

Outdoor Insights

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JEFFERSON COUNTY OPEN SPACE

Volume 1, Edition 3

North Table Mountain Park

Recreation in Motion, Conservation in Action



Pat Horkan and grandson Jerrod Miller take steps toward stewardship of North Table Mountain Park.

Will Lebzelter/Open Space

The Big Picture

Broad Expanses, Broad Support

North Table Mountain Park

Geologic Identity & History:

North Table Mountain is a mesa—a high flat-topped landform edged by cliffs—that was formed by four ancient lava flows.

Flora: Wet meadow, riparian forest, shrubland, foothills prairie, lichen rock and grassland plant communities.

Fauna: 52 recorded bird species, mule deer, prairie dog, coyote, mountain lion, bullsnake, rattlesnake.

Natural and Cultural Resources:

Recovered artifacts point to use as a hunting ground by Native Americans. Quarry and railroad remnants testify to mining past. Unique mineral specimens gathered historically.

Distinctions: Designated a Natural Heritage Conservation Site by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

On an April afternoon, 14-year-old Jerrod Miller and his grandfather Pat Horkan of Arvada hiked to the top of North Table Mountain to see all they could see. Enthused by their trip down Tilting Mesa Trail and beyond, grandfather and grandson came back a few weeks later to see what they could do. Among more than 100 other volunteers, they helped to remove an unsightly section of chain-link fence, while atop the mesa other volunteers built trails. “We felt good about what we did,” Jerrod said.

Many can feel good about what they’ve done on behalf of North Table Mountain Park. The most significant early contribution to the preser-

vation of the mesa came on Election Day 1972. That’s when County residents voted “yes” on an initiative to preserve highly desirable properties that PLAN Jeffco and other conservation organizations identified. The vote generated the mechanism for both North and South Table Mountain to become Open Space lands. Successful land acquisitions, and extensive community involvement and input (“The Long View,” page 2) have both defined the boundaries and shaped the identity of North Table Mountain Park and its 1,969 acres.

The mesa holds rugged appeal for many outdoor enthusiasts. The southern edge is a popular rock

climbing destination, with hundreds of routes in the Park and the Golden Cliffs Preserve, a 29-acre area owned by The Access Fund, a national climbing advocacy organization. Hikers, mountain bikers, birders and equestrians enjoy the broad expanses of the mesa top, savoring an above-it-all refuge from urban life.

Visitors may treasure the Park more than ever in the coming years. With intensive focus in 2011, staff and volunteers will define and develop a multi-use trail system, improve neighborhood and community access points, and enhance the visitor experience through protection of resources.



The Plan

Responsible Recreation, Sound Stewardship

North Table Mountain Park became easier to access in fall 2010 with the opening of an Open Space trailhead and parking lot on State Highway 93 north of Golden. The trailhead includes a kiosk to share information with visitors about the unique natural resources of the Park and encourage greater stewardship of the land. In early 2011, restroom facilities were completed.

As work continues in North Table Mountain Park, visitors may encounter closures of undesignated paths worn in by historic use. These unsustainable paths compromise natural resources. To do your part to rehabilitate North Table Mountain Park, please use designated trails.

During trail construction, portions of old road beds will be incorporated into new trails. Trail reroutes will protect sensitive riparian areas. Open Space crews will also build retaining walls along some trail segments to develop a gently sloping trail tread.

Priorities for 2011 are defined to the right of the Park map. By 2012, an extension of Rim Rock Trail to provide a loop trail will be complete. Plans are also in motion for a hiker-only interpretive trail to allow for responsible access to the Lichen Rock Garden and Lichen Peak, the highest point in the Park.



Mountain bikers cruise along the mesa top.

Will Lebzelter/Open Space

Volunteerism Pays Dividends

Care to deepen your commitment to North Table Mountain Park? E-mail osvol@jeffco.us or call 303-271-5922. There's plenty of momentum to build on from Spring Into Service, a May event cosponsored by the Colorado Mountain Club, REI and Open Space. See more event photos on our [facebook](#) page.



Ground-breaking work: Volunteers spring into service in May.

Will Lebzelter/Open Space



The call of the meadowlark can be heard across the mesa.

The Long View

The Far-Ranging Path of North Table Mountain Park

1972

In establishing the Open Space Sales Tax Fund, voters identify North and South Table Mountains as key preservation goals.

1993

Open Space acquires 229 acres from Coors Brewing Company, the first of eight parcels on the mesa.

1999

The largest property on the mesa is acquired, 907 acres from the Argentine Mine, LLC.

2003

A unique land transaction is struck with LaFarge, Inc., resulting in 463 more acres of public land on the mesa.

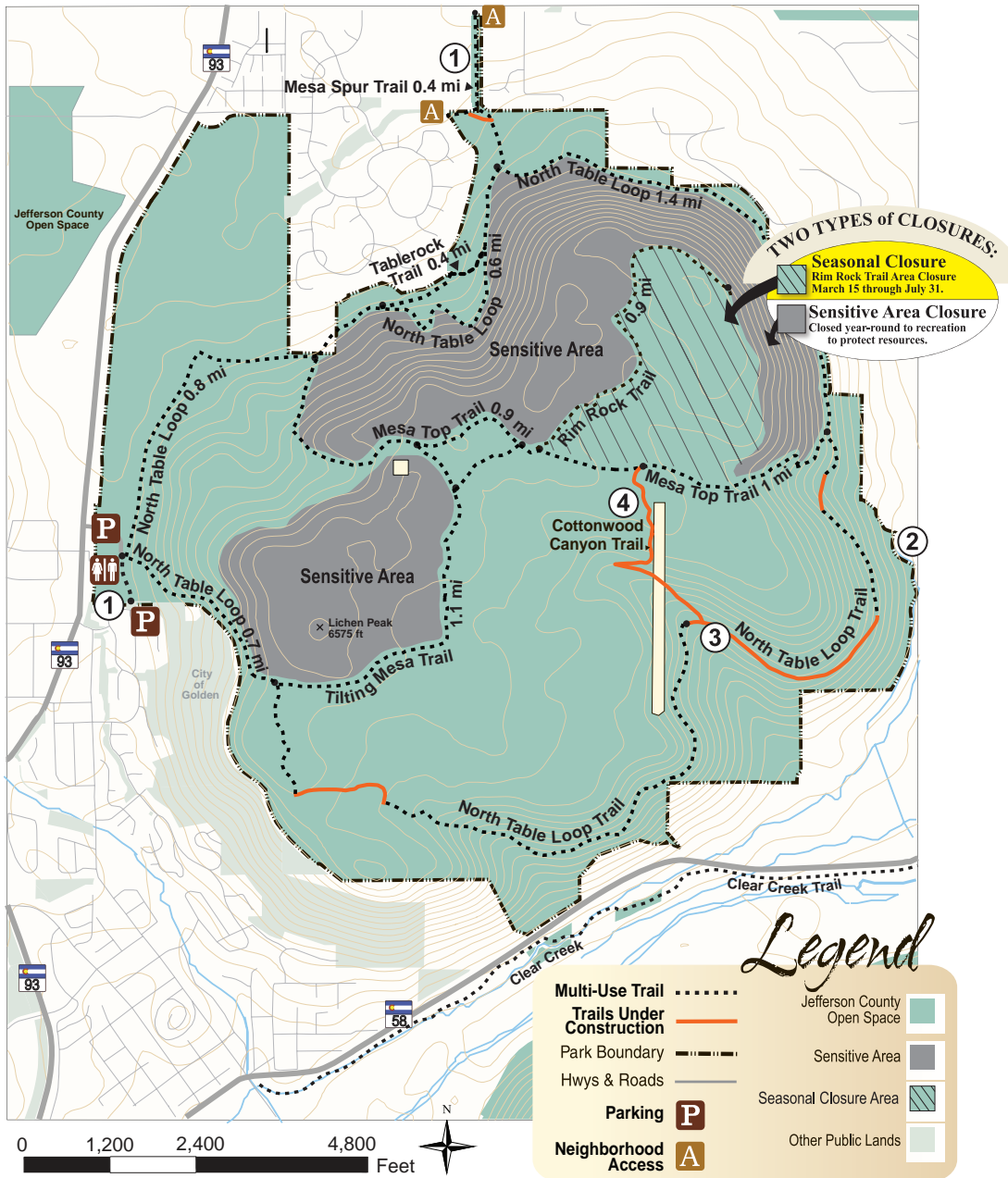
2004

Nearly 200 people attend two open houses held by Open Space to shape the future of the Park.

The view west to the foothills from atop North Table Mountain

North Table Mountain Park Plan

a guide to park and trail improvements



Priorities

Access & Trails

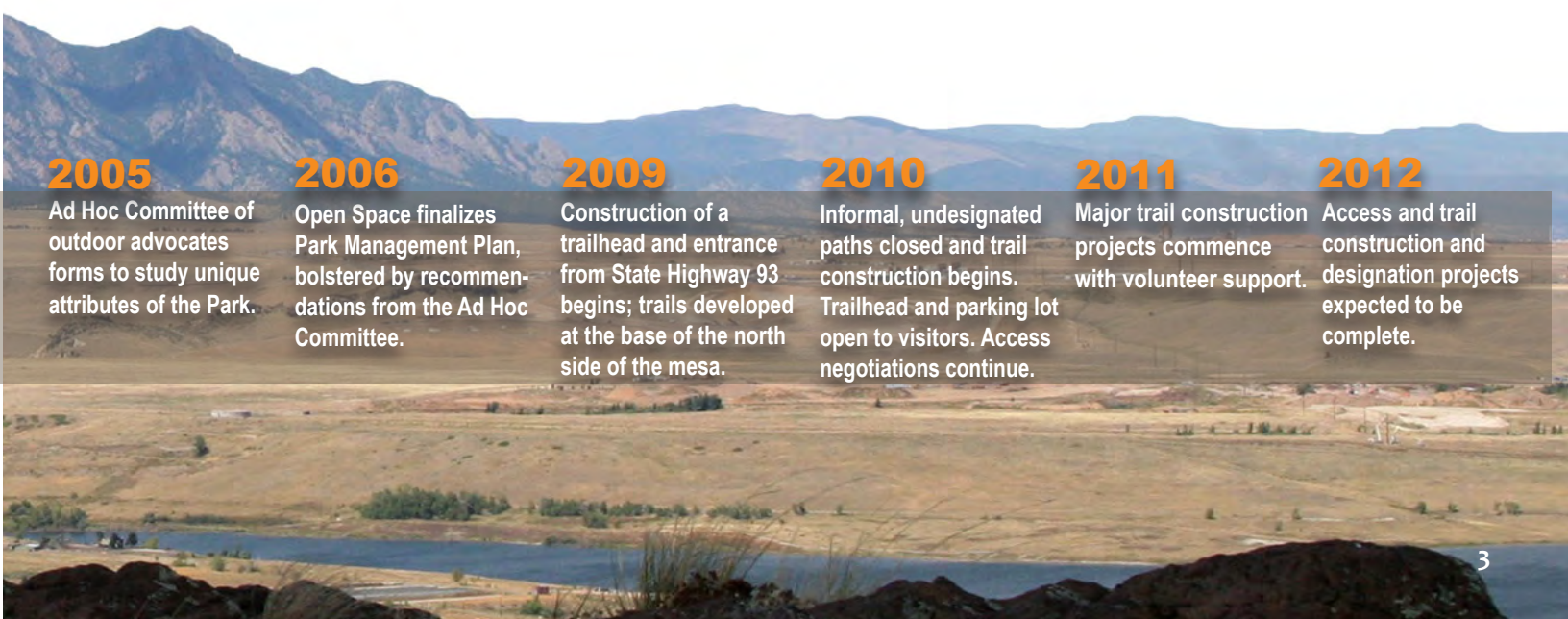
- ① Enhance Park entry points.**

 - Signs will be posted at neighborhood access points to share important information.
 - Open Space is completing a 650-foot connection from the City of Golden parking lot off Wyoming Circle to the Open Space trailhead. This crushed-rock, or “crusher fine,” trail reduces erosion and provides access to people with disabilities.
- ② Obtain real estate rights to establish connections on the east side of the Park.**

Through negotiations Open Space will secure legal public access from Tony Grampas Memorial Sports Complex and the Fairmount Trail to North Table Mountain Park.
- ③ Complete North Table Loop.**

An additional 3.2 trail miles will complete a loop of more than 7 miles—a sweeping arc of the southern rim, with views of South Table Mountain and Denver to the east.
- ④ Build Cottonwood Canyon Trail.**

This 0.8-mile canyon trail will connect North Table Loop and Mesa Top Trail.



2005

Ad Hoc Committee of outdoor advocates forms to study unique attributes of the Park.

2006

Open Space finalizes Park Management Plan, bolstered by recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee.

2009

Construction of a trailhead and entrance from State Highway 93 begins; trails developed at the base of the north side of the mesa.

2010

Informal, undesignated paths closed and trail construction begins. Trailhead and parking lot open to visitors. Access negotiations continue.

2011

Major trail construction projects commence with volunteer support.

2012

Access and trail construction and designation projects expected to be complete.

Preserve the Experience for Everyone



Leash and pick up after your dog.

Protect your pet, others, and resources.



Use designated trails.

Protect vegetation and wildlife habitat. Respect area closures.



Dispose of all waste.

Keep our Parks clean.



Yield, share the trail.

Everyone yields to horses. Bikes yield to all others.

Natural Profit

A Park for Today & Tomorrow



Will Lebzelter/Open Space

Opening vistas: Pat Horkan, right, helps to furl a fallen fence.

Together we are building an accessible park that protects natural systems, includes sustainable trails and is respectful to our neighbors. Our partners include the City of Golden, Apex Park & Recreation District,

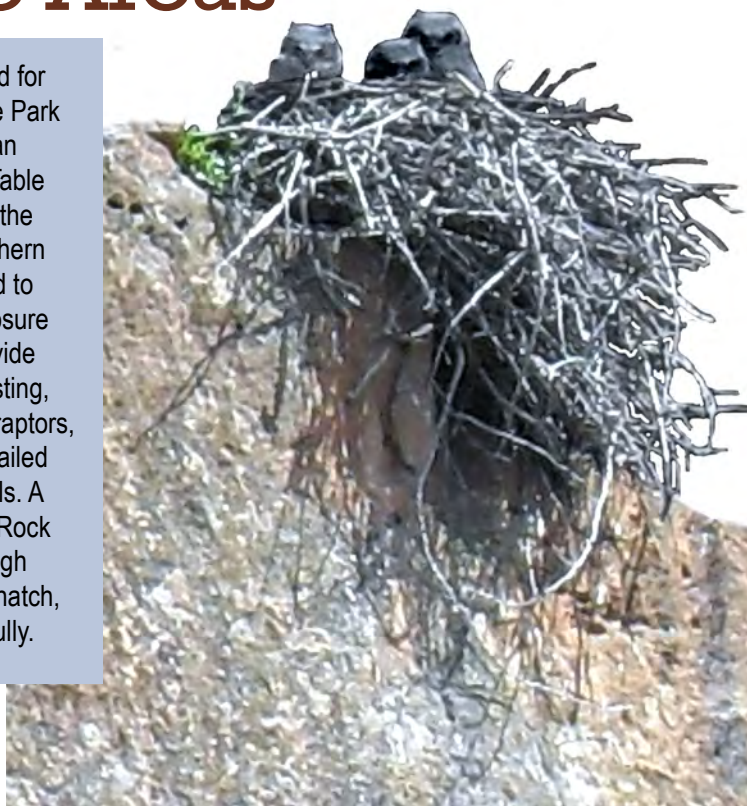
Denver Water, and interested recreation groups, homeowner associations and conservation organizations—all of whom contribute to the success of this effort.

In the coming years, the rugged appeal of the Park stands to grow. More visitors will be visible on the broad expanse of the mesa top, increasing the need for cooperation and stewardship. As these visitors are moved to become partners in conservation, we take strides to ensure that above-it-all adventures and the unique features of North Table Mountain Park will thrill and delight generations to come. 🌲

Sensitive Areas

Sensitive Areas were identified for additional protection of unique Park features and wildlife through an extensive inventory of North Table Mountain resources. Much of the Lichen Rock Garden and northern portion of the mesa are closed to Park visitors. The northern closure protects cliff faces, which provide critical breeding, foraging, nesting, mating and hiding habitat for raptors, including golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, prairie falcons and owls. A Seasonal Closure of the Rim Rock Trail area, from March 1 through July 31, helps young birds to hatch, develop, and fledge successfully.

A cliff nest of great horned owlets



Bryan Posthumus/Open Space

Jefferson County Open Space

Founded by voters in 1972 as a land conservation organization, Open Space preserves natural and cultural resources, provides quality outdoor recreation experiences and promotes sound environmental stewardship. We are funded with a one-half cent sales tax that has protected over 51,000 acres of land and created 28 regional parks and 210 miles of trails throughout Jefferson County.

Outdoor Insights

Outdoor Insights provides information on Jefferson County Open Space projects, programs and activities. For more information, contact Thea Rock, Manager of Public Information: trock@jeffco.us or (303) 271-5902. This publication is available on our website, <http://openspace.jeffco.us>, and [facebook](#) page.