

# Outside 285 Master Plan

October 2021



# OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

October 2021

*Prepared by:*

ERO Resources Corp.  
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Supported by Outside 285 Steering Committee

*Administered by:*

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Funded by the CPW Non-Motorized Trails Grant Program

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## Acknowledgements

The Outside 285 Master Plan is the result of a collaborative effort by multiple individuals and organizations to create a long-term strategy for trail development and wildlife habitat conservation in the region.

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## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

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## Introduction

### Background

The foothills and mountains southwest of Denver have a long history of serving as the backyard for the growing metropolitan area, and a rugged transition from the urban interface to remote, alpine wilderness. As the landscape rises from the edge of the plains to the crest of the mountains, it is bisected by U.S. Highway 285 and the North Fork of the South Platte River.

This region, dubbed the “Outside 285” region, is home to thousands of residents within forested subdivisions and rural tracts, provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species that depend on large landscapes, and is a key destination for outdoor recreationists. Major recreation destinations within the Outside 285 region include Waterton Canyon, Roxborough State Park, Staunton State Park, Buffalo Creek Recreation Area, Kenosha Pass, Geneva Basin, and Guanella Pass. These and many other sites in the region provide opportunities for trail-based, non-motorized access on public lands.

Over the past 10 years, the Denver metropolitan area has experienced significant population growth, with more and more residents seeking outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands. With its close proximity to Denver, the trails and recreation infrastructure in the Outside 285 region have become discovered, explored, and in time, increasingly overused by an influx of visitors. This has resulted in degradation of trails and infrastructure, crowding at popular destinations, increased conflict between visitors, increased pressure on wildlife due to unplanned trails, and an overall loss of one’s ability to find solitude.

The concept of a holistic, regional trail strategy was born out of conversations in 2018 between the Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA) and the Pike National Forest, South Platte Ranger District (SPRD). While SPRD had routinely worked with trail and recreational advocates to develop trail projects and perform trail maintenance, both COMBA and SPRD wanted a better vision of what new trail opportunities would be desired, and what new trail opportunities would be allowed to move forward. In the meantime, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) who is charged with managing wildlife and working to protect their habitat in cooperation with land managers, wanted to have a proactive role in defining future trail projects. Based on these conversations, COMBA applied for a trails planning grant from CPW in 2019, began to form a Steering Committee, and the Outside 285 partnership was born.

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The Outside 285 Master Plan is not a decision document; rather it is a strategy for trail development and wildlife conservation that represents a consensus of the Steering Committee. As described in detail below, land managers are not obligated to implement the projects identified in this plan but are expected to give them serious and honest consideration, honoring the extensive collaborative effort to develop the plan.

### Outside 285 Steering Committee

The Outside 285 Steering Committee consists of representatives from multiple land management agencies, trail-based recreation groups, wildlife and conservation organizations, and community interests. Steering Committee members include:

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- U.S. Forest Service – Pike National Forest, South Platte Ranger District
- U.S. Forest Service – Arapaho National Forest, Clear Creek Ranger District
- Colorado Mountain Bike Association
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Bailey Hundo
- Clear Creek County Open Space
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Mountain Club
- Colorado Wildlife Federation
- Denver Mountain Parks
- Denver Water
- Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources
- Front Range Back Country Horsemen
- Jefferson County Open Space
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Park County
- Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Team Evergreen Cycling
- Trout Unlimited
- Wild Connections

In 2020, the Steering Committee agreed to hire ERO Resources Corp. (ERO), an environmental planning and consulting firm, to complete the Outside 285 Master Plan. ERO teamed with Coyote Clan to manage and facilitate the planning and stakeholder engagement process.

### Outside 285 Study Area

The Outside 285 Master Plan area spans four counties: Jefferson, Park, Douglas and Clear Creek and its public lands include national forests, county open space, and state park land. These vast public lands include notable landmarks and destinations such as Kenosha and Guanella Passes, Staunton and Roxborough State Parks, Jefferson County Open Space Parks, Denver Mountain Parks, Waterton Canyon, and the Buffalo Creek Recreation Area.

The entire project area encompasses 550,000 acres of public and private land (about 850 square miles), extending about 36 miles east-west from Waterton Canyon to Guanella Pass, and about 28 miles north-south from Evergreen to Deckers.

### Project Purpose & Goals

The Outside 285 Master Plan will serve as a blueprint for conserving habitat and improving trail-based outdoor recreation experiences within public lands along the US-285 corridor.

The goals of the Outside 285 Master Plan are to:

- Produce a regional planning document to guide project decisions in the Outside 285 region
- Build consensus among agency, wildlife and recreation advocates
- Locate desirable and critical habitat areas for protection
- Determine opportunities for improved recreation amenities and capacity
- Identify suitable locations for trail linkages, improvements, or expanded trail systems
- Develop a system and identify resources for trail maintenance
- Strengthen relationships and mechanisms for future project determinations
- Provide a model for future regional trail planning

## Planning Context

### Demographics

The Outside 285 region is adjacent to the greater Denver metropolitan area, which has seen substantial growth in the past 20 years. Since 2000, the Denver metropolitan area has gained about 790,000 new residents (about 37 percent; Table 1). By 2040, the population is projected to increase by another 693,000 (about 23 percent; Figure 1).

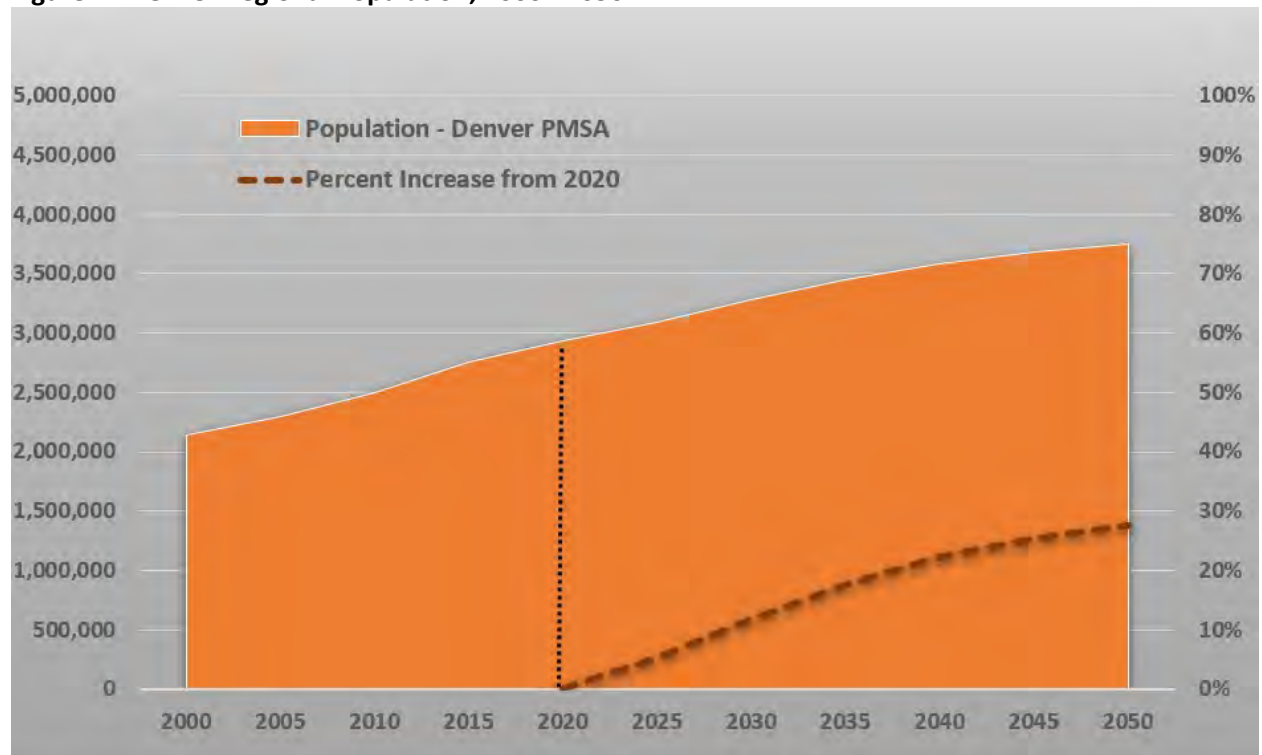
**Table 1. Denver Regional Population, 2000-2020**

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Population	2,144,968	2,299,267	2,502,291	2,758,204	2,934,233
Increase		154,299	203,024	255,913	176,029

Denver PMSA = Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties

Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office, 2021

**Figure 1. Denver Regional Population, 2000 - 2050**



Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

### Existing Trails and Trailheads

Existing trails and trailheads in the Outside 285 study area are shown on Figure 2. Major trail destinations include the following:

- **Foothills Parks** - Multiple parks and open space properties managed by Jefferson County Open Space and Denver Mountain Parks, including Lair o’ the Bear, Alderfer-Three Sisters, Deer Creek Canyon, and Meyer Ranch Park.
- **Waterton Canyon** - Access along the South Platte River to the Colorado Trail and Indian Creek trail systems, managed by USFS-SPRD and Denver Water.
- **Roxborough State Park** - Park focused on hiking and nature interpretation, managed by CPW.
- **Staunton State Park** - Park focused on trail-based recreation at the interface between the foothills and high elevation wilderness, managed by CPW.
- **Maxwell Falls** - Small foothills enclave with a popular trail system to access waterfalls, managed by USFS-CCRD.
- **Buffalo Creek Recreation Area** - Large expanse of forest and open areas burned in the 1996 Buffalo Creek Fire and 2000 Hi Meadow Fire is a destination for mountain bikers, managed by USFS-SPRD.
- **Mount Evans Wilderness Area** - Designated wilderness including high peaks and ridges near Mount Evans, with miles of backcountry hiking and equestrian trails, managed by USFS-SPRD and CCRD.
- **Lost Creek Wilderness Area** - Designated wilderness with high ridges, and rugged terrain along the Kenosha and Tarryall mountain ranges, managed by USFS-SPRD and South Park RD.
- **Kenosha Pass** - Popular highway wayside and access point for the Colorado Trail and several campgrounds, managed by USFS-SPRD and South Park RD.
- **Geneva Basin** - High-elevation basin with multiple camping and backcountry trail opportunities, managed by USFS-SPRD.
- **Guanella Pass** - High elevation pass with extremely popular trailheads along a scenic byway, primarily to access Mount Bierstadt, managed by USFS-SPRD and CCRD.

Throughout the study area, there are currently about 482 miles of existing, designated trails open to non-motorized uses (Table 2).

**Table 2. Existing Trail Mileage**

Trail Type	Miles
Multi-Use (Hike, bike, equestrian)	285.6
Hiking-only	32.1
Hiking and Equestrian	164.3
Total	481.9

An additional 122.7 estimated miles of undesignated, non-system, or “social” trail routes have been identified and mapped on public lands within the study area.

Existing recreation sites and designated parking areas are summarized below in Table 3.

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**Table 3. Existing Recreation Sites and Parking Capacity**

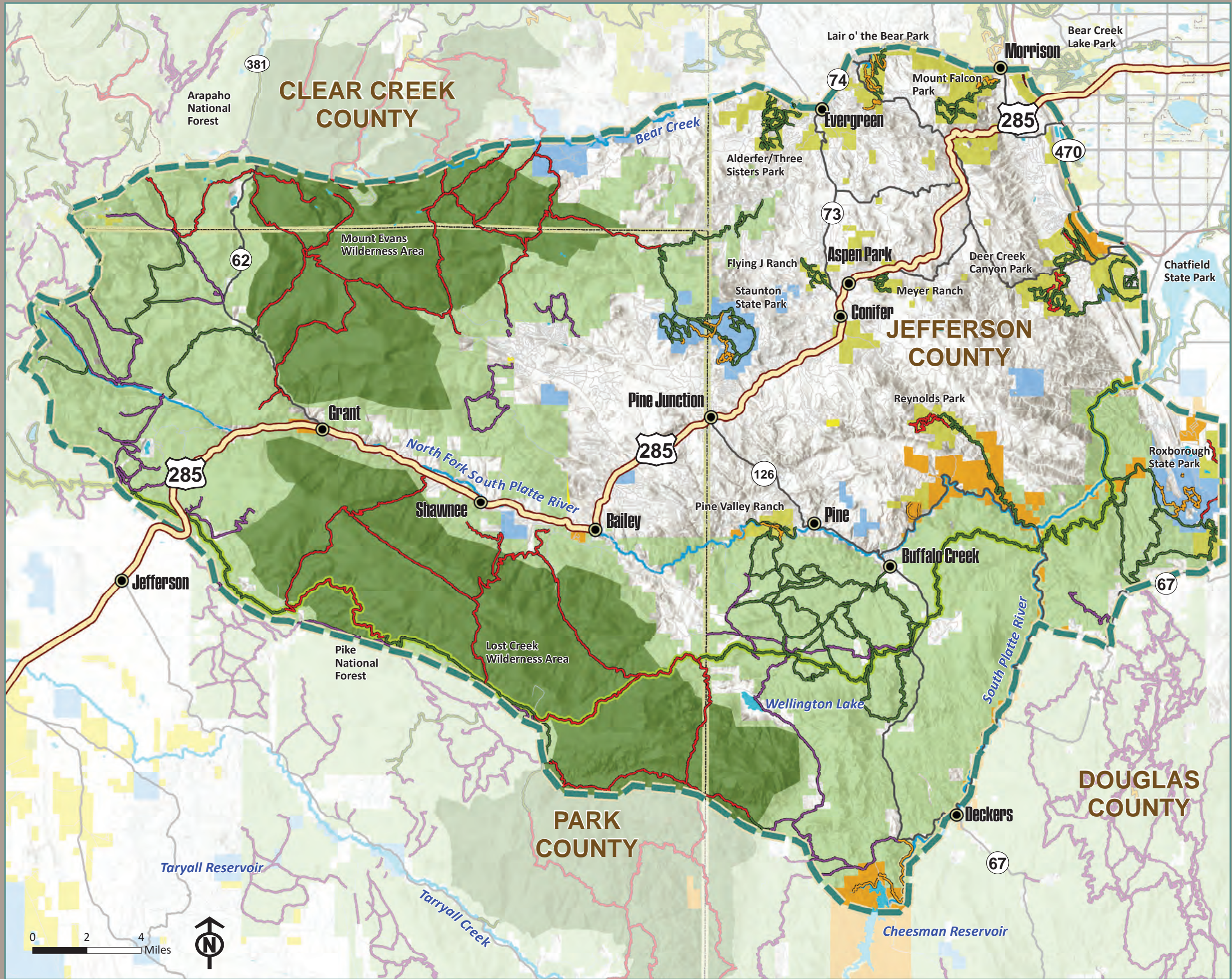
Site	Land Manager	Size (approx. acres)	Trail Mileage (approx.)	Primary Uses and Characteristics	Parking (approx. capacity) <i>Small = 1-50 spaces</i> <i>Medium = 50 – 100 spaces</i> <i>Large = 100+ spaces</i>
<b>Primary Trail Recreation Sites</b>					
Buffalo Creek Recreation Area	Pike National Forest – SPRD	20,000	75+	Regional mountain bike destination with occasional hiking, running, and equestrian use; moderate weekend use in spring, summer, and fall	Buffalo Park TH – Large Little Scraggy TH – Medium Rolling Creek TH – Small Multiple minor trailheads – Small
Staunton State Park	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	4,000	30	Multi-use park popular with hikers, bikers, and equestrians; heavy weekend use in summer and fall	Meadow Lot – Medium Mason Creek Lot – Small Visitor Center Lot – Small
Roxborough State Park	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	4,000	13	Trails open to hikers and runners. No bikes, horses, or dogs. Moderate weekend use year-round.	Visitor Center Lot – Medium
Waterton Canyon	Pike National Forest – SPRD/ Denver Water	1,500	6.5	Access road open to hikers, bikes, equestrian, fishing access. Access to the Colorado Trail and the Indian Creek trail system. Dogs prohibited. Heavy use year-round.	Waterton Canyon TH – Large
South Platte River Canyon	Pike National Forest – SPRD/ Denver Water	20,000	5	Popular destination for boating and fishing, and access to the Colorado Trail	South Platte TH – Medium North Fork TH – Small
Kenosha Pass	Pike National Forest – SPRD	100	10+	Popular access point for the Colorado Trail; limited parking can be overrun on busy weekends in summer and fall.	West Trailhead – Small East Trailheads (2) – Small
Guanella Pass	Pike National Forest – SPRD	20	5.5	Hiking access to Mount Bierstadt and South Park Trail – Heavy use in summer season with limited parking	Guanella Pass TH – Medium Square Tops Lakes TH – Medium
Pine Valley Ranch Park	Jefferson County Open Space	880	5.9	Popular multi-use park for hiking, fishing, and access to the Buffalo Creek Trail System. Heavy weekend use in summer season.	Trailhead – Large
Alderfer/Three Sisters Park	Jefferson County Open Space	1,135	15.6	Popular multi-use park. Heavy weekend use in spring, summer, and fall.	West Trailhead – Medium East Trailhead – Small

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Site	Land Manager	Size (approx. acres)	Trail Mileage (approx.)	Primary Uses and Characteristics	Parking (approx. capacity) <i>Small = 1-50 spaces</i> <i>Medium = 50 – 100 spaces</i> <i>Large = 100+ spaces</i>
Lair O' the Bear Park	Jefferson County Open Space	400	4.7	Multi-use park popular with picnickers and access to Bear Creek Trail. Heavy weekend use.	Trailhead – Large
Deer Creek Canyon Park	Jefferson County Open Space	1,650	14.3	Popular multi-use park at urban interface. Heavy weekend use in spring, summer, and fall.	Trailhead – Large
Mount Falcon Park	Jefferson County Open Space	2,250	12.2	Popular multi-use park at urban interface. Heavy weekend use in spring, summer, and fall.	East Trailhead – Medium West Trailhead – Medium
<b>Secondary Trail Recreation Sites</b>					
Mount Evans Wilderness	Pike National Forest – SPRD/Arapaho National Forest - CCRD	74,000	32	Rugged wilderness open to hikers and equestrians. Moderate to low dispersed use.	Deer Creek – Medium Meridian – Small Camp Rock – Small Abyss – Small Threemile - Small
Lost Creek Wilderness	Pike National Forest - SPRD	115,000	39	Rugged wilderness open to hikers and equestrians. Moderate to low dispersed use.	Ben Tyler – Small Brookside/Payne Creek – Small Rock Creek – Small Long Gulch – Small North Fork – Small Lost Park – Small Wigwam – Small Rolling Creek – Small
Geneva Basin	Pike National Forest - SPRD	22,000	23	Alpine and subalpine valley with multiple camping and backcountry trail routes	Burning Bear East – Small Shelf Lake/South Park – Small
Maxwell Falls	Arapaho National Forest – CCRD	1,100	3.6	Popular hiking destination with limited parking. Heavy weekend use in summer and fall.	Lower Trailhead – Small Upper Trailhead – Small Upper informal – Small
Indian Creek	Pike National Forest – SPRD	4,000	14	Equestrian and mountain bike destination; increasingly popular.	Trailhead – Small

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Site	Land Manager	Size (approx. acres)	Trail Mileage (approx.)	Primary Uses and Characteristics	Parking (approx. capacity) <i>Small = 1-50 spaces</i> <i>Medium = 50 – 100 spaces</i> <i>Large = 100+ spaces</i>
				Moderate weekend use in summer and fall.	
Flying J Ranch Park	Jefferson County Open Space	420	4.8	Small forested park used by hikers and beginner mountain bikers. Moderate weekend use in summer and fall.	Trailhead – Small
Meyer Ranch Park	Jefferson County Open Space	670	4.1	Small park used primarily by hikers. Moderate to heavy weekend use in summer and fall.	Trailhead – Medium
Reynolds Park	Jefferson County Open Space	2,100	17	Park divided by about 7 miles of hiker/equestrian trails and the multi-use regional North Fork trail	Trailhead – Medium Songbird Access – Small Campground Trailhead – Small
Cathedral Spires	Jefferson County Open Space	800	1.4	1.4 miles of hiker-only trail provide access to a popular climbing area.	Cathedral Spires TH – Small Cynical Pinnacle TH – Small
Corwina/O’Fallon/Pence Parks	Denver Mountain Parks	1,340	12.7	Destination for hikers and picnickers; most trails hiking only except for the regional Bear Creek Trail (multi use).	Corwina Trailhead – Small Panorama Point TH – Small West Ridge TH – Small
South Valley Park	Jefferson County Open Space	1,000	7.7	Primarily a hiking destination that is also open to bikes and equestrians, with trail connectivity to Deer Creek Canyon Park.	North Trailhead – Medium South Trailhead – Small
Cub Creek Trail	Arapaho National Forest – CCRD/ Pike National Forest – SPRD	100	4.4	Access point for the Cub Creek Trail to Mt. Evans Wilderness; used primarily by hikers and increasingly popular with mountain bikers.	Trailhead – Small
Cheesman Canyon	Pike National Forest – SPRD/ Denver Water	600	3.5	Trail access primarily for hikers and fishing access. Low to moderate use.	Cheesman Canyon TH – Small Cheesman Lake TH – Small
Hildebrand Ranch Park	Jefferson County Open Space	1,670	7.6	Multi-use park at the urban interface; Black Bear Trail connects to Deer Creek Canyon Park (closed seasonally). Moderate to heavy year-round use.	Trailhead – Medium



# Outside 285 Study Area

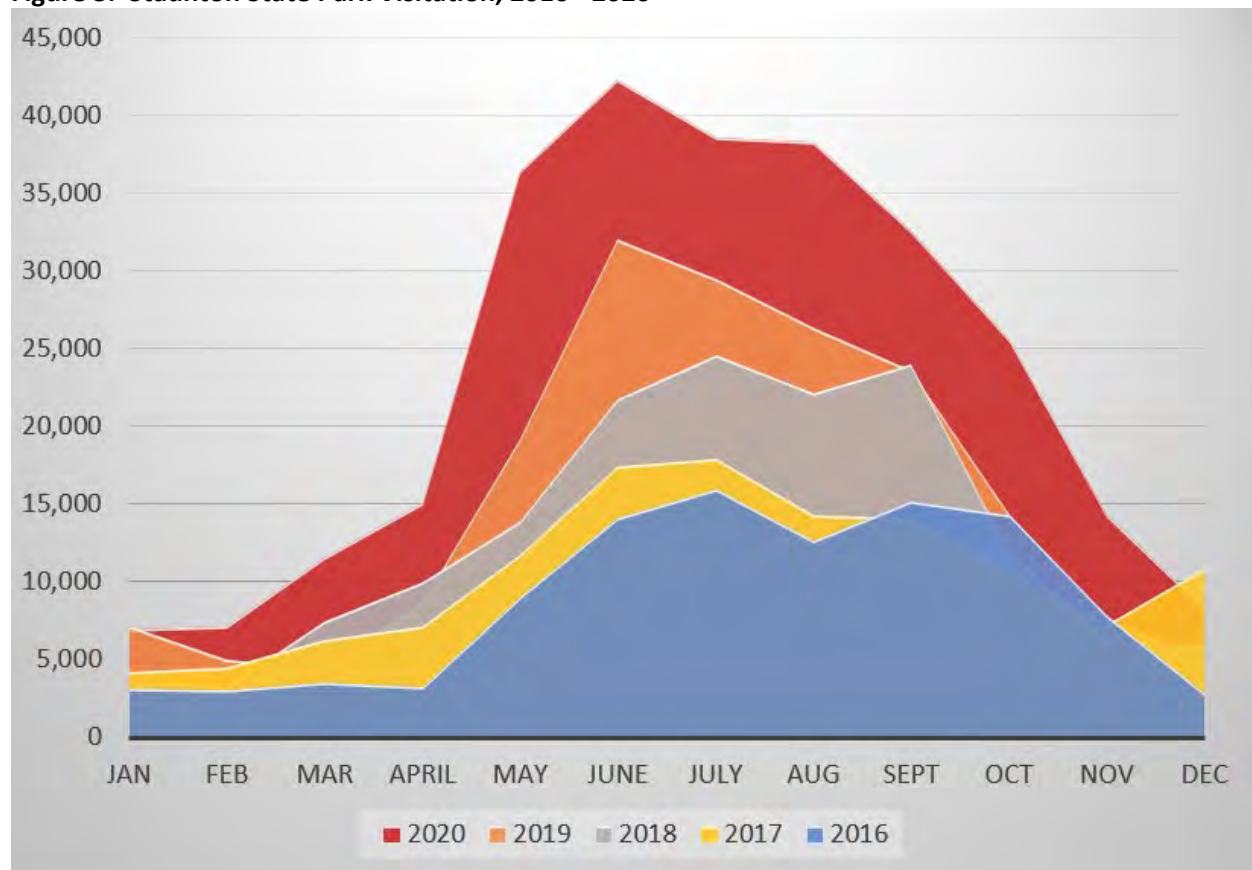
- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Hiking Only Trail
- Hiking and Equestrian Trail
- Multiuse Trail
- Road/Motorized Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State of Colorado
- Local Open Space
- Denver Water/Special District/NGO
- Bureau of Land Management



### Outdoor Recreation in the time of COVID

The Outside 285 planning process dovetailed with the 2020-2021 Covid-19 pandemic and the substantial increase in visitation that resulted from Coloradoans and other visitors flocking to their public lands to escape the doldrums of the pandemic. While it is very positive that Covid-19 propelled many more people to discover their public lands, enjoy healthy outdoor recreation and connect to nature, the extraordinary visitor use numbers present challenges for those managing and advocating for public lands. This rapid increase in outdoor recreation and use provided a unique opportunity to view future conditions in real time, including increased pressure on trailheads and parking, increased trail congestion and conflict, increased trail wear and damage, a proliferation of unauthorized/social trails, trail widening and braiding, and an overall loss of opportunities for solitude. Land management agencies reported increases in visitation by 50 to 200 percent in 2020, as evidenced by recorded visitation to Staunton State Park (see Figure 3 below).

**Figure 3. Staunton State Park Visitation, 2016 - 2020**



Source: CPW, Staunton State Park

These increases are not likely to abate with the end of the pandemic, and may have set a “new normal” for recreation pressure in Colorado. With the Front Range’s population projected to increase by 20% by 2030, 2020’s pandemic-propelled visitation levels have provided a valuable preview of what we can continue to expect. This new normal underscores the need for the Outside 285 master plan and the increased need for land managers, recreation, and wildlife advocates to work collaboratively to create and manage sustainable, high quality, and fun trail experiences that also protect critical wildlife habitat.

### Planning Process

Collaborative from the onset, the Outside 285 planning process was designed to engage land managers and recreation and wildlife advocates in analyzing the region and working together to develop shared solutions. The planning project was broken down into five phases:

**Phase I. Pre-Planning.** Before diving into the planning, the partners worked together to determine the boundary of the Outside 285 Region and to recruit additional steering committee members in order to ensure the project was directed by a diverse group of stakeholders representing land managers, recreation and conservation interests. The role of the Steering Committee was defined and it was made clear that the group would be engaged throughout the project and integral to developing, reviewing and refining project recommendations. During the pre-planning an Executive Team was also formed to oversee the project.

**Phase II. Habitat Evaluation.** A key element of the planning process was to balance recreation concepts with wildlife habitat conservation, based on objective resource data. ERO, in collaboration with USFS biologists and CPW wildlife managers, completed a comprehensive habitat analysis of the Outside 285 region in order to identify, prioritize, and map sensitive wildlife habitat.

**Phase III. Region Analysis.** Tapping the expertise and study area familiarity of members of the Steering Committee as well as the public, the planning team evaluated the region's recreation infrastructure, analyzed needs and constraints, and identified suitable locations for trail and other recreational amenity improvements. The planning team worked with the Steering Committee to compile issues and to identify recreation and conservation opportunities and planning concepts.

**Phase IV. Steering Committee and Public Engagement.** The planning team consulted with the Outside 285 Steering Committee in over 35 meetings, work sessions, and technical calls over the course of the planning process. In addition, an online survey was used to solicit public input on project objectives, trail project ideas, and conservation priorities. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, engagement was primarily virtual. The results of these efforts are described below.

**Phase V. Planning Recommendations.** In the final phase of the project, the team worked through the results of the habitat evaluation, planning zone analysis, and public input to develop a set of proposed projects. Over 140 individual projects were proposed within the study area, requiring a robust collaborative screening and evaluation process to identify recommended projects for implementation. Those projects are presented in the *Trail and Conservation Strategy* section.

### **Outside 285 Stakeholder Engagement, *by the Numbers...***

22	Organizations represented on the Steering Committee
16	Months of the planning process
11	Steering Committee Update Meetings
24	Steering Committee work sessions
1	In-person Steering Committee gathering
865	Responses to the public survey
130	Proposed trail and recreation projects
18	Proposed conservation and enhancement projects
87	Estimated hours in online meeting platforms

### **Steering Committee and Public Engagement**

The planning team consulted with the Outside 285 Steering Committee throughout the planning process. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, engagement was primarily virtual and included:

- Regular project progress calls and discussions
- An internal survey for sharing ideas and concerns
- Work sessions with the Steering Committee sub-teams (e.g., Wildlife, Conservation, Land Manager, and Recreation)
- Meetings with the Executive Team to discuss and resolve issues about the planning process
- Series of project review discussions.

In total, the Steering Committee was convened for 10 updates and presentation calls and Steering Committee members participated in 24 work sessions and project review calls as well as 1 in-person gathering at Staunton State Park.

The planning team and Steering Committee also solicited input from the public using an online survey that was widely distributed in the region between Nov 8, 2020 and Jan 3, 2021. Participation in the survey was robust with 865 respondents offering thoughtful comments and specific ideas regarding expanding trail systems, improving management, and protecting wildlife and habitat within the region. Over half of survey respondents live in the Outside 285 region.

### **Themes that emerged from the public survey**

- Desire for a diversity of trail experiences ranging from more access to peaks to longer loops to hiker-only trails and more technical trails for mountain bikers.
- Demand for new trail opportunities and/or linked trails to increase capacity, disperse users and alleviate crowding and user-conflicts.

- Emphasis on conserving wildlife habitat in the region and planning trails to minimize wildlife disturbance and protect sensitive habitat.
- Support for management practices that would carefully balance wildlife habitat conservation with recreation.
- Concern about visitor behavior and the need for more stewardship and Leave No Trace education, as well as enforcement and patrols.
- Recognition of the importance of adequately maintaining trail systems and establishing funding and personnel (e.g., volunteers, trail crew) to ensure the long-term maintenance and ongoing improvement of trails throughout the region.
- Openness to “pay to play” management strategies that would generate funding for improvements, maintenance and management.
- A need to address parking issues and improve trailheads along with support for management and enforcement that would limit overcrowding and resulting user conflicts, safety issues and resource impacts.

Additional details from the survey responses are provided in Appendix A.

### **Recreation Objectives Generated from Steering Committee and Public Input**

The following objectives emerged through collaborations with the Steering Committee and input gleaned from the public survey and laid the foundation for the development of planning recommendations and trail proposals.

#### **Trail and Recreation Concepts**

- Increase capacity of the region’s trail systems
- Provide new and better outdoor recreation experiences
- Establish and improve regional trail connectivity
- Minimize the impact of new trails on wildlife and habitat
- Create trails that serve multiple visitor types
- Improve trailhead access and capacity

#### **Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Concepts**

- Protect large blocks of contiguous wildlife habitat
- Protect big game migration routes, production areas, and severe winter range
- Protect and restore streams, wetlands, and riparian habitat and reroute trails out of riparian areas and/or wetland
- Facilitate private land conservation efforts in key habitats and corridors

#### **Management and Maintenance Concepts**

- Promote an improved stewardship ethic among all visitors
- Improve maintenance stewardship capacity
- Consider fee and/or reservation parking systems
- Increase enforcement
- Designate directional, activity-specific trails (or rotating/alternating use)
- Maintain and support Outside 285 as a regional partnership

### Draft Plan Review and Comment

The planning team invited the public to review and comment on the draft Outside 285 Master Plan in August 2021. Input was collected over a two-week period through a digital public review survey, resulting in 97 responses. The majority of the comments were complimentary of the Outside 285 planning effort. Among the projects proposed in the master plan, respondents were most excited about and eager to see the Buffalo Creek expansion, North Elk expansion and Kenosha Pass improvements implemented.

The substantive comments received drew attention to the following topics that resulted in minor updates to the plan:

- **Visitor Education.** Visitor education and promoting a stewardship ethic should be incorporated into efforts to expand the recreation capacity of the region.
- **Natural Resource Conservation.** Appreciation expressed for the plan's balancing of habitat requirements with recreation improvements, as well as a desire for even more conservation projects.
- **Parking.** Parking fees systems will require patrols and enforcement and could jeopardize equitable access to the outdoors.
- **Trail Projects.** Ensure that trails are built sustainably, prioritizing maintenance, engaging volunteers, incorporating natural features, and considering directional and single-use trails.
- **Ebikes.** It is not always clear where ebikes are permitted in the region and whether they will be allowed on proposed trails, so land managers need to work to clearly communicate their regulations.
- **Signage.** Incorporate new and updated signage addressing trail etiquettes, trespassing and/or ebike regulations.

### Habitat Analysis

A key element of the Outside 285 master plan is the analysis and documentation of existing wildlife habitat in the study area. As part of a “wildlife first” planning approach, this information is important to understand the habitat areas, movement corridors, and seasonal dynamics that are critical for wildlife populations and are the most vulnerable to human disturbance. This analysis identifies four primary elements:

1. **Existing Disturbance** – Areas that are already affected by human development and disturbance
2. **Habitat Sensitivity** – Most sensitive areas, based on the documented habitat for vulnerable wildlife species
3. **Core Habitat Areas** – Large areas of undisturbed habitat
4. **Riparian Interface Areas** – Areas where existing trails are within close proximity to streams, wetlands, and riparian habitat

Each of these elements, and the methods and assumptions to analyze their condition, is described below and illustrated in Figures 4-7.

### Existing Disturbance

This analysis documented the existing levels of disturbance and fragmentation within the Outside 285 study area, resulting from existing human uses and developments including highways and roads, homes and subdivisions, trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and commonly used social trails. These existing disturbances were mapped in GIS, with impact buffers representing the level of human disturbance (or “zone of influence”) beyond the immediate impact area.

Impact buffers are based on scientific literature pertaining to the impacts of human disturbance in general, and trail-based recreation in particular, on wildlife (see inset box). Two buffers are used: 100-meters, and 400-meters to reflect the range of influence that human use may have on wildlife, depending on the species, terrain, and development context. Three disturbance levels identified in this analysis, shown in **Figure 4**.

### High Disturbance Areas

Disturbances with frequent or permanent human occupation. Includes each of the following with a 100-meter impact zone:

- Existing homes (address points)
- Highways/primary roads (285 + state highways)

### Medium Disturbance

Disturbances with frequent but not permanent human occupation. Includes each of the following with a 100-meter impact zone:

- Existing trails
- Secondary roads (county, subdivision, USFS roads)
- Campgrounds and trailheads

### Wildlife Impact Buffers

Human disturbance along trails can negatively affect wildlife, creating an impact buffer (or, “zone of influence”) within which where habitat value is degraded. Impact buffers can range from 30 to 400 meters or more from a trail, depending on the terrain, vegetation, development setting, species, and levels of use and habituation.

Based on the habitat conditions and variability in the study area, the Outside 285 habitat analysis uses a *range* of 100 to 400 meters to assess impacts from existing and proposed trails.

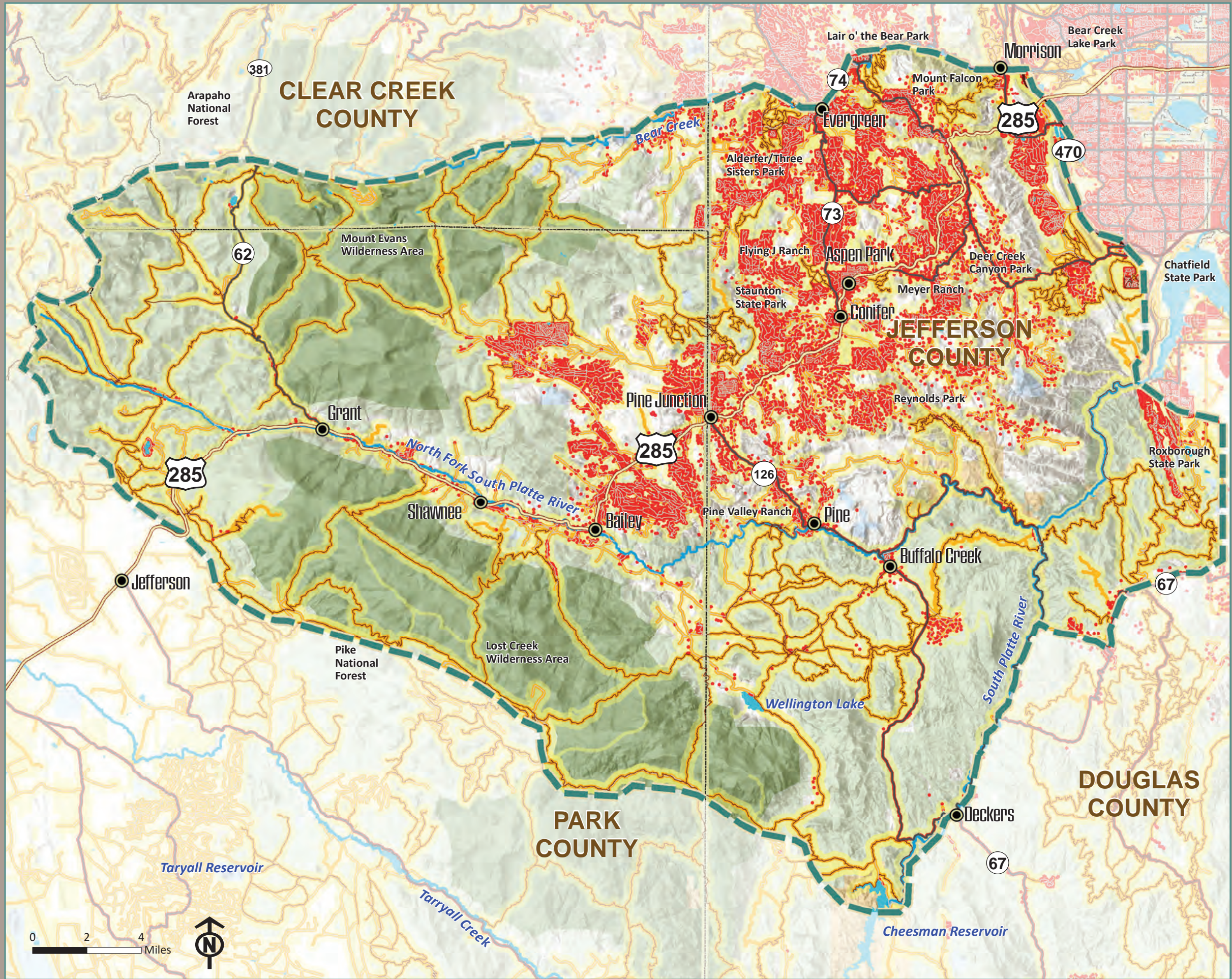
For more information on this topic, please reference CPW’s guidance on *Planning Trails with Wildlife in Mind*, which can be accessed here: <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/Planning-Trails-for-Wildlife.aspx>

### Low Disturbance

Disturbances with infrequent human occupation, or an expanded impact area associated with high or medium disturbances. Includes each of the following with specific impact zones:

- Existing trails (100 to 400 meters)
- Existing highways and roads (100 to 400 meters)
- Non-system social trails (100 meters)

The remainder represents undisturbed habitat.



# Outside 285

## Existing Disturbance

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Existing Trail or Road
- High Disturbance Area
- Medium Disturbance Area
- Low Disturbance Area
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State of Colorado
- Local Open Space
- Denver Water/Special District/NGO
- Bureau of Land Management



### Habitat Sensitivity

The purpose of this analysis is to identify, prioritize, and map sensitive wildlife habitat within the Outside 285 study area. This information may be used to identify areas where trail and recreation development may be more or less suitable, and areas where additional conservation efforts would be beneficial.

### Approach

For this analysis, ERO compiled GIS data that represents known or potential habitat for a variety of sensitive or important species at a landscape scale that is relevant to this analysis. Data sources include publicly available habitat information published by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Species and habitat data were also provided by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and CPW. In addition, CPW and USFS field personnel have provided anecdotal information on important or sensitive habitat areas, based on their first-hand knowledge of the study area.

It is important that this mapping represents habitat potential consistently across the study area, so that one area with a high level of information is not weighted over another area with less information. Data sources were carefully selected to achieve this. Sensitive species that are not known to occur within the study area, or do not have consistent or uniform habitat data available, are not represented in this analysis.

Habitat data was categorized into three priority levels – A, B, and C, based on the level of sensitivity of each habitat type, their federal listing status, USFS sensitive designation, CPW importance, NatureServe rank, and State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) tier. A fourth level – Priority D, represents common habitat that may be important for wildlife but does not have regional significance or sensitivity. Elements of each priority area are listed below.

#### ***Priority A – Existing T&E Species Habitat***

Includes known or suspected occupied habitat for federally listed threatened and endangered (“T&E”) species

- Preble’s meadow jumping mouse Critical Habitat
- Pawnee montane skipper modeled habitat
- Greenback cutthroat trout known populations

#### ***Priority B – Potential T&E and Imperiled Species Habitat***

Includes potential habitat for federally listed T&E species, and known habitat for other imperiled species

- Canada lynx potential habitat and linkages
- Preble’s meadow jumping mouse (PMJM) potential habitat
- Greenback cutthroat trout potential reintroduction habitat
- Mexican spotted owl Critical Habitat and recovery habitat
- Peregrine falcon known and potential nest sites (with buffers)
- Golden eagle nest sites (with buffers)
- Bighorn sheep winter ranges, production areas, and migration corridors
- Boreal toad potential habitat

- White-tailed ptarmigan potential habitat (alpine tundra)
- Wolverine potential habitat (alpine tundra and subalpine forest)
- CNHP Potential Conservation Areas (rank B1 – B3)
- Riparian and wetland habitat (plus a 100-meter buffer)

### ***Priority C – Critical Habitat for Species of Management Concern***

Includes critical habitat for species of management concern

- CPW-identified key habitat areas and corridors
- Elk critical winter ranges, production areas, and migration corridors
- Mule deer critical winter ranges and migration corridors
- Wild turkey critical winter range, production areas, and roost sites
- Bald eagle known nest (with buffer)
- Moose priority habitat
- CNHP Potential Conservation Areas (rank B4 and B5)

### ***Priority D – Common Habitat***

Includes general habitat that is valuable for a broad range of wildlife (including those listed above) but is not otherwise significant or sensitive.



### **Habitat Sensitivity Mapping**

To produce a habitat sensitivity map for the Outside 285 study area, the above habitat elements for Priorities A – C are shown using graduated colors. Priority A is shown with the darkest shade of purple, and Priority C is shown with the lightest shade. Priority D is not shaded at all, since it represents the remainder of common habitat that exists throughout the study area. This map provides a visual illustration of the areas with the highest relative sensitivity and conservation priority. Highest priority habitats are darker, while lower priority habitats are lighter. Areas with multiple co-occurrences of sensitive habitat are shown to have darker shades.

To finalize the habitat sensitivity map, the shaded habitat sensitivity areas were overlain with the habitat disturbance areas to define a more accurate representation of existing habitat conditions. This is based on the rationale that highly disturbed or developed areas do not contain the conditions that are necessary to support sensitive or vulnerable wildlife habitat. To make this adjustment, sensitive habitat shading was removed from high and medium disturbance areas (red and orange) and was reduced in low disturbance areas (yellow), producing a final habitat sensitivity map.

Note that the habitat sensitivity map is based on existing data provided by CPW, USFS, and CNHP. It is an illustrative overlay of existing information and is not intended to be a prescriptive model of habitat conditions or wildlife presence. The overall purpose of this map is to assist members of the Steering Committee and the public as they consider recreation and conservation opportunities during the development of this plan.

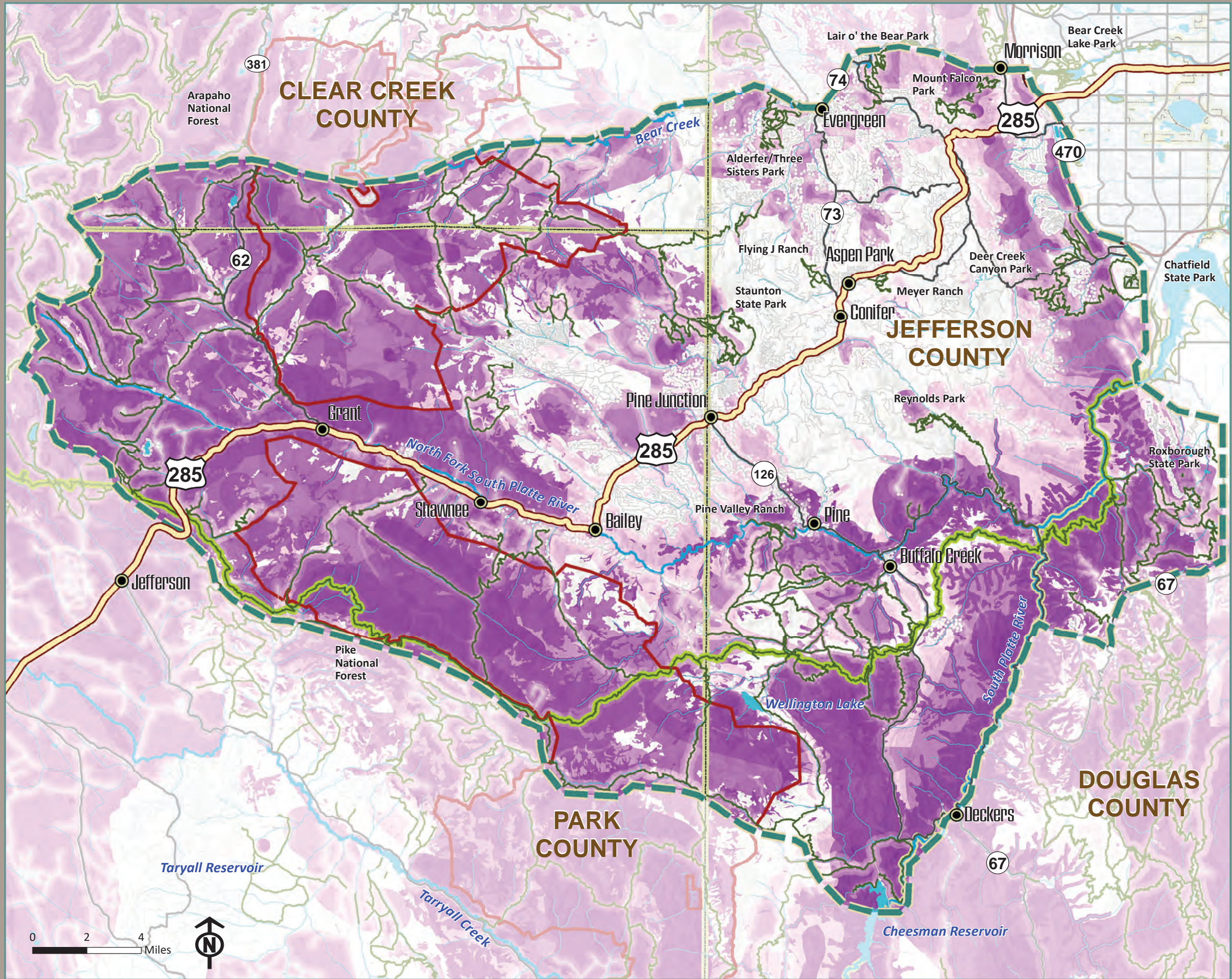
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

**Table 4. Wildlife Sensitivity Analysis Elements**

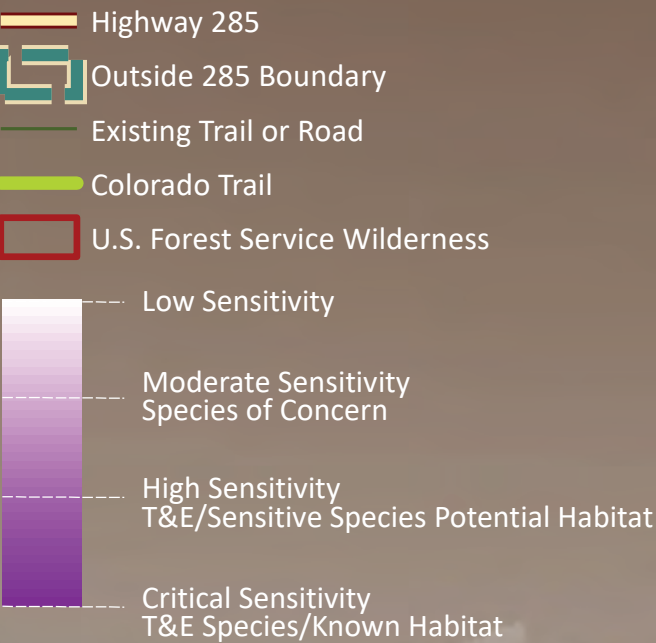
Resource	Priority	Listing Status*	SWAP Tier**	NatureServe Status
<b>Priority A - T&amp;E Species/Known Habitat</b>				
PMJM Critical Habitat	A	FT; ST	1	T2/S1 - Critically imperiled
Pawnee montane skipper habitat	A	FT		T1/S1 - Critically imperiled
Greenback cutthroat trout streams	A	FT	1	T1/S2 - Imperiled
<b>Priority B - T&amp;E/Sensitive Species Potential Habitat</b>				
Canada Lynx habitat/linkages (USFS)	B	FT	1	G5/S1 - Critically imperiled
PMJM Potential habitat (USFS/RCZ)	B	FT; ST	1	T2/S1 - Critically imperiled
Greenback cutthroat trout potential streams	B	FT	1	T1/S2 - Imperiled
Mexican spotted owl Critical Habitat and Recovery Habitat	B	FT	2	T3/S1 - Critically imperiled
Peregrine falcon - known and potential	B	SC	2	G4/S2 - Imperiled
Bighorn sheep critical	B	USFS S	2	G4/S4 - Apparently secure
Golden eagle nest	B	SC; USFS S	1	G5/S3 - Vulnerable
Boreal toad	B	PT; SE	1	G4/S1 - Critically imperiled
White-tailed ptarmigan	B	PT; SE; USFS S	1	G5/S4 - Apparently secure
Wolverine	B	PT/SE	1	T4/S1 - Critically imperiled
Riparian and wetland areas	B			G3 - Vulnerable
CNHP PCA (B1/B2/B3)	B			
<b>Priority C - Species of Concern</b>				
CPW identified key habitat and corridors	C			
Elk critical habitat	C			G5/S5 - Secure
Wild turkey critical habitat	C			G5/S5 - Secure
Bald eagle nest	C	SC; USFS S	2	G5/S1 - Critically imperiled
Mule deer critical habitat	C			G5/S4 - Apparently secure
Moose priority habitat	C			G5/SE - Secure/exotic
CNHP PCA (B4/B5)	C			

\* Listing status: FT = Federal threatened; PT = Proposed federal threatened; SE = State endangered; ST = State threatened; SC = State species of special concern; USFS S = US Forest Service sensitive.

\*\* Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP): <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/StateWildlifeActionPlan.aspx>



# Outside 285 Habitat Sensitivity



### Sensitive Species and Habitat Descriptions

The sensitive species and habitats that were included in the habitat analysis are briefly described below.

- **Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM; *Zapus hudsonius preblei*)** – Federally listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the PMJM lives in stream and riparian habitats with well-developed riparian vegetation and adjacent undisturbed upland habitat, generally below 7,600 feet in elevation. While most of the lower-elevation stream corridors in the project area have the potential to support PMJM populations, only a few populations have been discovered. Portions of the South Platte River corridor have been designated as Critical Habitat for the species.
- **Pawnee montane skipper (*Hesperia leonardus montana*)** – Federally listed as Threatened under the ESA, this species is small butterfly that occurs in dry, open ponderosa pine woodlands at elevations of 6,000 to 7,500 feet. This type of habitat dominates much of the lower elevations of the project area.
- **Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki stomias*)** – Federally and state listed as Threatened, this native trout species is found in isolated headwaters of mountain streams with gravel to rocky substrate and abundant riparian vegetation. Several populations are known to occur within the study area, and more streams have been identified for potential reintroductions.
- **Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)** – Federally listed as Threatened under the ESA, lynx occur in subalpine and upper montane forests between about 8,000 and 12,000 feet. A key component of their habitat is large, woody debris which supports denning sites and habitat for the snowshoe hare, their primary prey. Lower-elevation forests and riparian corridors provide movement corridors and linkages between primary habitat areas. Most of the upper-elevation forests in the study area provide potential habitat for lynx, while the upper basins and ridges between Kenosha and Guanella passes provide linkage habitat.
- **Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*)** – Federally listed as Threatened under the ESA, Mexican spotted owl occur in complex forest stands or rock canyons with mature or multi-storied forests. Several areas within the study area are considered to have potential recovery habitat for the species, while Critical Habitat has been designated for an area that includes the south side of Waterton Canyon, west of Indian Creek.
- **Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrines anatum*)** – Peregrine falcons are a Species of Concern in Colorado, that utilize nest sites constructed on rugged, remote cliffs, typically with nearby water sources. Several peregrine nests are known to occur on rocky crags within the study area. Seasonal closures to human access and development within ½ mile of an active nest are recommended between March 15 and July 31 to protect active nests.
- **Bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*)** – Bighorn sheep are a native ungulate that utilize steep, high-visibility habitat documented by grass, low shrubs, and rock cover. Some sheep move between summer and winter ranges, while others utilize south-facing slopes year-round. Several areas within the study area provide critical ranges for bighorn, including Waterton Canyon and upper South Platte drainage near Grant.

- **Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)** – Considered a state Species of Special Concern, the golden eagle is a large raptor that in Colorado typically nests on ledges or cavities in large cliffs. Golden eagle nest sites have been identified in multiple locations associated with the rugged canyons on the east side of the study area.
- **Boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*)** – Listed as endangered by the State of Colorado, the boreal toad is restricted to lakes and wetlands within spruce-fir forests and alpine meadows between 7,000 and 12,000 feet. Within the study area, the boreal toad may occur in the upper reaches of Geneva Creek and its tributaries.
- **White-tailed ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucura*)** – Listed as endangered by the State of Colorado, the white-tailed ptarmigan is a small bird that occurs in alpine tundra, particularly near willow shrubs and spruce krummholz trees. Within the study area, their habitat encompasses most of the alpine tundra within the Kenosha Range, the upper Geneva Basin, and near Mount Evans.
- **Wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*)** – A Colorado endangered species, the wolverine is a wide-ranging carnivore that occurs in low densities in rugged, mountainous forests with little human disturbance. The presence and distribution of the wolverine in Colorado is uncertain, since confirmed sightings have been extremely limited. Within the study area, large tracts of high-elevation forests, primarily within wilderness areas, provide potential habitat for wolverine.
- **Elk (*Cervus elaphus*)** – Elk are a large ungulate species that are found in most mountainous areas, and are typically associated with semi-open forests, meadows, and alpine habitat. Most elk herds migrate between summer and winter ranges. While elk are found throughout the study area, several higher-elevation areas provide critical calving and production habitat, and open or south-facing areas provide winter range.
- **Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)** – Wild turkey are a large bird species that are common in mountainous terrain, particularly in ponderosa pine forest and Gambel oak woodlands. Within the study area, the primary habitat for wild turkey occurs in the Indian Creek area and the valleys south of Green Mountain and Little Scraggy Peak.
- **Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)** – The distinctive bald eagle is a state species of special concern. It is a large raptor that is typically found near lakes and large rivers, and they usually nest in large cottonwood trees. Within the study area, bald eagles are known to forage along the North Fork of the South Platte River, and a nest has been identified near Wellington Lake.
- **Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)** – Mule deer are a common ungulate species that are found in most habitat types in Colorado. Some populations migrate between summer and winter ranges, while other populations congregate in a certain area year-round. Within the study area, most of the eastern foothills, burn areas, and river valleys provide winter range for mule deer.
- **Moose (*Alces alces*)** – Moose are a large ungulate species that are common in forested areas that contain lakes and willow-dominated marshes, which is their primary food source. Within the study area, priority habitat for moose is located in the Kenosha Pass area, Hall Valley, Geneva Basin, and Harris Park.

- **Riparian and wetland areas** – Throughout Colorado, most wildlife species depend on stream corridors, riparian, or wetland habitat for survival. These habitat types provide water, cover, movement corridors and foraging opportunities but are relatively rare on the landscape.
- **Potential Conservation Areas** – The Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) has identified multiple areas that contain rare species and natural plant communities, and/or significantly high biodiversity. Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs) are drawn to encompass significant resources and their contributing habitat and are ranked from 1 to 5 for their significance with 1 being globally outstanding to 5 being locally significant. Several PCAs have been identified within the study area.

### Core Habitat Areas

Based on the results of the *Existing Disturbance* and *Habitat Sensitivity* maps, the *Core Habitat Areas* map identifies large, contiguous habitat patches that possess high habitat values. Core habitat patches are shaded based on three categories: 1) Habitat patches greater than 10,000 acres, 2) habitat patches between 5,000 and 10,000 acres, and 3) habitat patches between 400 and 5,000 acres. Habitat patches smaller than 400 acres are not shown.

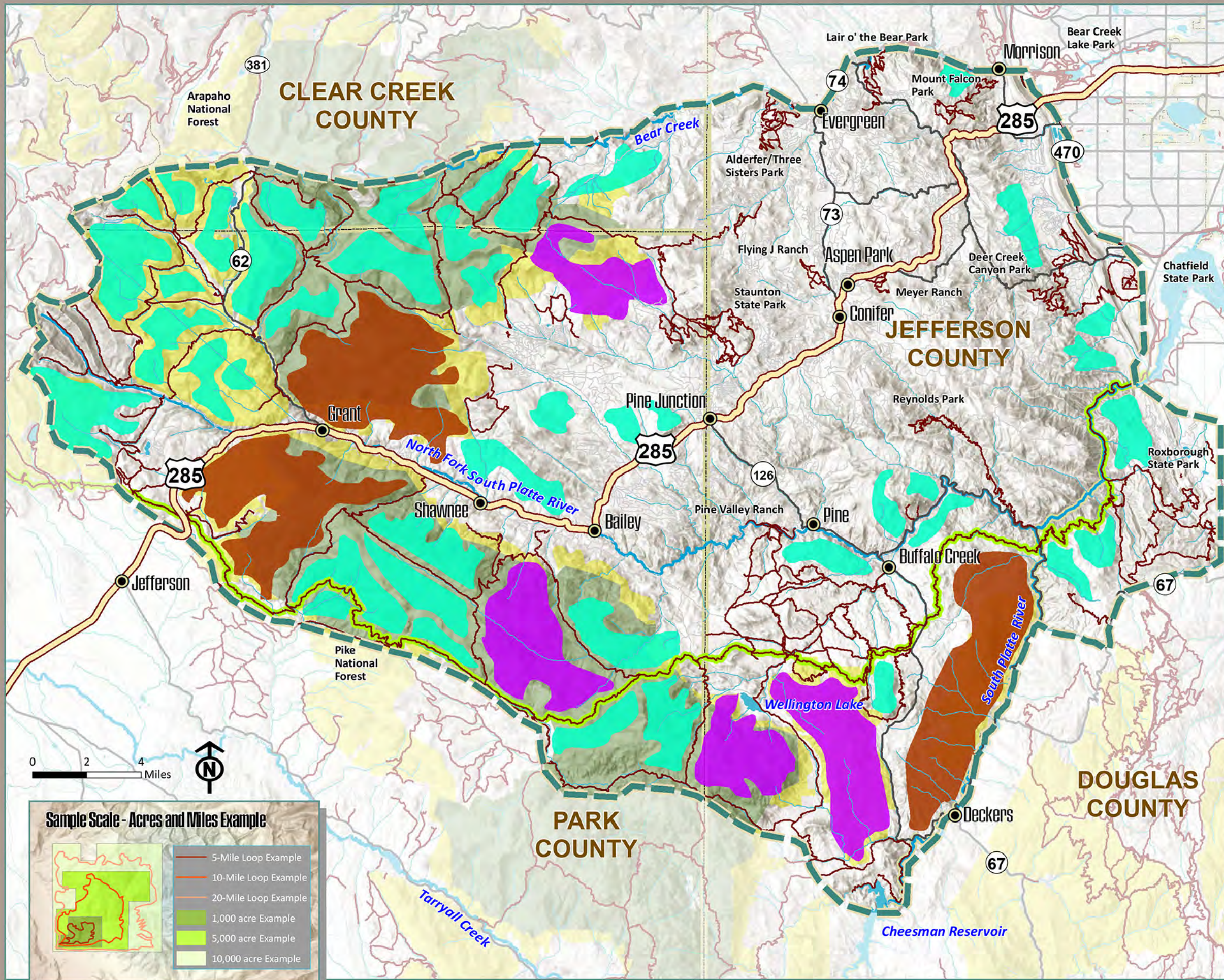
Recognizing that large, contiguous habitat is valuable for wildlife, this map can help land managers and stakeholders identify projects that minimize impacts to or fragmentation of core habitat areas. (For example, a new disturbance on the edge of a core habitat area is better than one cutting through the middle; while a disturbance that avoids these areas altogether is better still).

### Riparian Interface Areas

This map shows existing trails that are within close proximity to mapped streams and riparian habitat. While it is now well-understood that trails should minimize interface with streams, many existing trails were originally built decades ago along stream corridors. Sections of trail within 100 meters of streams are highlighted in green, while sections of trail within 25 meters of streams are highlighted in red. (These areas are well within the typical disturbance buffer, but a smaller number was used to highlight trails that are excessively close to riparian areas).



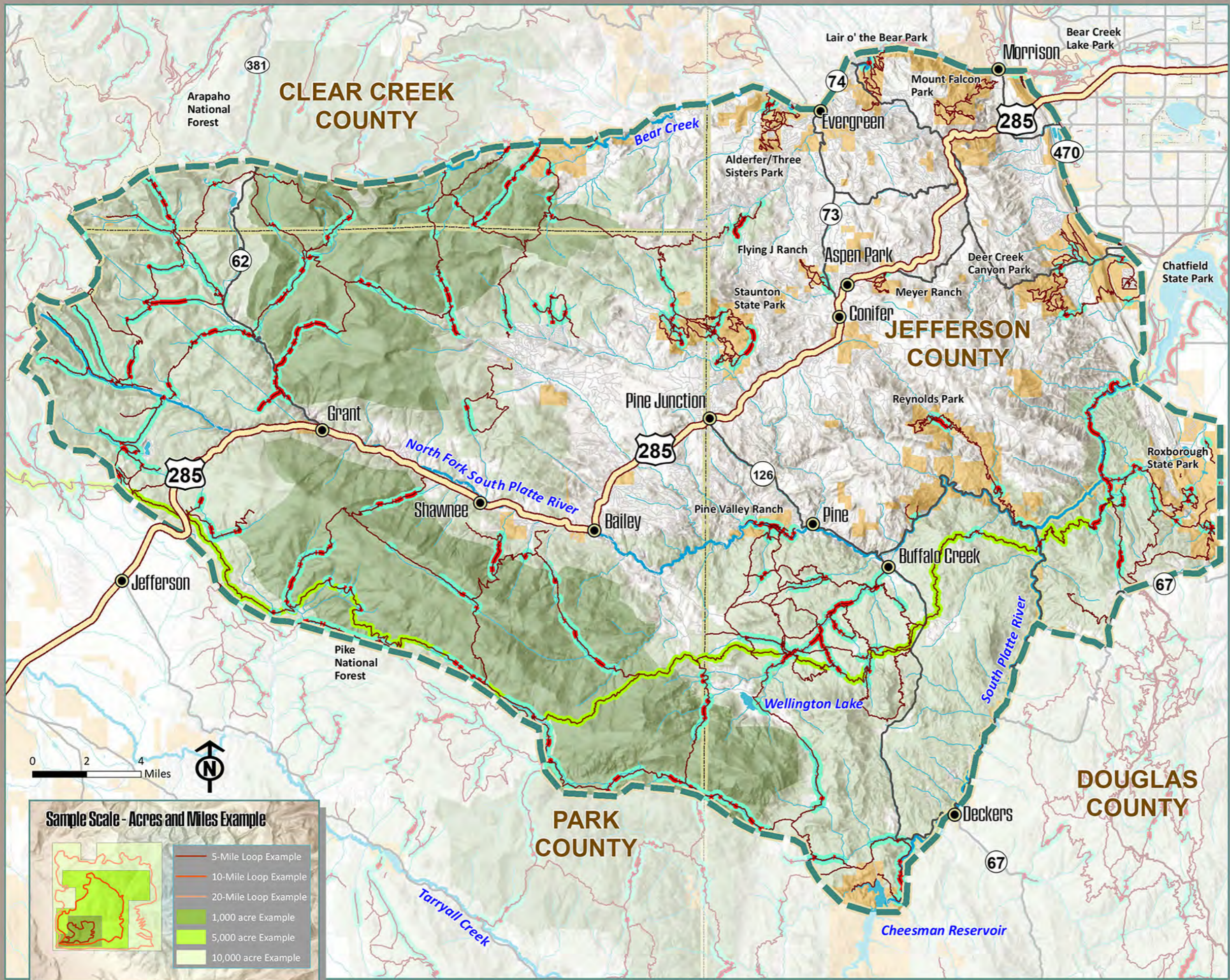
The purpose of this map is to help land managers and stakeholders identify existing trails that may be good candidates for reroutes that avoid or reduce impacts to stream and riparian habitat.



## Outside 285 Core Habitat Areas

- Outside 285 Boundary
  - Highway 285
  - Existing Trail or Road
  - Colorado Trail
- Core Habitat Areas**
- 400 – 5,000 acres
  - 5,000 – 10,000 acres
  - 10,000 + acres
  - Colorado Roadless Area
  - U.S. Forest Service Wilderness





Outside 285

# Existing Riparian Interface

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Existing Trail or Road
- Road or Trail Within 25m of Stream
- Road or Trail Within 100m of Stream
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- Public Land



### Trail and Conservation Strategy

This section describes the recreation and conservation strategies recommended by the Outside 285 Steering Committee. These strategies are intended to outline concepts and priorities for trail and trailhead development, trail maintenance, and habitat conservation and enhancement efforts. These strategies represent a consensus of the Outside 285 Steering Committee.

### Screening and Evaluation Process

With input from the Steering Committee and general public, the planning team received proposals for over 130 trail and trailhead improvement projects, and 18 specific habitat conservation and enhancement efforts (beyond the general habitat conservation objectives of the plan). The identification of recommended projects was a robust and iterative process, that allowed the planning team to evaluate each project independently and develop the following strategies for implementation.




The steps to this evaluation process were:

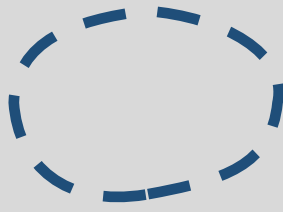
1. Each project proposal was mapped and compiled into a master list for evaluation.
2. The planning team utilized screening criteria to conduct a coarse evaluation of the project proposals. The evaluation criteria factored in landowner/agency feasibility, habitat suitability, and stakeholder support.
3. The planning team's preliminary screening of projects was then reviewed by the land manager agency representatives, CPW staff and agency biologists to assess their feasibility.
4. All projects were reviewed and fine-tuned in a series of Steering Committee meetings, each focused on a different planning zone. During these meetings, routes and concepts were further modified and projects deemed appropriate for possible implementation were categorized in tiers.
5. The Steering Committee reviewed the final set of proposed project maps and the approved proposals were converted into the strategy recommendations.

These project proposals were complemented by management strategies addressing funding, parking, maintenance, visitor management, trail design and construction, resource protection, habitat conservation and enhancement, trail-based events, and accessibility, equity, and inclusion. These topics are described in the following *Management and Implementation* section.

## Trail Strategy Definitions

**Table 5. Trail Strategy Tier Definitions**

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Definition	Feasible project with high value, high support, and immediate need or benefits	Feasible project with high value and support, but is more challenging to implement, requires more time and collaboration, or is contingent on other projects	Compelling idea that is not feasible now and requires more information or changed circumstances to move forward
Initiation Timeframe	Short-term Could be initiated right away	Long-term	TBD Timeframe uncertain
Map color			

	Areas Requiring Additional Coordination
	<p><i>Additional coordination among multiple partners is necessary in these areas to address issues, define solutions, and work towards implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maxwell Falls/Cub Creek</li> <li>• Indian Creek East Access</li> <li>• Kenosha Pass</li> <li>• Guanella Pass</li> </ul>

## Implementation Expectations

The following points need to be considered with every project:

- Land managers are not *obligated* to implement projects identified in this plan.
- Recommended projects are subject to evaluation and approval by individual land managers and their leadership and oversight bodies.
- Each individual project will require additional funding, design, compliance with laws and regulations (including environmental clearances), and potential additional public input prior to implementation.

The Steering Committee also hopes and expects that these strategies are given serious and honest consideration, honoring the extensive collaborative effort among many stakeholders that contributed to the development of this plan.

### Habitat Conservation Areas

A large part of the overall trail and conservation strategy was the deliberate avoidance of areas that contain large tracts of sensitive or contiguous wildlife habitat. This approach – to plan new trails and infrastructure while minimizing new habitat fragmentation – was a major component of the Steering Committee’s efforts in this plan, and a key element of the overall conservation strategy. Specific areas that were maintained for wildlife include the following, by zone:

#### Zone 1: Evergreen – Conifer

- North Elk West – Areas west of the North Elk Trail, and the North Fork of North Elk Creek

#### Zone 2: Waterton – Indian Creek

- Waterton Canyon East – Ridgeline between Waterton Canyon and Roxborough
- Strontia Springs – Waterton Canyon north of Strontia Springs Reservoir
- Russell Ridge – Ridgelines and canyons west of the Indian Creek system, and south of the Colorado Trail

#### Zone 3: Buffalo Creek

- Gunbarrel – Large area west of the South Fork South Platte River, and east of Highway 126
- Green Mountain – Large area south of Green Mountain and the Little Scraggy Trail
- Miller Gulch West – Areas west of the Miller Gulch Trailhead, and south of the river canyon

#### Zone 4: Bailey – Lost Creek

- Lost Creek Wilderness – All undisturbed areas within the wilderness area
- Grant – Shawnee – South facing slopes above the river valley between Grant and Shawnee

#### Zone 5: Geneva Basin – Mount Evans

- Mount Evans Wilderness – All undisturbed areas within the wilderness area
- Whiteside – Area north of the Hall Valley and south of the Burning Bear Trail
- Hall Valley South – Area south of the Hall Valley and north of Kenosha Pass
- Upper Buno/Kirby – Areas west of the existing South Park Trail
- Upper Basin – Alpine areas north of Geneva Creek

### Summary of Strategy Recommendations

#### Outside 285 Master Plan Strategies, *by the numbers...*

- 58** Trail projects (new trails, maintenance, and reroutes)
- 26** New trails, routes, or experiences
- 120** Miles of new trail
- 17** Parking improvement projects
- 5** New trailheads or parking areas
- 11** Target areas for private land conservation
- 5** Target areas for habitat restoration

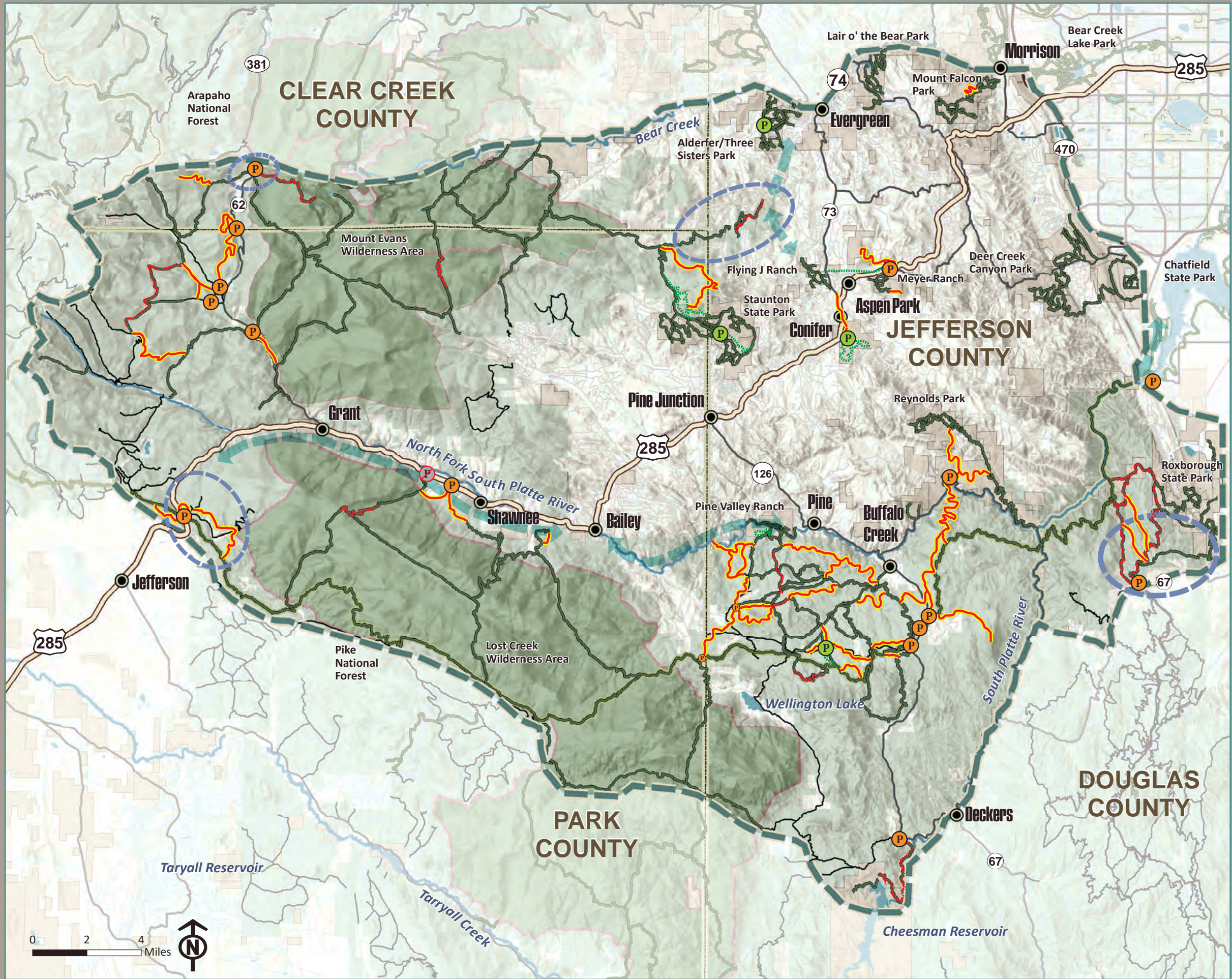
**Table 6. Summary of Project Quantities, by Zone**

	Zone 1: Evergreen – Conifer	Zone 2: Waterton – Indian Creek	Zone 3: Buffalo Creek	Zone 4: Bailey – Lost Creek	Zone 5: Geneva Basin – Mount Evans
Number of Trail Projects	11	4	25	8	10
Tier 1	2	2	7	3	3
Tier 2	6	2	10	4	4
Tier 3	3		8	1	3
Total Estimated Trail Miles	14	6	71	16	13
Trailhead Improvements	1	2	5	1	3
New Trailhead			2	1	2
Target Conservation Areas	5	2	3		1
Habitat Restoration Areas	1	1		1	2

Notes: Mileage estimates are approximate and would be refined during project planning and implementation.

Estimated mileage for regional connectors are not included, since the routes are currently unknown.

Recommended trail projects and trailhead improvements are shown on the following page (Figure 8). Figure 9 illustrates how the proposed trail projects relate to the habitat sensitivity analysis. Habitat conservation and restoration areas are shown on Figure 10.



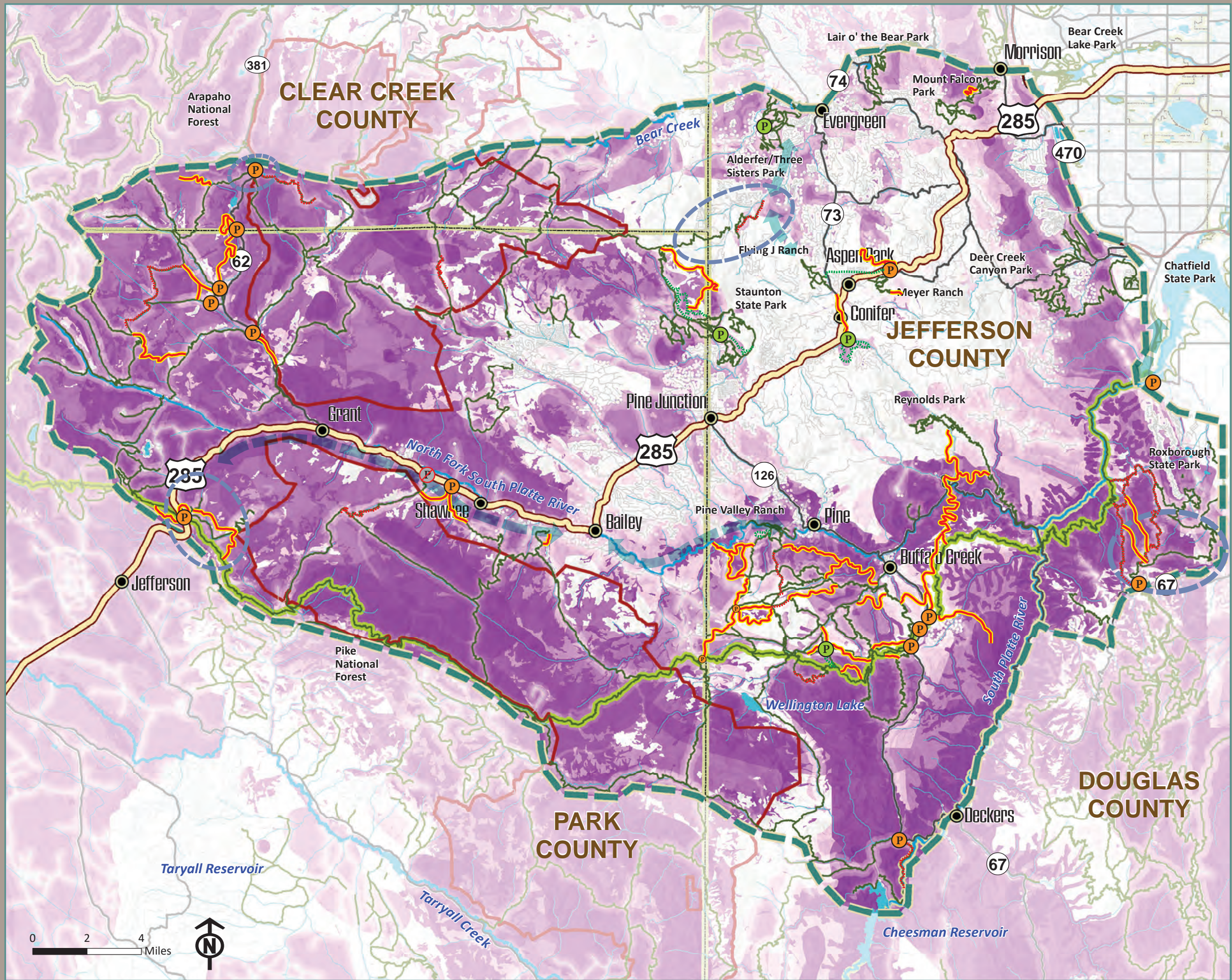
# Outside 285 Trail Strategy

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

## Proposed Trails

- Proposed Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection





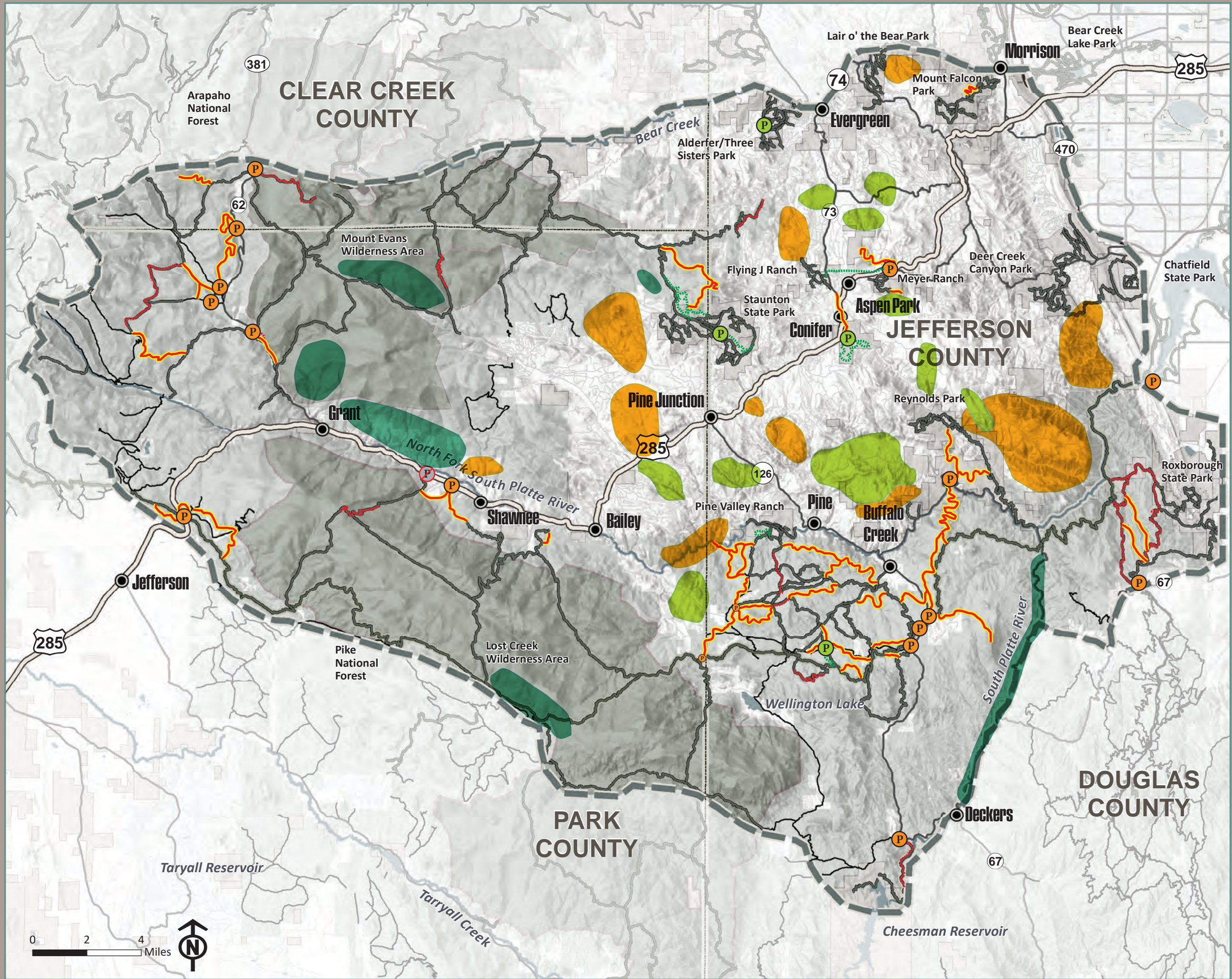
# Outside 285 Trail and Habitat Overlay

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Existing Trail or Road
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- Low Sensitivity
- Moderate Sensitivity  
Species of Concern
- High Sensitivity  
T&E/Sensitive Species Potential Habitat
- Critical Sensitivity  
T&E Species/Known Habitat

## Proposed Trails

- Proposed Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection





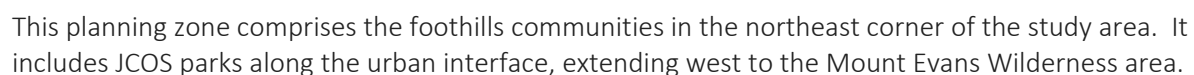
# Outside 285 Habitat Conservation and Restoration

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

## Proposed Trails

- Proposed Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Existing Conservation Easement (Private)
- Conservation Target Area (Private Lands)
- Habitat Restoration Area





- Enhance visitor experience and trail opportunities within or adjacent to existing trail systems, including JCOS parks and Staunton State Park
- Improve capacity and manage conflict in congested areas
- Address existing management and capacity issues at Maxwell Falls
- Proactively address increasing use and potential conflict on the Cub Creek Trail
- Provide backcountry trail experience and peak access in environmentally suitable locations
- Encourage private land conservation to protect some of the few remaining undeveloped areas

- Conservation of stream riparian habitat
- Conservation of the few remaining patches of undeveloped habitat in the Evergreen/Conifer area

## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

- Protection of production areas and migration corridors for elk
- Protection of elk winter ranges in the Pine Junction/North Elk areas
- Protection of mule deer winter ranges and corridors along the eastern hogbacks and foothills

### Trail Project Recommendations

**Table 7. Trail Projects – Zone 1: Evergreen - Conifer Zone**

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1.2 – Maxwell Falls maintenance 1.5 – Meyer Ranch – Legault Mountain	1.1 – Mt. Falcon Turkey Trot Expansion <b>1.3 – North Elk Phase 3</b> <b>1.4 – Black Mountain Access</b> 1.6 – Meyer Ranch – North Access 1.8 – Flying J Trail Expansion 1.9 – Newton/Beaver – Conifer Connection	1.7 – Meyer Ranch-Berrian Access 1.10 – Evergreen to Cub Creek Connection 1.11 – Maxwell Falls to Flying J
	<u>Trailhead:</u> Meyer Ranch Trailhead expansion	

Key projects in **bold** are outlined in greater detail in Appendix B.

#### **Tier 1 Projects**

- **1.2 – Maxwell Falls maintenance** – Conduct maintenance on existing trails within the Maxwell Falls area to mitigate erosion, shortcutting, and resource damage.
- **1.5 – Meyer Ranch – Legault Mountain** – Create formalized access to the summit of Legault Mountain at the top of Meyer Ranch Park.

#### **Tier 2 Projects**

- **1.1 – Mt. Falcon Turkey Trot Expansion** – Extend the hiking-only loop to the summit of Mt. Falcon.
- **1.3 – North Elk Phase 3** – Create a loop that completes a backcountry trail system in the area.
- **1.4 – Black Mountain Access** – Provide hiking access to the summit of Black Mountain from Staunton State Park and the North Elk trail system.
- **1.6 – Meyer Ranch – North Access** – Establish trail access in the northern section of Meyer Ranch Park.
- **1.8 – Flying J Ranch Expansion** – Create additional trail loops and trail connectivity within the park.
- **1.9 – Newton/Beaver – Conifer Connection** – Trail connection from Foxton Road to Conifer.
- **Meyer Ranch Trailhead Expansion** – Expand the size and capacity of the existing trailheads.

#### **Tier 3 Projects**

- **1.7 – Meyer Ranch – Berrian Access** – Establish connectivity between Meyer Ranch Park and Berrian Mountain (Denver Mountain Park).
- **1.10 – Evergreen to Cub Creek Connection** – Establish regional connectivity.
- **1.11 – Maxwell Falls to Flying J Ranch** – Establish regional connectivity.

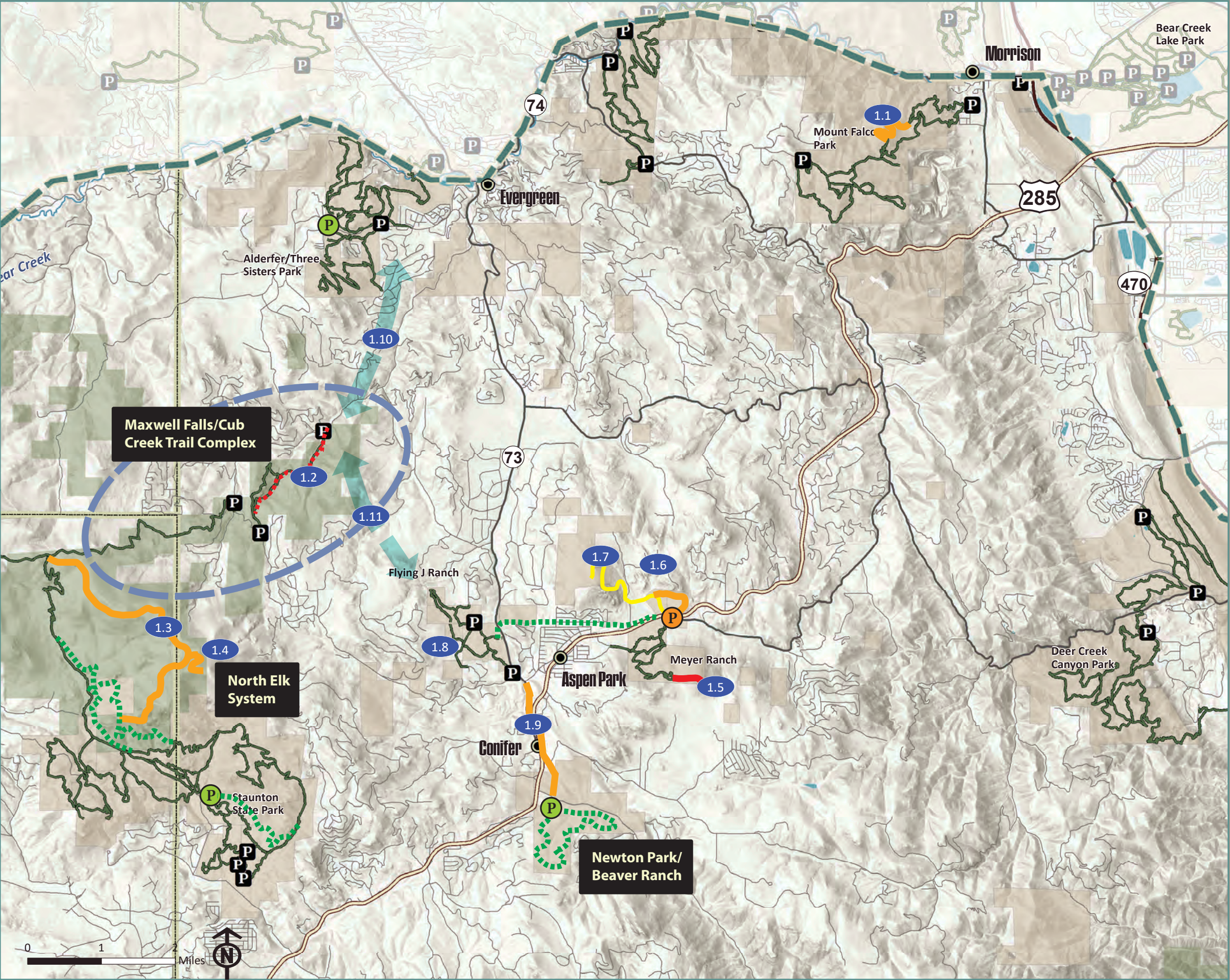


### Conservation and Enhancement Strategies

Based on habitat mapping, landscape analysis, and Steering Committee input, the following habitat conservation and enhancement strategies have been identified for this zone:

**Table 8. Conservation and Enhancement Strategies - Evergreen - Conifer Zone**

Location	Actions	Approx. Size (acres)	Notes
Mt. Falcon/Little Park Buffer	Private land conservation	450	High habitat value and continuity between adjacent parks
Flying J Buffer	Private land conservation	650	Moderate habitat value, continuity between adjacent parks, and potential trail connectivity
Deer Creek South Buffer	Private land conservation	1,500	High habitat value and movement corridor, continuity with adjacent parks
North Elk Riparian Enhancement	Riparian habitat enhancement	50	Noxious weed mitigation and willow plantings to enhance riparian community, and potential fuels reduction to encourage aspen recruitment and improved forage for big game species
Shaffer's Crossing South	Private land conservation	250	Moderate habitat value and important movement corridor
Elk Creek – Staunton West	Private land conservation	4,000	High habitat value and key movement corridor, with continuity to public lands



# Outside 285

## Zone 1

## Evergreen/Conifer

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

### Proposed Trails

- 1.12 Project ID
- Tier 1 Trail
- Tier 2 Trail
- Tier 3 Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection



### Area Requiring Additional Coordination – Maxwell Falls/Cub Creek

#### Background and Issues

The Maxwell Falls and Cub Creek trails are located at the interface with rural mountain subdivisions, and are disconnected from other lands and areas that are managed by the Arapaho National Forest, Clear Creek Ranger District (CCRD).

The Maxwell Falls Trails are a very popular hiking destination, served by two small trailheads. Limited parking availability has resulted in unsafe and congested spillover parking onto Brook Forest Road, while heavy hiking and dog use and limited maintenance capacity has resulted in significant trail erosion, trail braiding, and social trails.

The Cub Creek Trail is a steep and rocky route that has historically been an obscure access to the Mount Evans Wilderness Area. In recent years, this route has become more popular, and is a destination for mountain bikers seeking a steep and rugged experience. This increase in use has also coincided with the relatively new regional connection to Staunton State Park. These conditions have resulted in ongoing degradation of the existing trail tread, as well as conflicts with hikers primarily originating from adjacent subdivisions.

#### Objectives

The overall objective for the Maxwell Falls area is to improve trail conditions and circulation through increased maintenance and the addition of loop trail options; and to address issues with parking capacity and management. The overall objective for the Cub Creek Trail is to reduce conflict and congestion along the trail itself, while also providing loop opportunities for local hikers and other recreationists.

#### Proposed Projects

The following projects were proposed to meet the objectives for this area:

- **1.2 – Maxwell Falls maintenance** – Conduct maintenance on existing trails within the Maxwell Falls area to mitigate erosion, shortcutting, and resource damage.
- **Maxwell Falls parking expansion** – Expand parking on the east and/or west sides to accommodate existing use.
- **MF Trail Expansion** – Establish loop trails to improve experiences and reduce congestion.
- **Cub Creek Lower Reroute** – Reroute section of trail to improve experience and sustainability.
- **Cub Creek Lower Loops** – Improve and designate existing social trails to provide loop trail opportunities and disperse use.
- **Cub Creek Climbing Trail** – Develop a secondary trail within the corridor to create loops and reduce congestion and conflict.

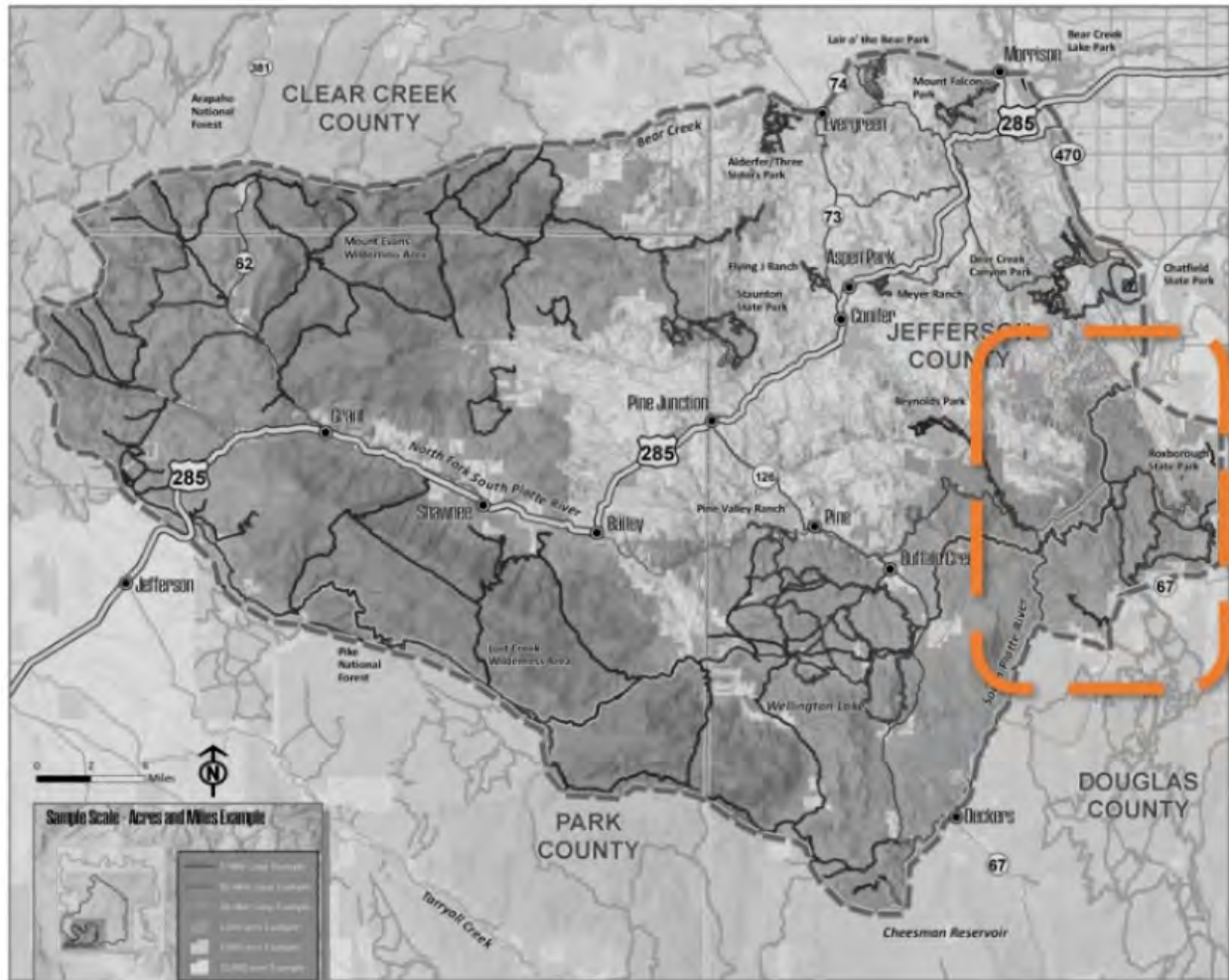
### **Planning Considerations**

The existing issues and future recreation opportunities in this area remain unresolved. During the Outside 285 planning process, this area was discussed at length by the Steering Committee and CCRD staff. The existing issues are complicated by limited land area and lack of personnel to manage the area, and CCRD is not comfortable moving forward with any new trail projects at this time. CCRD staff indicated that they may be willing to consider recreation improvements in the future if it were part of more comprehensive agreements with other agencies to assist with or take over management of these trails. While they recognize the Maxwell/Cub Creek area has issues that need attention, the area is currently not a priority for CCRD, and they require more time to consider options and plan for the area.

### **Next Steps**

Continue conversations between key partners, including CCRD, SPRD, COMBA, Colorado Mountain Club, and potentially Jefferson County Open Space to inventory existing conditions, understand short- and long-term issues, identify potential solutions, and explore joint-management opportunities.

### Zone 2: Waterton – Indian Creek



This planning zone comprises the foothills communities in the southeast corner of the study area. It includes Waterton Canyon and Roxborough State Park, extending west to Foxton Road.

Objectives for this zone include the following:

- Improve capacity and manage conflict in congested areas, including Waterton Canyon
- Improve connectivity between existing trailheads, the Colorado Trail, and the Indian Creek trail system
- Proactively address increasing use and access constraints between public lands and surrounding communities
- Protect critical habitat in the canyon, movement corridors for wildlife, and large areas of undisturbed habitat
- Protect the environmental resources and unique visitor experience within Roxborough State Park
- Encourage private land conservation to protect key wildlife habitats and movement corridors

Wildlife and habitat resources that were factored into the strategy recommendations include the following:

- Conservation of stream riparian habitat and habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse
- Protection of lambing and production and winter habitat for bighorn sheep
- Protection of nest sites and buffers for golden eagle and peregrine falcon
- Conservation of intact critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl
- Protection of migration corridors between the Chatfield Basin and the foothills habitats
- Protection of winter range and migration corridors for mule deer
- Protection of intact roosting habitat for wild turkey

### Trail Project Recommendations

**Table 9. Trail Projects – Zone 2: Waterton - Indian Creek**

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<b>2.1 – Indian Creek Trail Improvements</b> <b>2.2 – Indian Creek Social Trails</b>	2.3 – Highline Canal Connection 2.4 – Waterton - Chatfield	
<i>Trailhead:</i> Indian Creek Trailhead expansion		<i>Trailhead:</i> Waterton Canyon parking improvements

Key projects in **bold** are outlined in greater detail in Appendix B.

Several trail concepts were proposed to address access concerns near Roxborough State Park and the Indian Creek trail system; CPW is not interested in pursuing any new projects on state land, and none are recommended for implementation.

#### **Tier 1 Projects**

- **2.1 – Indian Creek Trail Improvements** – Conduct heavy maintenance (drainage/tread improvements, re-design, and reroutes) on existing trails.
- **2.2 – Indian Creek Social Trails** – Establish, improve, and designate primary social trails/routes within the system to enhance recreation access and reduce resource damage; close undesirable social trails.
- **Indian Creek Trailhead Expansion** – Expand the size and capacity of the existing trailhead, and utilize/expand overflow parking to the east.

#### **Tier 2 Projects**

- **2.3 – Highline Canal Connection** – Establish trail connectivity between the Waterton Canyon Trailhead and the Highline Canal Trail.
- **2.4 – Waterton – Chatfield** – Establish and improve regional trail connectivity between Waterton Canyon and Chatfield State Park.

#### **Tier 3 Projects**

- **Waterton Canyon Parking Improvements** – Improve capacity and/or management (e.g., fee or reservation system) of parking at the existing Waterton Canyon Trailhead.

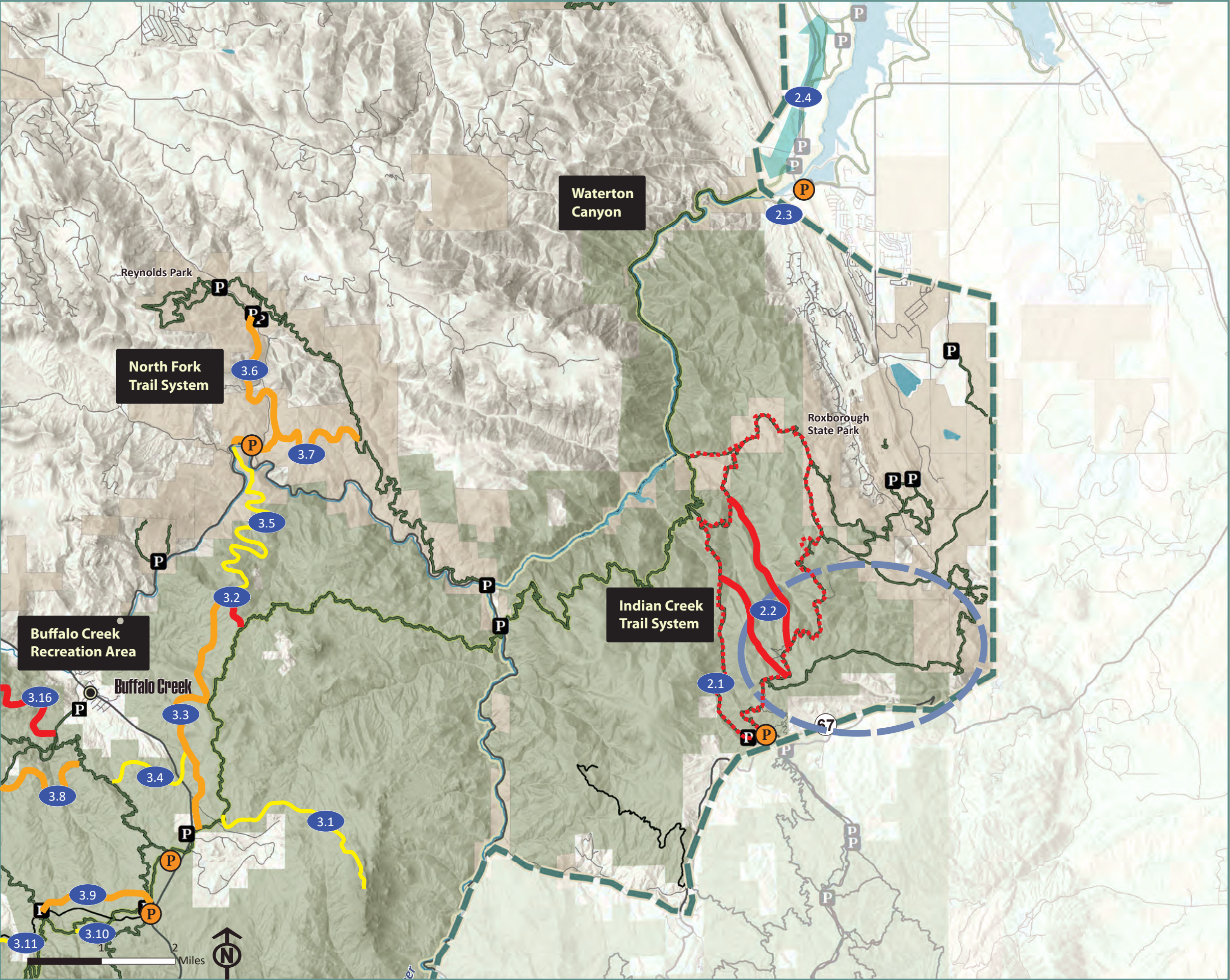


### Conservation and Enhancement Strategies

Based on habitat mapping, landscape analysis, and Steering Committee input, the following habitat conservation and enhancement strategies have been identified for this zone:

**Table 10. Conservation and Enhancement Strategies – Zone 2: Waterton - Indian Creek**

Location	Actions	Approx. Size (acres)	Notes
Waterton West	Private land conservation	1,700	High habitat value and critical movement corridors
Strontia North – Willow Creek	Private land conservation	2,000	High habitat value and key movement corridors, with continuity to public lands
South Platte Stream Restoration	Riparian habitat enhancement	n/a	Streambank protection and instream habitat enhancement along the South Fork



# Outside 285

## Zone 2

### Waterton Canyon/Indian Creek

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

#### Proposed Trails

- 2.12 Project ID
- Tier 1 Trail
- Tier 2 Trail
- Tier 3 Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection



### Area Requiring Additional Coordination – Indian Creek East Access

#### Background and Issues

Located at the urban interface on the southeastern edge of the study area, the eastern access to the Indian Creek area is a mosaic of public lands managed by the USFS-SPRD, CPW (Roxborough State Park and Sharptail Ridge State Wildlife Area), Douglas County Open Space, and Denver Water.

The Indian Creek trail system can be accessed from the east by the Ringtail Trail, and Douglas County Road 5 (DC5), which runs through Roxborough State Park and a private, gated subdivision. The Sharptail Trail connects between DC5 and access points to the north but is restricted to hiking and equestrian access only. As a result, there is no bike access from the Indian Creek and Ringtail Trails to access points further east, so bikes that use the Ringtail Trail must return to the Indian Creek system on DC 5. Illegal bike access along the Sharptail Trail and through the private subdivision does occur, and will likely be exacerbated over time by significant residential growth in the vicinity.

#### Objectives

The overall objective for the Indian Creek East area is to establish appropriate and sustainable multi-use access between Indian Creek, Ringtail, and other potential access points to the east in a manner that does not adversely impact the management or resources of Roxborough State Park or Sharptail Ridge State Wildlife Area.

#### Proposed Projects

The following projects were proposed to meet the objectives for this area:

- **Roxborough – CR5 Alternate** – Implement a bypass trail that bypasses a steep section of road and a private inholding, improving recreational access along County Road 5.
- **Roxborough Eastern Access** – Implement a multi-use trail connection between North Roxborough Park Road and County Road 5. This project is not supported by CPW.

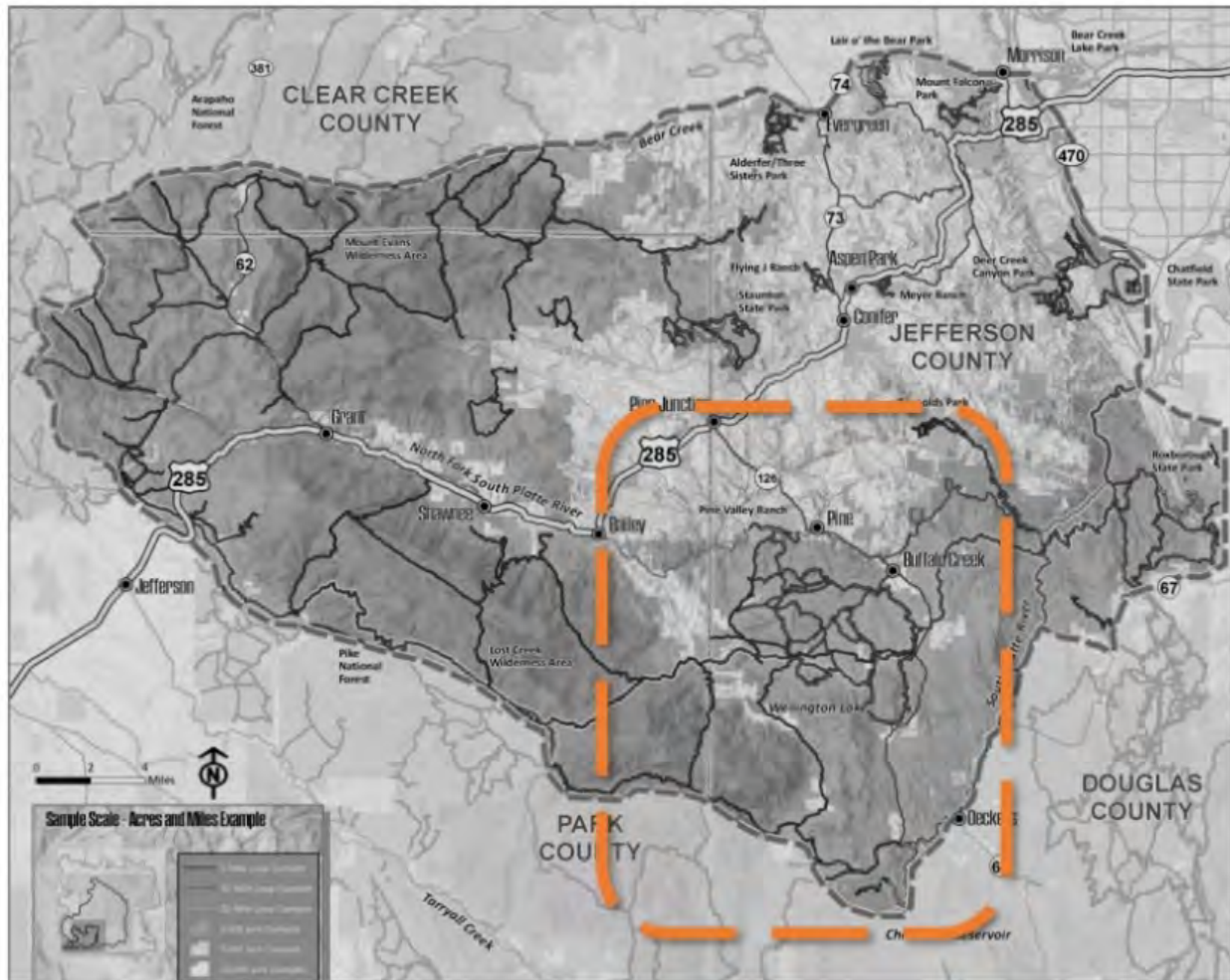
#### Planning Considerations

The existing issues and future recreation opportunities in this area remain unresolved. During the Outside 285 planning process, this area was discussed at length by the Steering Committee, CPW staff, and Douglas County Open Space staff. The existing issues are complicated by limited access to public lands, a mix of public land ownership, and wildlife habitat protection priorities. The access issues in this area will likely increase over the next decade as overall use and local access demands increase.

#### Next Steps

Continue conversations between key partners, including USFS-SPRD, CPW, Douglas County Open Space, COMBA, and Denver Water to further understand short- and long-term issues and to identify potential solutions.

### Zone 3: Buffalo Creek



This planning zone comprises the existing Buffalo Creek Recreation Area, including adjacent areas to the east and to the west.

Objectives for this zone include the following:

- Enhance visitor experience and trail loop opportunities within or adjacent to the existing Buffalo Creek system
- Expand trailhead capacity and management coordination along Highway 126
- Reduce congestion and conflict along the Colorado Trail
- Improve regional connectivity to Chair Rocks and the North Fork Trail
- Establish new trail opportunities on the west side of the system to disperse visitors and parking congestion
- Improve routine maintenance and weed mitigation throughout the Buffalo Creek Trail system
- Encourage private land conservation to protect large undeveloped habitat areas north of the Buffalo Creek Trail system

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Wildlife and habitat resources that were factored into the strategy recommendations include the following:

- Conservation of stream riparian habitat and habitat for the Preble’s meadow jumping mouse
- Protection of nest sites and buffers for peregrine falcon
- Conservation of intact critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl
- Protection of production habitat and winter ranges for elk and mule deer
- Conservation of large, intact habitat blocks over 5,000 acres in size
- Protection of significant migration corridors to the west and to the north
- Prevent introduction of non-native plants and support treatment of existing populations

### Trail Project Recommendations

**Table 11. Trail Projects – Zone 3: Buffalo Creek**

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
3.2 – Chair Rocks Trail 3.13 – Green Mountain trail maintenance 3.14 – Tramway Reroute <b>3.15 – Baldy – Sandy Wash Connector</b> <b>3.16 – Miller Rocks Connector</b> 3.17 – Homestead Trail Reroute 3.25 – Gill Trail Improvements	<b>3.3 – Top of the World Loop</b> <b>3.6 – Foxton to Reynolds Connector</b> <b>3.7 – Foxton to North Fork Connector</b> 3.8 – Kitty-Shinglemill Connector 3.9 – Buffalo Burn – Shinglemill Connector <b>3.18 – River Canyon Loop</b> 3.19 – Miller – Skipper Connector 3.21 – CT – Miller Gulch Connector 3.22 – Miller Gulch – Gashouse Connector 3.23 – Redskin/Jerome Mtn Loop	3.1 – Long Scraggy Hike 3.4 – Nice Kitty Connector <b>3.5 – Chair Rocks/Foxton Connector</b> 3.10 – Little Scraggy Bypass 3.11 – 550 Connector 3.12 – CT – Green Mountain Reroute 3.20 – River Canyon Access 3.24 – Denver & SP RR Grade
<u>Trailheads:</u> Little Scraggy Trailhead Expansion Buffalo Creek Trailhead Improvements Miller Gulch Trailhead Improvements	<u>Trailheads:</u> Little Scraggy North Trailhead/126 Parking Foxton-area Trailhead Chessman/Gill Trailhead Improvements	<u>Trailheads:</u> Rolling Creek Trailhead Improvements

Key projects in **bold** are outlined in greater detail in Appendix B.

### Tier 1 Projects

- **3.2 – Chair Rocks Trail** – Improve and designate existing social trail to Chair Rocks, which is a landmark, hiking, and climbing destination.
- **3.13 – Green Mountain Trail Maintenance** – Maintenance and reroutes in the upper reaches of the trail to improve experience and sustainability.
- **3.14 – Tramway Reroute** – Complete the reroute of the lower Tramway Trail, getting it out of the riparian corridor.
- **3.15 – Baldy – Sandy Wash Connector** – Establish new route connecting the top of Baldy Trail to upper Sandy Wash, eliminating recreation access along the Miller Gulch road.

- **3.16 – Miller Rocks Connector** – New trail connections along the rocky ridgeline between the Buffalo Creek and Pine Valley Ranch trailheads.
- **3.17 – Homestead Trail Reroute** – Reroute existing Homestead Trail to improve sustainability and more logical trail junctions and circulation.
- **3.25 – Gill Trail Improvements** – Maintenance, reroutes, social trail management, sanitation, and parking improvements along the Gill Trail to access Cheesman Canyon and the South Platte River.

### ***Tier 2 Projects***

- **3.3 – Top of the World Loop** – New trail along the high ridgeline between Chair Rocks and Highway 126, creating a loop with the Colorado Trail.
- **3.6 – Foxton to Reynolds Connector** – Connection from Foxton area to Reynolds Park, creating a loop with the North Fork Trail.
- **3.7 – Foxton to North Fork Connector** – Connection from Foxton area to the North Fork Trail, creating a loop.
- **3.8 – Kitty-Shinglemill Connector** – Connection from lower Nice Kitty to the bottom of Shinglemill Trail, to reduce congestion and introduce directional management on Nice Kitty Trail.
- **3.9 – Buffalo Burn – Shinglemill Connector** – Trail connection between existing trail to remain north of Road 550 and reduce traffic on the Colorado Trail.
- **3.18 – River Canyon Loop** – Loop trail off of the Buck Gulch Trail, with a potential spur to provide views and future access to the river canyon.
- **3.19 – Miller – Skipper Connector** – Trail connection between the Miller Gulch and Buck Gulch trailheads, providing an alternative to Road 553.
- **3.21 – CT – Miller Gulch Connector** – Trail connection from the Colorado Trail near the Rolling Creek Trailhead to the Miller Gulch Trailhead, creating a west loop to the Buffalo Creek system.
- **3.22 – Miller Gulch – Gashouse Connector** – New trail adjacent to existing road.
- **3.23 – Redskin/Jerome Mountain Loop** – New loop trail that ascends to the summit ridge, with a bike-oriented descent trail to provide a new destination experience in the western portion of Buffalo Creek.



### ***Tier 3 Projects***

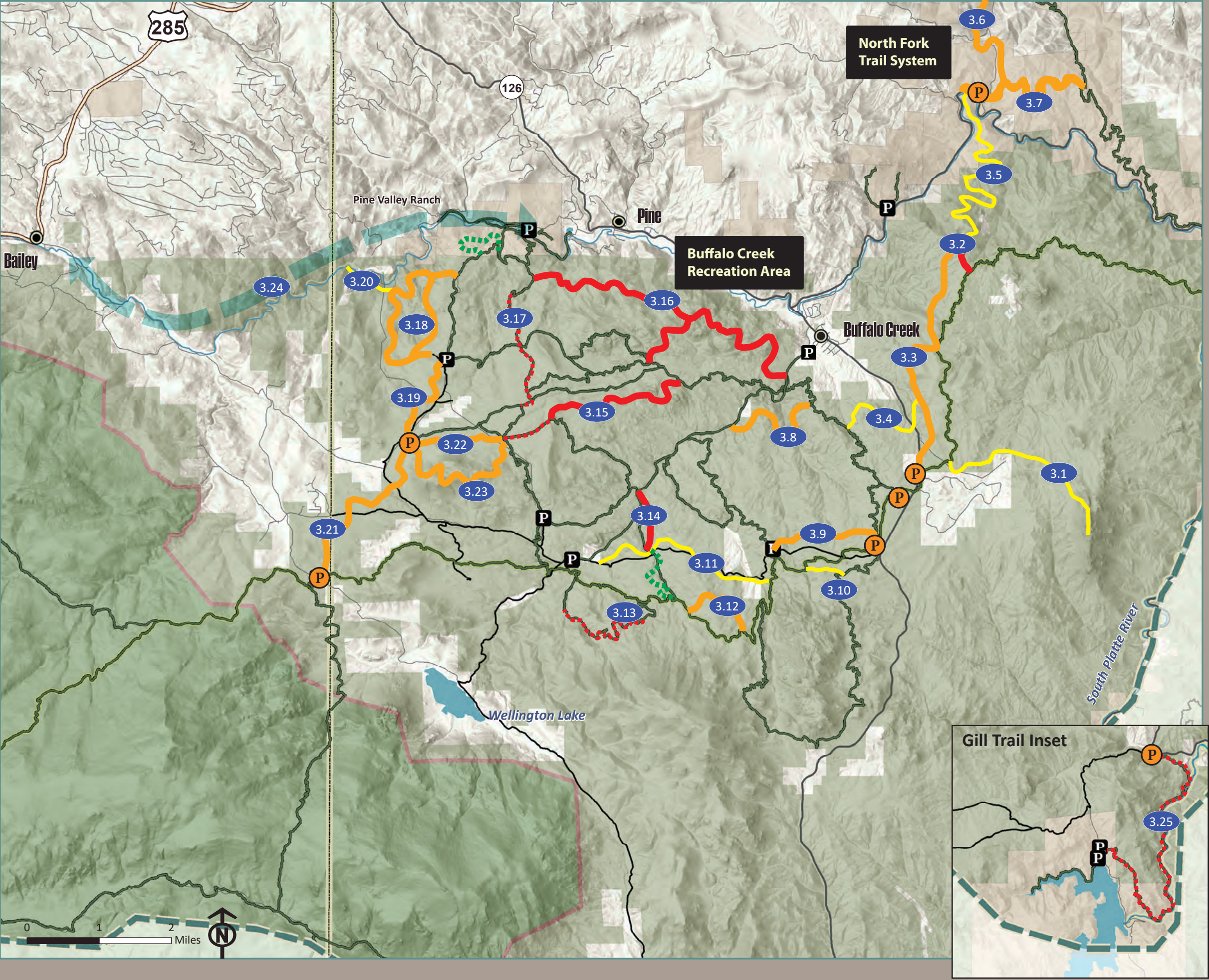
- **3.1 – Long Scraggy Hike** – Improvements and designation of existing social trail to access the summit of Long Scraggy Mountain.
- **3.2 – Nice Kitty Connector** – Connection from the Top of the World loop to the Nice Kitty Trail.
- **3.5 – Chair Rocks/Foxton Connector** – Regional connection trail from the upper ridge near Chair Rocks down to the river canyon near Foxton, creating a regional loop opportunity.
- **3.10 – Little Scraggy Bypass** – Short connector between the Little Scraggy and Colorado trails to reduce traffic on the Colorado Trail.
- **3.11 – 550 Connector** – Trail connection along the Road 550 corridor to connect camp sites into the trail system and reduce pedestrian/bike traffic on the road.
- **3.12 – CT – Green Mountain Reroute** – Reroute of the existing Colorado Trail between the Little Scraggy and Green Mountain Trail junctions, to improve experience and sustainability.
- **3.20 – River Canyon Access** – Access trail to connect between the river canyon (BC24) and the Buffalo Creek trail system.
- **3.24 – Denver & SP RR Grade** – Designated access along the publicly-owned portions of the railroad grade along the North Fork South Platte River.

### **Conservation and Enhancement Strategies**

Based on habitat mapping, landscape analysis, and Steering Committee input, the following habitat conservation and enhancement strategies have been identified for this zone:

**Table 12. Conservation and Enhancement Strategies – Zone 3: Buffalo Creek**

Location	Actions	Approx. Size (acres)	Notes
Lower Elk Creek	Private land conservation	500	Moderate habitat value and movement corridor adjacent to public/conserved land
Resort Creek East	Private land conservation	600	Moderate habitat value and movement corridor adjacent to public/conserved land
North Fork River Canyon	Private land conservation	400	Moderate habitat value and movement corridor, and key recreation opportunities adjacent to public/conserved land



# Outside 285

## Zone 3

### Buffalo Creek

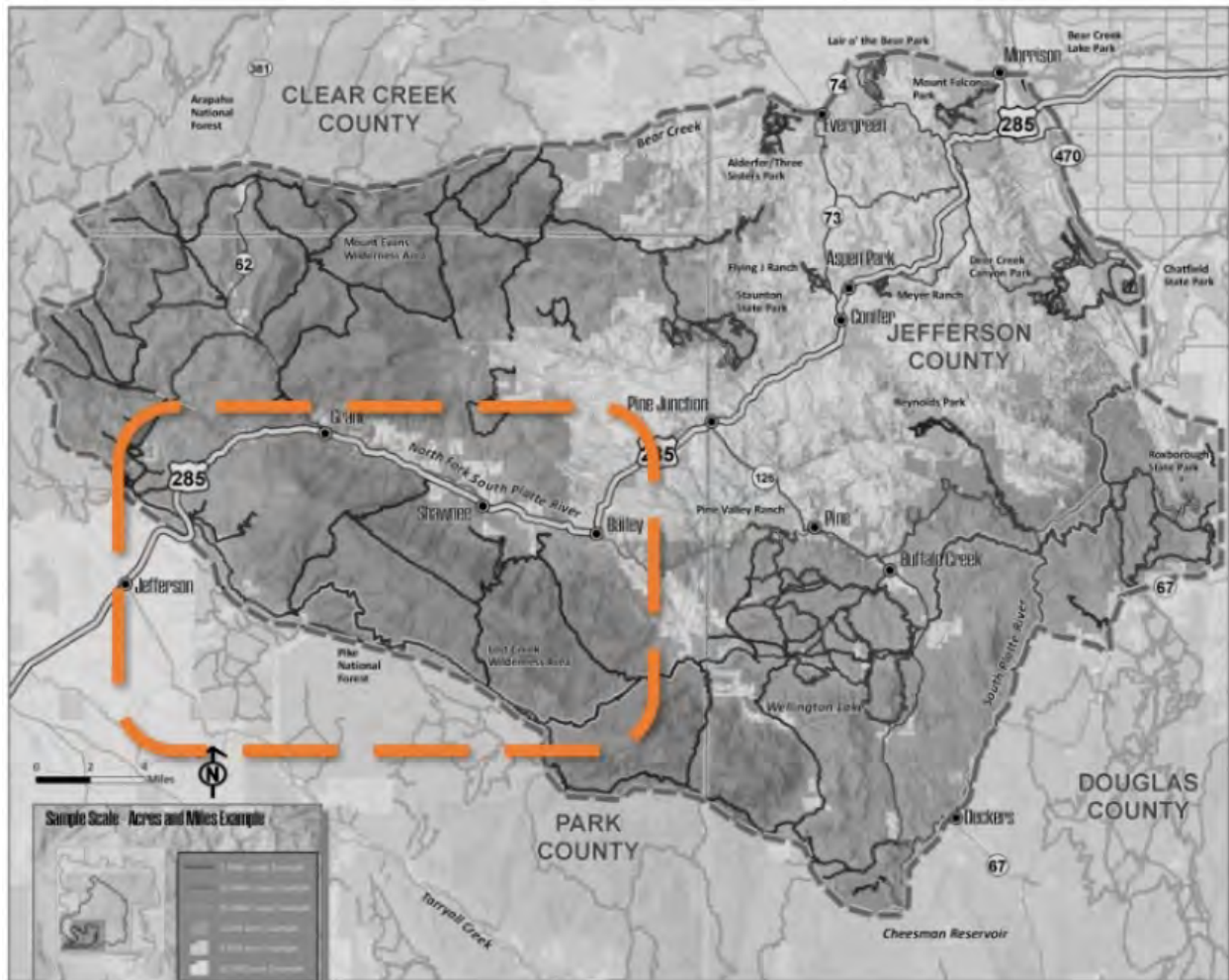
- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

#### Proposed Trails

- 3.12 Project ID
- Tier 1 Trail
- Tier 2 Trail
- Tier 3 Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection



### Zone 4: Bailey – Lost Creek



This planning zone comprises the Kenosha Mountains extending from Bailey west to Kenosha Pass.

Objectives for this zone include the following:

- Minimize new trail or infrastructure development within the Lost Creek Wilderness
- Improve trailhead capacity and safety at the Ben Tyler and Kenosha Pass trailheads
- Reduce congestion and conflict along the Colorado Trail at Kenosha Pass
- Protect critical wildlife habitat and movement corridors

Wildlife and habitat resources that were factored into the strategy recommendations include the following:

- Conservation of stream riparian habitat
- Protection of alpine tundra and ptarmigan habitat
- Protection of forest habitat and landscape linkages for Canada lynx
- Projection of lambing and production habitat, winter ranges, and migration corridors for bighorn sheep
- Migration corridors for elk between the Kenosha Mountains and South Park

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- Protection of production habitat and winter ranges for elk and mule deer and priority habitat for moose
- Conservation of large, intact habitat blocks over 5,000 acres in size
- Protection of significant north-south migration corridors

### Trail Project Recommendations

**Table 13. Trail Projects – Zone 4: Bailey - Lost Creek**

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<b>4.2 – Brookside AG Extension</b> <b>4.3 – New Trailhead Connection</b> <b>4.5 – Kenosha West Alternate Trail</b>	4.1 – Payne Gulch Loop 4.4 – Ben Tyler Maintenance/ Reroutes 4.6 – Kenosha East Loop 4.7 – Kenosha Wetlands Overlook Improvements	4.8 – Bailey – Kenosha Trail
<i>Trailheads:</i> <b>Kenosha Pass Trailhead</b> <b>Ben Tyler Trailhead</b>		

Key projects in **bold** are outlined in greater detail in Appendix B.

#### **Tier 1 Projects**

- **4.2 – Brookside AG Extension** – Improved connection between the existing Brookside AG Trail and a new trailhead site near Shawnee.
- **4.3 – New Trailhead Connection** – New connector or reroute of the Ben Tyler Trail to connect to a new trailhead site near Shawnee.
- **4.5 – Kenosha Pass West Alternate Trail** – New trail loop on the west side of the pass to relieve congestion and conflict on the Colorado Trail.
- **Kenosha Pass Trailhead** – Improve and potentially expand parking at the top of the pass to manage capacity and improve safety during busy periods.
- **Ben Tyler Trailhead** – Relocate the existing Ben Tyler trailhead to a new site near Shawnee to manage capacity and improve safety.

#### **Tier 2 Projects**

- **4.1 – Payne Gulch Loop** – Improvements and designation of existing social trails to create a short loop near the Payne Gulch Trailhead.
- **4.4 – Ben Tyler Maintenance/Reroutes** – Maintenance and short routes to improve the sustainability of the Ben Tyler Trail.
- **4.6 – Kenosha East Loop** – New trail loop on the west side of the pass to provide a new recreation experience and relieve congestion on the westbound Colorado Trail.
- **4.7 – Kenosha Wetlands Overlook Improvements** – Maintenance and improvements to the existing wetlands overlook trail for interpretation and accessibility.

#### **Tier 3 Projects**

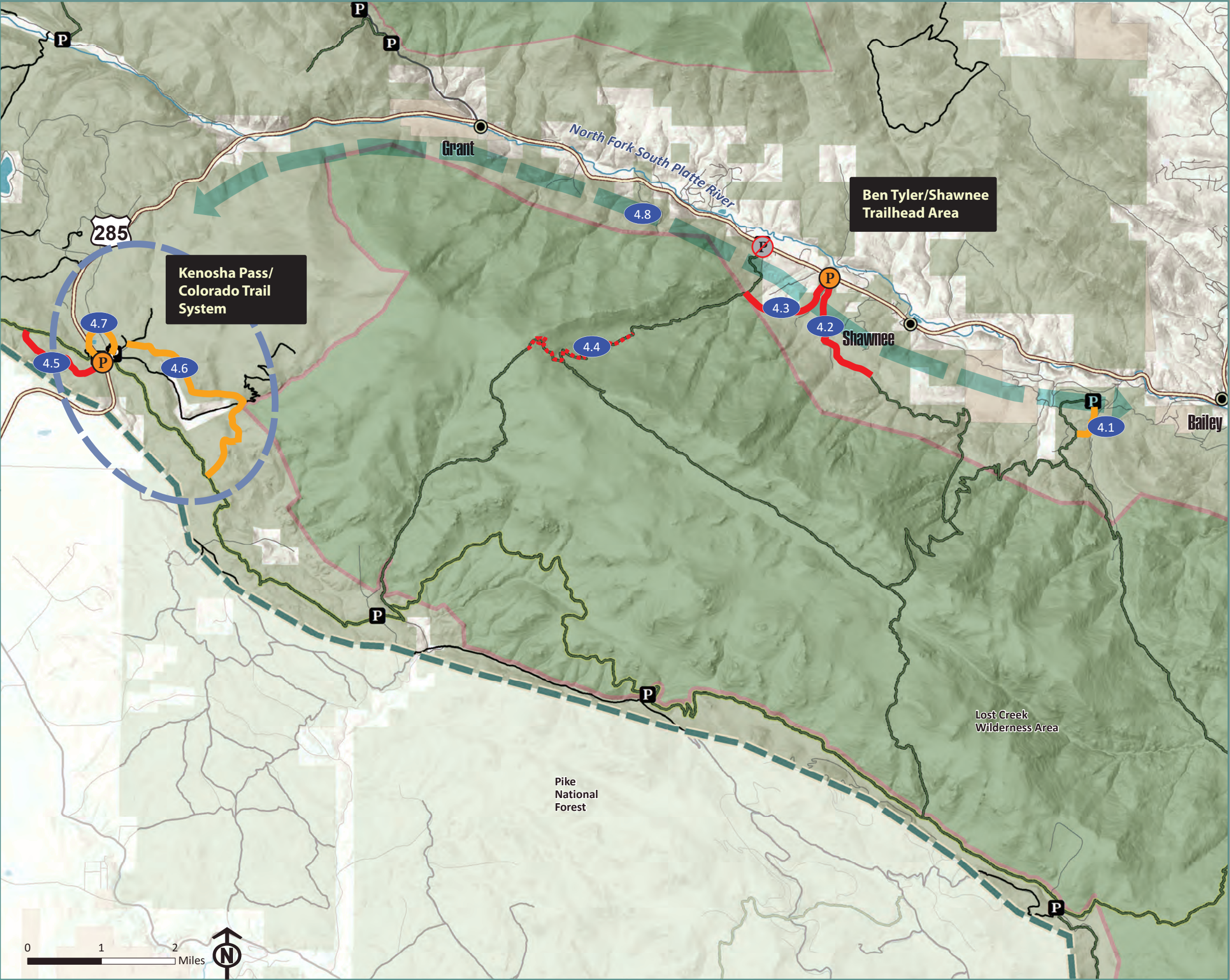
- **4.8 – Bailey – Kenosha Trail** – New regional trail connection between Bailey and Kenosha Pass.

### Conservation and Enhancement Strategies

Based on habitat mapping, landscape analysis, and Steering Committee input, the following habitat conservation and enhancement strategies have been identified for this zone:

**Table 14. Conservation and Restoration Strategies – Zone 4: Bailey - Lost Creek**

Location	Actions	Approx. Size (acres)	Notes
Lost Park Habitat Enhancement	Habitat enhancement	1,000	Forest management/clearing to improve wildlife habitat



# Outside 285

## Zone 4

### Bailey - Lost Creek

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

### Proposed Trails

- 4.12 Project ID
- Tier 1 Trail
- Tier 2 Trail
- Tier 3 Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection



### Area Requiring Additional Coordination – Kenosha Pass

#### Background and Issues

Located at the western edge of the study area, Kenosha Pass is a significant landmark and destination for travelers and recreationists. Besides being a notable landmark and wayside stop for travelers along US Highway 285, it is also a recreational destination and crossroads. The summit of Kenosha Pass has two campgrounds managed by the Forest Service and is an access point for the Colorado Trail. Designated parking at the top of the pass is limited and is generally served by informal pull-offs from the highway and the small unpaved road extending to the east (Forest Service Road 126).

The segments of the Colorado Trail extending east and west from the pass are popular for recreational trail use; eastbound trail use is more passive from the pass to the Lost Creek Wilderness boundary, about 7 trail miles to the southeast, while the westbound trail is a popular mountain bike route between the pass and Georgia Pass, 12 trail miles to the west. These trail routes, particularly westbound, are very popular destinations during the summer and fall months. This use becomes extreme during the aspen “leaf peeping” weeks in late September and early October.

This high use and results in two primary issues:

- **Parking/Roadway Congestion** – On busy days during weekends and peak times, parking at Kenosha Pass is an issue. The designated parking areas fill up quickly, followed by parking along the shoulders of Forest Service Road 126 and Highway 285. Shoulder parking can extend for ½ mile along either side of the pass. This shoulder parking, combined with pedestrians and bicyclists along the highway to reach the trails, creates dangerous conditions and contributes to weekend traffic jams.
- **Trail Congestion and Conflict** – In addition to the parking congestion and hazards, trail use congestion on busy weekends results in trail congestion, conflict, and a negative overall experience for hikers and mountain bikers along the westbound section of the Colorado Trail within the first mile of the pass (beyond that point, visitors and conflict seems to dissipate though the trail does require maintenance).

These issues will be exacerbated as more trail users seek out destinations that are farther from Denver, or are displaced from other trail areas that are closer to the city.

#### Objectives

The overall objective for Kenosha Pass is to establish expanded, manageable, and safe parking and trail circulation that provides for safe and efficient traffic flow and does not adversely impact scenic and natural values and improves management and experiences of multiple recreation destinations.

### Proposed Projects

The following projects were proposed to meet the objectives for this area:

- **Kenosha Pass Trailhead** – Improve and potentially expand parking at the top of the pass to manage capacity and improve safety during busy periods.
- **4.5 – Kenosha Pass West Alternate Trail** – Create a new trail loop within the first mile on the west side of the pass to relieve congestion and conflict on the Colorado Trail.
- **4.6 – Kenosha East Loop** – Create a new trail loop on the west side of the pass to provide a new recreation experience that is compatible with adjacent campgrounds and to relieve congestion on the westbound Colorado Trail.
- **4.7 – Kenosha Wetlands Overlook Improvements** – Maintenance and improvements to the existing wetlands overlook trail for interpretation and accessibility.

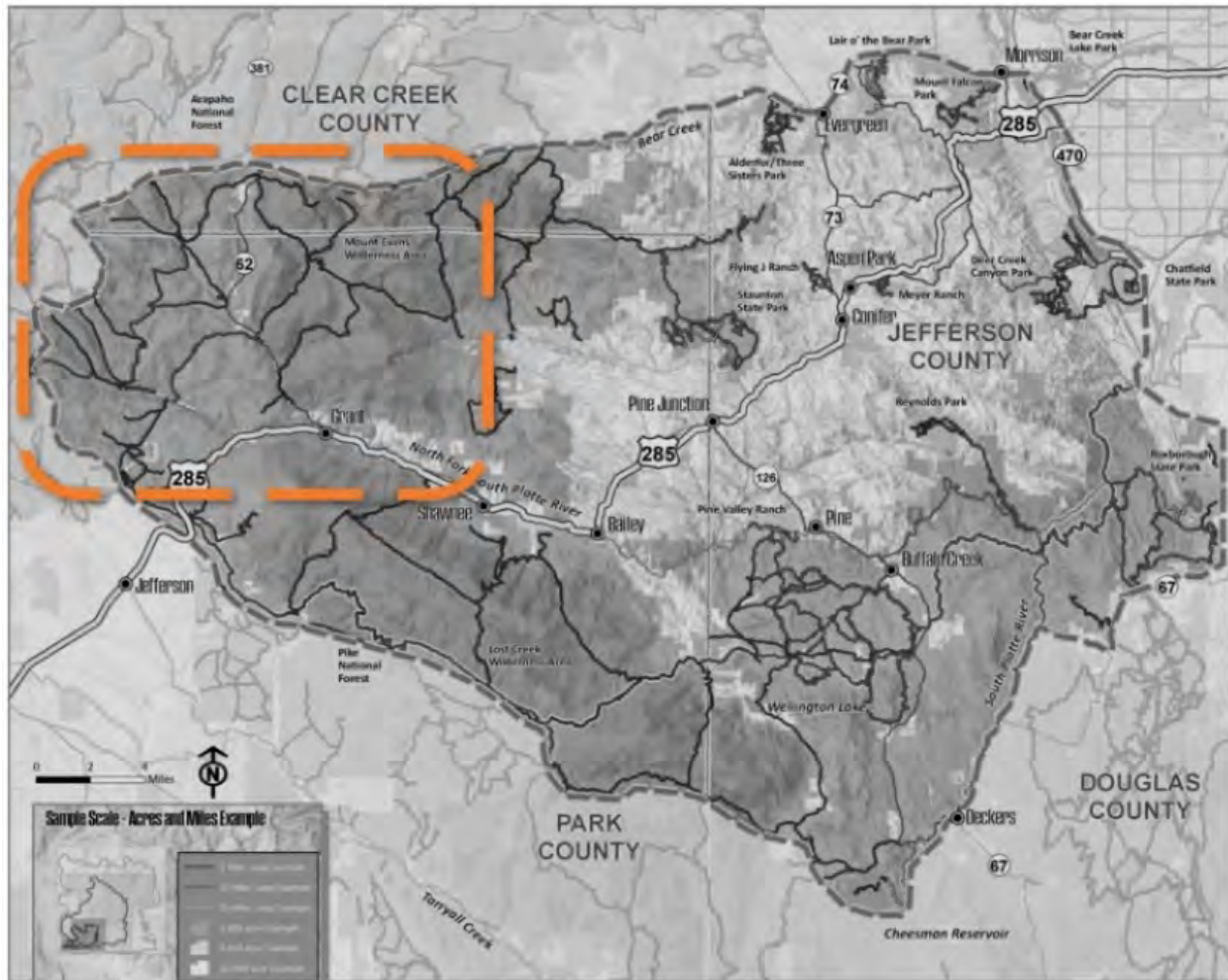
### Planning Considerations

Preliminary discussions during the Outside 285 planning process indicated a high level of support and collaboration to address the issues on Kenosha Pass. Opportunities were discussed at length with Park County, CDOT, CPW, and Forest Service staff, including preliminary design concepts and potential federal grant opportunities. The proposed west alternate trail (LC5) can be implemented independently, because it addresses existing trail congestion, does not interface the parking areas, and would not be a trail destination in itself. The other trail projects should be considered in concert with overall parking and congestion concepts. Another key partner may be the Colorado Trail Foundation, who was not involved in this planning process.

### Next Steps

Continue conversations between key partners, including SPRD, Park County, CDOT, South Park Ranger District, COMBA, Colorado Mountain Club, and Colorado Trail Foundation to develop concepts, funding, and support to address improvements at the top of the pass.

### Zone 5: Geneva Basin – Mount Evans



This planning zone comprises the northwest corner of the study area, including Hall Valley, Geneva Creek, Guanella Pass and the Mount Evans Wilderness Area.

Objectives for this zone include the following:

- Minimize new trail or infrastructure development within the Mount Evans Wilderness
- Improve visitor use management and parking capacity at the summit of Guanella Pass
- Enhance visitor experience and trail loop opportunities and regional connectivity
- Provide new, backcountry trail experiences in suitable locations
- Protect and enhance critical bighorn sheep and white tail ptarmigan habitat
- Protect large areas of undisturbed wildlife habitat and movement corridors

Wildlife and habitat resources that were factored into the strategy recommendations include the following:

- Conservation of stream riparian habitat
- Protection of forest habitat and landscape linkages for Canada lynx
- Protection of alpine tundra and ptarmigan habitat

- Projection of lambing and production habitat, winter ranges, and migration corridors for bighorn sheep
- Protection of production habitat and migration corridors for elk, mule deer winter range, and priority habitat for moose
- Conservation of multiple large, intact habitat blocks over 1,000 acres in size
- Protection of significant north-south migration corridors
- Ongoing research by CPW regarding wildlife use and migration corridors

### Trail Project Recommendations

**Table 15. Trail Projects – Zone 5: Geneva Basin - Mount Evans**

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<b>5.1 – South Park Trail Improvements</b> <b>5.2 – Geneva Park Connector</b> 5.5 – Glacial Moraine ADA Maintenance	5.7 – Mt. Bierstadt Trail Improvements <b>5.8 – Mill Gulch Trail</b> <b>5.9 – Geneva Basin Trail</b> 5.10 – Tanglewood Trail Improvements	<b>5.3 – Burning Bear Connector</b> 5.4 – Middle Geneva Creek 5.6 – Square Top Mountain
<u>Trailheads:</u> Buno Gulch Trailhead Guanella Pass Parking Management	<u>Trailhead:</u> Geneva Basin Trailhead Duck Creek/Mill Gulch Parking Improvements	<u>Trailhead:</u> Burning Bear Parking Improvements

Key projects in **bold** are outlined in greater detail in Appendix B.

#### Tier 1 Projects

- **5.1 – South Park Trail Improvements** – Maintenance and short reroutes along the existing trail to improve experience and sustainability.
- **5.2 – Geneva Park Connector** – Improve and designate existing social/winter use trails between the Duck Creek/Geneva Park, Buno Gulch, and the South Park Trail.
- **5.5 – Glacial Moraine ADA Maintenance** – Maintenance and improvements to the existing trail loop for interpretation and accessibility.
- **Buno Gulch Trailhead** – Establish a formalized trailhead on Buno Gulch Road.
- **Geneva Basin/Mill Gulch Trailhead** – Establish a new parking area in the Duck Creek/Geneva Park vicinity.
- **Guanella Pass Parking** – Improve capacity and/or management (e.g., fee or reservation system) of parking at the existing Guanella Pass parking areas.

#### Tier 2 Projects

- **5.7 – Mt. Bierstadt Trail Improvements** – Maintenance and short reroutes along the existing trail to address user-created routes and improve experience and sustainability.
- **5.8 – Mill Gulch Trail** – New trail connection between the Duck Creek Picnic Area and the old Geneva Basin Ski Area.
- **5.9 – Geneva Basin Trail** – New loop trail experience within the old Geneva Basin Ski Area.
- **5.10 – Tanglewood Trail Improvements** – Maintenance and short reroutes along the existing trail to improve experience and sustainability.



- **Geneva Basin Trailhead** – Establish a new, formalized parking area at the base of the old Geneva Basin Ski Area.
- **Duck Creek/Mill Gulch Trailhead** – Expand parking capacity at the Duck Creek Picnic Area to serve as a trailhead for the Mill Gulch and Geneva Park trails.

### ***Tier 3 Projects***

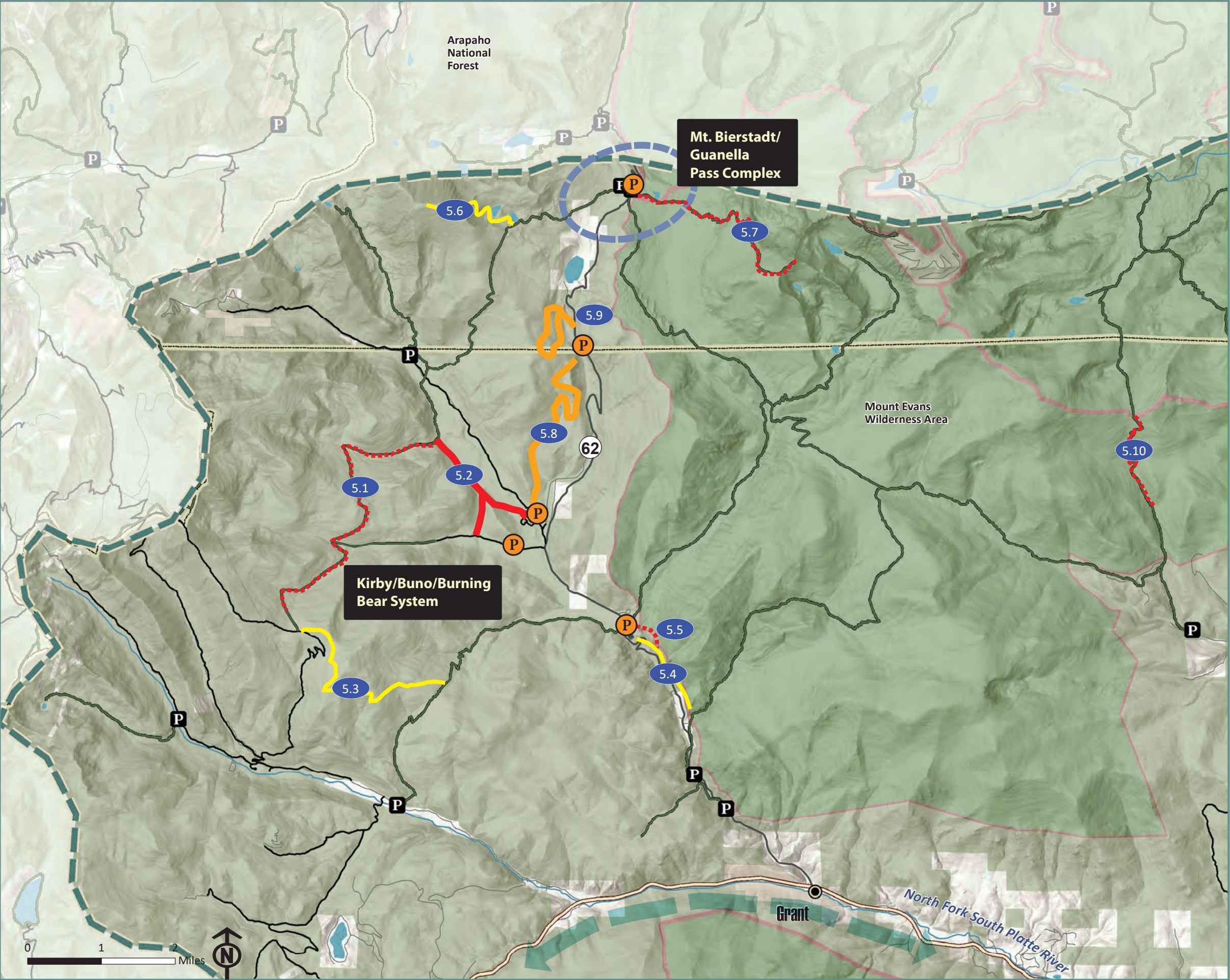
- **5.3 – Burning Bear Connector** – New trail connection between the southern terminus of the South Park Trail and the Burning Bear Trail.
- **5.4 – Middle Geneva Creek** – Improve access and signage along the existing trail to accommodate public use.
- **5.6 – Square Top Mountain** – Monitor social trail use and consider the need to establish a sustainable route to the summit, if it can reduce damage to the alpine tundra.
- **Burning Bear Parking Improvements** – Expand or improve management (e.g., fee or reservation system) of parking at the existing Burning Bear Trailhead.

### Conservation and Enhancement Strategies

Based on habitat mapping, landscape analysis, and Steering Committee input, the following habitat conservation and enhancement strategies have been identified for this zone:

**Table 16. Conservation and Enhancement Strategies – Zone 5: Geneva Basin - Mount Evans**

Location	Actions	Approx. Size (acres)	Notes
Shawnee North	Private land conservation	2,000	High habitat value (bighorn winter range) and contiguity to public lands
Spearhead Mountain	Habitat enhancement	1,200	Timber management to improve bighorn sheep habitat; in designated wilderness
Deer Creek	Habitat enhancement	1,200	Timber management to improve bighorn sheep habitat; in designated wilderness



# Outside 285

## Zone 5

### Geneva Basin - Mount Evans

- Highway 285
- Outside 285 Boundary
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Colorado Trail
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Forest Service Wilderness
- State and Local Public Land

#### Proposed Trails

- 5.12 Project ID
- Tier 1 Trail
- Tier 2 Trail
- Tier 3 Trail
- Trail Maintenance/Reroute
- Previously Approved Trail
- Previously Approved Trailhead
- Proposed Trailhead Improvement
- Trailhead to be Removed
- Additional Coordination Needed
- Proposed Regional Connection



### Area Requiring Additional Coordination – Guanella Pass

#### Background and Issues

Located at the northwest corner of the study area, Guanella Pass is a significant recreation destination for Colorado's Front Range. Two medium-sized trailheads at the top of the pass provide access to the Mount Bierstadt trail to the east, and the South Park trail to the southwest. As one of the closest 14,000-foot peaks to the Denver area, the Mount Bierstadt trail is incredibly popular and busy. Parking to access the peak quickly overwhelms the existing trailheads, resulting in unauthorized roadside parking along both sides of the road, while heavy use along the trail itself results in resource damage in the alpine environment. Besides issues with resource damage, safety, and visitor experience, this parking congestion also displaces visitors seeking to access other nearby trails and amenities.

#### Objectives

The overall objective for Guanella Pass is to implement a program to manage parking and access to reduce congestion and resource damage and preserve wilderness character while maintaining meaningful access and a positive visitor experience.

#### Proposed Projects

The following projects were proposed to meet the objectives for this area:

- **Guanella Pass Parking** – Improve visitor use management and/or capacity (e.g., fee or reservation system) of parking at the existing Guanella Pass parking areas.
- **5.7 – Mt. Bierstadt Trail Improvements** – Maintenance and short reroutes along the existing trail to improve experience and sustainability.

#### Planning Considerations

Preliminary discussions during the Outside 285 planning process indicated a high level of support to address the issues on Guanella Pass, but specific solutions were not discussed. Considering models and examples from other recreation sites (such as Vail Pass and Brainard Lake Recreation Areas), a fee and/or reservation system should be considered for this area. Minor roadside parking expansion may be considered, but may be less desirable due to resource impacts and trail capacity issues. Any solutions need to be developed in partnership with SPRD, CCRD, Park County, Clear Creek County, and CDOT. Another key partner may be the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, who was not involved in this planning process.

#### Next Steps

Continue conversations between key partners, including SPRD, CCRD, Park County, Clear Creek County, and Colorado Mountain Club to develop concepts, funding, and support to address improvements at the top of the pass.

# Management and Implementation

## Management Strategies

While this plan is focused on trail planning and identifying opportunities for future trail improvements, there were several management issues that arose throughout the planning process that also warrant attention. This section of the plan offers potential strategies for addressing the common management issues that were brought up by the Outside 285 land managers, their partners, the Steering Committee, and the public.

The most prevalent management issues in the Outside 285 region include:

- **Funding.** A need to increase funding to maintain existing systems, build new trails and improve management.
- **Trailheads and Parking.** At many trailheads, crowding has resulted in conflict, frustration, and unsafe parking conditions.
- **Maintenance.** Increasing visitation, deferred maintenance and the addition of new trails all necessitate a more robust maintenance program.
- **Visitor Conflicts.** Many survey participants requested management tactics that would alleviate conflicts between different user groups, namely bikers and non-bikers.
- **Trail Design and Construction.** Ongoing need to design new trails and reroutes in a manner that is compatible with natural and cultural resources, maintains sustainability, and is rewarding for trail users.
- **Resource Protection/Visitor Behavior.** Concern was expressed among both land managers and the public about disrespectful visitor behaviors and the need to educate visitors and raise awareness about proper trail etiquette and Leave No Trace principles in order to reduce resource impacts.
- **Habitat Conservation and Enhancement.** Ongoing and additional private land conservation is necessary to protect sensitive wildlife habitats and corridors, while enhancement projects on public and private land can improve the quality and integrity of several critical habitat areas in the region.

Two other management issues that were raised, albeit to a lesser degree than those listed above, are the need for trails to accommodate recreation events and competitions as well as equitable access for people with disabilities and underrepresented groups.

- **Trail Event Space.** A need was identified for an area within the Outside 285 region that can accommodate trail-related races and events (e.g. trail running races, Colorado High School Cycling League events).
- **Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion.** There is an interest in providing additional trail and outdoor recreation opportunities and programs for people with disabilities, as well as an ongoing need to improve access and inclusion for underrepresented demographic groups.

### Funding

Funding the maintenance of existing trails in the Outside 285 region is already a challenge, therefore, establishing funding mechanisms and funding sources to support the implementation of this plan's project recommendations will be a key implementation step.

Creating a fee-based parking system or paid pass requirement is one strategy for generating more revenue for trail improvements, maintenance, and enforcement. Options for fee systems include the following:

- **Site-based Fee System.** Limit paid parking to the busiest trailheads and the most management intensive trail systems. Some sites on USFS land currently utilize a fee-based system (through a concessionaire, such as the Little Scraggy and Indian Creek trailheads) while CPW collects fees to access Staunton and Roxborough State Parks.
- **USFS Regional Fee System.** Implement a fee across the South Platte Ranger District.
- **Multi-agency Regional Fee System.** A partnership between all land managers in the region or state, to create a region-wide system of paid parking at all trailheads in the region.

Other potential funding sources include:

- **Outside 285 Regional Partnership.** If the Outside 285 Region partners are successful in securing a regional partnership designation from CPW, the formalized regional partnership will present a new funding source.
- **Private-Public Partnerships and Fundraising.** Consider soliciting support from the outdoor industry or other private and corporate donors to help fund improvements within the region. For instance, an outdoor industry company may be willing to sponsor a trail crew, specific trail project or a stewardship communication campaign. The agencies and nonprofit user groups could also turn to the private sector to ask for help in matching public dollars allocated to trail improvements in the region. It will be imperative to recognize outside donors for their contributions and to track and report back on the results of their generosity.
- **Colorado Recreation Fee.** Support a broader, state-wide initiative to capture a fee from outdoor recreation enthusiasts that would be earmarked to pay for trail projects, maintenance, management, conservation as well as other recreation infrastructure (roads, parking, toilets, camping, fencing, etc).
- **Donation Tube.** Consider a donation tube and information sign at select trailheads to solicit funds for trail maintenance and improvement projects.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendations - Funding***

- Explore the feasibility of an Outside 285 Pass (ordered online and/or purchased at land manager offices). With a pass system, discounts could be offered to residents of the region and/or other groups the agencies want to accommodate and recognize (e.g., low income visitors, veterans, volunteers). The regional pass also presents an opportunity to educate passholders about Leave No Trace and other stewardship ethics (via a presentation, quiz, brochure, etc). It will be essential to build in a robust marketing/outreach program with the development of a regional pass in order to ensure visitors are aware of the pass requirement. Donation boxes could also be put at trailheads in order to capture fees from visitors who have not acquired a pass.
- Submit an application to CPW to become a Regional Partnership.
- Identify outdoor industry or other corporate partners and private donors that may be willing to support a specific trail project in the region and approach them about sponsorship opportunities.
- Implement parking fees at busiest trailheads - *see below under Parking for recommendations on specific trailheads.*

### **Trailheads and Parking**

The following strategies could be implemented to address trailhead congestion and unsafe parking conditions:

- **Parking Fees.** Expand the use of parking fees at major destination trailheads, coupled with active monitoring and enforcement.
- **Reservations.** Establish a reservation system for the busiest areas where parking congestion, resource degradation, and visitor conflicts are a concern and could be alleviated by limiting



use. This model became commonplace for some public lands and ski resorts during the COVID pandemic, and can be applied to trailhead access (with sufficient technology and monitoring).

- **Enforcement.** Regular parking patrols to monitor compliance and enforce violations, and active cooperation with county law enforcement to fine those who park illegally and discourage parking outside of designated parking areas.
- **Alternate Days.** At heavily visited areas crowded with bikers and other visitors, consider implementing alternate use days for bikers and non-bikers to reduce pressure on parking and trails.
- **Shuttles.** Consider whether weekend shuttles to select trailheads could alleviate parking congestion.
- **Parking Monitor Systems.** Use parking apps, remote cameras and/or social media to display parking conditions and warn visitors ahead of time that trailheads are full.
- **Access Equity.** Consider whether parking and access management strategies create additional barriers to traditionally underrepresented groups, and identify opportunities to resolve those barriers.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendations – Trailheads and Parking***

Continue to collaborate across management agencies to develop and implement parking management systems that are manageable for the agencies, are easy for the public to understand and utilize. Any paid or reservation-based system would require the necessary technology and infrastructure (e.g., websites, apps, and kiosks), connectivity, and active monitoring and enforcement.

The following major destination trailheads or trailhead zones, would be good candidates for site-based parking fees:

- **Waterton Canyon** – Consider a reservation and/or fee program at this heavily-used trailhead along the urban interface in coordination with Chatfield State Park.
- **Buffalo Creek/Little Scraggy** – Expanded parking at Little Scraggy coupled with parking management/enforcement along Highway 126 and coordination with the privately-managed Buffalo Park trailhead.
- **Kenosha Pass** – Expanded parking, roadside parking management, and a fee program could be considered as part of a comprehensive strategy in collaboration with Park County, CDOT, and the South Park Ranger District.
- **Indian Creek** – Expanded fee parking could be considered in the context of peak use periods and the nearby Rampart Range parking area.
- **Maxwell Falls** – Consider a reservation and/or fee program at this heavily-used site, along with improved stewardship and roadside parking management in collaboration with other partners such as Jefferson County.
- **Geneva Basin** – The complex of small trailheads including Burning Bear, Shelf Lake, and the proposed Buno Gulch and Duck Lake trailheads should be considered comprehensively.

### **Maintenance**

In order to expand maintenance resources (namely labor and volunteers) throughout the region, consider the following:

- **Maintenance Needs Inventory.** Develop and maintain a map-based inventory of trail locations that require minor or major maintenance, using the on-the-ground knowledge of Steering Committee members and/or the general public. A simple framework would allow land managers to compile maintenance needs, organize projects, and document project completion.
- **Professional Trail Crew.** Fund a professional seasonal trail crew to maintain and build trails throughout the region. The crew could work independently and also be assigned to lead youth corps and volunteer groups.
- **Trail Maintenance/Build Agreements.** Establish protocols and training for community groups, non-profit partners and interagency partners and award them trail maintenance/build agreements so they are empowered to maintain specific trails or trail systems. Ideally, trail maintenance agreements with trail builders and stewards would span multiple years to ensure continued maintenance, and would include opportunities for training.

- **Volunteer Coordinators/Trail Crew Leaders.** By hiring more volunteer coordinators and training up more trail builders and stewards, agencies and nonprofits can leverage more volunteer maintenance support.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendation - Maintenance***

Continue to work as a partnership to develop and fund all new maintenance strategies for the region and consider additional an ongoing maintenance on all existing trails.

Building from existing collaboration between land managers and trail stewardship groups (such as COMBA and CMC), seek opportunities and funding to expand these partnerships. A professional trail crew for the region is an aspirational goal that would require dedicated funding, management, and agreements.

### **Visitor Conflict**

As trails become increasingly crowded, conflicts between visitors are inevitable and are likely to increase due to more and more diverse visitors to the trails. Throughout the planning process, partners and the public expressed interest in exploring ways to minimize conflicts between bikers and pedestrian or equestrian trail visitors. Strategies considered included the following:

- **Segregating Uses.** Look for opportunities to segregate trail traffic by speed or user type (e.g., bike-only, bike uphill-only, hike-only) to make trails safer and more enjoyable for everyone and reduce user conflicts. (Note that it is difficult for the USFS to designate and enforce user-specific trail designations).
- **Designated Direction/Use** – Mandate allowed uses and directionality for specific trails, to disperse visitors, reduce conflict, and tailor trail uses to the setting, terrain, and regulations.
- **Suggested Direction/Use** – Post *suggested* use and directionality (rather than mandated) for certain trails to disperse visitors, reduce passing and conflict, and inform visitors who are unaware of typical use patterns.
- **Designated Use Days.** Consider alternating use (odd/even day, designated days, or weekend only restrictions) on specific trails or areas for hiker/bikers to reduce conflict.
- **Trail Patrols/Ambassadors.** Utilize volunteers to patrol trails and provide outreach at trailheads to promote responsible trail use. Post opportunities for volunteering at trailheads.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendation – Visitor Conflict***

All of the visitor management tools listed above should be considered in implementing new trails and managing popular trail systems. Guidelines for using these tools to manage visitor conflict include the following:

- Avoid changing the access and use of existing trails, unless significant safety issues need to be resolved or if a new alternative route/experience is provided.
- Designated Directional Trails. Focus designated directionality and use on new trails or trail systems in high-use, frontcountry settings that warrant more intensive trail management. Examples within the O285 region include:
  - New, frontcountry trails within Staunton State Park
  - New hiking-only connector within Deer Creek Canyon Park
  - Lower Nice Kitty Trail (Buffalo Creek; bike uphill only) if an alternate route (Project BC6b) is constructed
  - New alternate trail (potential bike downhill) at Kenosha Pass (Project LC5)
- Suggested Directional Trails. Consider suggested directionality and use on new or existing trail systems that have lower use or are in backcountry settings where the issues and management presence is lighter. Examples within the O285 region could include:
  - Nice Kitty Trail (Buffalo Creek); suggested bike uphill
  - Charlie's Cutoff and Sandy Wash trails (Buffalo Creek); suggested bike downhill
  - Little Scraggy Trail (Buffalo Creek); suggested clockwise travel for bikes
  - Indian Creek Trail system; suggested counterclockwise travel for bikes
  - Proposed Top of the World Loop (Project BC6a); directionality TBD based on design and construction

### **Trail Design and Management**

As new trails and trail reroutes are implemented, it is important to design trails to minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources, incorporate sustainable trail design principles, and to provide a rewarding visitor experience. The following strategies are recommended to achieve these objectives:

- **Natural and Cultural Resource Protection.** Complete natural resource (wildlife, vegetation) and cultural resource surveys as required by land management agencies. Design trail routes to minimize resource impacts and comply with applicable regulations.
- **Sustainable Trail Design.** Design and construct all new trails with sustainable design principles in mind, including appropriate trail grades, drainage, stream crossings, and structures. Sustainable trails last longer, require less maintenance, and result in less resource damage due to erosion, widening, and braiding.
- **Natural and Technical Features.** Design appropriate technical features into trails, to provide interest, context, and challenge to visitors. The type and difficulty of trail features will vary based on the objectives of the land manager, intended use and difficulty, and the terrain/setting, but should emphasize the use of natural features wherever possible.
- **Signage and Information.** With each trail project, plan for and implement the signage that will be necessary for wayfinding and visitor management. The type and extent of signage will vary based

on the land manager and context, but should consider trail names, destinations, allowed uses, management requirements (e.g., closures, private property) and trail etiquette.

### Resource Protection/Visitor Behavior

Visitation is on the rise in the Outside 285 region and uniformed or irresponsible visitors are adversely impacting resources and others' visitor experience. The following strategies are recommended to influence visitor behavior, encourage responsible use and promote a stewardship ethic among all visitors.

- **Seasonal Closures.** Close trails and areas as needed to protect critical wildlife habitats (e.g., raptor nests and critical winter ranges) and to prevent trail damage during muddy conditions. Ensure closures are clear to visitors and well-advertised ahead of time.
- **Ebike Access.** Mountain bikes with electronic pedal-assist technology (ebikes) are becoming increasingly popular, which raises questions and concerns about levels of use, visitor conflict, and wildlife impacts. Ebike access policies vary by land management agency, based on their own internal regulations and decision-making processes, which can cause confusion and frustration among some visitors. While this plan will defer to individual land managers on their ebike policies, it is evident that better communication and signage should be implemented throughout the trail system.
- **Promotion of Stewardship Information.** Educate visitors about what is and is not appropriate on the trails and on our public lands. Partner with groups like LNT.org and StaytheTrail.org to create responsible visitation messaging and content that media outlets and all gateways to the outdoors can promote locally. Target all businesses that benefit from the outdoor recreation activities in the region and encourage them to share the same message of respect for the land with their customers.
- **Onsite Signage.** Concise, quickly digestible temporary signage (e.g., sandwich boards) can be used to inform visitors and reinforce Leave No Trace (LNT) principles.
- **Enhanced Website Information.** Update and expand recreation information on websites to include Know Before You Go, LNT, and stewardship information.
- **Increase Staff and/or Volunteer Presence.** Having more staff and volunteers that are dedicated to education and able to post up at busy trailheads or on the trails is a valuable and effective way to educate visitors and protect resources.
- **Embed Popular Apps with Stewardship/LNT Info.** Apps such as COTREX, Strava, and MTB Project are the primary information resource for many visitors and they could incorporate more information about appropriate behavior and responsible trail use.
- **Enforcement.** More enforcement positions are needed to ensure areas have adequate enforcement resources to protect the habitat and educate visitors.
- **Collect User Feedback.** Increased and frequent visitor use surveys distributed during high use periods will provide managers with information on the health of the trail system and allow them to assess the quality of the visitor experience and understand the carrying capacity of a trail corridor.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendations:***

All of the above tools can be used to maintain and improve visitor behavior and to instill a sense of stewardship to new groups and generations of trail visitors. Most of these tools require additional time and effort to implement, which underscores the importance of long-term funding and partnerships. Otherwise, land management agencies would have limited capacity to implement many of these concepts.

Regarding seasonal wildlife closures, it is recommended that closures are considered and emphasized with new trail projects that may affect sensitive wildlife or habitat areas, and that the location and management of closures are strategically considered to maximize compliance. For example, a trail closure on a new experience or in a system that offers alternative options is more likely to be successful. A new seasonal closure on an existing trail or a route with limited management or control is less likely to be successful.

### **Trail Event Space**

Given the O285 region's proximity to the Front Range, there are several groups that would like to use the area's trail systems to host trail-based events and competitions. A desire was expressed to improve a trailhead and trail system within the region so that it could comfortably and regularly accommodate events.

- **Improve Existing Areas to Accommodate Events.** To be suitable for competitions, a venue would offer ample parking for participants and spectators, as well as an event staging area and trails that can accommodate training sessions and competitions.
- **Identify Areas to Support the High School Cycling League.** The league is growing and very popular with youth and they have specific criteria for what they require for their competition venues. Large groups of young riders practicing or competing sometimes impinge on the experience of other visitors and result in user conflicts, so a dedicated venue or at least advertised practice and competition times would be helpful.

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendation:***

The O285 process was not able to successfully resolve the desire for better venues for trail-based races and events. These events are periodically hosted at Staunton State Park and in the Buffalo Creek Recreation Area (Miller Gulch and Buffalo Park trailheads), but the capacity and infrastructure for events are limited. One additional site that was considered was Beaver Ranch Park, but JCOS determined that trail-based events were not a good fit for the site due to the many other community interests and uses of the park. No other sites or locations were identified in this planning process.

### Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion

The following management strategies would help ensure the region offers opportunities to visitors of all abilities and demographic groups:

- **Accessible Trail Improvements.** Create and/or improve trail experiences for people with mobility impairments and other challenges. Modify trails or segment of trails to ensure width, surfacing and grade are comfortable to visitors of all abilities by following ADA design guidelines. Also ensure adequate accessible parking spaces at these trails.
- **Promotion of Existing ADA Accessible Trails.** Share information about the region's accessible trails on agency websites and social media. Also provide information about accessible trail opportunities to partners and non-profit organizations that work with people with disabilities (e.g., veteran organizations, Wilderness on Wheels, Craig Hospital).
- **Leverage Existing Programs and Infrastructure.** Work with existing entities that provide accessible trail experiences, such as Wilderness on Wheels and Staunton State Park to support expanded needs and opportunities for accessible trail programs.
- **Support Equity and Inclusion Programs.** Partner with existing and emerging groups that support and facilitate outdoor access for traditionally underrepresented demographic groups, including communities of color, youth, and low-income communities.
- **Consider Equity in Access Decisions.** Some management solutions, including paid parking, reservation systems, and communication strategies, may create additional barriers to access for some underrepresented demographic groups. Consider these unintended access challenges and look for solutions to resolve these issues and ensure equitable access.

#### ***O285 Strategy Recommendation:***

The following areas could provide more opportunities for people with mobility impairments and other disabilities.

- **Staunton State Park** - Staunton already has a program that provides accessible trails and motorized wheelchairs available for use, along with trained guides. This program could be built upon and/or more widely promoted. For instance, the Davis Pond Loop could be enhanced with a braille trail in order to open the trail experience to the visually impaired.
- **Kenosha Pass** - Segments of the new trails proposed for Kenosha Pass could be designed to accommodate visitors of all abilities (Project GE6 and GE10).
- **Glacial Moraine ADA Trail** - This trail was originally built as an ADA trail, but hasn't received much use from its intended audience. Trail maintenance and improved signage and parking (with accessible spots) will make the trail more inviting to visitors with disabilities (Project GE 22).

### Habitat Conservation and Enhancement

Conservation and stewardship of both public and private lands is necessary to maintain and protect wildlife habitat within the Outside 285 region. The following strategies should be considered to facilitate these ongoing needs:

- **Conservation Easements** – Work with private landowners and private land trusts to identify mutually-beneficial opportunities to establish conservation easements over key properties to protect them in perpetuity.

- **Land Acquisition** – Identify and support opportunities for land acquisition by state and local entities that supports habitat conservation and public access goals within the study area.
- **Habitat Enhancement** – Identify opportunities to improve and enhance degraded habitat through stream restoration, noxious weed management, revegetation, and other means. Work to leverage habitat enhancement opportunities as part of larger-scale trail, infrastructure, or forest management projects.
- **Forest Management** – Partner with state and local entities to identify, plan, and design forest management projects in a manner that is beneficial to wildlife and enhances key habitat types (such as winter ranges for bighorn sheep).

### ***O285 Strategy Recommendations:***

All of the above tools should be considered in long-term efforts to protect and enhance wildlife habitat in the project area. The O285 project recommendations include the following:

- **Private Land Conservation** – The recommendations map identifies 10 general areas where important wildlife habitat and corridors occur on private land. In these cases, Steering Committee members should look for opportunities with willing landowners and outside conservation organizations (such as the Mountain Area Land Trust and Colorado Open Lands) to conserve these areas. Where opportunities arise to acquire land for public purposes (e.g., open space), coordinated support from the O285 Steering Committee can help with relationship-building and funding support. Any private land conservation should occur on a voluntary, willing-seller basis.
- **Habitat Restoration** – Several opportunities for habitat restoration on both public and private land were identified in this plan, including stream and riparian enhancement and forest management to improve bighorn sheep habitat. There are many other enhancement needs and opportunities that were not specifically identified in this planning process. As land managers and partners move forward with projects within the study area, they are encouraged to openly coordinate to identify restoration and enhancement needs within each individual project area and, where possible, integrate restoration efforts into other projects. (For example, stream enhancement as part of an adjacent trail or trailhead project).

Field studies by CPW, Forest Service, and other entities is ongoing and will be important to further identify, design, and implement conservation and implementation projects.

### Project Implementation

While this master plan provides a framework for projects within the Outside 285 region, there is still a lot of work that needs to be completed to make any of these projects a reality. The required steps needed to move from planning recommendations to shovel ready projects will vary with each of the proposed project recommendations. The “champions” of the proposed projects will want to consider the following general “next steps” as they move toward design and construction of new trails and the push for the rollout of new maintenance and management systems:

1. **Partner Collaboration.** Identify champions for the various proposed projects that can support the land management agencies as they move into implementation by providing help with funding, design and labor/volunteers. While some partners would be involved in implementation, others can provide letters of support for grant applications. Additionally, the agencies should seize opportunities to establish Trail Maintenance and/or Build Agreements with eager recreation partners like COMBA and CMC. Keep the Outside 285 partnership group strong (and funded), by applying for Colorado Regional Partnership designation (*see below for more on ongoing collaboration*).
2. **Planning, Layout, and Design.** For any new trail or infrastructure project, additional discussions need to occur with the land manager and key stakeholders to clearly articulate the objectives for the project and known opportunities and constraints. With that knowledge, preliminary reconnaissance and layout can define a trail corridor or facility location for more detailed analysis.
3. **Environmental Analysis.** Most new trail and infrastructure will require an analysis of environmental and cultural resources that may be affected by the project. For projects on federal land or with federal funding, this review is governed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA review typically requires field surveys of biological and cultural resources, and formal documentation in a categorical exclusion, environmental assessment, or for large or complex projects, an environmental impact statement. The land manager will determine the scope and scale of the environmental analysis, which may result in modifications to the project to avoid or minimize impacts to resources.
4. **Funding.** Any new projects require funding for design and construction. While some land management agencies have existing internal funding, many agencies rely on funding assistance from external programs to support trail and infrastructure construction. Common funding sources for trail projects include the CPW Non-Motorized Trail Grant program, and several GOCO grant programs. Trailheads and projects that support regional safety and mobility may be supported by CDOT and Federal Highway Administration grant programs.
5. **Final Design and Construction Planning.** With the previous steps in place, most projects require a second round of design and/or engineering to get a project ready for construction. This step often includes project bidding and contractor selection, for professionally-constructed projects.
6. **Construction.** The final – and most exciting – implementation step is the actual construction. This can be conducted by professional trail or construction contractors, in-house agency staff, youth corps, volunteers, or often a combination of the above.

### Ongoing Collaboration

Ongoing collaboration between land management agencies in the O285 region and their conservation and recreation group partners will be key to the successful implementation of projects and strategies outlined in this plan. This planning process brought together these parties and their relationships have been solidified as they've worked together on the O285 Steering Committee for over a year. A logical next step to ensure the partnership remains strong and to position the group for implementation funding, would be for the O285 Steering Committee to submit an application to be recognized as a Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership.

Funded by CPW and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Regional Partnership initiative was established to fund new and existing coalitions in their effort to create equitable and quality outdoor recreation experiences. The Outside 285 Steering Committee would be an excellent applicant for the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnership Funding Program seeing as they are an established coalition of land managers, wildlife advocates and recreation user advocates with a master plan that identifies specific projects for their region. Funding from the Regional Partnership initiative could be leveraged to implement specific trail projects identified in the master plan as well as management strategies needed to establish a sustainable source of funding for trail improvements and long-term maintenance and management. It is expected that CPW and GOCO will open another round of partnership applications in the Fall of 2022.

#### Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative

The Governor's Executive Order of October 30, 2020 (B 2020-008) outlined the regional partnership initiative to ensure that Colorado's land, water and wildlife thrive while also providing for equitable access to quality outdoor recreation experiences. Regional Partnerships that are funded for a capacity building grant or a planning grant will inform a Statewide Conservation and Recreation Plan.

Outside 285 is well positioned to apply for funding in the next round to carry out the master plan and represents local, state and federal land managers, a balance of outdoor recreation and conservation interests and underrepresented communities. Outside 285 has collaborated to establish high priority conservation needs and then identified tiered recommended projects to address community needs, as required in the regional partnership funding application.

The Executive Order can be found here:

<https://www.colorado.gov/governor/sites/default/files/inline-files/Fishers%20Peak%20EO%2010.30.20.pdf>

Colorado Outdoor Partnership Website:

<https://copartnership.org/>

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A – Public Survey Summary of Common Concepts**

**Appendix B – Key Project Implementation Notes**

**Appendix C – Trail and Recreation Concepts Not Recommended for Implementation**

### Appendix A – Public Survey Summary of Common Concepts

An Outside 285 public survey was distributed between Nov 4, 2019 and January 4, 2021 and 865 responses were collected. The following is a summary of the common trail, recreation, conservation and management concepts gleaned from responses to the public survey. This is a collection of general suggestions that were offered by multiple respondents.

#### Trails and Recreation Concepts

##### Desired Trail Experiences

- **Loop Trails.** As trail systems are expanded consider making loop trails in increments of 5mi, 7mi, 10mi, and above starting and ending at the trailhead.
- **Peak Trails.** Provide access to peaks in the region. In several cases there are social trails to these peaks, these could be formally designated system trails and improved.
- **Longer Trails.** ~10+ mile routes for backpackers, day hikers, equestrians and cyclists.
- **Hiker-only Trails / Non-bike Trails.** Desire expressed for “bike-free” trails.
- **Mountain Bike Trails.** Technical trails with purpose-built features and bike-only trails.
- **Improve and expand shorter loop trails where there are existing trails.** Large market for shorter loops, they appeal to the most users.

##### Trailhead Improvements

- **Horse trailer parking.** Need for more and dedicated horse trailer parking throughout the region
- **Public fishing access.** All of the public fishing access areas need more capacity.
- **Reconfigure trailheads to relieve congestion/parking on roads** and increase safety.
- **Expand parking.**
- **Use parking to control/limit visitor numbers.** More parking will only overcrowd trails and create more impact. Congestion is its own filter. If people can't park, they won't use it.
- **Restrooms and trash cans are needed at trailheads.**

##### New Access Points

- **Focus on maintaining existing trails and restoring damaged habitat.** Do not open up new access points and more land to the public.
- **Create more opportunities to access peaks in the region.**
- **Increase access into wilderness.** Mt Evans Wilderness and Lost Creek.
- **Improve FS roads to create new/better access to trailheads and hiking trails.**

##### Increase Capacity

- **Create new recreation areas and don't continue to overwhelm the existing areas.**
- **Establish new, well-built trails rather than long, regional connectors.** The number of users looking to put in the mileage that connected trail systems allow is likely very small.

## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

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- **Create connections between trails** to diversify the way the trails can be used and spread out the use.
- **Improve trails, don't expand them.** Work more with what we have rather than develop new recreation areas. Expansion brings more habitat impacts - noxious weeds, wildlife disturbance, fragmentation.
- **Look for new trail opportunities to alleviate crowding/user-conflicts and create capacity.** Provide bike-only trails to make the other "multi use" trails more accommodating for hikers, dogs, horses, etc.
- **Look for opportunities to spread out users within existing, popular trail systems.** Expand the number of short, family, day hike trails to spread people out and ease overcrowding at popular spots.
- **Concern that the creation of more trails will attract more users and not reduce or disperse the use.** Will building more trails alleviate the overcrowding, or will it just bring more people in?

### Management and Maintenance Concepts

#### Trailhead/Parking Management Concepts:

- **Parking reservation system.** As an alternative or in conjunction with expanded parking in order to reduce impacts.
- **Consider alternatives to expanding the size parking areas.** Reservations. Parking Fees. Encourage carpools. Shuttle service.
- **Resident vs visitor parking.** Permit residents to park for free, but charge visitors from outside the counties to park (annual or day passes).
- **Parking patrols/enforcement.** To prevent parking outside trailheads (on the roads) and encroachment in horse trailer parking.

#### Trail System Management

- **Recreation fees.** Parking passes to alleviate overcrowding, reduce impacts, and generate revenue for projects/maintenance/management.
- **Designate directional, activity-specific trails (or rotating use)** to prevent conflict and avoid people getting injured.
- **Keep trails multi-use.** The majority of trails should be multi use.
- **Segregating Uses.** Look for opportunities to segregate trail traffic by speed to make trails safer for everyone and reduce user conflicts.
- **Designated use days.** Alternating use for hiker/bikers to reduce conflict.
- **Ensure safety for the non-biking community.**
- **Concern about E-Bikes.** Need to determine what to do about e-bikes in the region.
- **Enforcement.** Need more law enforcement.

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### Education / Visitor Behavior

- **Trail/recreation expansion will require more education.** More educational campaigns focused on respect for land, leave no trace, right of ways, trail etiquette, safety and public land rules and regulations.
- **Concern about visitor behavior, need for enforcement/patrols.** Overcrowding brings a lot of issues including parking, litter, lack of trail etiquette, illegal camping and parking, and lack of respect for the land.

### Maintenance

- **Improve trails within existing parks.** Re-route and design trails to accommodate multi-use safely.
- **Focus on maintenance not new construction.** Bring existing trails up to proper/sustainable maintenance standards before initiating new construction.
- **Factor in maintenance resources.** The size of the trail network should match the resources available to maintain the trails and provide necessary amenities, such as parking and toilet facilities.
- **Regional trail crew.** Create and fund a professional trail crew dedicated to the O285 region.
- **Utilize volunteers** to patrol, maintain/build, and help promote responsible trail use. Post opportunities for volunteering at trailheads.

### **Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Concepts**

- **Do not expand trail systems in wilderness areas, roadless areas, or other high-quality fish and wildlife habitat.**
- **Protect wilderness.** Maintain wilderness and wildlife habitat that is not disturbed by trails.
- **No additional trails should be built in critical wildlife habitat or migration corridors** unless there is convincing evidence that wildlife will not be adversely affected.
- **Plan trails to minimize wildlife disturbance and protect sensitive habitat.** Protection of wildlife /habitat, plant communities, water quality should dictate where any expansion or connections are appropriate or not.
- **Maintain overall quality of trout waters** and avoid trails in sensitive water resource areas and slopes prone to erosion.
- **Avoid further fragmentation of large habitat areas.** Protecting habitat, large landscape connectivity and roadless character for quiet recreation is more important than expanding the trail systems into sensitive areas.
- **Reroute trails out of riparian/wetlands.**
- **Focus trail development in the high density areas** where new trails would be less impactful to natural resources. With the intense recreation penetration into diminishing but presently undisturbed areas, every effort should be made to keep trails near existing disturbed areas.

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- **Address wildfire and campfires.** Use new trails to help improve wildfire mitigation. Consider fire bans on public lands except in developed campsites and recreation areas. Educate campers.

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### Appendix B – Key Project Implementation Notes

North Elk Phase 3 and Black Mountain Access	
Map ID	1.3 and 1.4
Implementation Tier	Tier 2
Objective	Create a loop that completes a backcountry trail system in the area, with a spur trail to the summit of Black Mountain.
Approximate Length	6 miles
Land Manager	Pike San Isabel National Forest – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium habitat suitability</li><li>• Need to consider wildlife movement corridors and potential Canada lynx habitat</li><li>• Supported by CPW wildlife staff</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Upper connection to North Elk or Cub Creek Trail may require coordination with Arapaho National Forest, Clear Creek Ranger District</li><li>• 1.4 may be built and managed as hiker only, or multi use</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA, CMC
Notes	This project was previously discussed with stakeholders during the planning process for Phase 2 of the North Elk Creek trail system.



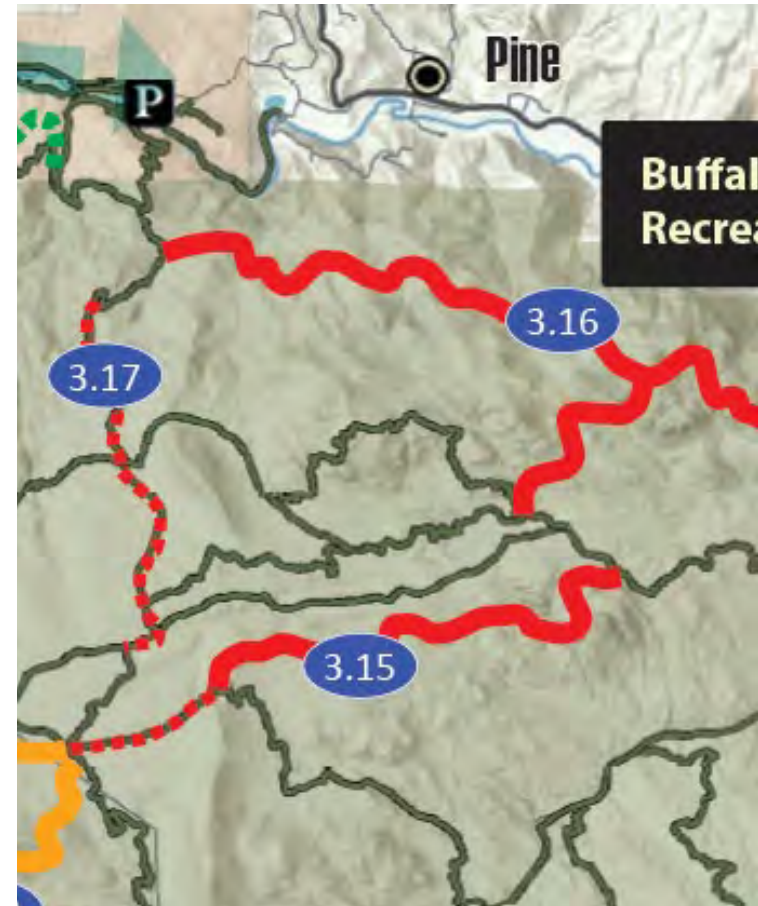
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Indian Creek Trail Improvements	
Map ID	2.1 and 2.2
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	Maintain and improve existing trails and refurbish/designate existing social trails to create a sustainable loop system.
Approximate Length	8 miles
Land Manager	Pike San Isabel National Forest – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medium habitat suitability</li><li>• Reduce impacts on riparian corridors with strategic reroutes</li><li>• Actively close new or unsustainable social trails</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Most of the trails already exist and are used as social trails</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



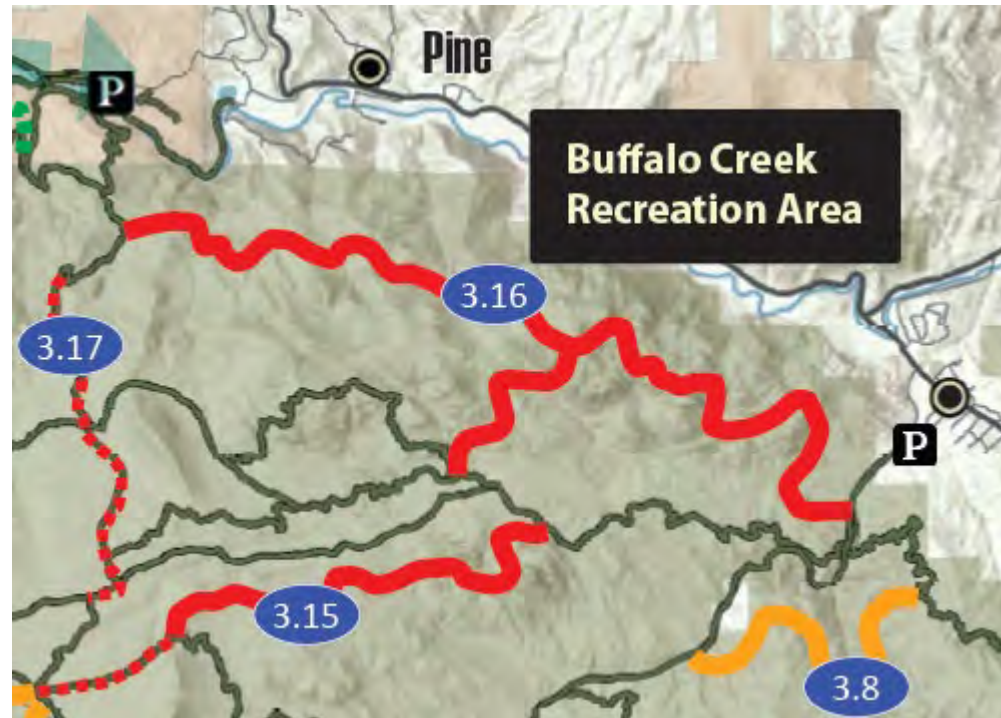
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Baldy – Sandy Wash Connector	
Map ID	3.15
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	New trail experience that creates an alternative route and takes visitor pressure off of other nearby trails.
Approximate Length	2 miles
Land Manager	Pike San Isabel National Forest – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium habitat suitability</li> <li>• New disturbance, but no significant known habitat concerns</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li> <li>• Consider connection to Sandy Wash Trail and proposed trail 3.16</li> <li>• Consider reclamation of existing Miller Gulch road; may be necessary for admin access</li> </ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



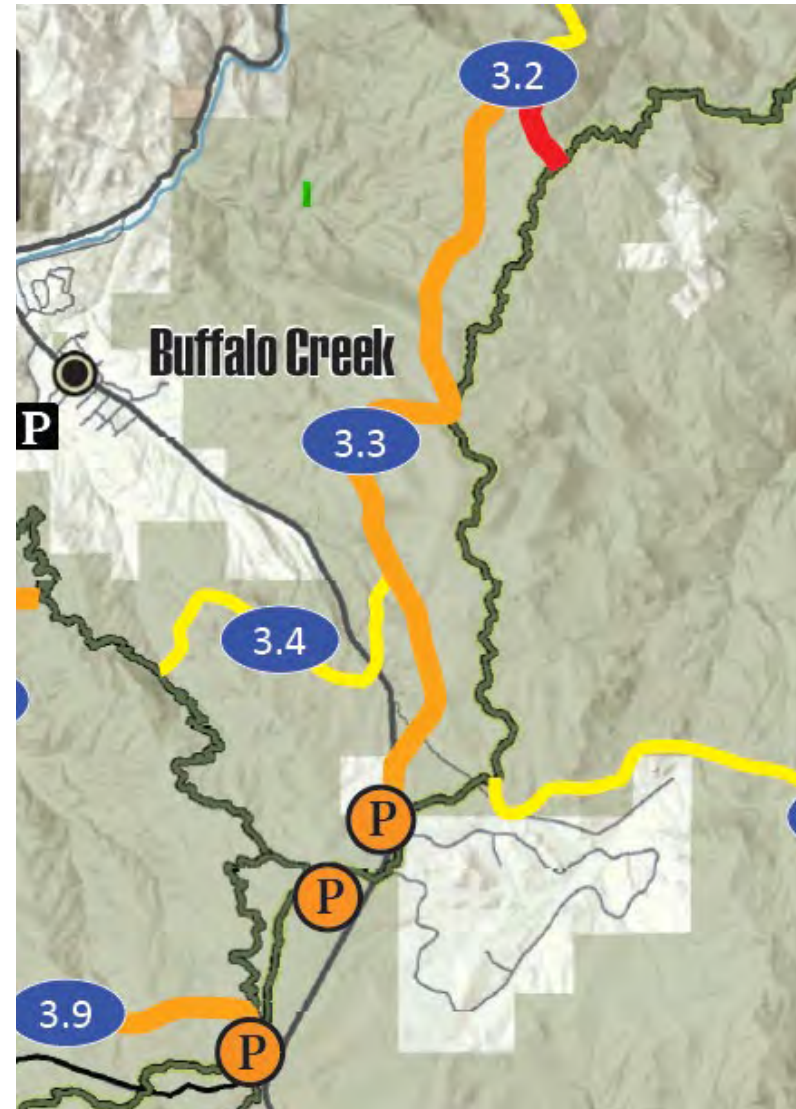
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Miller Rocks Connector	
Map ID	3.16
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	New trail experience that creates a loop(S) through the rocky terrain north of Miller Gulch.
Approximate Length	9 miles
Land Manager	Pike San Isabel National Forest – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High habitat suitability</li> <li>• New disturbance, but no significant known habitat concerns</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li> <li>• Mid-way spur to Sandy Wash Trail creates opportunities for phasing</li> <li>• Consider directional travel and/or loops on east end</li> </ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



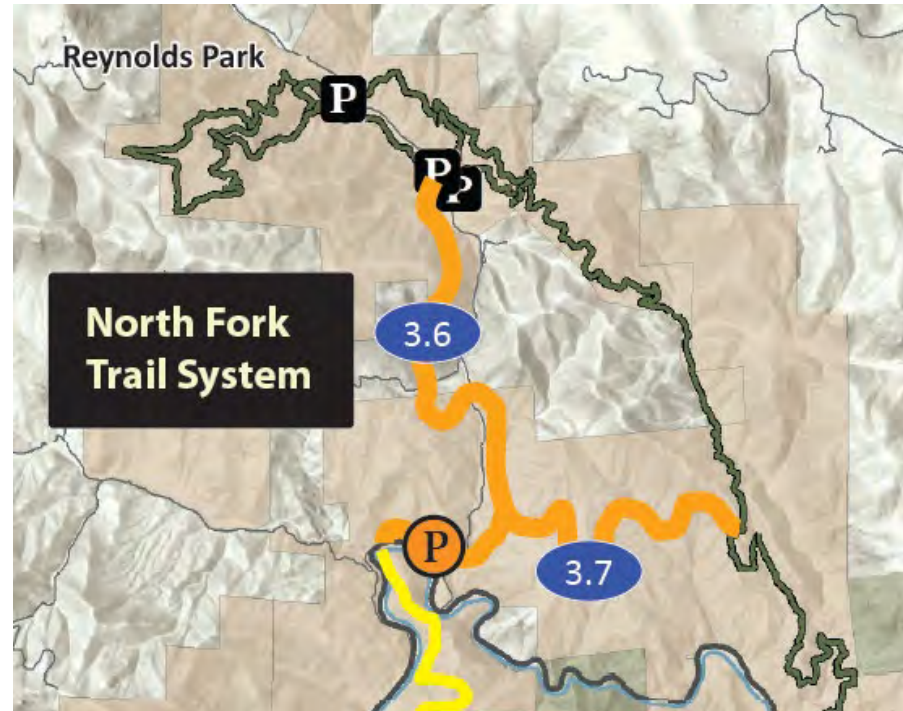
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Top of the World Loop	
Map ID	3.3
Implementation Tier	Tier 2
Objective	New trail experience that creates a long loop with the existing Colorado Trail between Highway 126 and Chair Rocks.
Approximate Length	5 miles
Land Manager	Pike San Isabel National Forest – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low to moderate sensitivity</li><li>• Located in mule deer winter concentration area</li><li>• New disturbance, but no significant known habitat concerns</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Needs to be coupled with the Chair Rocks Trail (3.2)</li><li>• Mid-way connection to Colorado Trail creates stacked loop and phasing opportunities</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



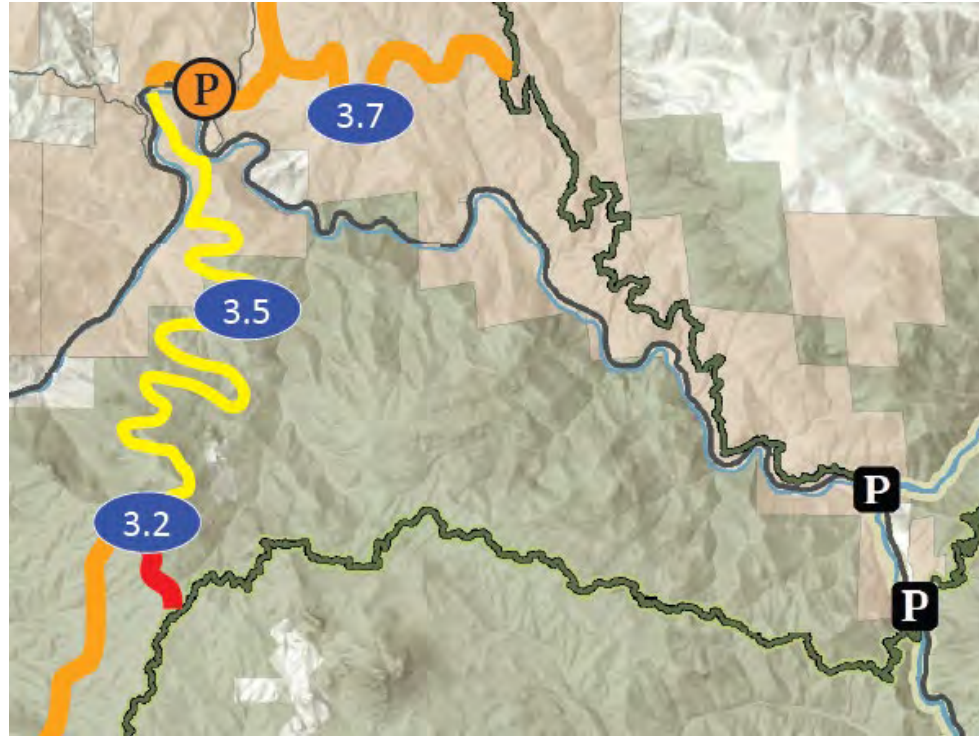
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Foxton to Reynolds Connector, and Foxton to North Fork Connector	
Map ID	3.6 and 3.7
Implementation Tier	Tier 2
Objective	Trails from Foxton area to Reynolds Park and the North Fork Trail, creating a loop.
Approximate Length	8 miles
Land Manager	Denver Water, Jefferson County Open Space
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li> <li>• Located in mule deer severe winter range and migration corridors</li> <li>• Crosses potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse</li> <li>• Minimal concerns expressed by CPW</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and environmental clearances</li> <li>• Could be built and managed by JCOS and Denver Water under a similar agreement as the North Fork Trail</li> </ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



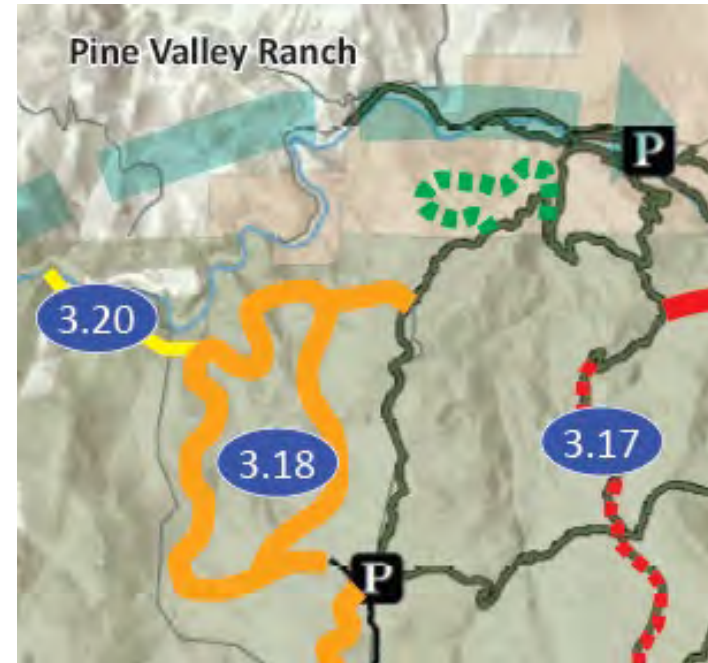
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Chair Rocks/Foxton Connector	
Map ID	3.5
Implementation Tier	Tier 3
Objective	Regional trail connection from Chair Rocks to Foxton area
Approximate Length	6 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District, Denver Water
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li> <li>• Crosses potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse and Mexican spotted owl recovery habitat</li> <li>• Requires new bridge crossing of North Fork South Platte River</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and environmental clearances</li> <li>• Steep and challenging terrain</li> <li>• Requires new bridge crossing</li> </ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



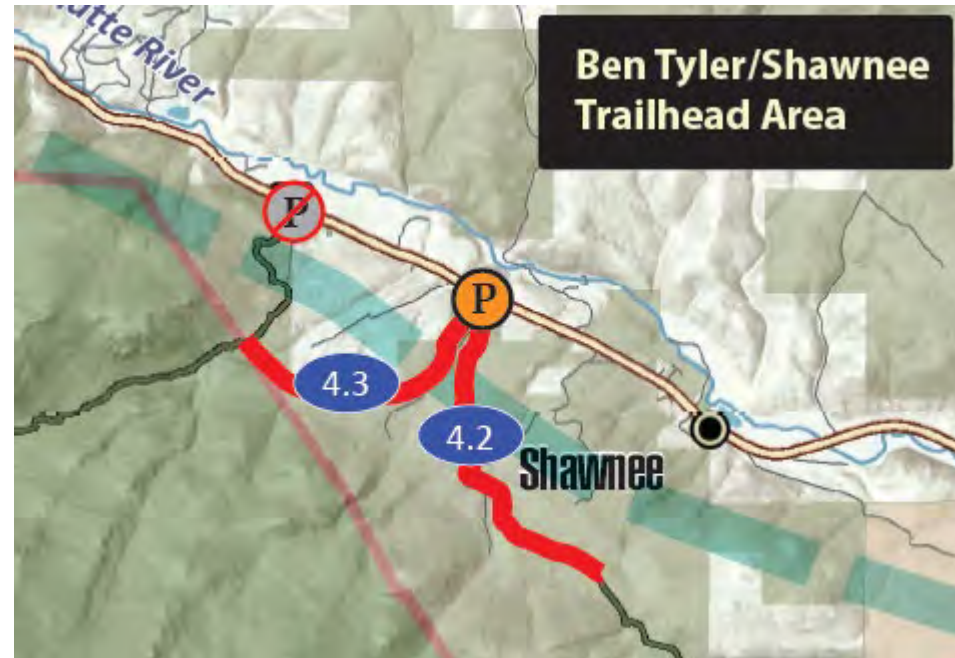
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

River Canyon Loop	
Map ID	3.18
Implementation Tier	Tier 2
Objective	Loop off of Buck Gulch trail to provide additional trail opportunities and river canyon views
Approximate Length	5 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li><li>• Crosses potential habitat for Preble's meadow jumping mouse</li><li>• Located in elk and mule deer winter range</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Should be considered with the Miller-Skipper Connector (3.19)</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA



## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

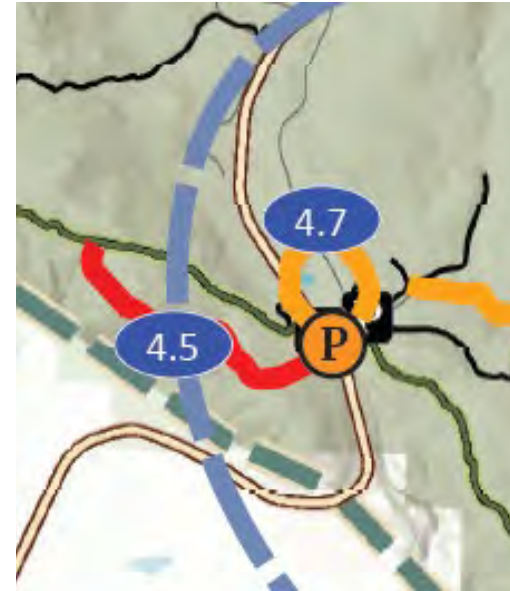
Ben Tyler Trailhead, and Trail connections	
Map ID	4.2, 4.3, and 4.5
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	Relocate Ben Tyler Trailhead to a better location, and establish trail connections
Approximate Length	4 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li> <li>• Adjacent to wildlife migration corridors</li> <li>• Located in mule deer winter range</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li> <li>• Adjacent private lands may complicate trail alignments</li> </ul>
Project Partners	CDOT



## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

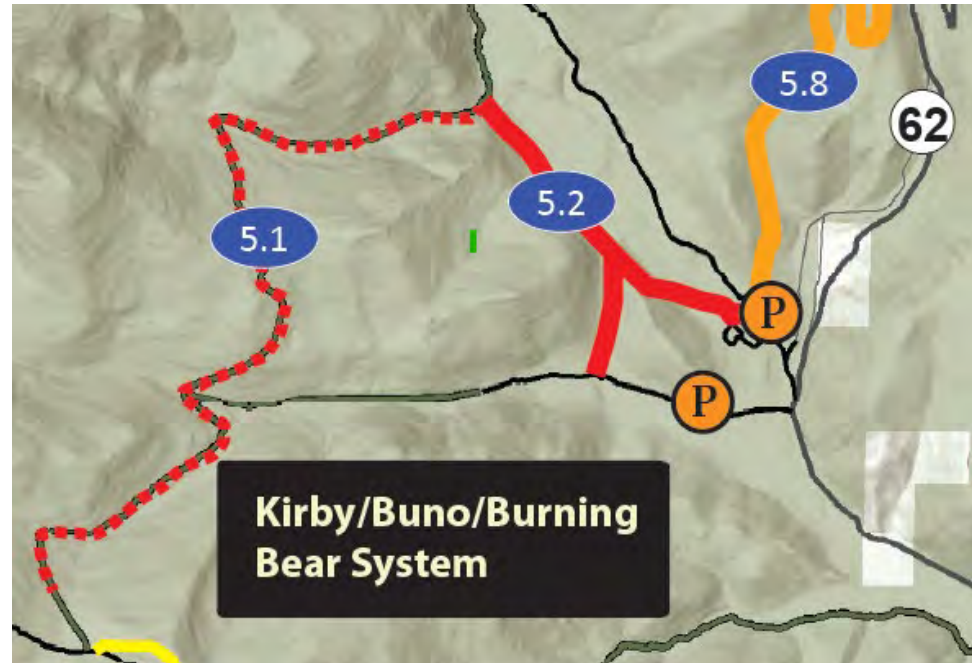
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Kenosha West Alternate Trail	
Map ID	4.5
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	Create a new loop or alternate trail to relieve congestion on the Colorado Trail
Approximate Length	2 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District; South Park Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li><li>• Adjacent to wildlife migration corridors</li><li>• Located in mule deer winter range</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Could be managed as bike-only, directional, or shared use</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA, CMC, CDOT



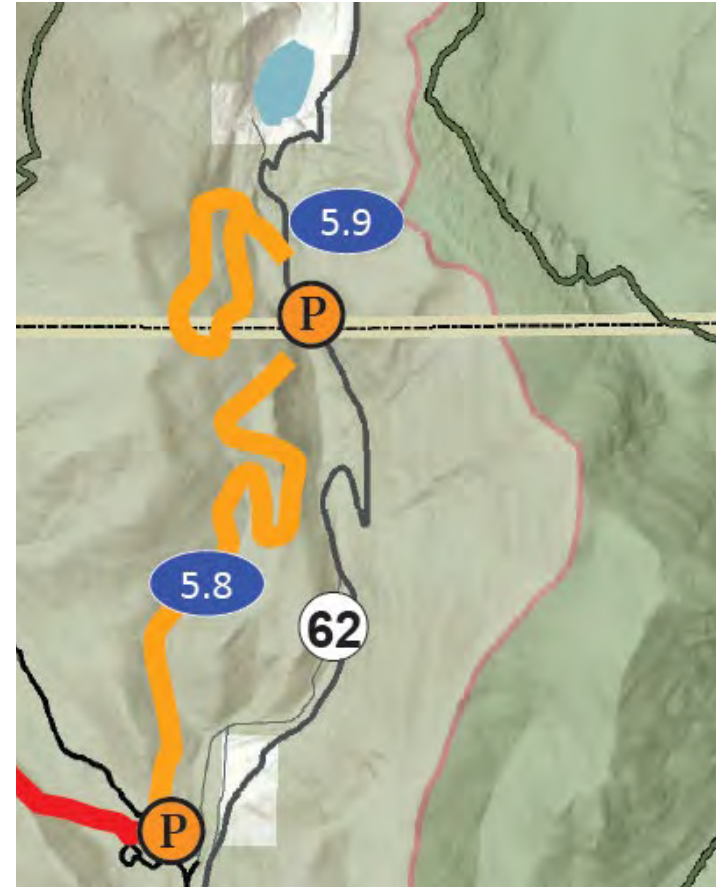
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

South Park Trail Improvements, and Geneva Park Connector	
Map ID	5.1 and 5.2
Implementation Tier	Tier 1
Objective	Conduct maintenance and short reroutes on the South Park Trail, and designate/improve the existing connector to the Geneva Park Campground and Buno Gulch
Approximate Length	2 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li> <li>• Existing trail corridors</li> <li>• Located within or adjacent to Canada lynx habitat, elk production area, and wetlands</li> </ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li> <li>• Consider along with the Burning Bear Connector (5.3) and Buno Gulch Trailhead</li> </ul>
Project Partners	COMBA, CMC



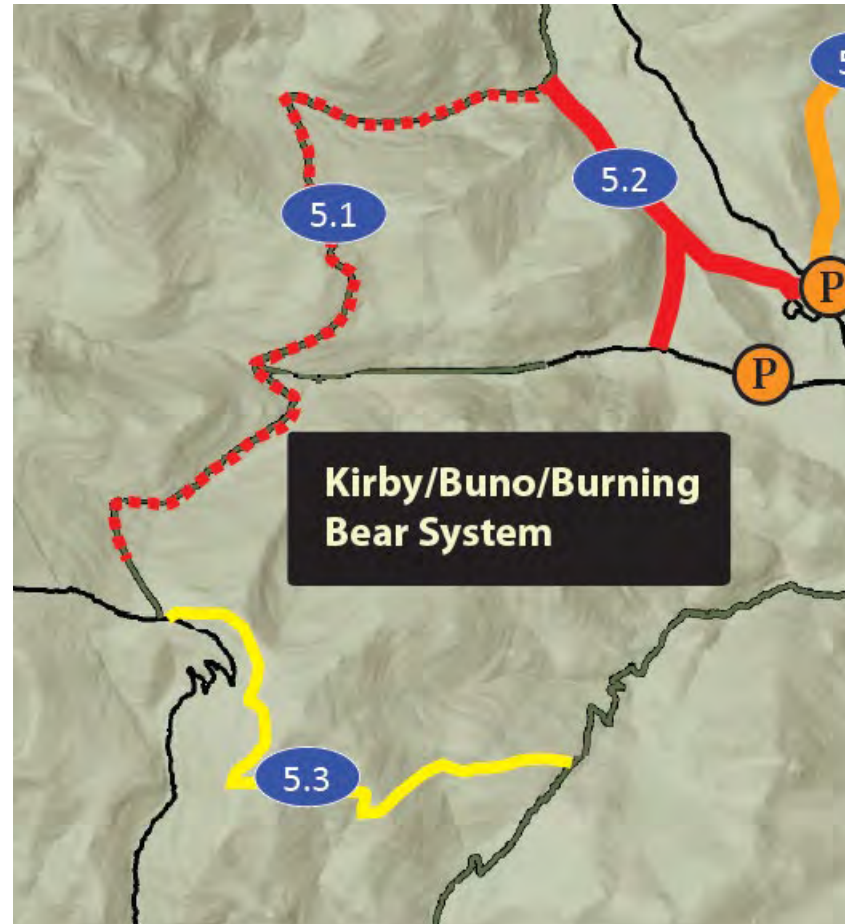
## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Mill Gulch Trail, and Geneva Basin Trail	
Map ID	5.8 and 5.9
Implementation Tier	Tier 2
Objective	New trail connection from Geneva Park to the old Geneva Basin Ski Area, with a loop trail on the former ski area site
Approximate Length	7 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li><li>• Existing use and disturbance in the ski area site</li><li>• Located within or adjacent to Canada lynx habitat</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li><li>• Consider along with a potential trailhead at the former ski area</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA, CMC



## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Burning Bear Connector	
Map ID	5.3
Implementation Tier	Tier 3
Objective	New trail connection from the south terminus of the South Park trail to the Burning Bear Trail
Approximate Length	4 miles
Land Manager	USFS – South Platte Ranger District
Environmental Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moderate habitat sensitivity</li><li>• Located within or adjacent to Canada lynx and ptarmigan habitat</li><li>• CPW concerns about elk use in area</li></ul>
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires planning, design, and NEPA compliance</li></ul>
Project Partners	COMBA, CMC



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### Appendix C - Trail and Recreation Concepts Not Recommended for Implementation

The Outside 285 planning process considered over 130 specific trail and recreation concepts within the region. Considering wildlife habitat suitability, land manager priorities, recreation benefit and overall feasibility, the Steering Committee identified the projects listed above for future implementation. Based on this analysis, the following proposed projects were not recommended for implementation.

Map ID	Project Name	Description	Rationale/Notes
<b>Zone 1: Evergreen – Conifer</b>			
EC2	Corwina/O’Fallon loop improvement	New trail to improve trail loops	Uncertain ownership and need
EC10	Black Mountain East	Hiker route from Staunton SP to Black Mountain from the east	Crosses private land
EC17	Hildebrand – Neighborhood Access	Connection from loop trail to neighborhood	Resource impacts
EC19	Beaver Ranch – Reynolds Park Connection	Regional connection along Foxton Road corridor	Private land; no available corridor
EC21	Staunton to Harris Park	Regional backcountry connection	Habitat impacts and land management concerns
EC22	Highway 285 – Conifer to Bailey	Trail along highway corridor	Complicated terrain and ownership; uncertain need
EC23	Highway 285 – Indian Hills to Aspen Park	Trail along highway corridor	Complicated terrain and ownership; uncertain need
EC25	Staunton to Flying J	Trail connection between parks	Private land; no available corridor; incompatible with park management
EC26	Staunton to Buffalo Creek	Regional connection	Private land; no available corridor
EC27	Cub Creek Park Trails	Develop new trails, access, and connections in Denver’s Cub Creek Park	Incompatible with land manager objectives
	Cub Creek Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and uncertain need
	Lair o’ the Bear Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and park capacity
	Pence Park Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and uncertain need
	Cub Creek Trail Restrictions	Convert to hiking only trail	Need to accommodate existing uses and regional connections
<b>Zone 2: Waterton – Indian Creek</b>			
WI2	Indian Creek – Russell Ridge Connector	Regional backcountry trail connection	Sensitive habitat area and incompatible with land management priorities
WI3	Waterton – CT Bypass	Connection from Roxborough Loop Trail to canyon bottom	Sensitive habitat area, private land issues, and incompatible with land management
WI4	Waterton – Parallel Trail	Trail along river, parallel to road	Sensitive habitat area, complex terrain, and incompatible with land management

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Map ID	Project Name	Description	Rationale/Notes
WI5	Ringtail – Eastern Access	Trail access from Highway 67 corridor east of Ringtail Trail	Private land
WI6	Strontia Springs North	Loop trail north of canyon/reservoir	Sensitive habitat area, complex terrain, and private land
WI7	Strontia – North Fork Connector	Connection from WI6 to North Fork Trail	Sensitive habitat area and private land
WI8	Hildebrand – Waterton Connection	North-south regional trail connection	Sensitive habitat area and private land
WI11	Roxborough – Eastern Access	New trail to provide bike access to Ringtail and Indian Creek system	Sensitive habitat area and incompatible with Roxborough SP management
	Sharptail Trail Access Change	Change management to allow bike access	Wildlife concerns and incompatible with conservation easement and management priorities
<b>Zone 3: Buffalo Creek</b>			
BC2	Raleigh Peak Hike	Hiking access to peak	Wildlife concerns and uncertain need
BC3	Raleigh Peak Loop Trail	Trail across Spring Creek drainage to loop with Colorado Trail	Sensitive wildlife habitat
BC4	Spring Creek Trail	Backcountry trail loop around Spring Creek drainage	Sensitive wildlife habitat
BC9	Reynolds Park – Cathedral Spires Connector	Regional connection between parks	Complicated terrain and ownership, habitat concerns, and connection addressed by other concepts
BC10	Reynolds Park – North Fork Loop	Loop trail to the east	Sensitive wildlife habitat and incompatible with management priorities
BC14	Green Mountain Loop	Large backcountry loop to the south	Sensitive wildlife habitat
BC25b	Narrow Gauge Loop	Loop from Buck Gulch to the river canyon and back	Sensitive wildlife habitat, complicated terrain, and incompatible with management priorities
BC26	Pine Junction – Buffalo Creek	Regional trail along road corridor	Private land; no available corridor
BC27	Buffalo Peak Trail	Designated trail to summit of peak	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
BC28	Windy Peak Trail	Designated trail to summit of peak	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
<b>Zone 4: Bailey – Lost Creek</b>			
LC4	Kenosha to Hall Valley Connector	Regional connection to Burning Bear trail	Sensitive wildlife habitat
LC8	Kenosha Crest Trail	Formalize hiking route along crest of ridge	Sensitive wildlife habitat; uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
<b>Zone 5: Geneva Basin – Mount Evans</b>			
GE4	Burning Bear Peak Trail	Designated trail to summit	Sensitive wildlife habitat; uncertain need

## OUTSIDE 285 MASTER PLAN

Map ID	Project Name	Description	Rationale/Notes
GE5	Burning Bear – Whiteside Connector	Backcountry trail connection	Sensitive wildlife habitat; incompatible with existing use and management priorities
GE8	Spearhead Peak Trail	Designated trail to summit	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE9	Rosedale Peak Trail	Designated trail to summit	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE10	Meridian – Tanglewood Connector	Connector to create a loop hiking route	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE11	Tanglewood – Rosalie Connector	Connector to create a loop hiking route	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE13	Harris Park Trail Improvements	Loop trails and connectors from neighborhood	Incompatible with management priorities
GE14	Three Mile Trail Improvements	Bridge and other trail improvements	Uncertain need
GE15	Montezuma Connection	Regional backcountry connection to the west	Challenging terrain and uncertain need
GE16	Rosalie – Mt. Evans Access	Formalize backcountry hiking route	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE17	Royal Mountain Trail	Designated trail to summit	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE18	Mount Logan Trail	Designated trail to summit	Sensitive wildlife habitat; uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE19	Mount Rosalie Trail	Designated trail to summit	Uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE20	Upper Bear Track Lake	Designated trail to upper lake	Sensitive wildlife habitat; uncertain need; incompatible with wilderness management
GE23	Kirby Ridge Trail	Short hike access above campground	Uncertain need
GE26	Geneva – Shelf Lake Loop	Connector to create a loop hiking route	Sensitive wildlife habitat
	Three Mile Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and uncertain need
	Rosalie Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and uncertain need
	Shelf Lake Trailhead Expansion	Expanded trailhead capacity	Limited land area and uncertain need