi-use trail system is meeting the needs of a very broad population of user types. A characteristic that virtually all trail users exhibit at some point while on a trail is the choice to follow the path of least resistance. Hikers generally do not like hiking in the mud, cyclists sometimes avoid features that reduce their speed and equestrians need more physical area to go down the trail. These characteristics combined with the steepness of a trail, highly erosive soils and volume of use result in areas being negatively impacted and safety being compromised.

At Elk Meadow Park, work occurred from the Stagecoach parking lot to the area of the first switchbacks past the Sleepy S trail junction. The objective was to establish a stable out-slope (degree of cant for drainage) of the trail surface (typically 3-5%). In some areas the out-slope was greater than 10% and in other areas the tread was concave. This effort was accomplished by eliminating the higher edges or berms on the downhill side of the trail tread or by recovering the soils eroded from the tread surface from the ends of the water bars. No material was imported to do this work. Open Space also conducted maintenance to a few of the switchbacks in this area to establish better drainage off the trail.

Recent maintenance at Elk Meadow Park has also occurred along Painters Pause trail as it parallels Highway 74 and completed an effort that began almost 5 years ago. Painters Pause trail had become compacted, rutted and braided. To create a durable tread along this trail, an aggregate material called crusher fine (crushed granite varying in size from 3/8" and smaller) was applied. Establishing crusher fine as a trail tread surface results in a very durable surface able to more effectively sustain the literally thousands of people that use the trail and provide for maximum user days despite weather conditions.

Summit Trail at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park involved reworking existing soils to establish better drainage of the trail tread. Other projects at Alderfer/Three Sisters involved the rebuilding of a section of turnpike on Bluebird Meadow trail as it



parallels LeMasters Road and some service road work in the northern sections of the property referred to as the Blair Ranch Acquisition.

Annually we establish maintenance and management goals for the over 200 miles of trail in our system. We acknowledge that our work may change the recreational experience for some of our users. We also recognize that we must be responsible in how we balance our objectives in being good stewards of the land and providing for recreational opportunities. The trail construction and maintenance performed by Jefferson County Open Space provides recreational opportunities for over 1.6 million visitors to our parks each year. Neglecting regular maintenance and failing to mitigate trail degradation to appease one segment of the population would be irresponsible.

Regards,
Kim Frederick
Open Space Trails Supervisor