Open Space Division • Management Report

Jan. - March
2010

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Acquisition: Acquire lands to preserve resources and provide for future recreational opportunities

- The Lease Agreement between the State Board of Land Commissioners and Jefferson County was renewed for 160 acres adjacent to Hildebrand Ranch Park. The five-year renewal will be at an adjustable lease rate from $3,457 for the first year to $7,203 for year five.

Renewed 160-acre lease south of Hildebrand Ranch Park.

Land Management: Manage Open Space lands to preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources

- Open Space was successful in receiving a Colorado State Historical Fund Grant to restore the mortar at Hiwan Homestead Museum. The Grant award will require a match of Open Space funds to complete the project later this year.

- Open Space took possession of a masticator to assist with forest management practices. The mobile unit chips timber on-site and turns woody material into mulch that remains on the ground, protecting the soil as well as adding nutrients.

- Annual Updates to the 29 Park Management Plans (PMPs) were reviewed and endorsed by the Open Space Management Team.

Recreation: Provide for quality visitor experiences in a manner that protects natural and cultural resources

- The Board of County Commissioners adopted new Passing and Yielding regulations as part of County Policy 6.4.1. The regulation, crafted by staff with input from park users, helps address visitor use, safety and etiquette on Open Space trails.

- Trail Use Changes were implemented at Apex Park. Staff and volunteers prepared an information blitz for visitors explaining the management changes that went into effect on March 15. Outreach efforts on the Web and through media was enhanced by 340 hours of volunteer presence at the Park during the first week of implementation. Additional on-site outreach is planned through Labor Day. The management change addresses an increase in reports of conflict and safety concerns and requires directional travel for bicyclists on designated trail segments on odd-numbered days.

- Following the Jefferson County Historical Society's donation of the Grove, a Cooperative Agreement was signed in January that outlines management responsibilities for use of the land adjacent to the Hiwan Homestead Musuem. Details of renting, maintaining and managing the Grove are being defined by Open Space staff.

The Grove, next to Hiwan Homestead Museum, was recently donated to Open Space.

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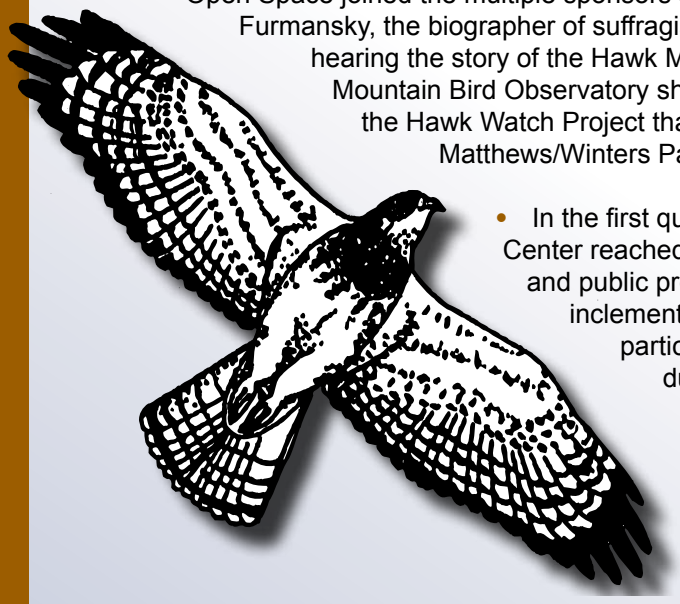
Education: Foster awareness and appreciation for natural and cultural resources and the ethic of resource stewardship



- Open Space joined the multiple sponsors at PLAN Jeffco's annual meeting featuring Dyana Furmansky, the biographer of suffragist and conservation activist, Rosalie Edge. After hearing the story of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary founder, staff from the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory shared tips on raptor identification and explained the Hawk Watch Project that takes place on the Dakota Ridge portion of Matthews/Winters Park.

- In the first quarter of the year, the Lookout Mountain Nature Center reached 5,500 through nature center visits and group and public programs. The lower number is primarily due to inclement weather that limited visitor center and program participation. No special events were held during this time period.

- Hiwan Homestead Museum tours, education and outreach programs served approximately 2,500 people during the first quarter of 2010.

Partnerships: Strengthen and build partnerships for community parks, recreation, open space and trails

- The Open Space Advisory Committee recommended to the Board of County Commissioners distribution of $2 million in Joint Venture Grants among 6 municipalities and 11 recreation districts to assist with recreational capital improvements. Concurrently, $150,000 in Conservation Trust Funds were awarded to 11 entities to assist with a variety of recreational improvements.

- Jefferson County Open Space contributed to the Colorado Northern Front Range Mountain Backdrop Study encompassing portions of Jefferson, Boulder and Gilpin Counties and excluding the incorporated areas of Boulder, Arvada and Golden. A required report for submission to Congress was part of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Section 3403 of H.R. 146). Additional partners in completing the study and report included Boulder County, Gilpin County, State Parks, Division of Wildlife, State Forest Service, with the US Forest Service as lead agency.

Tom Hoby, Director of Open Space and Community Resources.

- Open Space staff reviewed and submitted comments on the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Legacy and Large Grant Survey, GOCO Strategic Plan and Colorado State Parks Five-Year Strategic Plan.

Sustainability: Ensure the viability of Jefferson County Open Space for future generations

- Tom Hoby was appointed Director of Open Space and Community Resources to succeed Ralph Schell who was promoted to County Administrator. Mr. Hoby is a veteran parks, recreation and open space professional, coming to Jefferson County from the Highlands Ranch Metro District.

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Sustainability: Ensure the viability of Jefferson County Open Space for future generations

- Open Space Volunteer Recruitment Event was held at the Hiwan Homestead Museum on February 6. Each program that utilizes volunteers, such as Avian Census, Park Patrollers or Trail Inspectors, participated. Information stations and applications were available for prospective volunteers.

- The annual Visitor Experience Survey locations for 2010 have been designated at Hildebrand Ranch Park and Welchester Tree Grant Park. Park Hosts and other volunteers will collect park visitor input from May through September.

Park visitors helping answer survey questions. - photo by Carol Wilson