



BOARD OF DIRECTORS September 1, 2006

Guy Burgess

To: Don D'Amico and Joe Mantione

Jim Knopf

Subject: Undesignated Trails, Eldorado Mountain/Doudy Draw Draft Trail Study Area Plan additions, dated August 22, 2006

Mike O'Brian

We have reviewed the Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) Department's additional materials concerning undesignated trails for the draft Eldorado Mountain/ Doudy Draw Trail Study Area (EM/DD TSA) Plan and would like to add the following comments to our previous submission:

Chris Morrison

For Natural Areas the Visitor Master Plan envisions creating attractive quality trails as the primary tool to focus visitor travel and keep most visitors on the designated trail system.

Gary Sprung

Holly Tulin

Visitor created undesignated trails point out unrealized visitor desires for official OS accesses. They illustrate where people want to go and how they want to get there. The EMDD TSA proposes closing and restoring many undesignated trails.

Eric Vogelsberg

Suzanne Webel

When alternate, high quality designated trails exist, redundant or damaging social trails can be successfully reclaimed. When alternate designated trails do not exist, attempts to eliminate undesignated trails will be unsuccessful and will, in fact, do additional damage by leading to the creation of new undesignated trails to replace the closed ones.

The trail system envisioned by the present EMDD TSA draft plan is a major improvement over the status quo, but still lacks a few alignments necessary for success:

1) Flatirons Vista Mesa Rim Trail (Map 2 Location 3 & Map 3 Trails 36, 46,47,49)

The northern loop trail on the Flatirons Vista Plateau and the associated access trail via the Matterhorn underpass is the primary missing component.

The draft proposes seasonal closures for this area, restoration of the existing undesignated trails, and various other actions to reduce visitation. The draft also proposes to allow continued use of the Matterhorn underpass without any trail designation and proposes to review the area access requirements at some future time.

The proposals to restore the undesignated trails while designating the use of the underpass and scheduling future studies are contradictory in nature and contrary to the Natural Area philosophy of managing visitor travel by designating appropriate trails.

Designating the Flatirons Vista Mesa Rim Trail and requiring on-trail travel during the seasonal closures would eliminate these issues,

improve the likelihood of the success of the plan, and best protect the area.

2) Connection to South Boulder Creek trails (Map 2 Location 2 & Map 3 Trails 49, 50, & 52)

The draft proposes deferring any decision on a trail connection from this TSA to the South Boulder Creek trails until the Shanahan/South Mesa TSA planning process. The draft also proposes restoring the existing undesignated trails that might provide such a connection. These trails should be retained until the decision about the South Boulder Creek trails connection is made.

3) Lower Doudy Draw Loop Trail (Map 2 Location 1 & & Map 3 Trails 65 & 66)

There is an existing loop of undesignated trails in this area. The draft proposes restoration of these undesignated trails without providing any alternative designated trails in the area. We have previously argued for a designated trail loop in this area. At the least, a loop of the undesignated trails should be retained to avoid the creation of additional undesignated trails in the area.

4) Roads designated as trails

Several of the designated "trails" in the draft plan are, in fact, roads (e.g., the old farm road from the Flatirons Vista trailhead to the old railroad grade and the Denver Water Canal maintenance road). Many visitors do not consider roads to provide quality experiences. As a result undesignated trails are often created paralleling the road alignments. The Boulder Valley Ranch roads and the Marshall Mesa roads are major examples of this situation.

Attempts to prevent or restore such parallel, undesignated trails within the EMDD TSA will be unsuccessful. A wiser approach is to incorporate these undesignated trails as part of the trail system, and to actively improve the visitor experience along the road corridors by constructing sustainable parallel trails as necessary to avoid the future creation of undesirable undesignated trails.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft plan and hope for the success of the plan and the TSA process.

Sincerely,

Boulder Area Trails Coalition Board of Directors

Cc: Mike Patton