



**VIRGINIA**  
**CANYON**  
**MOUNTAIN**  
**PARK**

**2 0 1 9**  
**M A S T E R P L A N**



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan would not be possible without the vision and direction provided by the City of Idaho Springs City Council and Staff members involved. Alongside the City's efforts, the dedication and guidance provided by the Steering Committee played a vital role as the heartbeat of this document.

This project was funded by a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) along with contributions from the City of Idaho Springs.



The City of Idaho Springs would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their engagement in the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan:

## IDAHO SPRINGS CITY COUNCIL

Mike Hillman, Mayor  
Tracy Stokes  
Scott Pennell  
John Curtis

Mike Vieweg  
Jason Siegel  
Robert Bowland



## STEERING COMMITTEE

Alan Tiefenbach, City Planner  
Andy Marsh, City Administrator  
Mike Hillman, Mayor  
Jonathan Cain, Management Intern  
Chris Malanka, Chief of Police  
Beth Luther, Clear Creek County  
James Kovaly, Clear Creek County  
Gary Moore, Colorado Mountain Bike Association  
David Knox, Colorado Mountain Bike Association  
Travis Cook, Argo Mine & Mill  
Mary Jane Loevlie, Argo Mine & Mill  
Janice Bowland, Argo Mine & Mill  
Bob Bowland, Argo Mine & Mill  
Paul Dalpes, Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District  
Laura Allen, Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District  
Ben Plankis, Colorado Parks & Wildlife  
Amy Saxton, Clear Creek Greenway Authority  
Dan Williams, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado  
Bob Young, Citizen  
Santiago Garcia, Citizen  
Steve King, Citizen  
Scott Yard, Citizen  
Patti Tyler, Citizen

## PROJECT TEAM



THK Associates, Inc.  
Kevin Shanks, RLA  
Ellie Garza, RLA  
Randall Navarro, MPM



Tony Boone Trails  
Tony Boone, M.Ed.



Chinook Landscape  
Architecture  
Jon Altschuld, RLA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
A. PURPOSE & GOALS .....	3
B. PLANNING AREA .....	4
C. HISTORY .....	5
D. APPROACH .....	7
<b>II. RESEARCH &amp; ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
A. PREVIOUS PLANNING.....	9
B. EXISTING CONDITIONS .....	12
C. SWOT ANALYSIS .....	24
<b>III. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>26</b>
A. OUTREACH .....	27
<b>IV. MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>30</b>
A. OVERVIEW .....	31
B. TRAIL MASTER PLAN .....	31
<b>V. FUNDING &amp; IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>47</b>
A. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES .....	48
B. PHASING 1 PROJECT.....	54
<b>VI. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE .....</b>	<b>57</b>
A. PURPOSE .....	58
B. MAINTENANCE .....	59
C. MAINTENANCE TASK CHECKLIST .....	61
<b>VII. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>VIII. APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>64</b>
APPENDIX A: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS AND THE ARGO MINE & MILL.....	65
APPENDIX B: VIRGINIA CANYON OPEN SPACE SURVEY RESULTS.....	74
APPENDIX C: 2017 AREA 28 & VIRGINIA CANYON RECREATION AREA CONCEPT.....	126



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Over the last 5 years, the City of Idaho Springs has transformed itself from a pass-through town located along the I-70 Mountain Corridor, to a truly unique regional destination that attracts thousands of tourists a year. Several completed and planned development projects in the City, including the devolution of Colorado Boulevard and new ownership and vision at the Argo Mill, have energized the local residents and economy. The newly constructed Clear Creek Greenway (Peaks-to-Plains) trail through Idaho Springs has connected the community and improved outdoor recreation experiences, even enhancing the City's booming rafting industry. The additional enhancements planned at Courtney-Ryley-Cooper Park will ensure that the City's local park system remains one of the best in Clear Creek County. The only missing piece in the City's robust park system is an open space that can provide first-class mountain trail experiences...until now!

The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan is the next step in the planning for a true recreational gem that has not yet been fully realized. Located on the south slope of Clear Creek Canyon in the northern part of Idaho Springs, Virginia Canyon Mountain Park boasts close to 500 acres of untapped mountain biking and hiking potential.

Once owned by the Bureau of Land Management, Virginia Canyon Mountain Park has always been envisioned as an area that would be reserved for outdoor recreation. While some preliminary studies and plans have been completed throughout the years, the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan is the first that consolidates all of the information into a concise document that accurately identifies specific trail alignments, design and construction considerations and implementation strategies.

The alignments and strategies detailed in the Master Plan were the result of numerous hours of background research, field studies, stakeholder engagement and input from industry experts. The overarching goal of the Master Plan is to create a first-class, sustainable trail system that balances outdoor recreation with preservation of the natural environment. For this reason, the Master Plan includes an Operations and Maintenance section, ensuring the continued safe and healthy use of Virginia Canyon Mountain Park.

Finally, the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan looks beyond the initial planning of the Open Space. As a part of the implementation strategies outlined in the document, a Phase 1 system of trails has been identified as a priority for construction. This Phase 1 project will consist of over 3 miles of new trail construction that will service both hikers and mountain bikers and create additional opportunities for future trail development.

*"We Aspire To Be An Active, Healthy Community That Appreciates The Outdoors, Our Connection To The Natural Environment, And Fosters Sustainable Recreational Opportunities Within Our Mountain Community For All Ages And Abilities." - Envision Idaho Springs 2017*

A hiker with a backpack is seen from behind, pointing towards a vast mountain landscape. The scene is framed by pine trees in the foreground and a clear blue sky. The hiker is wearing a light-colored shirt and a backpack. The landscape features a mix of green pine forests and rocky, brownish mountain peaks. The overall atmosphere is bright and scenic.

# INTRODUCTION



# PURPOSE & GOALS

In April of 2018, The City of Idaho Springs was awarded a Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) planning grant to fund the creation of the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (VCMP) Master Plan for the City-owned acreage called Virginia Canyon, or locally known as Area 28. This area has remained unprogrammed since it was endowed to the City by Clear Creek County under the Recreation & Public Purposes Act in 1999. Previous efforts to try to plan this space into a recreational amenity for the City had fallen by the wayside, and the City and interested local groups wanted to reassess the recreational potential of the Open Space once again. With the assistance of a Local Park and Outdoor Recreation (LPOR) Planning Grant from GOCO, the City has completed this Master Plan to address the following goals:

**1. Create A Master Plan That Will Balance the Environmental, Recreational And Economic Value Of The Open Space**

- Having a holistic Master Plan that properly balances recreational amenities with the protection of natural and cultural resources is essential for protecting the City of Idaho Springs' investment and conserving the open space for future generations.

**2. Gather Community Input And Work With A Steering Committee To Help Guide The Planning Process**

- Engaging a group of knowledgeable citizens from various backgrounds was a key to formulating a master plan team that would guide the Master Plan process and inform the Planning Team on direction and items of note.

**3. Establish A Sustainable Multi-Use Open Space Trail System For Public Users**

- Planning efforts focused on consideration for passive recreational use for hiking, running and biking in Mountain Park, as determined by the Recreation and Public Purposes Act Agreement.

**4. Develop A Brand For The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park**

- To progress the vision and to bring more awareness to this overlooked community amenity, a key of the plan was to develop a memorable identity for Mountain Park.

**5. Create An Operations Management Plan**

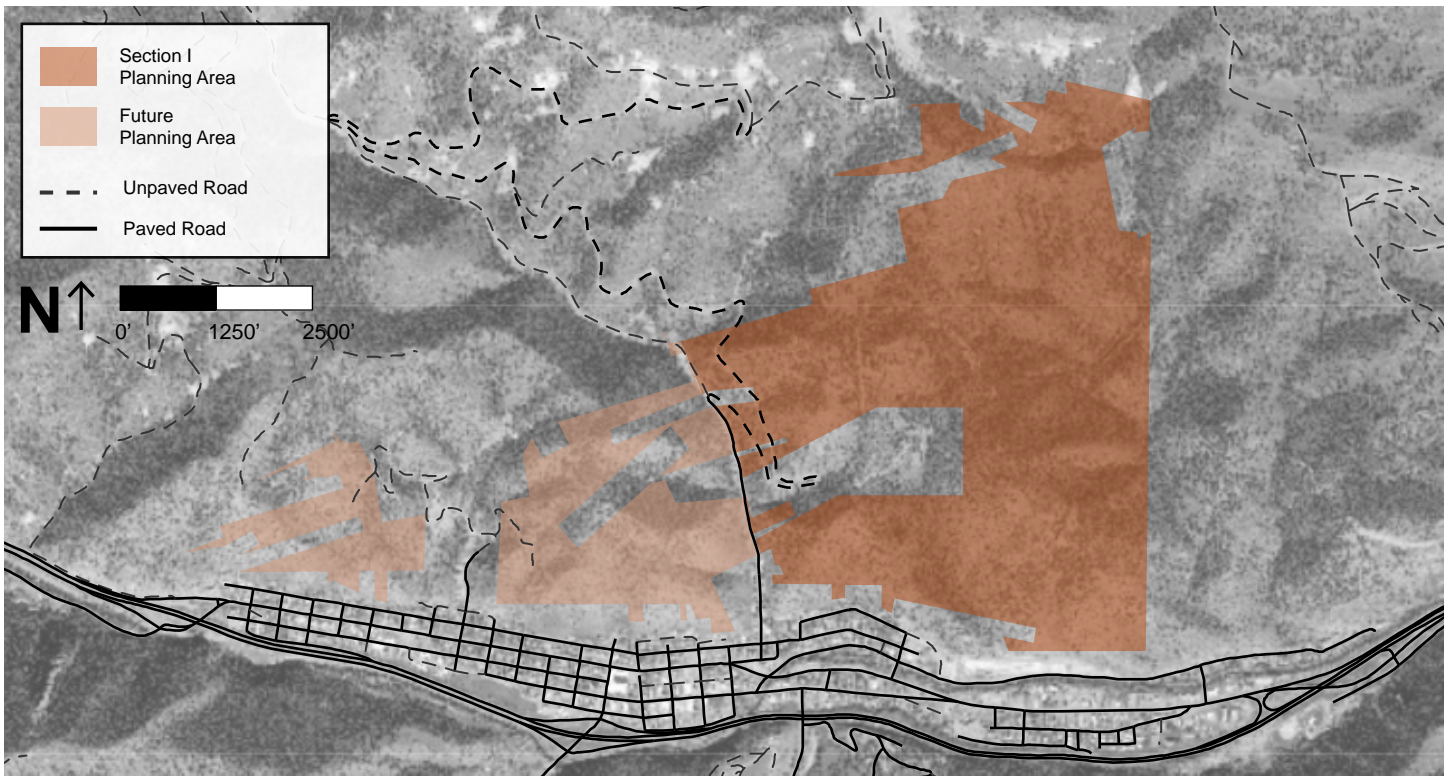
- The Master Plan includes the operations and management planning for the future maintenance of Mountain Park for the City of Idaho Springs.

**6. Design A Phase 1 Project That Will Include Shovel Ready Plans**

- A first step action item was included in the planning efforts for the Master Plan to design a shovel ready Phase 1 project that would be easily implementable in the near future.

**7. Strategize Additional Funding For Future Planning, Design & Construction Of Open Space Amenities**

- To move the plan from paper to reality, the plan would strategize additional funding for future planning, design and construction of Mountain Park trails and amenities.



Map 1.1 - Planning Area

# PLANNING AREA

Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (Mountain Park) is an approximately 472 acre parcel of land located to the north of the City of Idaho Springs within Clear Creek County. The parcel is owned by the City of Idaho Springs and is regionally accessed through the City from the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The Mountain Park is bordered by the nearby Virginia Canyon Road, Riverside Drive and Santa Fe Mine Road (also known as Oh-My-God Road). The Mountain Park is surrounded by private property and historical mining claims that streak the landscape of Clear Creek County.

Due to the complexity of the project and the topography, the Master Plan focused on the eastern portion of the Open Space known as Area 28. This area is shown as the Section 1 Planning Area on Map 1.1. The City of Idaho Springs has deemed this area as the highest priority for non-motorized, outdoor recreational development. Planning for the western portion of the Mountain Park will be a future consideration.



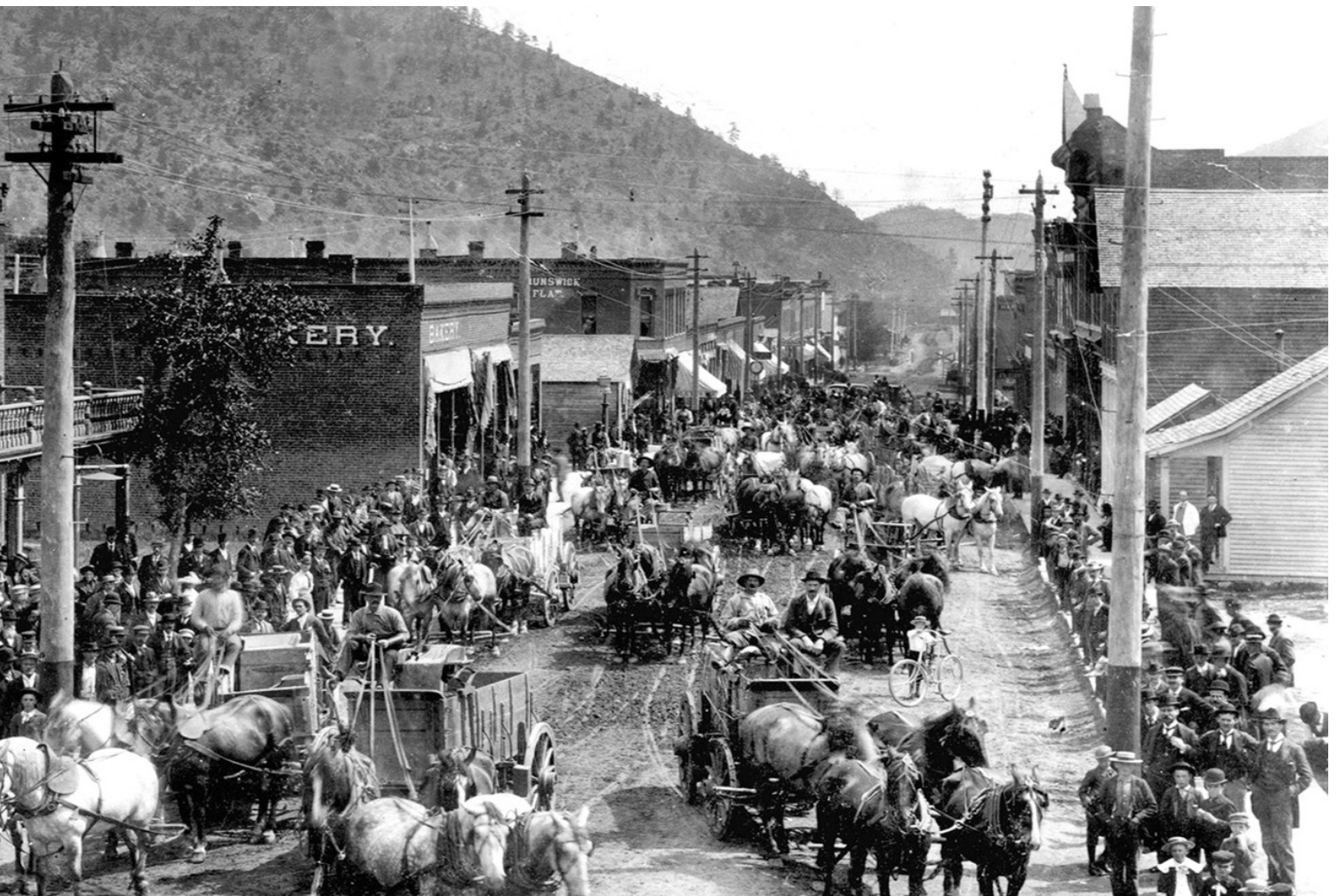
Historical Downtown Idaho Springs



# HISTORY

The Mountain Park is located within an area of Colorado well-known for its extensive mining history. Idaho Springs is located between these ridges where many miners made their fortunes. While industry developed along Clear Creek, homes and narrow streets sprang up at the base of the steep inclines and the residents built a host of churches and shops. In the middle of this, the Miner Street commercial district grew into the cornerstone of Idaho Springs' historic landscape. All of these elements - the topography, the mines, the homes, the shops, the churches and the creek - have survived relatively intact and, when viewed as a whole, afford modern day Coloradoans a rare insight into the history not just of Colorado, but of development in the western United States.

The Mountain Park boasts remnants of this history in the form of historical burro, foot, and prospector wagon trails that follow the ravines and ridges that are found within this area of the county. These trails existed to connect the many mining claims as miners used shared trail systems to access their respective mine sites. These trails still exist today and can be observed from Virginia Canyon and Santa Fe Mine Road. Many prospect diggings and mines have been observed in Clear Creek County dating as far back as 140 years. The Argo Mine and Mill is a historical focal point in Clear Creek County and its historical features form a dramatic backdrop to the City of Idaho Springs and an eye-catching front door to the Mountain Park, seen from the I-70 Mountain Corridor and as far away as Mount Evans & Highway 103 to the south.



For many years mining was an important part of the local economy. With the advent of the 20th century, the number of mines and active claims began to shrink as the easily mined ores were no longer available. The decline in precious mineral mining and population continued through the first half of the 20th century with most of the mines closing down by the end of World War II.

The miner's true legacy was the City of Idaho Springs, a community built to support the mining industry and the needs of its workforce. The construction of housing, shops, streets and public facilities was carefully scaled to those needs and succeeding generations have maintained this practice. As a result, the appearance of much of the City of Idaho Springs remains in many ways as it looked in the days of the Gold Rush. Idaho Springs, widely regarded as one of the first sites of a major Colorado gold strike, is among the handful of western gold rush towns that have survived to the present day.

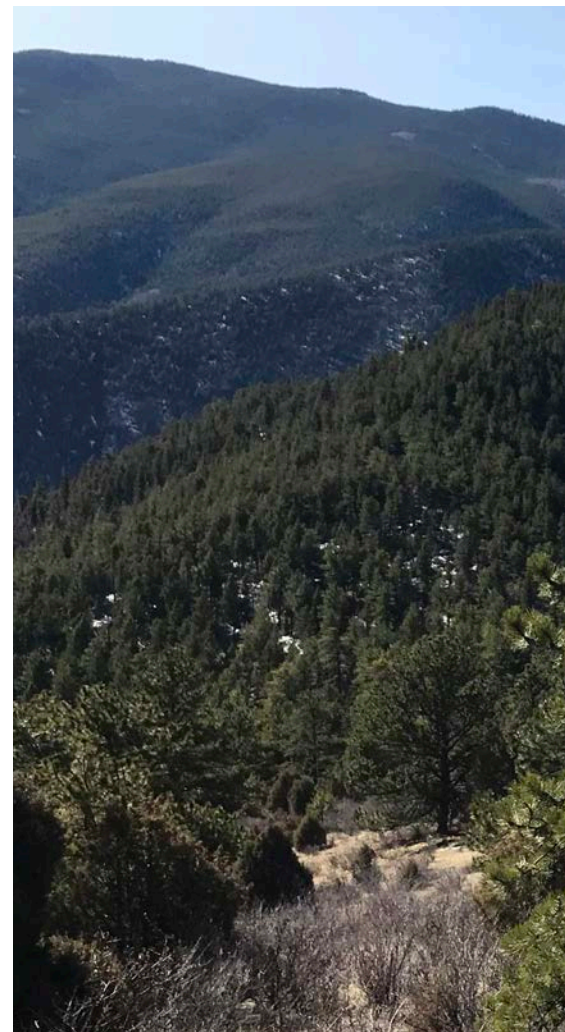
To the west of the City, winter resort development grew rapidly. As the ski industry developed, so did the resort communities. With competition for limited land, costs of housing skyrocketed. Service workers and support services started to locate in less costly communities, and workers began commuting to and from the resort areas. With the maturation of the resort industry, attention began to focus on expanding tourism marketing to a year round audience to support the large investments being made in those areas. This shift in focus and metro area growth contributed to large numbers of visitors traveling to and from the Denver area, either from the airport or from their metro area homes to winter and summer recreation sites via I-70.

With the substantial population growth in Colorado since World War II, the metropolitan Front Range has grown westward. Early development occurred near Lookout Mountain, Evergreen, Bergen Park, Genesee and El Rancho. It is continuing to move westward into Clear Creek County at Floyd Hill and on land west of Evergreen. Increasingly these areas have attracted relatively affluent families who commute to the metro Denver area while living in the mountains. This same development pattern is occurring in Clear Creek County and is expected to continue. Significant growth has occurred in unincorporated Clear Creek County in areas west of Evergreen, at Floyd Hill and Saddleback and in the Dumont-Lawson-Downieville area.

## OWNERSHIP

This Mountain Park property was part of the BLM lands disposition process which started in 1985 and resulted in the Clear Creek County, Colorado, Public Lands Transfer Act of 1993. The lands proposed to be transferred were divided into 35 areas and a recommendation was developed for each of the areas by the BLM Lands Committee and the Board of County Commissioners through committee meetings, workshops and a public hearing before the Board of County Commissioners. Recommendation No. 28 stated that a patent to these lands should be granted to the City of Idaho Springs for Recreation and Public Purpose uses. The patent for this area first went to Clear Creek County and then the property was transferred to the City of Idaho Springs.

In 1994, Clear Creek County acquired approximately 7,400 acres of property from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Some of this land is along the hillside north of the City. In 2003, the County transferred approximately 424 acres of this property to the City of Idaho Springs. As part of the transfer agreement, Idaho Springs prepared a long range management plan for the site. This Virginia Canyon Open Space Concept Plan (also known as "Area 28") was prepared in 2006 through grants with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety) and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). Stakeholders involved in this early process included Clear Creek County, Colorado State Parks, and the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). The Plan conceptualized 10-15 miles of trails, designed for mountain bikes, although at the time the project did not go forward.



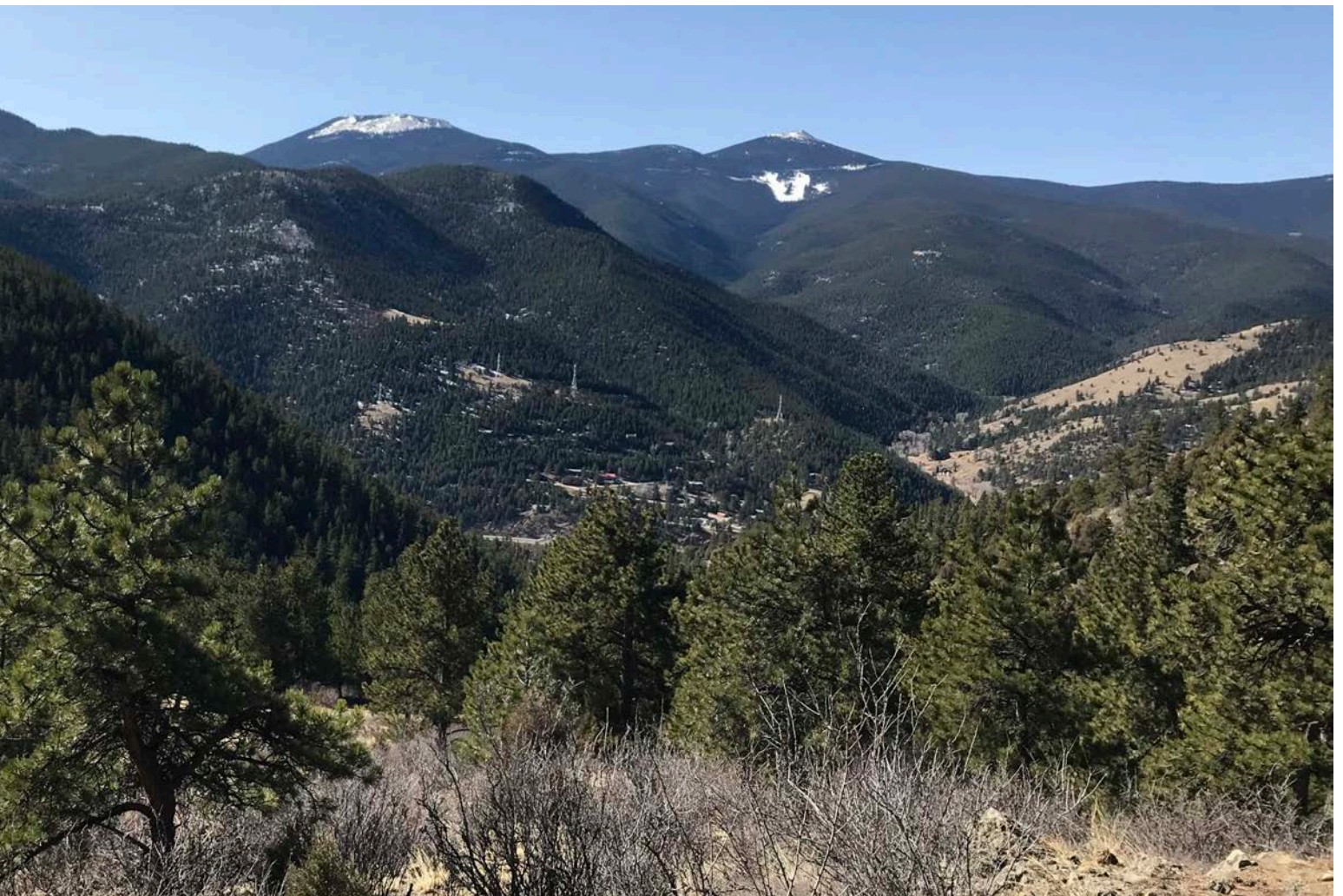
A View from A Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Overlook

# APPROACH

The Mountain Park Master Plan will advance the previous planning efforts that have laid the ground work for Mountain Park. The approach taken to understand and visualize the future of the Mountain Park consisted of primarily “boots on the ground” efforts that afforded an in-depth knowledge of the site to the Planning Team. Several reconnaissance trips were completed to ensure trails identified were sustainable and unobtrusive. This was achieved by placing alignments that followed the contour of the slope creating a trail system that works with the existing conditions of the site instead of against it.

In conjunction with this comprehensive approach to the trail network design, desktop analysis were performed to further understand the existing conditions and site characteristics by reviewing and applying electronically available pertinent data. Research for this project helped to inform the final decisions and conclusions that evolved through inclusive engagement with a monthly steering committee. These meetings were the bloodline for the Master Plan, where schools of thought were brought together by different stakeholders to discuss and consider various aspects of the trail design drafts and deduce the best solution for the Master Plan. These meetings helped further identify the needs for the trail system planning efforts and focus the intent of the plan. After the approval of this Master Plan document, the steering committee members will continue to play a major role as ambassadors for the Mountain Park’s development.

After nearly 10 months of planning work, the information was consolidated and conceptualized into this Master Plan document. The Master Plan Recommendations provided have been extensively vetted through the steering committee meetings to ensure accuracy and collective agreement from the parties involved.





# RESEARCH & ANALYSIS



# PREVIOUS PLANNING

Previous Master Planning efforts for the Open Space should be recognized for beginning the plan and continuing the conversation that led up to the formal Master Plan for the open space. It is important to recognize items that remain relevant to this Master Plan. Past plans reviewed included:

- Special Warranty Deed & Recreation and Public Purposes Act, 1999
- 2005 Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan, 2008
- Clear Creek Greenway Plan, 2005
- Area 28 & Virginia Canyon Recreation Area Concept, 2017
- Envision Idaho Springs 2017

These plans are provided as Addendums to this Master Plan document for reference. The following is a synopsis of these past planning efforts that helped inform the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan:

## SPECIAL WARRANTY DEED & RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSES ACT

On June 24, 1999, the Board of County Commissioners of Clear Creek County granted the City of Idaho Springs the land for Virginia Canyon Mountain Park through a Special Warranty Deed. There were a total of 14 contiguous parcels as part of this deed with the following names:

- Idaho Springs R&PP West Parcel, Area One
- Idaho Springs R&PP West-Central Parcel, Area One
- Trenberth
- Idaho Springs R&PP East-Central Parcel, Area One
- Idaho Springs R&PP East Parcel, Area One
- Lukowl
- Idaho Springs R&PP West Parcel, Area Two
- Idaho Springs R&PP West-Central Parcel, Area Two
- Williams
- Marlin
- Blankenship
- Hoffman
- White
- Mitchell

The City of Idaho Springs paid a total of \$0.00 dollars for the property and was given the land under the stipulation of the deed that the land was to be “held by the recipient under the same terms and conditions as if transferred by the United States under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, except that such terms and conditions shall also apply to the mineral estate in such land.”

The Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to lease or convey public lands for recreational and public purposes. The land was initially conveyed to the County by the Bureau of Land Management who in turn deeded it to the City of Idaho Springs with the stipulation that the purpose for recreation remain intact. Before the Bureau of Land Management gave the land to the County, it was a part of the Louisiana Purchase. When the Bureau of Land Management transferred ownership to Clear Creek County, the parcel was designated “Area 28”.

# 2005 IDAHO SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2005 Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan identified a large expanse of Open Space, referred to as Area 28, north of the City, and called for the phased development of hiking and mountain biking trails through the property. The Comprehensive Plan presents both opportunities and challenges to the City for the development of the Open Space. Its myriad of opportunities focus on the various types of recreational uses while the main challenges included securing the appropriate financing, both for development and operations/maintenance expenses. In summary, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan tasked the City to proceed with cautious development of Area 28, while enlisting the support of collaborative organizations and agencies which will share in addressing both initial and on going costs of recreational amenities.

## ENVISION IDAHO SPRINGS 2017

Envision Idaho Springs 2017 was a complete revision of the 2005 City of Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan. The Envision Idaho Springs document is a long-range plan that looks into the future and articulates a vision for the City of Idaho Springs while providing a set of goals and actions to achieve that vision. It is a policy document that provides guidance to City Council, Planning Commission, City Staff, residents, businesses, and developers to facilitate informed decisions about the current and future needs of the community.

Envision Idaho Springs 2017 stated that in the previous year, there was renewed interest in the Virginia Canyon Open Space, driven by new leadership, the design of the Greenway and the potential Argo Mill and Tunnel redevelopment. In order to determine the political climate and actual feasibility, staff organized a meeting to discuss the project. The results of this meeting were overwhelmingly positive, with all individuals as well as the City Council voicing their support for Staff to move forward with a list of action items.

In 2017 the City Council directed Staff to continue to move The Mountain Park project forward recognizing the recreational and economic development potential of the Mountain Park within the City limits. Access to the Mountain Park include the Clear Creek Greenway and Virginia Canyon Road, with a future possibility to connect to Central City.

The document identified the following objectives for the near future of the Mountain Park:

1. Complete the design and development of the Virginia Canyon Open Space.
2. Identify and prioritize parcels for future acquisition of trail connections for the Virginia Canyon Open Space.
3. Work with other agencies and volunteer groups such as the Clear Creek Greenway Authority, Clear Creek County, and COMBA to plan, fund, develop and maintain the Virginia Canyon Open Space.



Envision Idaho Springs Comprehensive Plan Cover Image

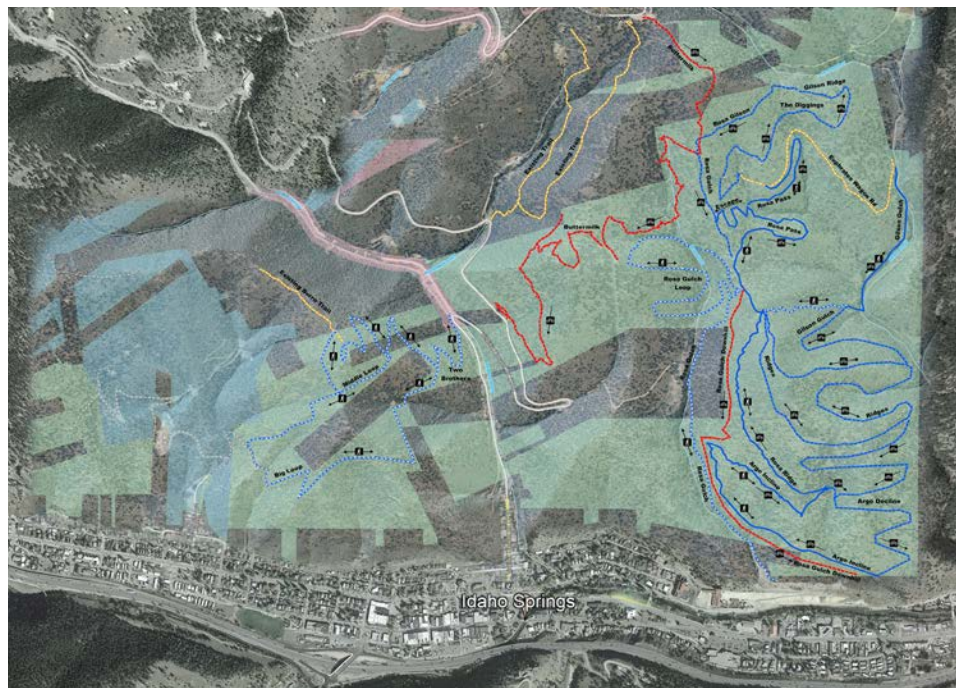
# CLEAR CREEK GREENWAY PLAN

The Clear Creek Greenway Plan was published in 2005 and identified its purpose to serve as the backbone of Clear Creek County and link together a string of open spaces, parks, recreational facilities and commercial facilities along Clear Creek. The Mountain Park was identified as a connection of the proposed Clear Creek Greenway Trail.

# AREA 28 & VIRGINIA CANYON RECREATION AREA CONCEPT

In June, 2017, the Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA) created a Concept Plan for the Mountain Park, identified locally as Area 28. This was the most relevant and recent plan that was developed for the Mountain Park. The Plan provided a high level concept plan that identified the need for the space to be considered for future land use and stewardship options. The plan proposed that future efforts aim to work with community leaders, the public, and interested agencies and organizations to formulate a vision for multi-use trails for the property. The plan urged future action to also consider mitigation and interpretation of the history on the site. Future efforts should strive to enhance economic benefits brought about by building a unique, world-class experience and thus attraction repeated use by hikers and mountain bikers from a broad demographic.

With the consideration of preservation of the site “as is” or only allowing minimal access to users, the COMBA planning process recommended the third option of developing the site for an outdoor recreation venue. The plan gave the formal recommendation to develop the site as a world class destination for a mountain biking and hiking venue and to create a network of trails that accommodates non-motorized uses. Reuse of several existing trails was desired with the plan, but complicated because many of these existing trails cross private property. The COMBA concept envisioned amenities such as parking, trailheads, informal picnicking, interpretive displays, and overlooks, with the potential for the site to host competitive events such as cross-country, downhill, endurance mountain biking races, and endurance foot races.



Original Area 28 Concept Plan

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

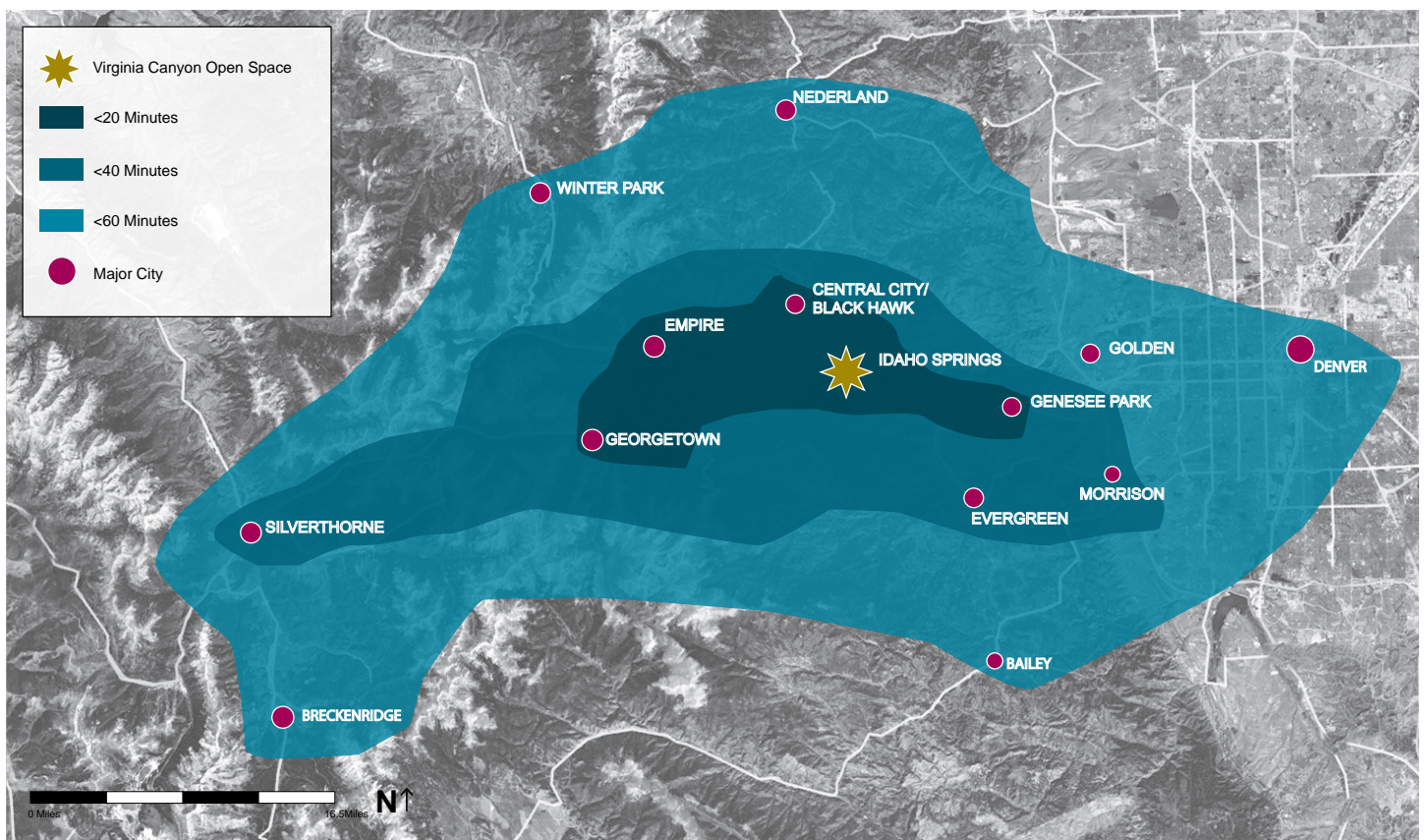
## REGIONAL CONTEXT

### REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

Virginia Canyon Mountain Park is located directly north of the City of Idaho Springs. The City of Idaho Springs is the second city that you come to traveling west through the I-70 Mountain Corridor from Denver after passing Golden. This strategic location allows the County, the City and the Mountain Park to benefit from the larger populations of recreational enthusiasts residing in the Denver Metropolitan area. Below is a map that shows the approximate drive times from major locations to access Mountain Park.

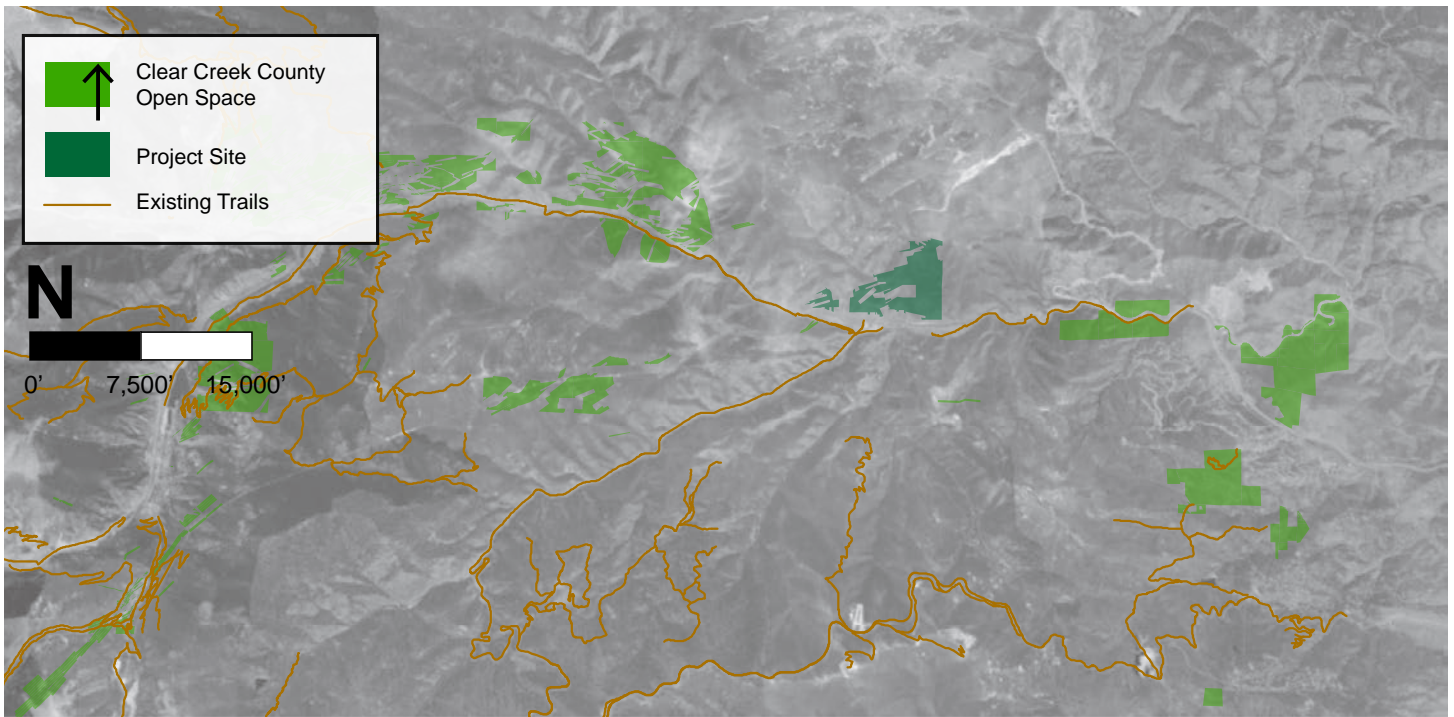
### POPULATION

According to the United States Census Bureau 2017 census data, the City of Idaho Springs is home to a total of 1,782 citizens, and Clear Creek County has a total of 9,574 residents. The residents of Clear Creek County are all located within about a half hour drive time from Idaho Springs due to the size of the County.



Map 2.1 - Regional Context





Map 2.2 - Clear Creek County Open Space and Trail Systems

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Due to the topographic constraints within Clear Creek County, there are few locations that can easily afford open space. The closest outdoor recreation areas are the Old Game Check Trailhead and Park, Courtney-Ryley Cooper Park, Water Wheel Park and Macy/Ruth Mill Park. The Barbour Forks 4WD Area is in close proximity to the Mountain Park just south of Idaho Springs down Soda Creek Road. St. Mary's Glacier Recreation Area is also a short drive from the location.

A potential park is proposed at the Old Sewage Treatment Plant site. Another park near Clear Creek just past Fall River Road is proposed in the near future to provide a trailhead, campground and park area for the County.

The County has recently undertaken a parallel planning project for the Floyd Hill Open Space neighboring the City of Idaho Springs. This neighboring open space is a total of 1,600 acres that had been acquired by the County in 2017. It already has several miles of developed trail built on it and will add another phase in 2019.

## REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

The Clear Creek Greenway is a planned 36-mile regional trail that spans Clear Creek County from Loveland Pass to the County boundaries along US-6 in Clear Creek Canyon. It is a part of the larger Peaks-to-Plains regional trail. The Mountain Park can be accessed directly from the Clear Creek Greenway trail in front of the Argo Mine & Mill. The trail also provides direct access to the City of Idaho Springs main parking area near downtown Idaho Springs.

# LOCAL CONTEXT

## LAND USE AND ZONING

The Mountain Park is zoned as a Park and Recreation (P) planning district within the City of Idaho Springs. The only uses allowed within this district are public park and park facilities, greenbelt spaces and public and private golf courses as well as public recreation building or facility and community center. Horses and any motorized vehicles are not allowed on park property, outside of designated roadways.

The City of Idaho Springs is currently attempting to rezone the City-owned parcel to allow for other recreational uses to be developed in the future to support the use of the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park and the future Mighty Argo Redevelopment.

## SURROUNDING PROPERTY

The Mountain Park is surrounded by private property. No current easements are known to access the property at this time, but historically the open space was accessed by the Bureau of Land Management for management purposes via an unknown location. A few private property parcels are located within the Mountain Park and can only access their property by traveling on private roads that cross-through the City-owned parcel. One sole private property owner abuts the south of the open space property limits: the Argo Mine and Mill. The Argo is a historic site, and very visible from the I-70 corridor and serves as a historic landmark in the County and for the City of Idaho Springs. Access is a major issue identified for Mountain Park due to it being surrounded by private property, except at one location where it crosses Virginia Canyon Road, just south of Buttermilk Gulch.



Map 2.3 - Property Boundary



Existing vegetation found in Virginia Canyon Mountain Park

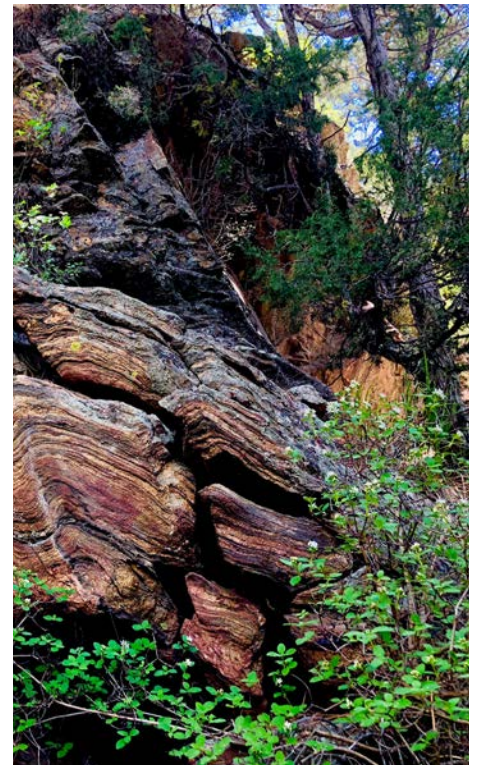
## NATURAL RESOURCES

### EXISTING LAND COVER

According to the United States Geological Survey's GAP Land Cover data there are five existing land covers that comprise Virginia Canyon Open Space. The site is primarily covered in Southern Rocky Mountain Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland, as well as Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland. Both of these land cover types are dominated by conifers occurring on mesic slopes. Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Shrubland makes up a considerable part of the land cover as well. These land covers are usually associated with exposed sites, rocky substrates, and dry conditions, which limit tree growth. In smaller amounts, introduced Upland Vegetation-Shrub and Developed. Open Space can be found on the site. These occur in small areas near the southern border of the site adjacent to the City of Idaho Springs.

#### **Southern Rocky Mountain Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland**

These are mixed conifer forests of the Rocky Mountains west into the ranges of the Great Basin, occurring predominantly in cool ravines and on north-facing slopes. Occurrences of this system are found on cooler and more mesic sites. Such sites include lower and middle slopes of ravines, along stream terraces, moist, concave topographic positions and north and east-facing slopes which burn somewhat infrequently.



### Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland

These woodlands occur at the lower treeline/ecotone between grassland or shrubland and more mesic coniferous forests typically in warm, dry, exposed sites. Occurrences are found on all slopes and aspects; however, moderately steep to very steep slopes or ridgetops are most common. This ecological system generally occurs on soils derived from igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary material, with characteristic features of good aeration and drainage, coarse textures, neutral to slightly acidic pH, an abundance of mineral material, rockiness, and periods of drought during the growing season.

### Rocky Mountain Lower Montane-Foothill Shrubland

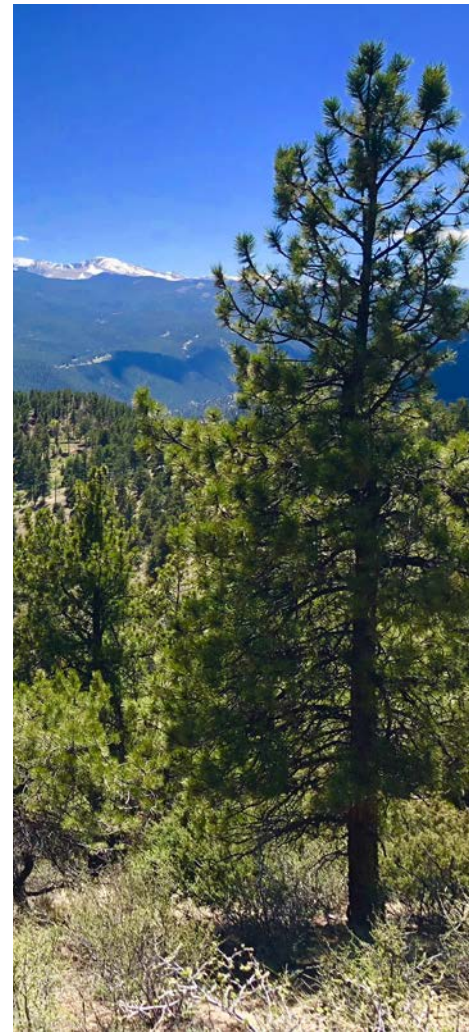
These shrublands are usually associated with exposed sites, rocky substrates, and dry conditions, which limit tree growth. It is common in the northern Colorado Front Range and in drier foothills and prairie hills. Scattered trees or inclusions of grassland patches or steppe may be present, but the vegetation is typically dominated by a variety of shrubs.

### Introduced Upland Vegetation-Shrub

Vegetation dominated (typically >60% canopy cover) by introduced species. These are spontaneous, self-perpetuating, and not (immediately) the result of planting, cultivation, or human maintenance. Land occupied by introduced vegetation is generally permanently altered (converted) unless restoration efforts are undertaken. Specifically, land cover is significantly altered/disturbed by introduced shrub species.

### Developed Open Space

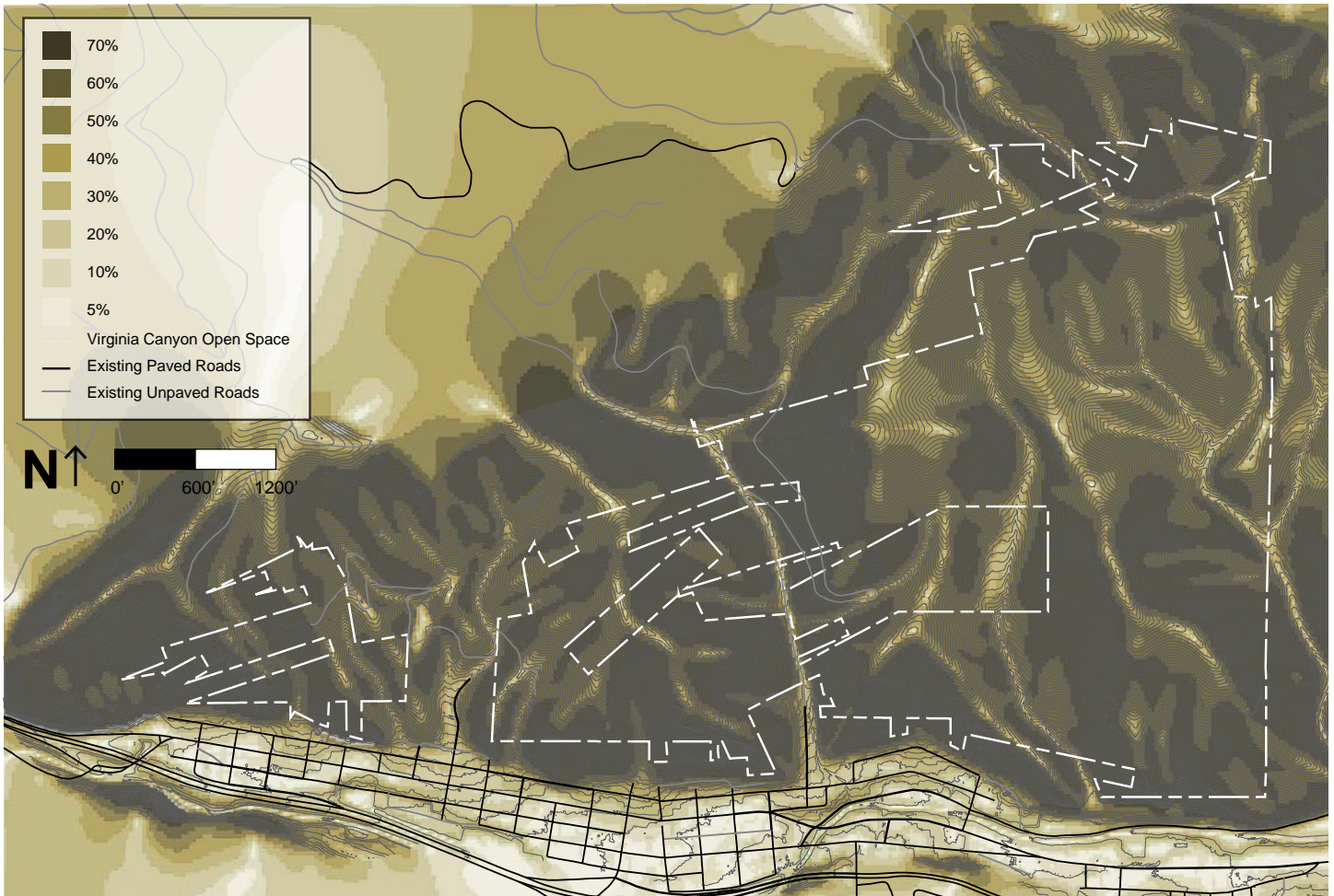
This includes areas with a mixture of some constructed materials, but mostly vegetation in the form of lawn grasses. Impervious surfaces account for less than 20 percent of total cover. These areas most commonly include large-lot single-family housing units, parks, golf courses, and vegetation planted in developed settings for recreation, erosion control, or aesthetic purposes.



Coniferous Trees Dominate The Landscape



Map 2.4 - Vegetation Coverage



Map 2.5 - Slopes



Existing Unsustainable Steep Trails

## SLOPES & SOILS

The Mountain Park is located within a mountainous area with an average of 70% slopes that mostly fall south and west towards the City of Idaho Springs. The terrain is generally steep and rugged. Steep gulchways and ravines cross Mountain Park from north to south down the mountainside. There are few flat areas or areas with gentle side slopes.

Due to the extreme topography found on site, certain existing natural hazards are prevalent in the space. The Clear Creek County Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the two potential geologic hazards within Mountain Park as being landslides and subsidence.

### Landslides

A landslide is a downslope movement of soil, rock, and vegetation under gravitational influence. Some of the natural causes of ground instability are stream erosion, heavy rainfall, and poor quality natural materials. Human activities contribute to soil instability through improper grading of steep slopes or overloading them with artificial fill, extensive irrigation, construction of impermeable surfaces, excessive groundwater withdrawal, and removal of stabilizing vegetation.

### Subsidence

Ground subsidence is the sinking of land due to human-caused or natural underground voids in combination with the settlement of native low density soils. The remnant mines and the underground passages from the Argo Mine & Mill still exist at the south edge of Mountain Park. In areas where subsidence hazards may be present on Mountain Park, geotechnical analysis should be required prior to construction.

The soils on site are categorized into three main types per the United States Department of Agriculture.

### **Cathedral - Rock Outcrop**

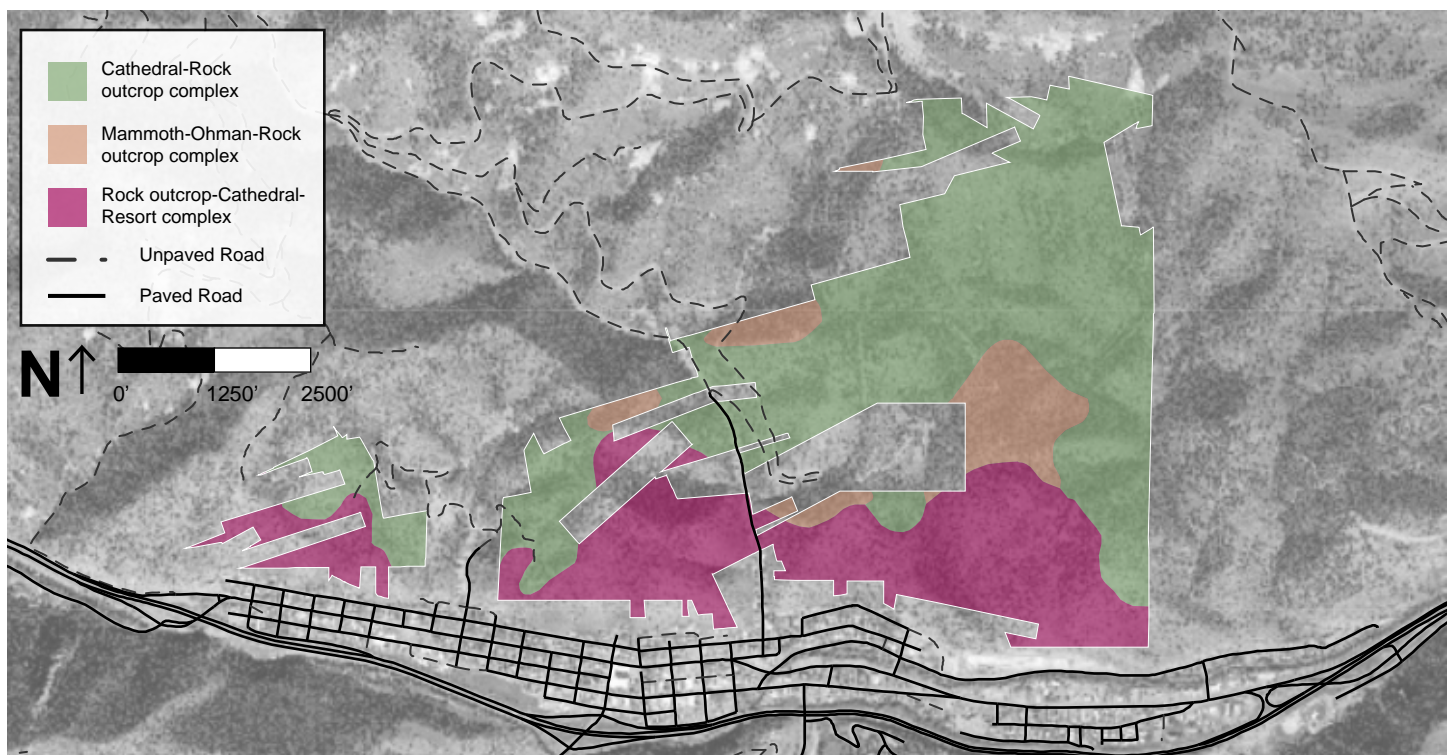
The soils found in this area typically have 40-50 percent slopes and are rubbly, shallow and excessively drained. This soil type takes up a large portion of the northern portion of Mountain Park. The soil depth to bedrock and effective rooting depth is less than 20 inches. It is typically stony, sandy loam at the surface and subsoil with low available water capacity, moderate permeability and rapid runoff. Rock outcrops are comprised of cliffs and talus landforms. The rubbly soil has low landslide potential moderate debris flow potential and moderate snow avalanche potential.

### **Mammoth-Ohman-Rock Outcrop**

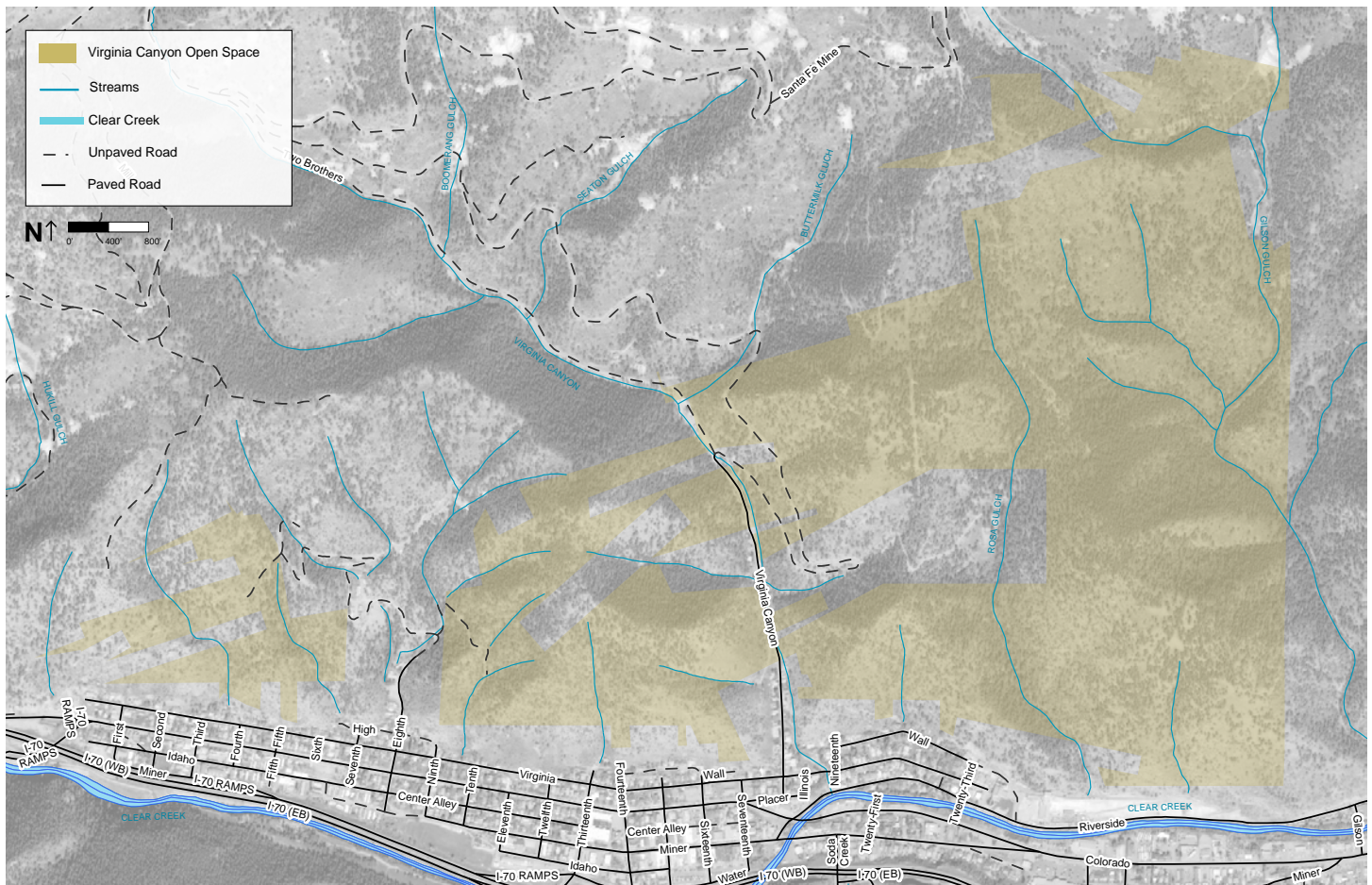
This classification of soils contains very gravelly, sandy loam, woodland. This soil type is found on mostly the western facing slopes of Mountain Park. It consists of moderately to very deep, well drained soils found on mountain slopes and mountain ridges. These soils typically provide moderate to rapid runoff and rapid permeability. Slopes are 9 to 75 percent. The soil depth to bedrock and effective rooting depth is around 35 inches. It is typically stony, sandy loam at the surface and gravelly sand loam at the subsoil. Rock outcrops are comprised of cliffs, mountain slopes and ridges.

### **Rock Outcrop-Cathedral-Resort**

This soil classification is generally comprised of gravelly, sandy loam, woodland. This soil type is found on the southern perimeter of Mountain Park. It consists of very friable, slightly sticky soils at the surface and non sticky subsoil. These soils typically have 3 to 80 percent slopes and are found on mountain slopes and ridges. The soil is somewhat excessively drained with rapid run off and rapid permeability.



Map 2.6 - Soils Map



Map 2.7 - Hydrology Map

## HYDROLOGY

The Mountain Park is situated within the Clear Creek Watershed, a 575 square mile area that spans from the mountain peaks at its western edge along the Continental Divide down to its confluence at the South Platte River. This is an arid mountain west watershed. The Mountain Park has several gulches running down the valley and ravines in the mountainside directly feeding into Clear Creek. Clear Creek flows eastward along the I-70 Mountain Corridor through several communities serving as the primary water supply source for several upper-watershed towns, including Idaho Springs. The Clear Creek watershed is one of the most over-appropriated streams in Colorado. It is composed of variably fractured crystallizing basement rocks and thin soils which leads to fracture-flow groundwater systems susceptible to pollution. Large flows in narrow canyons can lead to flooding and issues such as sediment loading for water quality. The placer mining and waste piles exposed large amounts of bedrock and waste material to the environment causing acidification and mobilization of heavy materials into nearby streams. The Clear Creek/Central City Super-fund site encompasses a large area of the watershed and the industrial wastewater treatment plant at the Argo Tunnel shows promising results in mitigating acid and metal loading from historic mining activities. (<http://www3.drcog.org/documents/archive/Upper%20Clear%20Creek%20Watershed.PDF>)

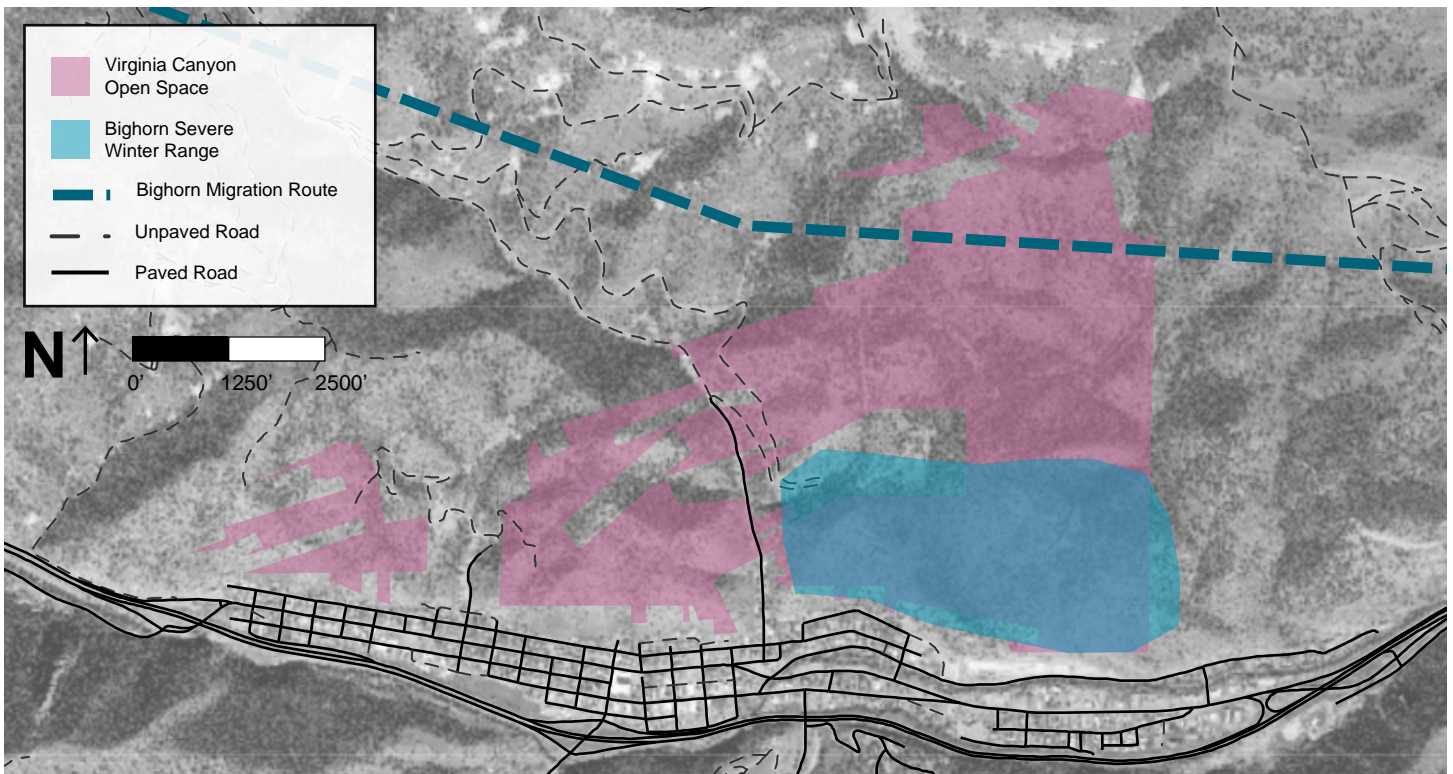
The main access to the Mountain Park is through Rosa Gulch, which is currently a dry bed. Buttermilk Gulch is another waterway running through the Mountain Park near Virginia Canyon Road. Underground mining tunnels have impacted the waterways and how water travels downstream. Gilson Gulch makes the farthest east extent of the Mountain Park and provides drainage down to Clear Creek. This Gulch has water running within it and captures much of the runoff from the Mountain Park. The Gulch has been recently re-engineered in October, 2009 at its base with erosion control methods to prevent water running onto Riverside Drive.

Typically, due to the soils and terrain on site, stormwater events will run to the deep-cut gulches. The well-drained soils allow for water to effectively penetrate through the soil.

# WILDLIFE

A variety of wildlife and habitat exists within the Mountain Park. Wildlife in the area includes deer, elk, mountain lions, bighorn sheep, bobcats, coyotes, black bears, on rare occasions a moose, and a variety of small animals. Waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors, such as the bald eagle, hawk, and owl, live or migrate through the area. The health and survival of wildlife depends on the amount and quality of habitat. Wildlife contributes to the quality of life within the City of Idaho Springs, and provides significant attraction for residents as well as visitors to the City as well as the Mountain Park.

According to current Colorado Parks and Wildlife wildlife habitat range information, the Bighorn Sheep has a Severe Winter Range habitat within the southeast portion of the Mountain Park. Colorado Parks and Wildlife defines "Severe Winter Range" as "that part of the overall range where 90% of the individuals are located when the annual snowpack is at its maximum and/or temperatures are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten." The Bighorn Sheep also has an important migration route crossing through the northern portion of the Mountain Park.



Map 2.8 - Wildlife Habitat



Bighorn Sheep at the Mountain Park



The Double Eagle Mine at the Entrance of the Phase I Shared-Use Trail



# CULTURAL

## MINING

Over 250 miles of mine workings, tunnels and other mining features exist underneath or near the Mountain Park, primarily on the west side of Rosa Gulch. The Argo Tunnel extends from the north of Wall Street in the City of Idaho Springs approximately 4 miles northwest to a point west of Central City, CO. Several mine tunnels are directly connected to the Argo Tunnel and interact with the Mountain Park include: Addudel, Bellamn, Burroughs, Calhoun, California, Concrete, Fontenac, Freighters Friend, Gardner, Gem, Grand Amy, Gunnell, Half and Half, Hidden Treasure, Hot Time Lateral, Kansas, Mammoth, Morning Star, Pease, Pozo, Prize, Saratoga, and Sun and Moon.

The Argo Mine & Mill is located to the south of the Mountain Park and trail access is provided across the private property and near to historical mining features such as the Double Eagle Mine shaft. These cultural remnants are an important aspect to the Mountain Park.



Existing Mining Remnants



Existing Mining Remnants





Existing Dilapidated Rogue Trail Features



Existing Dilapidated Rogue Trail Features



Existing Dilapidated Rogue Trail Features

## CIRCULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

### TRAILS

The Mountain Park has been known for its renegade downhill mountain bike trails for decades and is still used by mountain bikers, but much less frequently than it was in the past. The rogue trail system also crosses into neighboring private property at numerous locations and contains a variety of rogue technical trail features (TTF's) in the Mountain Park and surrounding private lands. Many of these rogue features are in a state of disrepair having seen little maintenance or even rider use over the past decade. Unofficial mountain bike features are present throughout the Mountain Park, with the majority of the wooden structures and trails located west of the Mountain Park. There are still several rogue trails that run through the Mountain Park and exit out from Rosa Gulch or Buttermilk Gulch.

The current user-created trail system within the Mountain Park is a poorly planned system that catered solely to down-hill mountain bikers. These rogue trails often ignore the principles of trail sustainability by exceeding the half-rule (the trail grade should be no more than half the sideslope grade), containing numerous grades over 15-20%, and rarely having effective drainage.

## ACCESS

The Mountain Park is almost landlocked by private property. Two unimproved dirt roads, Virginia Canyon Road and Santa Fe Mine Road, skirt the western and northern perimeter of the property. The surrounding private properties are often accessed by unimproved dirt roads that cross through other adjacent properties. A road also exists on the east side of the property up Gilson Gulch. Most of this road is on private property owned by the Young Ranch, however a small section of this road goes through the northeastern section of the Mountain Park.

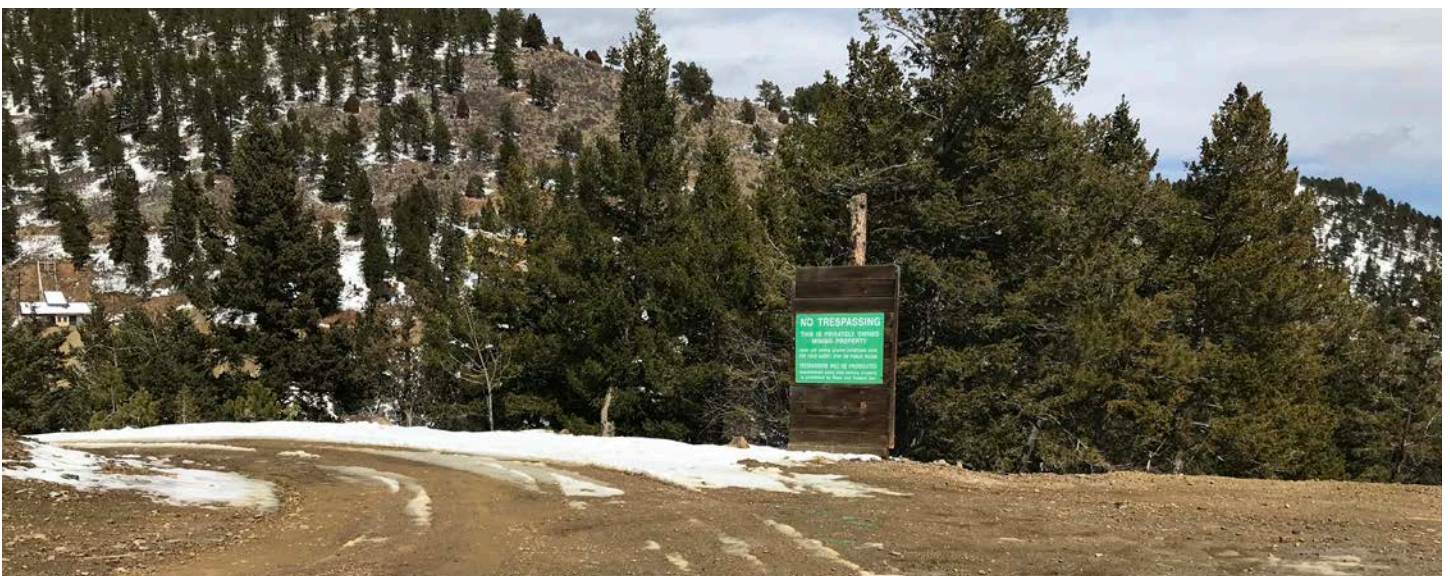
## PARKING

The two public roads that skirt the perimeter of the Mountain Park, Virginia Canyon Road and Santa Fe Mine Road, are currently used to access the trails and inevitably end up crossing private property. Parking locations on these roads are limited and often encroach onto private property. Approximately six cars can park along Virginia Canyon Road at Buttermilk Gulch, another half dozen can park on the corner pull-out with a small shed.

The Santa Fe Mine Road offers significantly more parking. However, users must trespass through private property to access the Mountain Park. Parking at the Argo Mine & Mill is provided for visitors to the Mine. It is used much less frequently for hikers/bikers accessing the Mountain Park up Rosa Gulch through the Argo Mine and Mill property than it has in past decades. The Argo Mill staff currently enforces the no trespassing regulation to visitors that are not part of the Argo Mine/Mill Tour. Access is currently signed and gated at the bottom of the road that accesses Rosa Gulch and the area used to store mining artifacts.



Virginia Canyon Road



Santa Fe Mine Road

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- Outstanding Vistas, Forests, Meadows, Canyons, Cliffs, Boulders
- Unadulterated Landscape
- Great Wildlife Viewing, Especially Bighorn Sheep
- Remote Backcountry Feel To Portions Of The Property
- Rugged Terrain is Unique and Challenging For High Adventure Outdoor Pursuits Like Hiking, Running And Mountain Biking
- Currently Unprogrammed Space Serves As A “Blank Slate” To Start With Planning Efforts

## WEAKNESSES

- At Least A Third Of The Terrain Is Unsuitable For Trail Construction Due To Steep Vertical Cliffs
- Safety Hazards Near Trails Such As Mine Pits/Tunnels, Mining Wastes, Mine Run-Off
- Major Clean-Up Needed For Mistreated Public Property Such As Abandoned Structures And Vehicles Will Need To Be Cleaned, Reclaimed, Signed and Fenced
- Clean-Up of Lead Found on Site Needed due to Existing Gun Range
- Current Misuse Of Property May Be An Issue To Mitigate And Deter
- Large, Mountainous Property Will Be Hard To Patrol And Enforce Rules
- Winter Bighorn Sheep Habitat Can Require Seasonal Closures From Colorado Parks And Wildlife
- Proximity of I-70 Causes Noise Disturbance

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Huge Potential For Additional Economic Income Generated From Trail Based Recreation, Proximity to the Colorado Front Range Can Provide For A Larger Breadth Of Users
- Enhance Quality Of Life Of Local Residents By Offering High-Quality, Outdoor Recreation Amenity Easily Accessible From Town
- Wildlife and Culturally Significant Areas Provide Educational Opportunities For Visitors
- Pristine Forested Area Can Continue To Be Protected In It’s Current State
- Better Management of Area Through Formal Trails and Mapping

## THREATS

- Access and Parking Is Currently Limited By The Terrain And Surrounding Private Properties
- Trail Construction Will Be Extremely Difficult/Costly, Require Extensive Stonework, Drilling/Blasting Likely, And Potential Rockfall Debris Rolling Down Steep Slopes Potentially Damaging Property Or People.
- No Opportunities For Easy Trails Without Steep Fall Zones
- Loose Material Can Be A Safety Hazard Due To Frequent Rock Falls
- Further Analysis Will Need To Be Performed To Understand Geological Hazards Due To Nearby Mining Sites
- No Existing Amenities, Utilities Or Services Currently Available On-Site
- No Opportunities For ADA or Beginner Trails







# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



# OUTREACH

Creating a shared vision for the future of the Mountain Park first required ensuring broad representation in the input collected. The community engagement process included a series of steering committee meetings, community public meetings, and an on-line survey.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee with a total of 23 members met once a month throughout the Master Plan process. Concurrent to the data gathering and site analysis review, known user group representatives and neighboring property owners met to discuss information gathered, solving dilemmas, and guidance for next steps of the Master Plan process. The discussions by this group formed the backbone of the Recommendations section of this Master Plan Topics included:

- Shared use vs. shared use multi-directional trails allocated in this plan. COMBA has wanted to include single-direction trails for bike trails in the location.
- Trail separation by speed, direction and rugosity
- Creation of a Trail Hub - roundabout with nature in the middle where bikers and hikers can convene from connecting trails, benches and tables for relaxation and a map to show other trails to go to.
- No easy trail opportunities due to topographic constraints
- Potential exit not dependent on other property owners about half way up VC Road.
- Bighorn sheep habitat and decreasing trail density in this location
- Connection to the Clear Creek Greenway
- Mines in the area, can be dangerous, how to prevent people from going off trail
- Private Properties surround the site, how to keep people on trail and not going onto private property
- Argo Mine and Mill provides the best access from the City of Idaho Springs, partnering with the private owner who would like to consider some private recreational amenities within Mountain Park such as a Gondola
- Environmental concerns at the Argo Mine and Mill
- Parking issue is reflected in the City as well as in this plan
- Access is the biggest concern, currently only access is through Private Property
- Inclusion of trails for both hikers and bikers in the first implementable phases of the plan
- Concern for a loop bike trail to start and end at same connection point
- Funding ideas and grant matching brain storming



# COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Two community meetings and an on-line survey afforded the opportunity for stakeholders, site users, and the general public to provide input during the Master Plan process. The first public workshop was an inclusive community open house held on June 18, 2018 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at Idaho Springs City Hall. The workshop provided an opportunity for the City to introduce the project and review initial wants and needs from the community. An initial draft of the proposed trail system was shown to the community to gather initial direction and feed back. Approximately 30 participants were documented at this meeting. The following is a synopsis of the feedback that was provided from the participants:

- Provide trails for both hikers and bikers
- Provide space and fencing between trails and nearby private owner properties
- Consider sustainability and provide signage to educate trail users on the local wildlife
- Provide well-marked trails to successfully implement directional trail use
- Ensure adequate parking is provided

The second community meeting was a public open house held to present the final draft of the Master Plan Recommendations for the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park. The meeting was held on May 13, 2019 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Approximately 25 people came to the final public meeting.

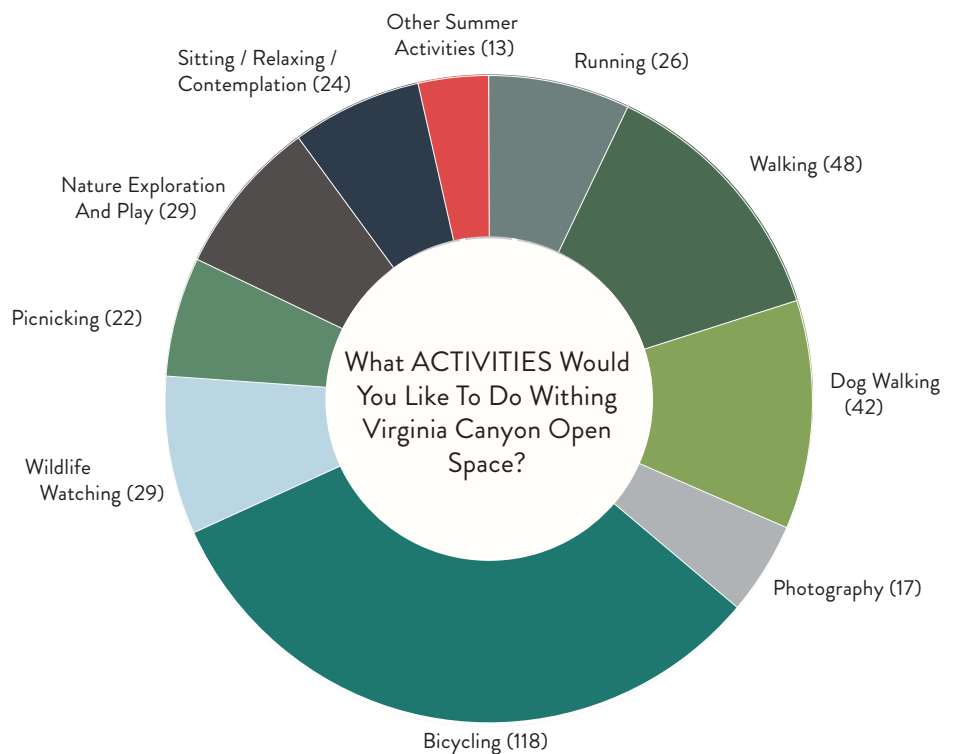
# SURVEY

Following the first public meeting, an on-line survey was made available between June 14 and July 13 of 2018 to gather input on the project. Questions from the survey were provided to community members on how visitors to the Mountain Park currently use the Open Space, how they would like to use it in the future, and how they would like to see this area improve overall. This survey provided another tool to gather community input.

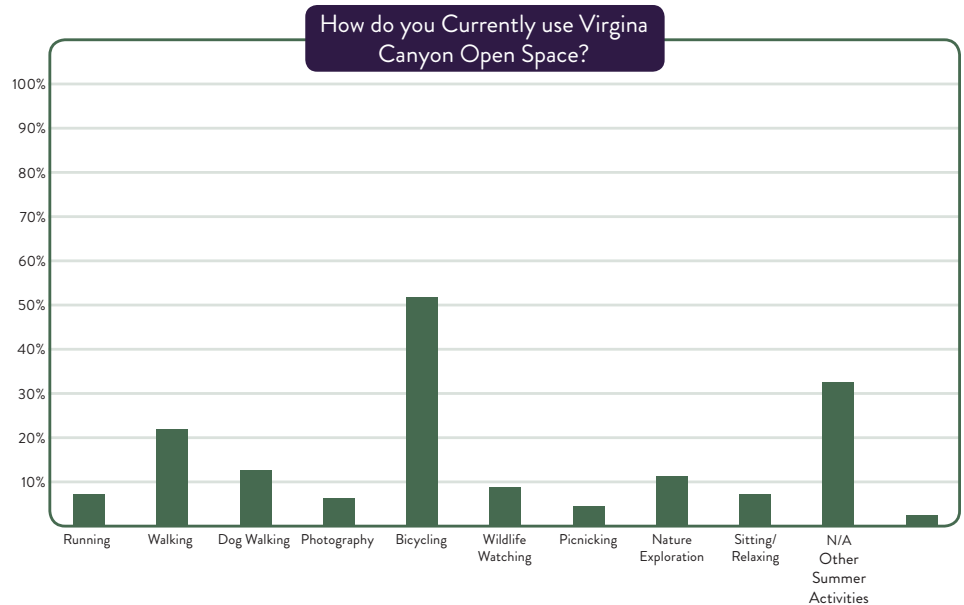
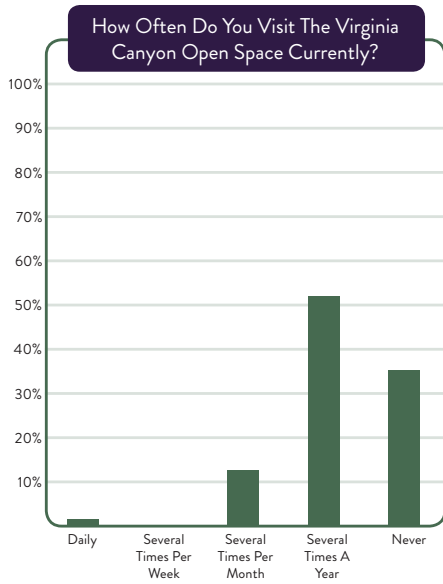
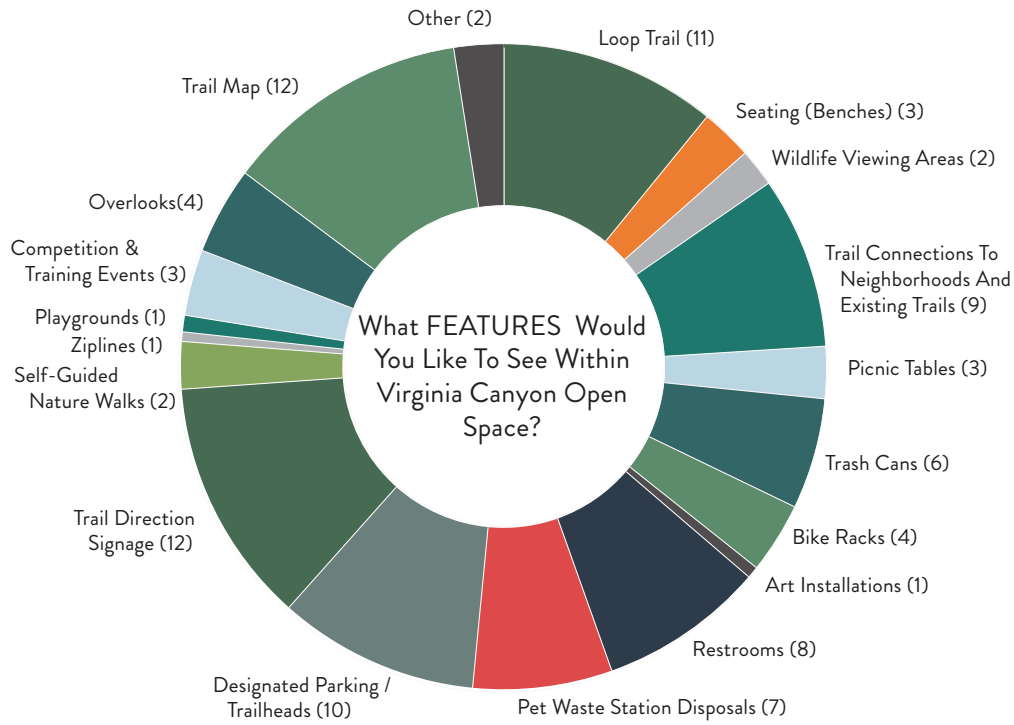
There were a total of 30 questions provided with the on-line survey. A total of 190 responses were collected from the survey. 13% of respondents were full-time Idaho Springs residents.

The following is a synopsis of the most pertinent information collected via the on-line survey that served to inform the planning process. The complete survey results are provided along with this Master Plan as Appendix A.

A majority of the respondents were from the Denver/Front Range. Nearly half of the respondents did not currently use the Open Space, but were familiar with the area. 52% of respondents currently use the Open Space for bicycling. Approximately 65% of respondents said that there was not enough available access or parking to the Open Space. 58% of respondents considered trails, wildlife viewing areas, shade shelters and benches important features for the Open Space. The majority of respondents wanted to bicycle within the Open Space, as well as walk and walk their dogs. Most of the respondents wanted to see features such as trail directional signage, trail maps, loop trails and designated parking / trailheads at the Open Space. Nearly 70% of respondents said that it was important to attract tourists and travelers to the Open Space.







## OPEN SPACE NAME

A question was provided to the public in the on-line survey requesting input from the public on what the name of the Open Space should be. The Open Space has been known by many names by different user groups over the years. The survey results reflected a desire from the majority of out-of-town visitors to name the park "Area 28", as it is known by the mountain biking community. The majority of Idaho Springs residents requested the name of the park to be "Virginia Canyon Mountain Park ". After deliberation by the Steering Committee of the different user groups desires, the group decided to recommend the name "Virginia Canyon Mountain Park" as the future designation for the Open Space. The City of Idaho Springs City Council approved the decision to name the Open Space "Virginia Canyon Mountain Park" on August 13, 2018.



# MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

# OVERVIEW

The Virginia Canyon Mountain Park is a complex area to be planned due to the topographical constraints and the existing parking and access issues. The following Master Plan Recommendations chapter identifies the best recommendations for the City of Idaho Springs for the Mountain Park.

Looking at the existing area, mostly passive recreation in the form of shared use trails are proposed throughout the main portion of the Mountain Park. Due to the topography, easy (green) trails and ADA access are not feasible at this time. The main planning effort of the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park focused on creating a Phase 1 Shared-Use Trail to provide a way for hikers and bikers to create a trail up to the "Trail Hub" from the entrance at Rosa Gulch.

Rosa Gulch was identified as one of the only feasible access points to the Mountain Park and would be permitted through a legal easement through the Argo Mine & Mill property. A Memo of Understanding (MOU) was established during the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park planning efforts. This MOU will pave the way for a temporary trail easement for public access across the Argo Mine & Mill property and will ultimately become a permanent trail easement once a final trail alignment is determined through the final design of the future development of the Argo Mine & Mill.

The trail system proposes multiple trail loops that can be implemented in phases to provide both hikers and bikers trail options as future phases are brought on-line. The trail system aims to provide an enjoyable user experience with the opportunity for intermediate to difficult trail routes with steep grades and natural obstacles. Trails will typically be single track and developed with an obvious tread route, constructed features and evident route identification signage.

This Master Plan includes:

- Two primary access points and trailheads: Rosa Gulch and Santa Fe
- A "trail hub" where all completed phases will reach a central destination, allowing users to meet up with groups, stop for a picnic and to have a full set of options for their next route
- A main peak to reach for outstanding views at the highest point with a view over Clear Creek County
- Four stacked loops that provide varied experiences including open hillsides, quiet gulches, expansive views and a back country feel
- Separated hike-only and bike-only trails to improve visitor experience and reduce congestion and conflict
- Implementation information for future phasing and fund acquisition

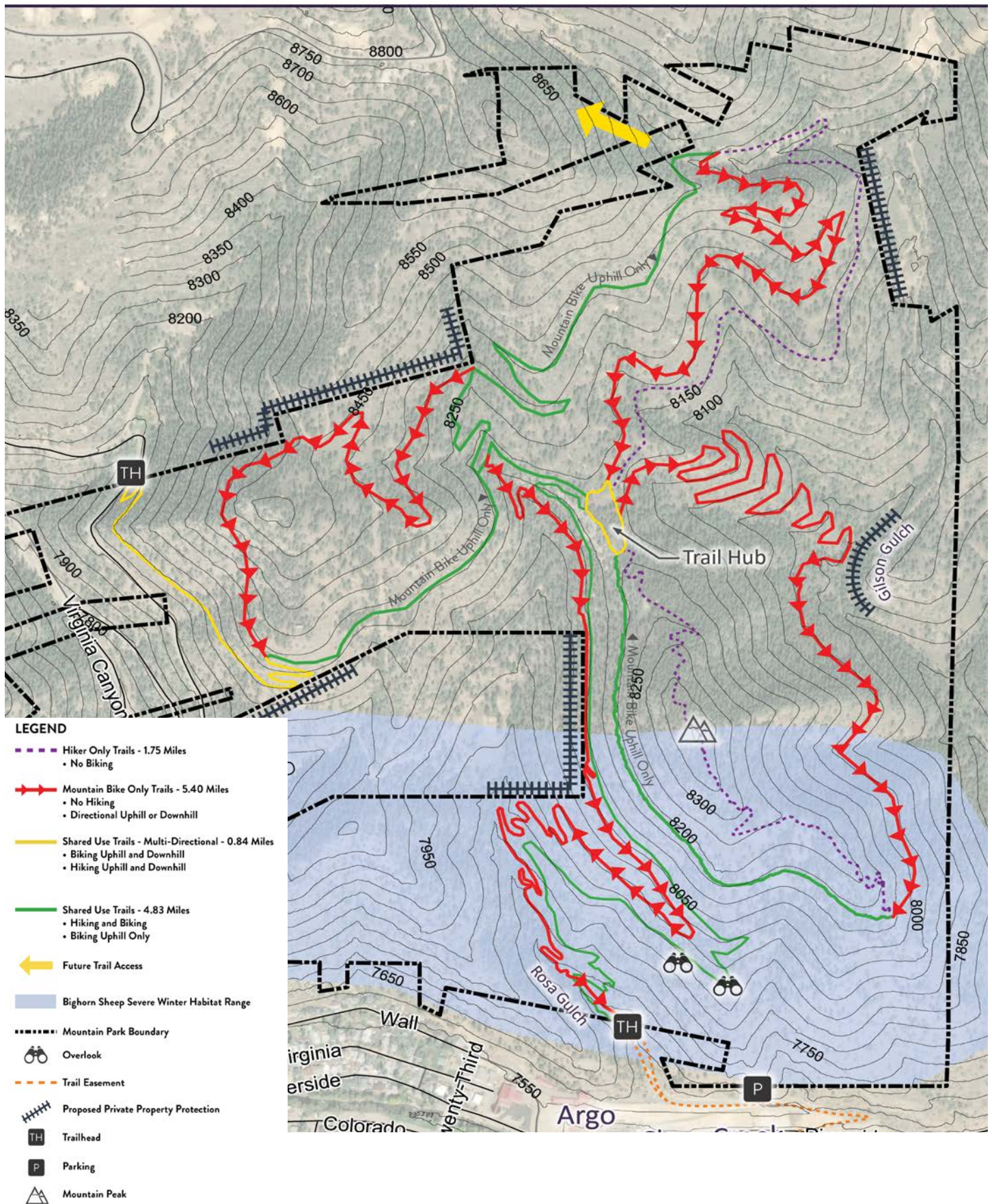
# TRAIL MASTER PLAN

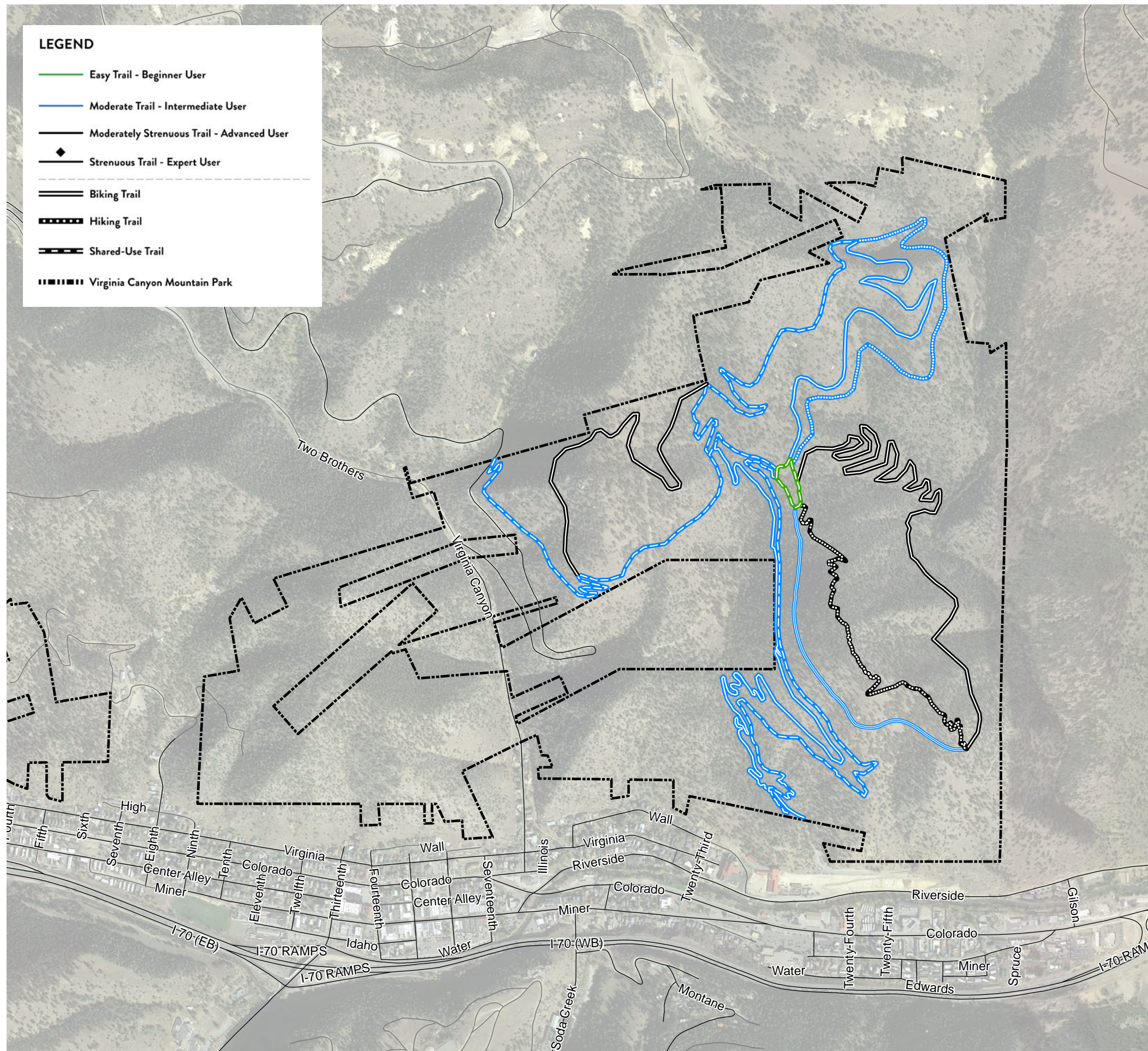
## TRAILS

The Mountain Park Plan proposes a sustainable system of trails that includes directional bike only trails, hiking only trails, shared-use trails with multi-directional biking, and shared-use trails with bikes directional uphill only. The unique mountain-side terrain provides an adventurous and challenging experience for visitors wishing to find a mountain to conquer in close proximity to the Front Range and along the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Trails are designed to be minimally intrusive on the natural landscape, to celebrate the existing healthy eco-system and to provide scenic destinations for to trail users of all levels.

A total of approximately 12.82 miles of hiking, biking, and shared-use trails are proposed throughout the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park. A total of 5.67 miles of shared-use trails, 1.75 miles of hiker only trails and 5.40 miles of directional biker-only trails are a potential for this site.

This plan was identified through a comprehensive study with a thorough on-site analysis to find the most feasible, cost efficient and sustainable routes to implement. It has taken the information afforded from previous planning efforts, as outlined in the Existing Conditions chapter, as well as the efforts put forward by the community and stakeholders.





## TRAIL TYPES AND RATINGS

The following is a description of the different types and various ratings of trails that have been identified with this Master Plan.

With the increasing popularity of outdoor adventure activities, especially mountain biking, the evolution of user-optimized, single-use trails is becoming more accepted. These proposed hiker-only trails can be designed with steeper grades and tighter radius corners, incorporating bedrock sections, stairs and risers into the tread, enhancing the challenge/fitness level for hikers and runners. With the inherently slower speeds of hikers and runners, visitor conflicts are virtually eliminated without mountain bikers on the trail.

Bike only, directional trails allow the designers and builders to maximize the use of elevation loss to create a unique kinesthetic trail experience. By not allowing hikers or two-way traffic on these bike-optimized trails, visitor conflicts are significantly reduced or eliminated, and bikers get an optimal experience of “controlling their own roller-coaster as they rhythmically flow and float down the hill”

COMBA would like to see more trails, specifically advanced trails since they are limited choices along the Front Range. By offering advanced black diamond level trails, similar to the rogue trails that have existed for decades in the area, Idaho Springs will be in the position to market and capitalize on their advanced, directional, bike-optimized trails. We believe that the enhanced marketability of single-use, directional trails optimized for bikes can be one of Idaho Springs’ most successful niche markets.

There are 12.82 total miles of trails proposed. There are a total of 9.02 miles of intermediate (blue) trails and 1.70 amount of advanced (black) trails and 1.86 miles total very hard (double black) trails proposed. Only one easy, green trail exists at the Trail Hub, with a total length of 0.25 miles, however it will likely only have intermediate difficulty access to it. If and when the Argo gondola and hotel are developed, possible easy or even ADA trails may be more feasible, ideally connecting to the new Clear Creek Greenway in town.



## SHARED USE TRAILS

### Shared Use + Biking One Way

A total of 4.83 trails have been identified for Shared Use where Biking is only allowed uphill. The total miles of Shared Use trails are intermediate (blue) trails. For these trails, it is proper to promote hiking both ways and only uphill for biking. These paths are intended for bikers to use as one-way travel with the use of effective measures to be taken to ensure one-way operation, including clear one-way designation, convenient access to a separate facility in the other direction, and peer enforcement. Any switchbacks/climbing turns built in Shared Use and Biking One Way would be designed with a minimum radius of 12' where feasible. These trails would be recommended to have a minimum width of 36" to allow for room for passing. In locations where the trail cannot be designed to this standard width, the trail should be no smaller than 24" wide. A passing area 4-5' wide should be designed at a minimum of every 500 LF feet to allow for passing.

### Shared Use + Biking Multi-Directional

A limited number of trails have been identified for Shared Use multi-directional travel. A total of 0.84 miles of intermediate (blue) trails have been identified with this master plan. Shared-use paths serve a variety of important purposes, such as providing an alternative to a busy thoroughfare or controlled-access corridor. Shared-use paths play an important role in providing continuity for the overall bicycle network by creating connections where there are missing links, or creating a route through a neighborhood to a nearby destination.

These shared-use, bi-directional trails for mountain bikers, runners and hikers are required in several areas, typically where both bikers and hikers will need to begin and return to the same trailhead location and where the bikers and hikers will share the trail hub to access other trails from.



Courteous Trail Users Share the Trail



Hiker Optimized Trails

## HIKER ONLY TRAILS

A total of 1.75 miles of trail have been identified for Hiking Only. A total of 1.05 miles of intermediate (blue) trails and a total of 0.70 miles of advanced (black) trails have been identified. These trails would be signed and designed to dissuade bikers from using these trails. These trails would be designed with switch backs with a minimum radius of 8' and a maximum grade of 12% for intermediate trails and a maximum grade of 15% for advanced trails. This would allow for different hiking/running experiences and a decent range of trail levels.



Biker Optimized Trails

## BIKER ONLY TRAILS

A total of 5.40 miles of trail have been identified for Bikers Only. A total of 3.53 miles of intermediate (blue) trails and a total of 2.87 miles of advanced (black) trails have been identified. These trails would be signed and designed to discourage hikers from using these trails. These trails would be designed with additional technical trail features (TTF's) such as berms, rollers and jumps. These trails would be designed with bermed corners, ideally with a minimum radius of 12-15' and maximum grades of 8-10% for intermediate trails and maximum grades of 10-15% for advanced trails. This allows for different biking skill-levels and a range of experiences for different biking users and encourages progressive learning of bike handling skills as riders move up in difficulty after mastering lower levels of difficulty.



## SEASONAL CLOSURES AND PERIOD OF USE

During the Master Plan process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) reviewed the trail design for any significant impacts to wildlife habitat. Due to the large portion of the Mountain Park that is designated as Severe Winter Range for Bighorn Sheep, certain trails or areas of the park may need to implement seasonal closures in harsh winters. CPW determined that the trails proposed with the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park Master Plan had significantly less impacts on the important Severe Winter Range for the Bighorn Sheep than previous planning efforts and were in favor of the number and location of trails that were proposed with this plan. CPW further recommended that seasonal closures be coordinated between the government agency and the City of Idaho Springs at times when these trails will need to be closed. It is not anticipated at this time that these trails will be closed every winter for wildlife protection, but only at the direction of CPW.

The steep loose terrain of the Mountain Park and poor accessibility for maintenance/rescue operations may also dictate that some trails be closed seasonally during the winter months when trails become solid ice on steep sideslopes, creating significant fall hazards on bench cut trails. Due to the steep terrain and rocky outcroppings prevalent throughout the Mountain Park, it is not recommended that winter recreational use, such as snow-shoeing or cross-country skiing should be allowed within the Mountain Park.

Winter use should be closely monitored on trails. During the winter months, potential hazards such as existing old mining holes could be dangerous when covered by snow and not easily seen. As trail development is implemented, those mining pits within 100-200' of the trail should be considered for closure or signage/fencing if visitor safety is a concern. This Master Plan recommends that the City of Idaho Springs should typically close Mountain Park access during periods of significant snow fall and snow pack on the mountain-side to prevent any hazardous situations. Due to the fact that most of the Mountain Park is situated on a southern-facing slope, winter hiking may still be a viable use.

## DECOMMISSIONED TRAILS

Due to the history of use that has occurred in the Open Space, several existing rogue trails are prevalent throughout the Mountain Park. A very small amount of existing trail alignments are able to remain apart of the final Master Plan because, for the large part, these trails often ignore the principles of trail sustainability by exceeding the half-rule, containing numerous grades over 15-20%, rarely having effective drainage, and have mandatory drops, gap jumps, and miles of fall line rutted trails a foot deep or more. These trails do not follow the general rules of sustainable trail building and are built against the grade instead of with it, may cause negative impacts to the natural systems and require a high amount of maintenance.

It is recommended that at the time that different trail phases are being implemented within the Mountain Park, nearby/visible social trails should also be fully decommissioned, signed and blocked off to allow for the trail to return to a natural state as well as deter nearby trail users to wander off trail. These closed trails will require reclamation efforts that volunteer groups can easily assist with and learn how to properly reclaim a trail.



A Decommissioned Trail With Check Dams

# TRAILHEADS

A total of 2 trailheads are proposed for Virginia Canyon Mountain Park. The first is at the entrance to the Mountain Park on the Argo Mine and Mill Property and would provide access to the trail system through a future easement from the Clear Creek Greenway. This access would be the main point of entry to the park and has been worked on through a Memorandum Of Understanding with the private property owner that borders the south of the Mountain Park, the Argo Mine & Mill. The Master Plan recommends the owner of the Argo Mine and Mill and the City of Idaho Springs work through to finalize a formal easement through the private property to the trailhead and parking area through to the connection of the trail system in 2019 in order for the City to seek a future grant for the construction of the trails.

The second trailhead is located off of Virginia Canyon Road, at the City limits. It is near a potential future parking lot accessed by a future easement off Santa Fe Mine Road,. This is currently one of the more popular access points to the existing rogue trail system that uses portions of the Mountain Park property. This access would also provide potential access for the future gondola landing.



Trailhead location at Argo Mine & Mill Property



Access from Virginia Canyon Road

# PARKING & ACCESS

Parking has remained an issue through the Master Plan process due to the fact that there is no existing access to the Mountain Park. The Memorandum of Understanding that was completed during the planning process will also pave the way for a future parking area on the Argo Mine & Mill property. The parking area at this location is proposed to provide an undetermined amount of parking space, and would be provided at the time the Argo Mine & Mill development had determined the final trail alignment through the development to access Mountain Park.

A key area for potential future parking is located at Virginia Canyon Road near the trailhead at the City limits. It is recommended that this area be considered for a future public parking area and can even provide space for a future park ranger station for the City. As time goes on, access to the Argo and access from the Santa Fe Mine Road, appear very likely, expanding the parking and access opportunities for the Mountain Park.

# SHUTTLE

To mitigate the access issues and limited parking available for the Mountain Park, shuttle services should be promoted by private and public providers to be able to access the trailheads. This would encourage visitors to park in town and visit local shops to purchase supplies before or after they visit the Mountain Park. The City of Idaho Springs is currently undergoing a parking study in-town to understand parking issues in the City and to determine whether further parking and parking enforcement will be needed to more efficiently use the parking they have.

# OVERLOOKS

A total of at least four amazing overlooks have been identified in the Master Plan. More overlooks may be identified during the final design/layout phase of the proposed trails. Three of the overlooks are accessed from the Phase One hiking trail. It is recommended that these overlooks provide one bench and/or the potential for a picnic table at these locations.

Benches can be timber or stone, but ideally carry the adopted mining theme design if possible. Benches and tables are great amenities to seek individual sponsorship for, and then add a simple plaque for recognition.



Existing overlook located near the propose Trail Hub

# TRAIL PULL OFFS & OPTIONAL LINES

Consideration should be given to shared use trails to provide trail pull-off locations to allow room for multi-directional and multi-user traffic to mitigate trail user conflicts. These pull off locations can also provide seating for trail users to rest at and help create oppurtunties for different groups of hikers to be able to pass one another.



Example of a trail pull off

Similarly, trail final design and construction should consider the use of parallel trails for different user types and/or to provide more breadth in areas of high traffic locations. Having multiple route options will allow for multi-directional traffic to be able to safely pass each other in steeper areas near the trailheads of the Mountain Park where more users will be centralized in one space.



Example of optional trial lines

# TRAIL HUB

A Trail Hub is proposed at a central location of the Trail System due to the opportunity presented by the existing terrain. This Trail Hub would offer the opportunity for bikers and hikers alike to get to a destination that would provide seating, a gathering location for different users to join back up and a full trail map kiosk to provide adequate wayfinding. The Trail Hub would also provide off-trail benches and picnic tables for places for gathering and resting. It functions similar to a city street round about allowing users to traverse around the short hub loop until they see the trail they desire to use.



Example of open picnic area



Schematic rendering of proposed Trail Hub

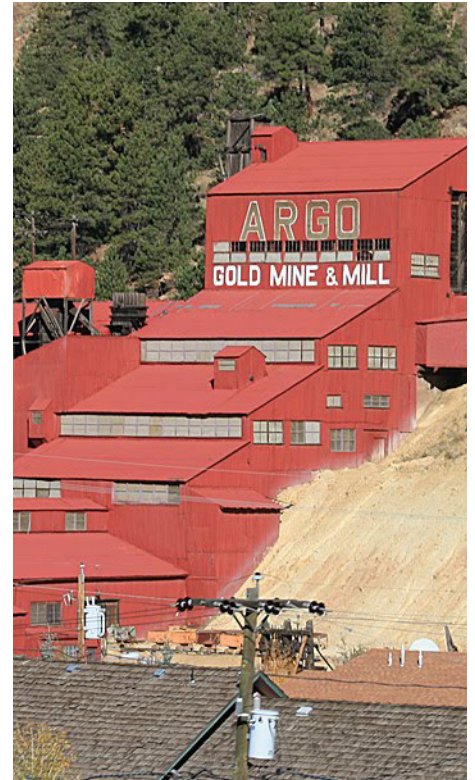


Example of trail hub

# PRIVATE OWNER DEVELOPMENT

During the master plan process, the Argo Mine and Mill was identified as a strategic project partner for the City of Idaho Springs. The Argo Mine and Mill fully supports the City's venture to plan and implement Mountain Park and have joined together with the City of Idaho Springs with a Memorandum Of Understanding to continue to move forward together to assist in the planning of Mountain Park. The Argo Mine and Mill would like to propose future private developments that would be located within Mountain Park and include: a future gondola location and other recreational opportunities. These opportunities will need to be deemed/approved compatible to the City's park/trail management goals and visions.

The Argo Mine and Mill also proposed to provide a Welcome Center near the main access-way to the mountain park at the base of Rosa Gulch. These development opportunities are still being planned at the time of the Master Plan, and may change dramatically over time. The private property would plan to provide an access easement to the City of Idaho Springs in order to allow public access and parking at the main trailhead at Rosa Gulch. The main concern throughout the Master Plan process for the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park has been to ensure that the alignment and the location of the lift tower pylons of the proposed Gondola does not impede views of visitors, does not inhibit trail construction and trail routes, and does not impede views of the neighbors of the Open Space.



# EASEMENTS

Numerous easements are recommended with this master plan in order to provide legal and proper access to Mountain Park. An easement through the Argo Mine and Mill property located to the south of Mountain Park and an easement to the north from Santa Fe Mine Road that would require crossing multiple parcels for access to the site are desired.



# COMPETITIVE EVENTS

The Mountain Park has the capability and potential to host competitive events such as cross-country, downhill and/or endurance mountain biking and foot races. Events in the Mountain Park would have to be coordinated with the Argo Mine & Mill private property owner. These types of events could be held in association with private events at the Argo Mine & Mill Development to help increase visitorship.



# ELECTRIC BIKES

The on-line survey that was provided to the community revealed that most survey takers did not know what an E-Bike was. Further, the survey results showed that people were apprehensive to allow an electric bike to be allowed in the Mountain Park .

Since E-Bikes are a new technology, further public understanding and awareness is spreading on the different types of E-Bikes available. As such, the Master Plan proposes that Class 1 E-Bikes should be allowed in the Mountain Park to allow different-abled users to be able to utilize this technology to assist them on uphill biking trails with pedal assistance. The City should further look into County rules and neighboring municipalities to determine if other classes of E-Bikes should be allowed in the Mountain Park.



# DOGS

City regulations allow for dogs to be within public parks and open space as long as they are on-leash. The Mountain Park is home to several different types of wildlife that can be startled from their home territory by dogs in the premise. It is recommended that dogs can be allowed within the Mountain Park but must remain on leash. Furthermore, there may be particular trails within the Mountain Park that will restrict dogs in the area at certain times of the year, such as within the Bighorn Sheep Severe Winter Range, as determined by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.



# EMERGENCY ACCESS & REGULATION

Emergency access for medical services to accidents that may occur on the Mountain Park will be an important item to consider as different phases of the trail system come on-line. Due to the existing terrain and current access issues, emergency access will most likely occur from the north of the Mountain Park, from Santa Fe Mine Road. Cell phone service is easily available on the mountain side for emergencies to be called in. It is recommended that emergency information be posted on all trailhead signs for users to know who to contact.



Access to the site must also be regulated and enforced to ensure correct use by Mountain Park visitors. At this time, only one parking lot off site on private property is proposed, but a secondary parking area could be viable in the future from the Santa Fe Mine Road access. These trailhead parking areas should be closed and signed and/or gated from dusk till dawn to deter after-hour use. Users should also be empowered to do their own self-policing to ensure correct use of the Mountain Park.

# CATTLE GRAZING

The Young's Ranch Trust to the east of the Mountain Park has historical cattle grazing rights for the area within the Mountain Park. These cattle will typically follow existing trail alignments to graze. This could invite a particularly dangerous situation with cattle on a downhill biking trail. The Master Plan recommends that the trails that come within 150' of Gilson Gulch should be fenced from the private property. Signage should be posted for users to warn them of the potential of cattle near/on the trail. The fencing will help deter trail users from going off trail and trespassing as well as block the cattle from being able to access the trails.



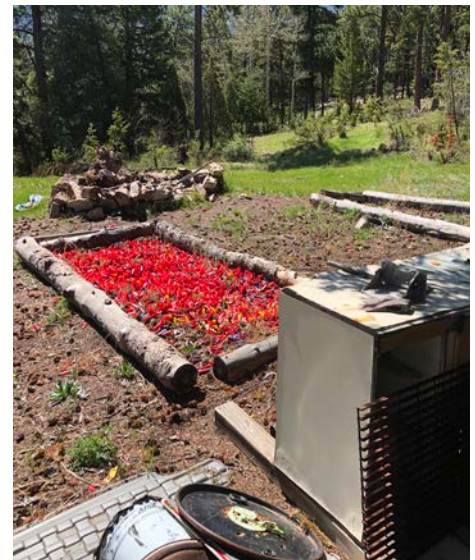
Trail damage from cattle grazing

# CLEAN UP / MITIGATION

There are two main areas identified in the Master Plan process that will need further consideration and effort to mitigate existing poor conditions. The first location is Buttermilk Gulch where misuse of the Mountain Park has occurred. The site is approximately two acres and contains trash, waste, and ammunition casings which litter the area and will require clean-up due to the presence of lead before it can be used. Further misuse of the site will also need to be prevented so that the issue does not continue to occur.

The second location is at the trail easement at the Argo Mine & Mill. There is one superfund site in Clear Creek County, the Clear Creek/Central City site located in Central City and Idaho Springs at the Argo Tunnel. The Argo tunnel is adjacent to the southern boundary of the Mountain Park and runs under the Mountain Park lands in a northerly direction. The proposed trail at this location would traverse the waste rock pile of mine tailings. At the time of trail construction in this location, further assessments should be undertaken to understand the impacts to health and safety of the existing conditions and what mitigation efforts may need to be undertaken to ensure a healthy and safe trail is provided for public use.

There are several old mining sites that exist throughout the Mountain Park land and surrounding area. Some of these could be dangerous pits or tunnels and should ideally be reclaimed where potential hazards exist or signed and fenced if located close to the trail corridor. Signage will be posted at the trailhead regarding the associated risks of abandoned mine tunnels/shafts.





# SIGNAGE & FENCING

## PROPERTY BOUNDARY FENCING & SIGNAGE

An effective trail system that offers visitors a reasonably safe and enjoyable experience relies heavily on a concise signage plan. The Mountain Park will require a variety of signs for the various types of trails and the challenging environmental conditions present at the park. These signs will include educational, directional and regulatory signage.

The Mountain Park is almost completely surrounded by private property, the one exception being the section where it encompasses Virginia Canyon Road on the west side of the current Mountain Park project boundaries. This typically creates a number of opportunities and challenges for land management agencies. First and foremost, the Mountain Park property boundaries should be accurately located and/or legally surveyed and marked with boundary signage. These can be wired on to existing fences or used on a metal post and regular intervals where fencing does not exist or is inaccurate.

By clearly marking the boundaries to the Mountain Park, the City is acting prudently in educating trail users where private property starts and to respect it, while showing the adjacent private landowners accurate boundary lines are so they become aware of any existing encroachments; whether they be from the current or past landowners or in some areas pseudo-illegal squatters on public BLM lands over past 25 years.



Example of park signage

## EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Educational signage can help promote the correct use of the Mountain Park and bring about a sense of stewardship and respect for the Mountain Park. The educational signage used in the Mountain Park should be focused on sharing information about the important natural ecosystem and how unique this type of climate and habitat is to plants and animals alike. Pulling in the cultural history of the site and how humans have the capability of determining what type of footprint they leave on public lands will help to empower the user to make a positive impact during their visit.

When decommissioning heavily used trails, utilizing signage to educate the user as to why the trail is now closed plays a large role in keeping those trails unused. The principle is the same for seasonal trail closures. If trail users understand why the trails are closed and are informed of the sensitive habitats needed for the local wildlife, it will influence the riders and hikers to stay off the trails.

### MOUNTAIN BIKER'S RESPONSIBILITY CODE

Mountain biking involves risk of serious injury or death. Your knowledge, decisions and actions contribute to your safety and that of others.

#### ALWAYS:

1. **STAY IN CONTROL.** You're responsible for avoiding objects and people.
2. **KNOW YOUR LIMITS.** Ride within your ability. Start small and work your way up.
3. **PROTECT YOURSELF.** Use an appropriate bike, helmet and protective equipment.
4. **INSPECT AND MAINTAIN YOUR EQUIPMENT.** Know your components and their operation prior to riding.
5. **BE LIFT SMART.** Know how to load, ride and unload lifts safely. Ask if you need help.
6. **INSPECT THE TRAILS AND FEATURES.** Conditions change constantly; plan and adjust your riding accordingly.
7. **OBEY SIGNS AND WARNINGS.** Stay on marked trails only. Keep off closed trails and features. Ride in the direction indicated.
8. **BE VISIBLE.** Do not stop where you obstruct a trail, feature, landing or are not visible.
9. **LOOK AND YIELD TO OTHERS.** Look both ways and yield when entering or crossing a road or trail. When overtaking, use caution and yield to those ahead.
10. **COOPERATE.** If involved in or witness to an incident, identify yourself to staff.

**Know and Follow the Code. It is Your Responsibility.**

## CLEAR CREEK GREENWAY & CITY ACCESS SIGNAGE

Wayfinding signage throughout the Mountain Park is important to help users access the right trails, understand the directions of the trails, know whether it is a hiking only, biking only or shared use trail and to know what route to take to get to significant locations such as trailheads, overlooks, parking, and the trailhub. Concurrently, signage outside of the Mountain Park should be considered to help other trail users know how to correctly access the Mountain Park. Signage should be present along the Clear Creek Greenway near where a Greenway trail user would access the trail to the Virginia Canyon Mountain Park. This signage should provide the Greenway trail user further information about the Mountain Park as well as an overall sign showing trail types, ratings, lengths and hours of use.



Clear Creek Greenway near the Game Check Station



# FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

## GOALS OF SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DESIGN

Sustainable trail design is beneficial for the trails themselves and for the users of the trails. Environmental sustainability, social sustainability and financial sustainability are the three main goals of sustainable trail design.

### Environmental Sustainability

- Protect indigenous flora, fauna and soils
- Protects trail investments

### Social Sustainability

- Offer high-quality trail experience for desired users
- Consider locals when planning trails

### Financial Sustainability

- Trails are expensive, invest trail dollars wisely
- Follow proper best management practices to help manage your risks

## PARAMETERS OF SUSTAINABLE TRAIL DESIGN

When designing sustainable trails, it is important to know the average grades for different levels of difficulty. Green trails are considered “easy” and have an average slope of 3-6%. Blue trails are “intermediate” difficulty level and have an average slope of 4-8%. Black trails are classified as “difficult” and have an average slope of 6-12% or greater.

Practice Rolling Contour Design so that when or if the trail tread becomes dished and intercepts water it can exit the trail at the grade reversals. Typically, this is every 50-100 linear feet or less. To minimize braking bumps entering corners, rise up and scrub speed before turns. Locate gentler sideslopes for the ease/ability to make wider radius corners easier to build and maintain. A wider radius is typically 10 foot radius or larger.

Directional trails are a great management tool to optimize all users trail experiences. Designating trails or zones to directional, bike optimized trails can help concentrate mountain bikers in areas designed for them. Offering hikers and runners pedestrian optimized stacked loop system also allows more trail styles such as steeper trails with big stone steps. Shared-use trails will also be planned but designed to minimize visitor conflicts due to speed and silence of bikes, especially in areas of limited visibility.

Directional trails for bikes allow designers/builders more creativity to optimize the riding experience and significantly reduce the chance of biker collisions, possible on bi-directional trails. Mountain bikers of all ages and ability tend to flock to these bike-optimized trails, enhancing the marketability to the user group.



# ESTIMATED COSTS RANGES FOR POTENTIAL FEATURES

Depending on the trail design, different features can be included in the design. The following is a list of typical features seen in trail design and the associated costs for those features. The costs vary based on material cost and ease of mobilization to the trail work zone. The large cost ranges are primarily due to the required mobilization over narrow trails or steep loose terrain to deliver building materials to actual working site.

Native Stone Steps (>125#)	\$200-300/step
Import Stone Steps (>125#) only in Rosa	\$150-200/step
Rolling Crown Switchback	\$500-2000/each
Dry-laid stone wall (native stone)	\$35-\$55/SF
Dry-laid stone wall (imported stone)	\$45-65/SF
Stone Armoring (native stone)	\$25-40/SF
Stone Armoring (imported stone)	\$30-45/SF
Bridges (no rails) < 3' high off ground	\$50-70/SF
Boardwalks (no rails) < 3' high off ground	\$50-70/SF
Bridges (with rails, spans <15')	\$100-120/SF
Bridges (with rails, spans >15')	\$140-180/SF
Engineered bridges TBD by design	TBD
Large Bermed Corners > 3' high >10' long	\$400-1600/Each
Switchbacks	\$400-1600/Each
Technical Trail Features (TTF) (native or import stone)	TBD

# GRANT AGENCIES

One of the primary goals of the VCMP Master Plan is to identify funding sources to help implement and construct the trails based on the estimated costs. There are several agencies that can help fund both trail construction and maintenance. Some of the more reliable sources of funding include:

## GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO (GOCO)

- Local Park and Outdoor Recreation (LPOR) Grants help build or improve community parks, outdoor recreation amenities, outdoor athletic facilities and environmental education facilities. Funding is also available for land acquisitions.
- Youth Corps Grants employ Colorado Youth Corps Association crews on projects like building trails, erosion control after forest fires and eradicating invasive species.

## COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE (CPW)

- The Colorado State Recreational Trails Grant Program (Non-Motorized Trails) funds projects for large recreational trail grants, small recreational trail grants, trail planning and trail support grants. The grant program also provides funds for trail maintenance.

## DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS (DOLA)

- Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) The Department of Local Affairs distributes CTF dollars quarterly, on a per capita basis, to over 470 eligible local governments: counties, cities, towns and Title 32 special districts that provide park and recreation services in their service plans.

## PEOPLE FOR BIKES

- PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development, from city or county agencies or departments and from state or federal agencies working locally.

## COLORADO HEALTH FOUNDATION (CHF)

- Activating Places and Spaces supports locally-defined, place-specific efforts to get people outdoors and actively engaged in their neighborhoods together. The goal of the funding opportunity is to help activate existing infrastructure in public places that contribute to a community's overall health through residential usage and positive experiences. Foundation grant funds will support costs associated with project/program planning and/or implementation for up to one year. In addition, funding for technical assistance for community engagement, communications and marketing is available.

## EL POMAR

- El Pomar Foundation is a private, general purpose foundation established in 1937 by Spencer and Julie Penrose. With a mission to “enhance, encourage, and promote the current and future well-being of the people of Colorado” El Pomar Foundation provides more than \$22 million annually in grants and programs throughout the state.

## LAURA JANE MUSSER FUND

- The Rural Initiative Program encourages collaborative and participatory efforts among citizens in rural communities that will help to strengthen their towns and regions in a number of civic areas including, but not limited to, economic development, business preservation, arts and humanities, public space improvements and education.



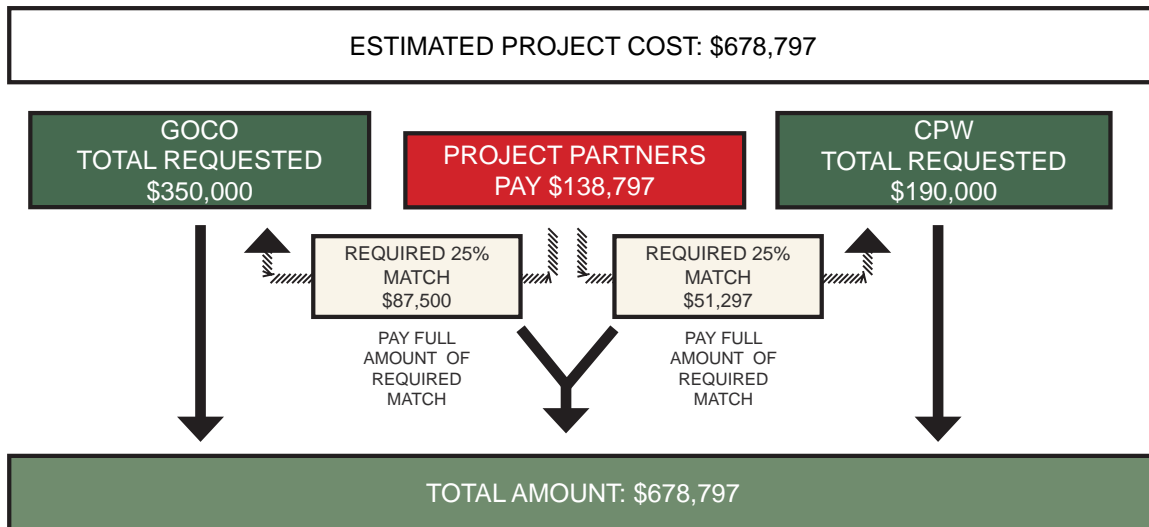
## LEVERAGING GRANTS

While granting agencies and programs are an excellent source of funds to help implement projects, many require a significant “match”. The amount of funds required for matching grants varies greatly depending on the agency. For example, most GOCO grants require a 25% match for the requested funds, while some DOLA grants require a 100% match for requested funds. Matching funds can also take two forms:

- **Cash Match:** Cash matches are funds that are being spent from a specific account or project. For municipalities, these funds are usually provided from General Funds or Capital Improvements.
- **In-Kind Match:** In-Kind matches are services or materials that are being provided or donated. This can include labor, planning, building materials, maintenance and other services.

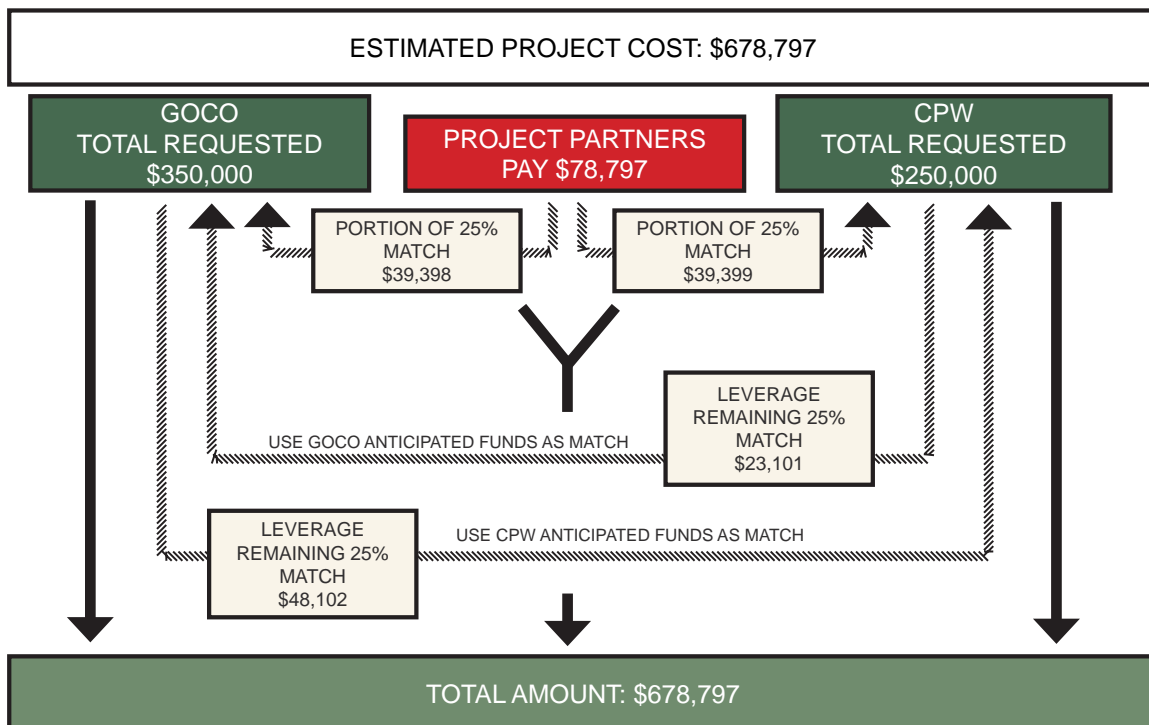
Each grant will have specific language that will help determine how to calculate the overall match and composition of the match.

As shown in the trail cost estimates, the estimated total cost to complete projects identified in the Master Plan is significant. As the Trail Project Partners move forward with grant applications, providing matching funds for numerous grants can be difficult and unrealistic. A more efficient approach to seek funding for implementing projects is to leverage grants and projects against each other. Leveraging grants is utilizing a specific grant for a project as the required matching funds for a second grant for the project and vice versa. For Virginia Canyon Mountain Park, a typical grant strategy to fund new trail construction could look like this:



In this example, the Trail Project Partners would have to provide a combined \$138,797 in matching funds for the grant applications.

However, if the grants are leveraged against each other, the process looks more like this:



In this example, the Trail Project Partners would only have to provide \$78,797 in matching funds, saving the Project Partners \$60,000

Leveraging can also be done by utilizing project costs from associated projects. For example, if the Argo Partners receive a grant from the EPA make improvements on their property, those funds can be leveraged against a CPW or GOCO grant to improve access to parking for VCMP.



# Grant Agency Timelines and Requirements

The following chart outlines some of the prospective funding agencies' grant awards, required match and submittal timelines. All information is subject to change by each individual agency and should be confirmed on an annual basis.

Agency	Amount	Match	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
GOCO LPOR	\$350,000	25% (10% Cash)												
GOCO Youth Corps	2 Weeks Labor	Not Required												
CPW Trail Construction	\$250,000	25%												
DOLA CTF	Varies	Not Required												
People For Bikes	\$10,000	Not Required												
Colorado Health Foundation	\$100,000	Varies												
El Pomar Foundation	\$100,000	Not Required												
Laura Jane Musser Fund	\$25,000	Not Required												



Grants Due



LOIs Due

# PHASE 1 PROJECT

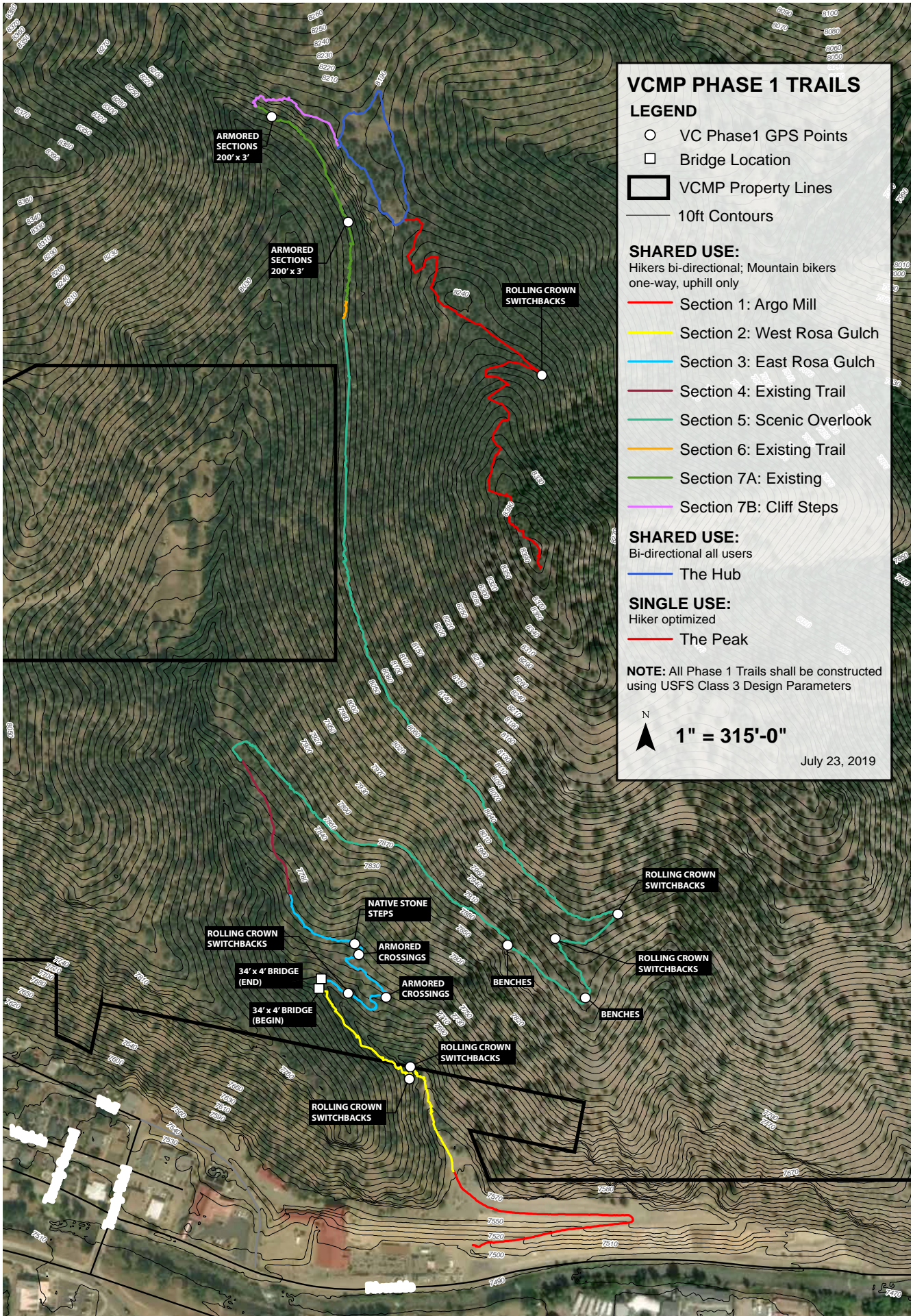
## OVERVIEW

Property covered in this Trail Master Plan is 400 acres with approximately 20-30% being steep, rocky, cliffs, and rockfall. 300 acres are relatively suitable for trails, but will still be extremely difficult construction. Drilling & blasting will be required on many of the trails and will be unavoidable. Despite the design and construction hurdles the challenging terrain will produce a very rugged and rowdy trail system for hikers, runners and mountain bikers. The steep terrain and loose rocky hillsides will likely not offer any truly beginner trails for any users, but lend themselves more to high outdoor adventure pursuits like mountain running, mountain biking and steep challenging hikes with amazing views of Idaho Springs and surrounding peaks.

Currently there are only a few spots along the Virginia Canyon Road where access is fully legal near Buttermilk Gulch. This gravel road has limited parking on County ROW. The Argo Mill and City of Idaho Springs are working towards a more formal access agreement and the city is exploring a parking management plan.

Within these constraints the field design team has created several high priority goals:

1. Optimize quality of trail mileage for all users by offering shared-use, biker and hiker only trails where appropriate. Get hikers/runners to the top of unnamed northern peak & Ridgeline and the High Point (8810') efficiently and sustainably and offer mountain bikers an iconic and awesome 4-5 mile downhill oriented trail with several other trail options for longer rides.
2. Minimize user conflicts on shared-use trails by designing them to be uphill only for bikes or gently rolling contour trails that naturally minimizes the velocity of bikes, through flatter trail tread grades and tighter, more technically challenging corridors, and key technical trail features (TTFs).
3. Optimize trails for specific user groups by offering steeper, more direct hiker-only routes, built with rock steps and armoring in numerous sections with 10-25% grades.
4. Optimize bike trails by designing one-way directional, gravity-assisted, bike-only trails chocked full of numerous TTFs (at least one feature every 75'). Desirable features include berms, rollers, jumps, step-ups, step-downs, chicanes, rock gardens, armoring, steep pitching, natural rock features, etc.
5. Last but not least, we tried to stay out of Severe Winter Habitat for Big Horn Sheep, as much as possible by concentrating trails in fewer areas, leaving some larger areas undisturbed. We have purposely avoided many of the south facing ridgelines that appear to be a favorite hangout with the local herd.



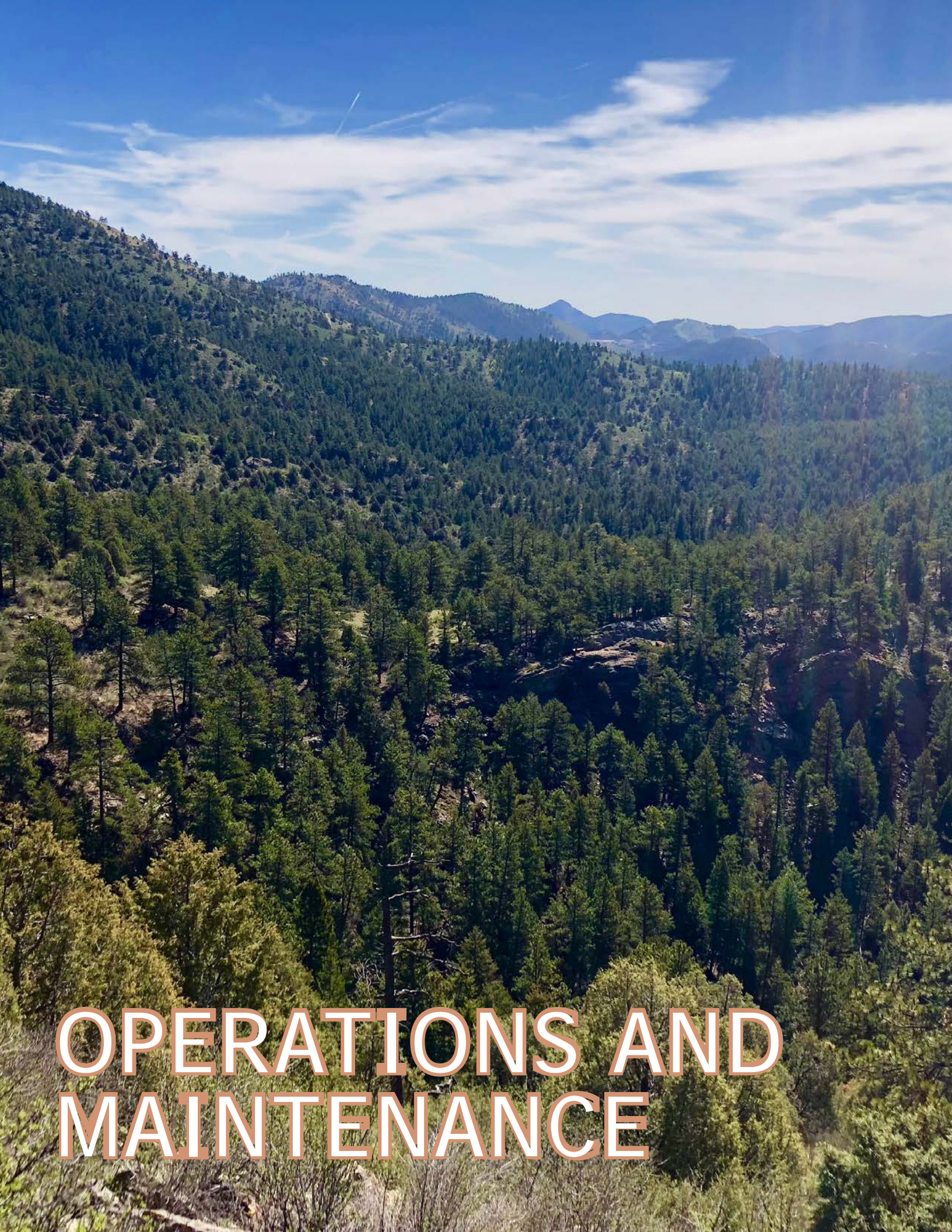
# PHASE 1 PROJECT COST ESTIMATE

Section	Feature/Materials	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total
Section 1: Argo Mill	Secure Access and Ensure Visitor Safety				
Section 2: West Rosa Gulch	Moderate Trail Construction	1290	LF	\$7.00	\$9,030.00
	Wood Post and Dowel Fencing	144	LF	\$30.00	\$4,320.00
	Rolling Crown Switchbacks	2	Each	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
	Metal Handrail	261	LF	\$50.00	\$13,050.00
	Imported Stone Steps	100	Each	\$150.00	\$15,000.00
	Drilling/Blasting/Chipping	8	LF	\$250.00	\$2,000.00
Bridge Over Rosa Gulch	34' x 4' Bridge (Including Design)	136	ft <sup>2</sup>	300	\$40,800.00
Section 3: East Rosa Gulch	Moderate Trail Construction	1354	LF	\$7.00	\$9,478.00
	Armored Crossings	60	ft <sup>2</sup>	\$25.00	\$1,500.00
	Rolling Crown Switchbacks	1	Each	\$500.00	\$500.00
	Native Stone Steps	20	Each	\$200.00	\$4,000.00
Section 4: Existing Trail	Enhanced Drainage	627	LF	\$3.00	\$1,881.00
	Native Stone Steps	10	Each	\$150.00	\$1,500.00
Section 5: Scenic Overlook	Moderate Trail Construction	5974	LF	\$7.00	\$41,818.00
	Native Stone Steps	27	Each	\$150.00	\$4,050.00
	Benches	3	Each	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00
	Rolling Crown Switchbacks	2	Each	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
	Drilling/Blasting/Chipping	30	Hr	\$250.00	\$7,500.00
Section 6: Existing Trail	Enhanced Drainage	101	LF	\$3.00	\$303.00
	Reroute to West (Climbing Turn)	25	LF	\$5.00	\$125.00
Section 7A: Existing	Difficult Trail Construction	1225	LF	\$9.00	\$11,025.00
	Armored Sections 200' x 3'	600	ft <sup>2</sup>	\$25.00	\$15,000.00
Section 7B: Cliff Steps	Difficult Trail Construction	572	LF	\$9.00	\$5,148.00
	Native Stone Steps	35	Each	\$200.00	\$7,000.00
The Hub	Easy Trail Construction	1358	LF	\$5.00	\$6,790.00
	Benches	3	Each	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00
	Picnic Tables	3	Each	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00
The Peak	Moderate Trail Construction	2582	LF	\$7.00	\$18,074.00
	Rolling Crown Switchbacks	1	Each	\$500.00	\$500.00
	Native Stone Steps	50	Each	\$150.00	\$7,500.00
	Benches	3	Each	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00

Total Construction Cost \$261,892.00

10% Mobilization \$26,184.00

**Total Project Cost \$288,076.00**



# OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

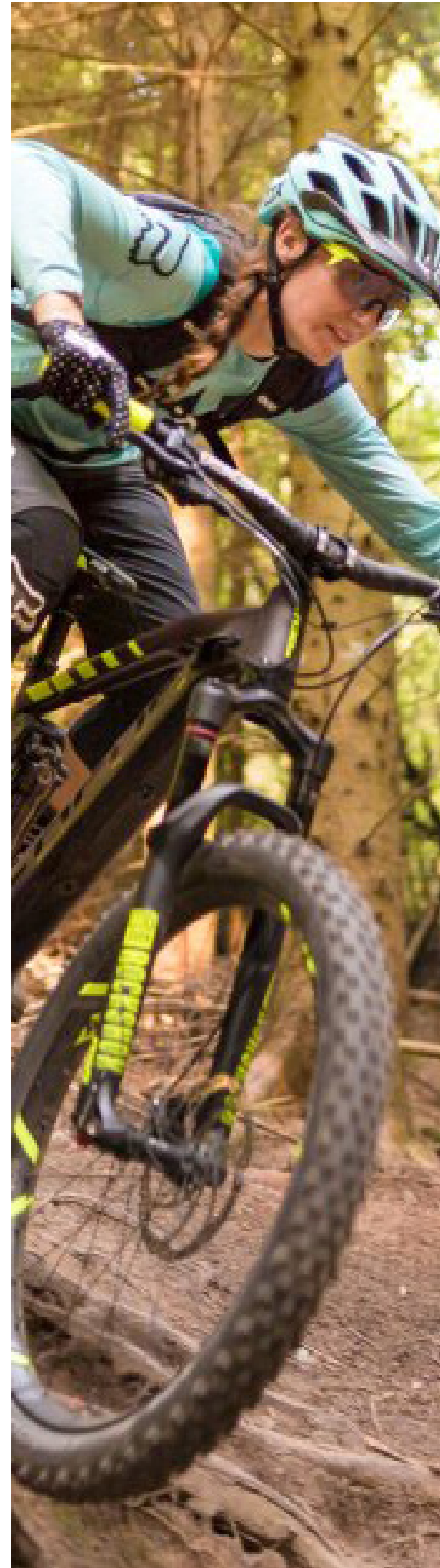
# PURPOSE

Virginia Canyon Mountain Park (Mountain Park), known as Area 28 for decades, is a 424-acre parcel of steep, rugged terrain surrounding the northern boundary of Idaho Springs on the I-70 Mountain Corridor. Due to the extremely complex and challenging topography in the area, past mining history, access challenges and the abundance of critical habitat for Bighorn Sheep, the future planned trail system will be limited to approximately 300 acres. The stacked loop trail system at Mountain Park will offer mountain bikers, runners and hikers intermediate to advanced challenges, including hiker specific & bike optimized, directional trails.

Colorado Mountain Bike Association's (COMBA) 2017 Concept Plan outlined an initial concept plan and laid the ground work for today's recommendations. Colorado Mountain Bike Association involvement is still strong today and key for the success of the Park's future development, funding and maintenance. Having Clear Creek County Open Space Trail Crews also involved in the maintenance of Mountain Park trails adds even more strength to the vision.

While the steep slopes and loose soils provide numerous design challenges and costly trail construction, they also provide a canvas easily capable of creating legitimate black diamond, advanced and expert lines for mountain bikers and also offer awesome challenge trails for hikers to the summit of the northern peak and beyond.

Due to these topographic constraints and opportunities, additional routine maintenance will be critical in providing and helping insure the trail system remains in reasonable condition, despite the high volumes of usage that are expected. This likely includes routine safety inspections on a weekly basis as the system is developed and would be prudent to expect a daily safety inspection if/when a gondola is available for transport to the top. Any type of lift access that transports bikes will allow riders to make numerous passes on the limited number of trails and require significantly more maintenance and armoring of tread directly related to the volume of use and sustainability of each trail.





# MAINTENANCE

Minor landslides of soil, rock, and vegetation are to be expected over time as evidenced by the geology and terrain. These will be exacerbated by heavy rainfall, steep slopes, and loose materials. Human activities may also contribute to increased soil instability and erosion through trail compaction, widening and short-cutting. The greatest potential for slide potential is in areas where development occurs on slopes of greater than 30%, which is the vast majority of Mountain Park lands.

Subsidence “is the sinking of land over human caused or natural underground voids and the settlement of native low-density soils.” The Mountain Park is underlain with the Argo Tunnel and remnant mines and underground passages that may result in void spaces in the rock. These voids can then be affected by natural and man-made processes causing slumping or collapsing of the ground surface. Numerous open tunnels and shafts still exist on Mountain Park land and trailhead signage should educate visitors on these potential hazards. There have been several recorded incidents of collapse and sinkholes in Clear Creek County. Subsidence can result in severe structural damage or even loss of life.

Based on these concerns, the Master Plan Team feels it is reasonable and prudent to provide precautionary statements for future trail designers/builders in this area. Additional mapping efforts should focus on not only mapping the surface conditions affected by past mining but the subsurface tunnels and shafts that also exist below the Park.

The potential economic value of high-quality outdoor recreation for Idaho Springs is undeniable and its location less than an hour from Denver will undoubtedly create success and challenges at the same time. Competing with other mountain biking meccas has become an increasingly difficult task, requiring a steady stream of iconic, fresh trails and unique features on a regular basis. The mountain bike success stories today are most often the ones spearheaded by local grass-roots organizations. In today’s increasingly competitive outdoor recreation industry branding, and rebranding your destination has become commonplace.

Protecting these trail investments for future generations is essential, especially considering a mile of bike-optimized trail in Colorado can easily cost in excess of \$30K/mile to design and build, and a mile of trail at Virginia Canyon Mountain Park will easily cost 2-3 times as much with the extreme construction challenges. A mandatory tool in protecting this trail investment and your agency’s potential liability is a solid trail maintenance program. A consistent, thorough trail maintenance program with routine, documented safety inspections is critical for a sound risk management program in today’s world of high adventure outdoor pursuits and potential liability.

A sound, routine trail maintenance program is one of the most valuable tools for land managers and outdoor recreation providers offering high-quality outdoor recreation experiences for their intended trail users. A trail should be reasonably safe and adhere to “best management practices”, taking into consideration the difficulty/type of trail experience desired, the changing environmental conditions and the inherent risks of the various high adventure pursuits, like mountain biking.

Most importantly, routine trail maintenance programs help land managers and outdoor recreation providers protect and conserve the natural and cultural resources of the area that make it unique, that make it successful. The quality of trail user’s experience is tied intimately with the quality of the natural, cultural and soil resources.

Mountain Park's success ultimately depends on the City of Idaho Springs, COMBA, Clear Creek Open Space and the surrounding communities working collaboratively to monitor, enhance, raise funds, write grants, and maintain the safe functioning of Mountain Park trails and facilities as they evolve. The management must also be sustainable; encouraging community stewardship, involving citizens/groups in monitoring and maintenance, while protecting and enhancing the habitat and outdoor recreation resources of the site.

Here are several concepts to consider that may assist the City and its stakeholders in future management and maintenance of Mountain Park and increase the chances of success.

Implementation of the Mountain Park Master Plan will be more successful following the City's current inclusive approach and supporting a collaborative community effort of on-going discussions with stewardship groups, agencies and partners about the priorities for maintenance and project implementation.

The Mountain Park Master Plan strongly encourages maintaining the original feel and style of rider experience that made Area 28 famous - advanced, challenging raw singletrack. New trails should continue complimenting the natural features and topography of the area and be laid as gently as possible on the rugged landscape. Design principles and construction techniques should encourage use of native materials that do not conflict with the history and environment of the site. Highly manufactured trails constructed with tons of imported materials (stone, soil or wood) are not recommended due to the backcountry feel and aesthetics of the area, however this is not a strict rule, but to be decided as funding is available.

Site improvements and amenities such as signage, kiosks, picnic tables, benches, fencing and pavilions will be purposeful and fit the context of the community, require minimal maintenance/replacement, and ultimately help in minimizing our human impacts upon the natural environment. Creating a mining theme using Argo artifacts could also make the project more unique and marketable and highlight the history of mining in the area. The Mountain Park Master Plan proposes significant enhancements to provide a high-quality visitor experience and offer new opportunities in the area for residents and visitors.

Acknowledging that all of our human activities have impact, we have tried to balance the future recreational use demands with the natural systems of the area by limiting encroachment into Bighorn Sheep Severe Winter Range as much as feasible. Depending on the depth of winter snows in future years, CPW may recommend certain trails be closed on a seasonal basis in severe winters.

As trails are developed in the future, an on-going evaluation of the existing rogue trails could be developed and most of these closed when contractors are in the area working nearby.

In addition to the mining impacts, a number of safety concerns were documented within the existing trail corridors and at trailheads that could potentially become liability issues for the City if not properly addressed prior to public use. These include a large shooting range (2 acres) with pounds of lead on ground surface, numerous abandoned motor vehicles, a boat, a variety of construction materials, mining artifacts and a few abandoned homeless camps.

With the extractive history of mining and grazing on Mountain Park lands there are opportunities for awesome habitat enhancement projects. These types of projects when combined with trail development projects are very attractive and can often go after a variety of grants instead of just recreational trail grants.



# MAINTENANCE TASK CHECKLIST

## Management Review Tasks

- Annual and post-storm monitoring recommended
- Evaluate existing fencing/barriers for repair, removal and/or new installation
- Evaluate all existing signage (directional, regulatory and educational)
- Make recommendations for new sign installation
- Evaluate kiosks, bulletin board & message boards

## Routine Maintenance Tasks

- Service all amenities on routine basis (empty trash cans, clean restrooms, stain/repair tables/benches)
- Parking areas surface maintenance
- Weed control and mowing (if any prescribed)

## Periodic Maintenance Tasks (to be performed by city trail crews, COMBA, volunteers, and/or contractors)

- Minor trail tread surface repairs (gullies, rivulets, cow hoof holes, off-trail tracks)
- Corridor clearing (prune limbs/cactus back, flush cut stumps, remove hazardous roots from tread)
- Clean all drainage features/structures (rolling grade dips, knicks, culverts, and lead off ditches)
- Remove any rocks, soil or debris that have migrated onto trail surface
- Remove any site litter (trash, old wire, graffiti, bike parts, illegal dumping, posts, etc.)
- Install additional drainage features (rolling grade dip, knick, ditch, etc)
- Deberming to re-establish proper outslope (5-9%)
- Repairing any Technical Trail Features (TTFs) or stone armoring to original condition
- Repair, replace & maintain signage and kiosks
- Sharpen/repair tools and equipment
- Stain/paint benches, picnic tables, wood sign posts and kiosks as necessary

## Volunteer Trail Steward Monitoring Tasks

- Proper training in understanding trail standards, monitoring and recording
- Monitor conditions of trail surface and features
- Monitor areas of high erosion after storm events
- Sweep/shovel loose sand and gravel off trail
- Monitor swales/culverts for vegetation and sediment build up
- Monitor site elements condition (amenities, signs, etc.)
- Monitor site vegetation for safety (dead limbs, stumps, trees, etc.)
- Monitor trail surface for vegetation encroachment
- Monitor fences within trail corridor
- Remove litter as necessary
- Native grassland restoration / erosion control
- Weed pulling/control (coordinate w/ vegetation management plan)
- Implement IMBA Trail Patrol
- Volunteer appreciation event
- Other Community engagement events/activities
- Document/submit hours

## Routine Maintenance Checklist

Various Tasks and Responsible Party	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER
<b>Management Review Tasks</b>				
Annual and post-storm monitoring				
Install/monitor new fencing to prevent livestock encroachment				
Evaluate existing fencing/barriers for repair, removal and/or new installation				
Install/monitor signage (directional, regulatory and educational)				
Install/monitor kiosks, bulletin board & message boards				
<b>Routine Maintenance Tasks (City crew or contractor)</b>				
Service all amenities on routine basis (empty trash cans, clean restrooms, clean fire pits, stain/repair tables/benches)				
Parking areas surface maintenance				
Weed control and mowing (if any prescribed) TBD				
Major trail tread surface repairs (gullies, rivulets, cow hoof holes, off-trail tracks)				
<b>Routine Maintenance Tasks (may be performed by trail crews, COPMOBA, volunteers, and/or contractors depending on task)</b>				
Minor trail tread surface repairs (gullies, rivulets, cow hoof holes, off-trail tracks)				
Corridor clearing (prune limbs, flush cut stumps, remove hazardous roots/trees from trail)				
Clean all drainage features/structures (rolling grade dips, knicks, culverts, and lead off ditches)				
Remove any rocks, soil or debris that have migrated onto trail tread				
Remove any site litter (trash, old wire, graffiti, bike parts, illegal dumping, posts, etc.)				
Install additional drainage features (rolling grade dip, knick, ditch, etc)				
Deberming to re-establish proper outslope (5-9%)				
Repairing any Technical Trail Features (TTFs) or stone armoring to original condition				
Repair, replace & maintain signage and kiosks				
Sharpen/repair tools and equipment				
Stain/paint benches, picnic tables, wood sign posts and kiosks as necessary				
<b>Volunteer Trail Steward Monitoring Tasks</b>				
Proper training in understanding trail standards, monitoring and recording Routine Inspections				
Monitor conditions of trail surface and features				
Monitor areas of high erosion after storm events				
Sweep/shovel loose rocks, boulders, sand and gravel off trail				
Monitor swales/culverts for vegetation and sediment build up				
Monitor site elements condition (amenities, signs, etc.)				
Monitor site vegetation for safety (dead limbs, stumps, trees, etc.)				
Monitor trail surface for vegetation encroachment				
Monitor fences and abandoned mine pits/tunnels within trail corridor				
Remove litter as necessary				
Native grassland restoration / erosion control				
Weed pulling/control (coordinate w/ vegetation management plan)				
Volunteer appreciation event				
Other Community engagement events/activities				
Document/submit hours				

# REFERENCES

<http://clearcreekwater.org/watershed-map>

Colorado Mountain Bike Association. (2017). Area 28 & Virginia Canyon - Recreation Area Concept. Idaho Springs. (Colorado Mountain Bike Association, 2017)

<https://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/index.aspx?NID=443>

Idaho Springs City Council, & Idaho Springs Planning Commission. (2017). Envision Idaho Springs 2017. Idaho Springs, CO.

Idaho Springs Planning Commission. (2005). 2005 City of Idaho Springs - Comprehensive Plan. Idaho Springs: Idaho Springs City Council.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/survey/>

Shannon & Wilson, Inc. (2011). Argo Tunnel Bulkhead Structure Geotechnical Report.

Tupa, M. (2015). Idaho Springs Parking Inventory & Survey Garage Design Cost-Benefits (Rep.). CO: UCDenver CCCD-UTA. doi:[https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/2015 Parking Inv and Survey Univ of Colo Denv.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/2015%20Parking%20Inv%20and%20Survey%20Univ%20of%20Colo%20Denv.pdf) (Tupa, 2015)

<https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/science-analytics-and-synthesis/gap/science/land-cover/>



# APPENDICES

**City of Idaho Springs  
City Council  
COMMUNICATION**

<b>Meeting Date</b> August 13, 2018	<b>Page:</b> 1 of 2	<b>Item:</b>  <b>Virginia Canyon Open Space Planning and Design Update</b>
<b>Presented By</b> Alan Tiefenbach Community Development Planner		

**BACKGROUND**

In March of this year, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) awarded the City a grant of \$62,000 to begin the planning and design of the first phase of the Virginia Canyon Open Space. On April 23, 2018 the City Council awarded the planning and design to THK Associates / Tony Boone Trails.

Since that time, a Steering Committee has been formed which is comprised of representatives from the City, Clear Creek County, THK Associates / Tony Boone Trails, the Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA), the Argo Team, Idaho Springs Chamber of Commerce, the Clear Creek County Tourism Bureau, Clear Creek Greenway Authority, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Young Ranch, and the Clear Creek Metropolitan Recreation District. The Steering Committee has had four meetings to date and has held one public meeting.

The design team has spent a significant amount of time exploring and mapping the area and has produced a conceptual trails map. Tony Boone Trails has already flagged several miles of trail, the City is presently having property lines surveyed, and formalized trail corridors at construction level detail for the first segments of the park are anticipated within the next few months. The most recent trail map has been included with this staff report.

Based upon preliminary trail alignments and cost, the first segments of trail (Phase One) anticipated to be constructed will begin near the Argo Mill and Mine, run the length of Rosa Gulch and up the ridge and ridgeline to the unnamed 8,500 foot peak at the southern portion of the park. It is hoped that a loop at the top of the ridge will also be constructed, and possibly a trail connection from the ridge to Santa Fe Mine Road, above and to the north. These first portions will likely be hiker-only, although staff is working with COMBA toward potential trail segments for mountain biking. Funding for the construction of these first portions will be sought through a non-motorized trails grant with Colorado Parks and Wildlife as well as a potential grant through the El Pomar Foundation. Staff is presently coordinating with Clear Creek County Trails on an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for the yearly maintenance of these first trails at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$5,000.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR ACCESS**

Although there is a potential access point to the park at the city limits line on Virginia Canyon Road, due to topographical constraints this is not the preferred primary access. Staff and the Argo ownership have been working together since the inception of the project regarding access of the park occurring at Riverside Drive and across the Argo property up Rosa Gulch. This arrangement is a reciprocal benefit for both parties; with the City seeking access across the Argo land for the trail connection, and the Argo seeking access across the City owned property for the installation of a gondola line to the top of the park. As the details of the complete planning and design of both projects are still conceptual and ongoing, the City and the Argo have drafted a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU). This MOU is preferred to receive grant funding. Formal access agreements will eventually be formalized when the planning and design has been completed. A copy of the MOU has been included with this staff report and staff requests the City Council formally accept the MOU for the Mayor's signature.

### **NAME OF THE PARK**

There have been many discussions in regard to the name of the potential park. In May, a survey was published on the City website as well as the Facebook Page with a number of questions, one of which included potential names of the park. 190 responses have been received, although only 25 of them were received from Idaho Springs Residents. Three potential names have occurred most frequently:

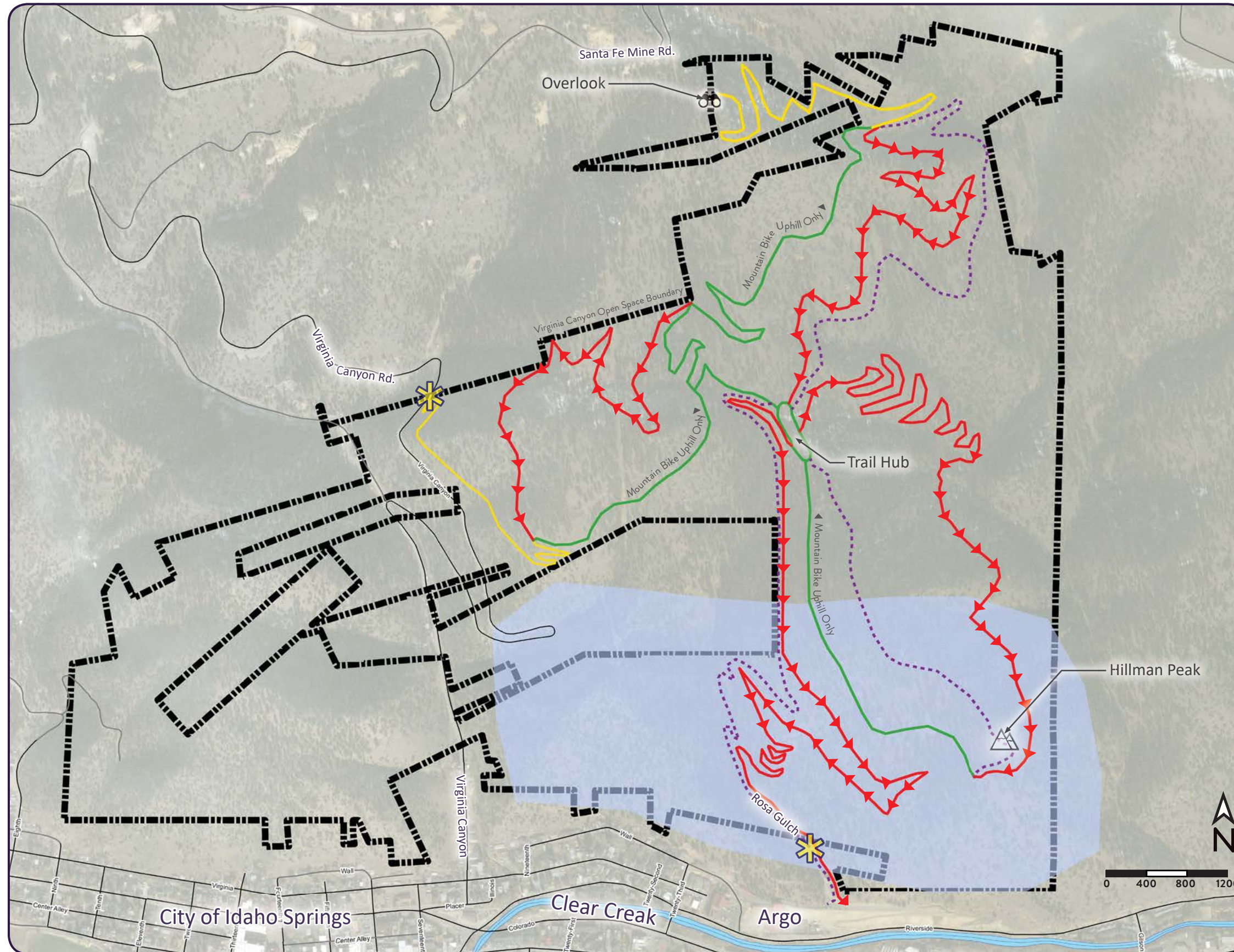
1. Virginia Canyon Mountain Park
2. Area 28 Mountain Park
3. Oh My Gawd Mountain Park

The Steering Committee discussed these names at length at their July 26, 2018 meeting and recommends the City Council formally adopt the name *Virginia Canyon Mountain Park* by resolution.

### **CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

1. Staff recommends the City Council accept the MOU by resolution.
2. Staff recommends the City Council adopt the name Virginia Canyon Mountain Park by resolution.

# PRELIMINARY TRAIL ALIGNMENT



## LEGEND

- - - Hiker Only Trails
  - No Biking
- Mountain Bike Only Trails
  - No Hiking
- Shared Use Trails - Multi-Directional
  - Hiking and Biking
  - Biking Uphill and Downhill
  - Hiking Uphill and Downhill
- Shared Use Trails
  - Hiking and Biking
  - Biking Uphill Only
- Bighorn Sheep Severe Winter Habitat Range
- Overlook
- Mountain Peak
- Potential Access Point

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BY AND BETWEEN  
THE CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS  
AND  
ARGO HOLDINGS, LLC  
REGARDING  
JOINT OPPORTUNITY OF RECREATION DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN ARGO MILL  
AND VIRGINIA CANYON OPEN SPACE**

This **AGREEMENT** (the “Agreement”) is entered into effective as of this \_\_\_\_\_, day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018 (“Effective Date”), by and between **CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS AND ARGO HOLDING LLC.**, (The City and Argo Holdings, LLC. may individually be referred to herein as a “Party” or collectively referred to herein as the “Parties”).

**WHEREAS**, Idaho Springs is a city within the State of Colorado; and

**WHEREAS**, Argo Holdings, LLC. is a licensed business within the State of Colorado and property owner within the City of Idaho Springs; and

**WHEREAS**, The Parties, have jointly determined that both Virginia Canyon Open Space and the Argo Mill expansion may stand alone, joint opportunities to share access and accommodate improvements may be mutually beneficial; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the mutual interest of The Parties to establish a protocol to review and coordinate with one another to optimize joint opportunity including; structures access, parking, joint sharing of property through legal agreement, and potentially shared economic funding. Consideration resulting in mutual benefit regarding these opportunities may also be considered.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements set forth herein the adequacy of which is hereby acknowledged by the Parties to be sufficient, the Parties agree as follows:

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**1.** The City of Idaho Springs and Argo Holdings, LLC. is committed to designing recreational infrastructure on city property (known as Virginia Canyon Open Space) and on property owned by Argo Holdings, LLC. at and adjacent to the Argo Mill site.

**2. The Parties’ Interests by Entity Include The Following:**

**City**

Build bike and hiking trail system on city property which currently has a single access point located at the city boundary. The city will work with Argo Holdings, LLC. to provide an

additional access via easement along Rosa Gulch (Argo LLC. property) to terminate out or near Riverside Drive.

**Argo Holdings, LLC**

Build a gondola approximately 1 mile long across city property; in part connecting from the Argo Mill site to a landing point at or near Santa Fe Mine Road. The landing point may be entirely on city property. The Argo, LLC. would be responsible for easements outside city property and not included within Argo property.

It is the interest that either use, gondola or bike/trail system, can be constructed and operated independently. However, joint benefits or integration of the two opportunities is desirable. Other uses such as restaurant and adventure opportunities are contemplated.

**3.** The planning and design work will be performed in a conclusive manner and will consider elements such as but not limited to:

- Alignments and profiles which dictates the operation of facilitates and construed by design criteria or industry “best practices”
- Location and proximity of trail paths with gondola towers utilized to support the gondolas
- View sheds from and to the gondola
- Enhancements and infrastructure which would be mutually beneficial

**4.** It is further understood that if any additional access points are identified and ultimately acquired across private property to the landing area location, both parties will have use rights to and through this access point

**5.** By signing this document, both parties agree to work towards mutually beneficial use of their properties to accommodate multiple recreational facilities, which would ultimately be governed by legal easement which would specifically define terms of use and rights based on the planning and design outlined in this agreement

**6. No Third-Party Beneficiaries**

This Agreement does not, and is not intended to, confer any rights or remedies upon any person or entity other than the Parties. Enforcement of this Agreement and all rights and



obligations hereunder are reserved solely to the Parties. Any services or benefits which third parties receive as a result of this Agreement are incidental to the Agreement, and do not create any rights for such third parties.

**7. Miscellaneous**

A. Notices. Any notices or other communications required or permitted by this Agreement or by law to be served on, given to, or delivered to either Party hereto, by the other Party shall be in writing and shall be deemed duly served, given or delivered when personally delivered to the party to whom it is addressed or in lieu of such personal services, when received:

City of Idaho Springs:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Argo Holdings, LLC:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Either Party may change its address for the purpose of this Section by giving written notice of such change to the other party in the manner provided in this Section.

B. Controlling Law and Venue. The Parties agree that exclusive jurisdiction and venue for the resolution of any dispute relating to this Agreement or any Services to be provided hereunder shall lie in the Jefferson County district courts.

C. No Waiver. No waiver of any of the provisions of this Agreement shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of any other of the provisions of this Agreement, nor shall such waiver constitute a continuing waiver unless otherwise expressly provided herein, nor shall the waiver of any default hereunder be deemed a waiver of any subsequent default hereunder.

D. Governmental Immunity. Nothing in this Agreement or in any actions taken by The City or Argo Holdings, LLC. pursuant to this Agreement shall be construed or interpreted as a waiver, express or implied, of any of the immunities, rights, benefits, protections, or other provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, Sections 24-10-101, et seq., Colorado Revised Statute, the Federal Tort Claims Act, 28 U.S.C. Pt. VI, Ch. 171 and 28 U.S.C. 1346(b), or the State’s risk management statutes, Sections 24-30-1501, et seq., C.R.S., as applicable.

E. Entire Agreement. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and sets forth the rights, duties and obligations of each to the other as of this date. Any

prior agreements, promises, negotiations or representations not expressly set forth in this Agreement are of no force and effect.

F. Severability. The invalidity or unenforceability of any portion or previous version of this Agreement shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other portion or provision. Any invalid or unenforceable portion or provision shall be deemed severed from this Agreement, and the balance of this Agreement shall be construed and enforced as if this Agreement did not contain such invalid or unenforceable portion or provisions.

G. Headings. The headings and captions in this Agreement are intended solely for the convenience of reference and shall be given no effect in the construction or interpretation of this Agreement.

H. Counterpart Execution. This Agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, and all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

I. Agreement Modification. The Agreement may not be amended, altered, or otherwise changed except by a written agreement signed by the Parties.

Argo Holdings, LLC

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the Parties, intending to be legally bound, have executed this First Amendment as of the date first written above.

CITY OF IDAHO SPRINGS

---

By:

Its:

Argo Holdings, LLC

ARGO HOLDINGS, LLC.

---

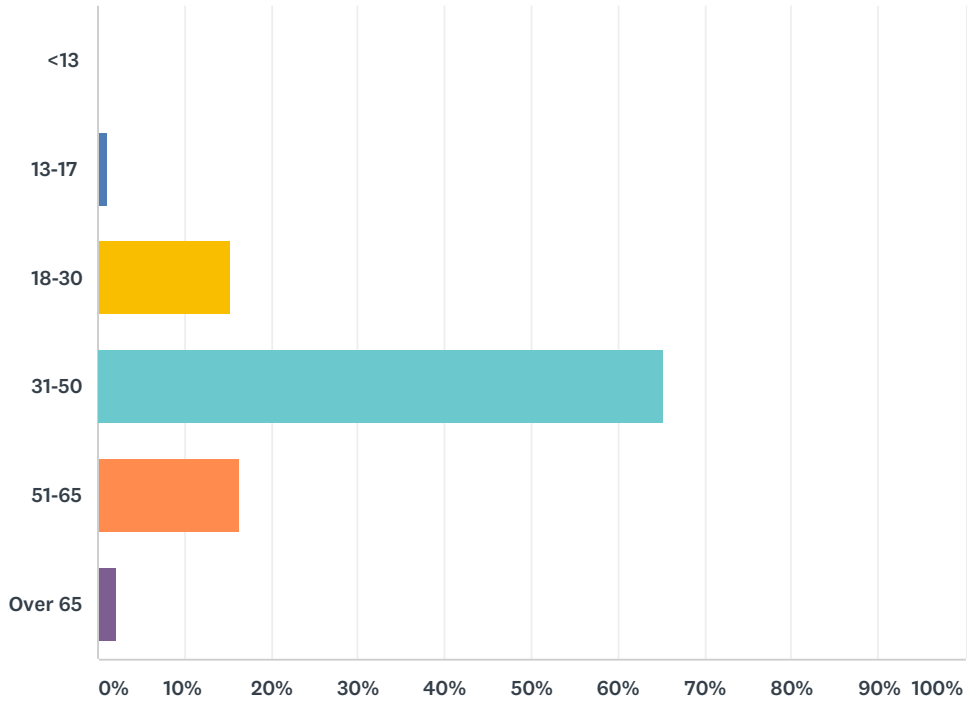
By:

Its: ARGO HOLDINGS, LLC – MANAGING PARTNER

# APPENDIX B

## Q1 Please select your age range

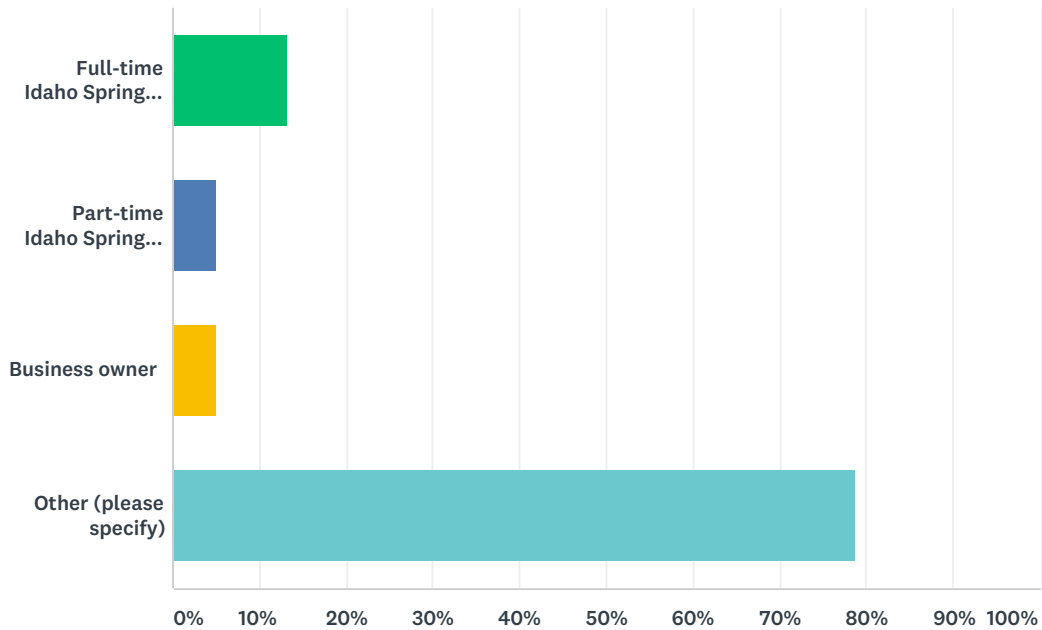
Answered: 190 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
<13	0.00%	0
13-17	1.05%	2
18-30	15.26%	29
31-50	65.26%	124
51-65	16.32%	31
Over 65	2.11%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>190</b>

## Q2 Are you a:

Answered: 182 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Full-time Idaho Springs resident	13.19% 24
Part-time Idaho Springs resident/ Idaho Springs second homeowner	4.95% 9
Business owner	4.95% 9
Other (please specify)	78.57% 143
Total Respondents: 182	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Front range resident	7/13/2018 1:04 PM
2	Recreational Rider/Racer	7/13/2018 11:01 AM
3	Denver resident	7/12/2018 8:19 PM
4	Colorado Resident	7/12/2018 4:42 PM
5	Gilpin Resident	7/12/2018 2:25 PM
6	Jeffco resident; grew up in Clear Creek County	7/12/2018 1:15 PM
7	Live in Arvada	7/12/2018 12:35 PM
8	Frequent visitor to Idaho Springs	7/12/2018 7:17 AM
9	Golden resident	7/11/2018 11:44 PM
10	N/A	7/11/2018 8:40 PM
11	Person that visits Idaho springs to spend money	7/11/2018 6:31 PM
12	Visitor to Idaho Springs	7/11/2018 1:47 PM
13	Visitor biker	7/11/2018 11:42 AM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

14	Full-time Littleton, CO resident	7/11/2018 11:34 AM
15	Visitor and general lover of the area	7/11/2018 11:28 AM
16	Mountain biker	7/11/2018 9:50 AM
17	I frequently visit Idaho Springs	7/11/2018 8:41 AM
18	Colorado Front Range resident	7/11/2018 7:33 AM
19	passionate rider	7/11/2018 6:16 AM
20	Visitor to Idaho Springs	7/11/2018 5:04 AM
21	Live down the road but love to come and play	7/10/2018 11:07 PM
22	Wheat ridge	7/10/2018 9:41 PM
23	Visitor	7/10/2018 9:08 PM
24	Trail user	7/10/2018 5:53 PM
25	visitor	7/10/2018 4:46 PM
26	I recreate in idaho springs frequently	7/10/2018 4:41 PM
27	Foothills dweller and recreator	7/10/2018 3:52 PM
28	Idaho Springs trail user	7/10/2018 3:32 PM
29	Live in golden but would ride there often	7/10/2018 3:18 PM
30	Golden resident, frequent visitor to Idaho Springs to ride!	7/10/2018 1:55 PM
31	Denver resident	7/10/2018 1:10 PM
32	Denver Resident	7/10/2018 1:00 PM
33	Denver resident	7/10/2018 12:34 PM
34	Denver Resident	7/10/2018 12:30 PM
35	Denver Resident	7/10/2018 12:29 PM
36	Trail user	7/10/2018 12:05 PM
37	Fort Collins resident	7/10/2018 11:50 AM
38	Frequent visitor	7/10/2018 11:25 AM
39	Denver resident always in the mtns	7/10/2018 11:20 AM
40	potential visitor	7/10/2018 10:55 AM
41	Golden resident who will use the trail system often	7/10/2018 10:49 AM
42	Long time patron	7/10/2018 10:37 AM
43	Mountain Biker	7/10/2018 10:32 AM
44	Mountain biker from Denver	7/10/2018 9:55 AM
45	Local Outdoor Enthusiast	7/10/2018 9:52 AM
46	Evergreen resident	7/10/2018 9:24 AM
47	mountain biker	7/10/2018 9:22 AM
48	Frequent visitor	7/10/2018 9:21 AM
49	Frequent visitor	7/10/2018 9:08 AM
50	Visitor	7/10/2018 9:00 AM
51	Frequent Visitor	7/10/2018 8:59 AM
52	Live nearby	7/10/2018 8:53 AM
53	Visitor	7/10/2018 8:51 AM
54	I visit the area often.	7/10/2018 8:48 AM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

55	Golden resident	7/10/2018 8:47 AM
56	Frequent visitor	7/10/2018 8:26 AM
57	Colorado resident	7/10/2018 8:11 AM
58	Jefferson county resident	7/10/2018 7:56 AM
59	Morrison resident	7/10/2018 7:53 AM
60	Denver resident	7/10/2018 7:42 AM
61	Colorado resident	7/10/2018 7:39 AM
62	Frequent visitor	7/10/2018 7:36 AM
63	Denver resident	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
64	Conifer local	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
65	Lifelong CO resident	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
66	Front Ranger willing to drive there to recreate and enjoy local food and beer	7/10/2018 7:13 AM
67	Denver resident	7/10/2018 6:24 AM
68	Adams county resident	7/10/2018 4:14 AM
69	Louisville resident	7/9/2018 11:43 PM
70	Visitor from Louisville	7/9/2018 11:38 PM
71	Sales manager bike retail	7/9/2018 11:33 PM
72	Live in Golden, recreate in and around Idaho Springs	7/9/2018 11:23 PM
73	Frequent visitor	7/9/2018 11:13 PM
74	Colorado resident	7/9/2018 11:09 PM
75	Frequently visit ID Springs	7/9/2018 11:05 PM
76	Tourist	7/9/2018 10:08 PM
77	Local Visitor	7/9/2018 10:06 PM
78	Colorado resident that enjoys recreating in the area near Idaho Springs.	7/9/2018 9:36 PM
79	Outdoor enthusiast	7/9/2018 9:34 PM
80	Outdoor enthusiast	7/9/2018 9:33 PM
81	Resident of denver	7/9/2018 9:31 PM
82	Frequent visitor	7/9/2018 9:28 PM
83	Denver resident	7/9/2018 9:25 PM
84	Denver resident	7/9/2018 9:10 PM
85	Clear creek resident	7/9/2018 9:05 PM
86	Live in lakewood, visit IS regularly since 2009	7/9/2018 8:57 PM
87	Frequent visitor	7/9/2018 8:53 PM
88	Denver resident	7/9/2018 8:51 PM
89	Denver resident	7/9/2018 8:47 PM
90	Jeffco resident	7/9/2018 8:40 PM
91	Long time Idaho Springs & clear creek county trail user	7/9/2018 8:36 PM
92	Lived in IS for 7 years. Just moved this past fall	7/9/2018 8:34 PM
93	Regular visitor	7/9/2018 8:33 PM
94	Trail user from denver	7/9/2018 8:32 PM
95	Interested recreation enthusiast	7/9/2018 8:28 PM



## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

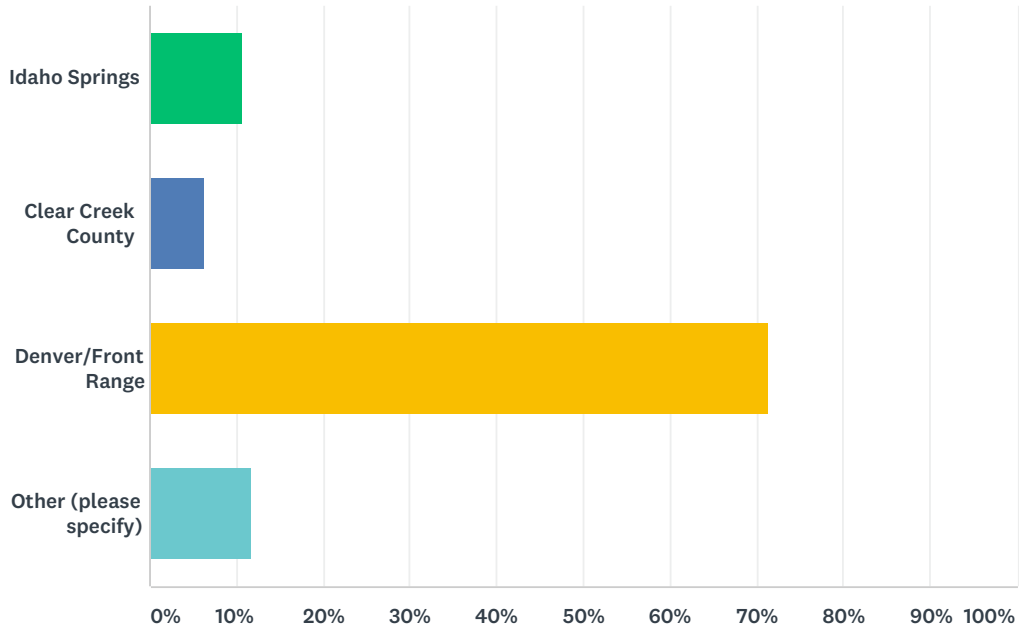
96	Front range resident outdoorsman	7/9/2018 8:27 PM
97	Visitor	7/9/2018 8:25 PM
98	Front Range Resident	7/9/2018 8:23 PM
99	Denver Resident, frequent visitor to Idaho Springs	7/9/2018 8:15 PM
100	Virginia Canyon rider	7/9/2018 8:07 PM
101	colorado native	7/9/2018 8:04 PM
102	Golden resident, Idaho springs trail patron	7/9/2018 8:04 PM
103	Potential trail user (mtb)	7/9/2018 8:01 PM
104	CO resident	7/9/2018 7:56 PM
105	Evergreen	7/9/2018 7:55 PM
106	Not resident	7/9/2018 7:41 PM
107	Golden resident	7/9/2018 7:39 PM
108	Mountain biker	7/9/2018 7:30 PM
109	Tourist from denver	7/9/2018 7:29 PM
110	Denver resident; regular Idaho Springs visitor	7/9/2018 7:20 PM
111	Front range	7/9/2018 7:14 PM
112	Visitor	7/9/2018 7:07 PM
113	Recreationer	7/9/2018 7:04 PM
114	Denver resident	7/9/2018 7:04 PM
115	Area frequenter	7/9/2018 7:02 PM
116	Golden giddyup trail lead	7/9/2018 7:02 PM
117	nearby resident	7/9/2018 6:59 PM
118	Golden resident	7/9/2018 6:58 PM
119	Live in Boulder, recreate on the front range	7/9/2018 6:53 PM
120	Nearby resident in Golden.	7/9/2018 6:51 PM
121	Evergreen resident	7/9/2018 6:51 PM
122	Visitor	7/9/2018 6:50 PM
123	Used to live in Lawson. Now in Denver.	7/9/2018 6:49 PM
124	visitor	7/9/2018 6:47 PM
125	Full-time Denver resident	7/9/2018 6:44 PM
126	Visitor from Denver	7/9/2018 6:43 PM
127	Visitor to Idaho Springs	7/9/2018 6:42 PM
128	Mountain bike advocate	7/9/2018 6:24 PM
129	Frequent visitor. Very frequent.	7/9/2018 5:59 PM
130	I live near idaho springs and visit it very often. It like a second home to me.	7/9/2018 5:52 PM
131	CCHS Graduate (1999), work in Idaho Springs	7/9/2018 8:48 AM
132	Front range trail builder and bike rider.	7/6/2018 12:17 PM
133	Mountain biker	7/5/2018 5:13 PM
134	I visit the area to ride the maintain bike trails	7/5/2018 2:15 PM
135	Regular visitor for recreation	7/5/2018 1:17 PM
136	County resident	7/2/2018 11:01 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

137	I work in Idaho Springs and am planning on moving here.	6/29/2018 8:40 AM
138	Clear Creek County Resident	6/28/2018 12:48 PM
139	work and recreate in Clear Creek County	6/28/2018 11:29 AM
140	Dumont Resident—Work in Idaho Springs	6/27/2018 10:07 PM
141	Frequent visitor	6/27/2018 2:28 PM
142	Full time resident, outside of Idaho Springs	6/27/2018 2:11 PM
143	Front Range Area Resident	6/27/2018 1:57 PM

### Q3 Where is your primary residence located?

Answered: 189 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Idaho Springs	10.58% 20
Clear Creek County	6.35% 12
Denver/Front Range	71.43% 135
Other (please specify)	11.64% 22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189</b>

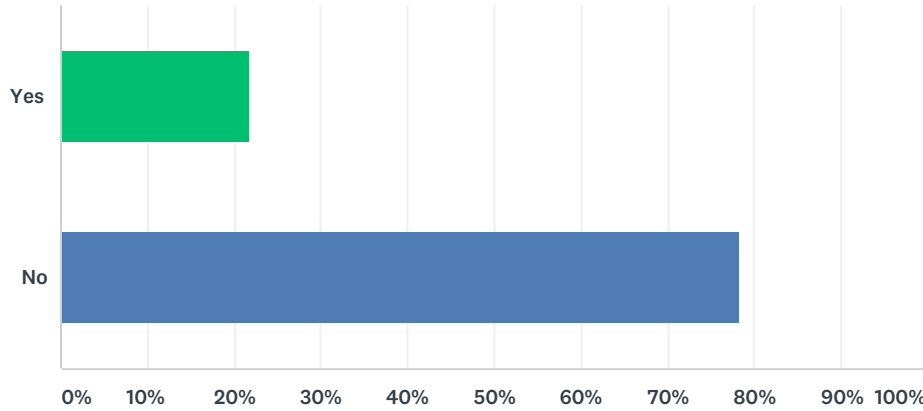
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Gilpin County	7/12/2018 2:25 PM
2	Wyoming	7/11/2018 11:28 AM
3	Monument	7/10/2018 11:07 PM
4	Golden, CO	7/10/2018 5:53 PM
5	Idledale	7/10/2018 3:52 PM
6	Arvada	7/10/2018 12:05 PM
7	Jeffco/Genesee	7/10/2018 9:00 AM
8	Evergreen	7/10/2018 8:53 AM
9	Jeffco/Genesee	7/10/2018 8:48 AM
10	Conifer	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
11	Eagle County	7/9/2018 8:53 PM
12	Lakewood	7/9/2018 8:40 PM
13	Eagle County	7/9/2018 8:34 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

14	Gilpin county	7/9/2018 7:02 PM
15	Golden	7/9/2018 7:02 PM
16	Golden	7/9/2018 6:59 PM
17	Evergreen	7/9/2018 5:59 PM
18	Douglas County	6/28/2018 9:15 PM
19	Central City	6/28/2018 11:29 AM
20	Texas	6/27/2018 8:10 PM
21	Full time county resident	6/27/2018 2:03 PM
22	Saint Marys	6/27/2018 12:18 PM

### Q4 Do you have children or grandchildren at home and that visit Virginia Canyon Open Space?

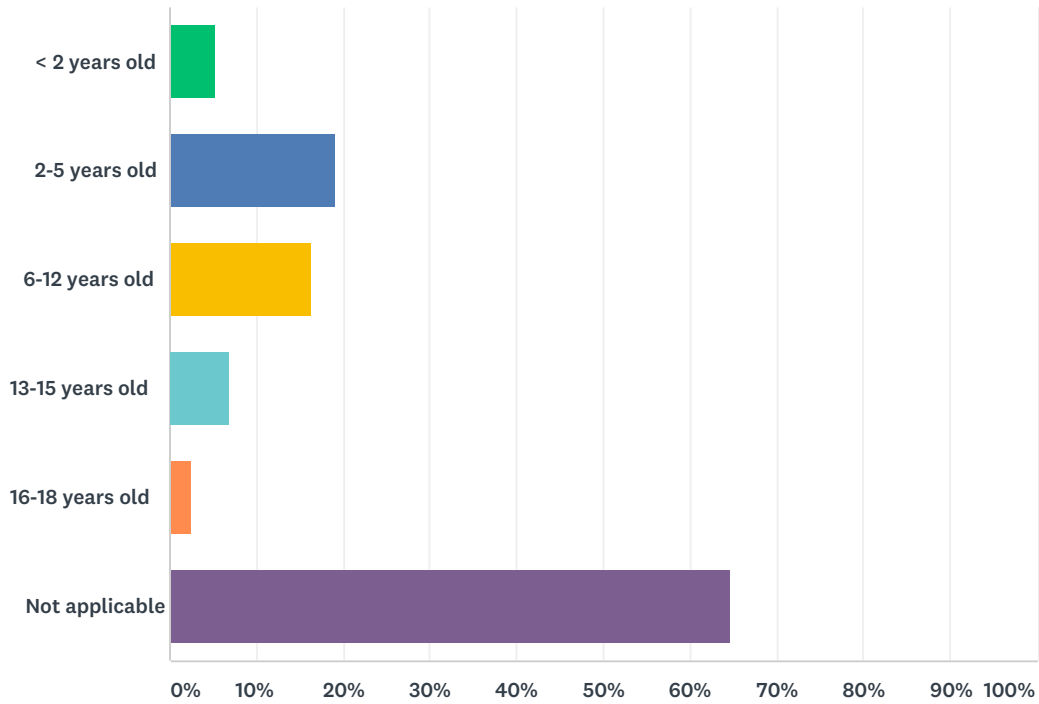
Answered: 189 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	21.69%	41
No	78.31%	148
TOTAL		189

**Q5 If you answered yes to question #4, please identify the age group of your children or grandchildren: Please select all that apply**

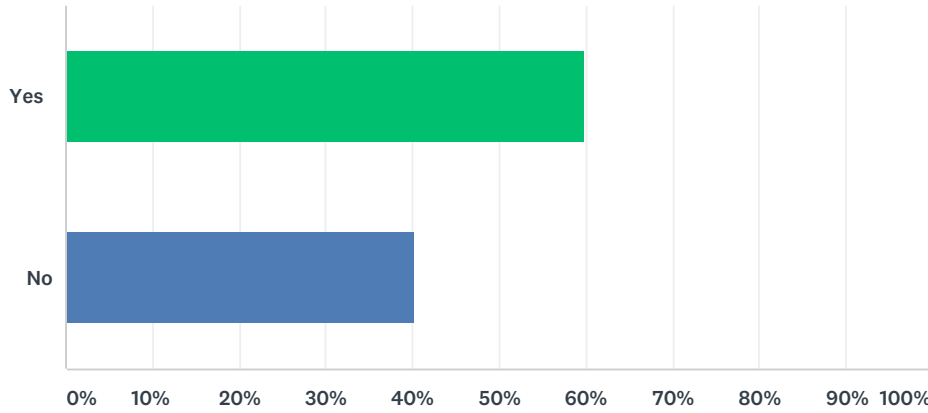
Answered: 116 Skipped: 74



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
< 2 years old	5.17%	6
2-5 years old	18.97%	22
6-12 years old	16.38%	19
13-15 years old	6.90%	8
16-18 years old	2.59%	3
Not applicable	64.66%	75
Total Respondents: 116		

## Q6 Do you use Virginia Canyon Open Space?

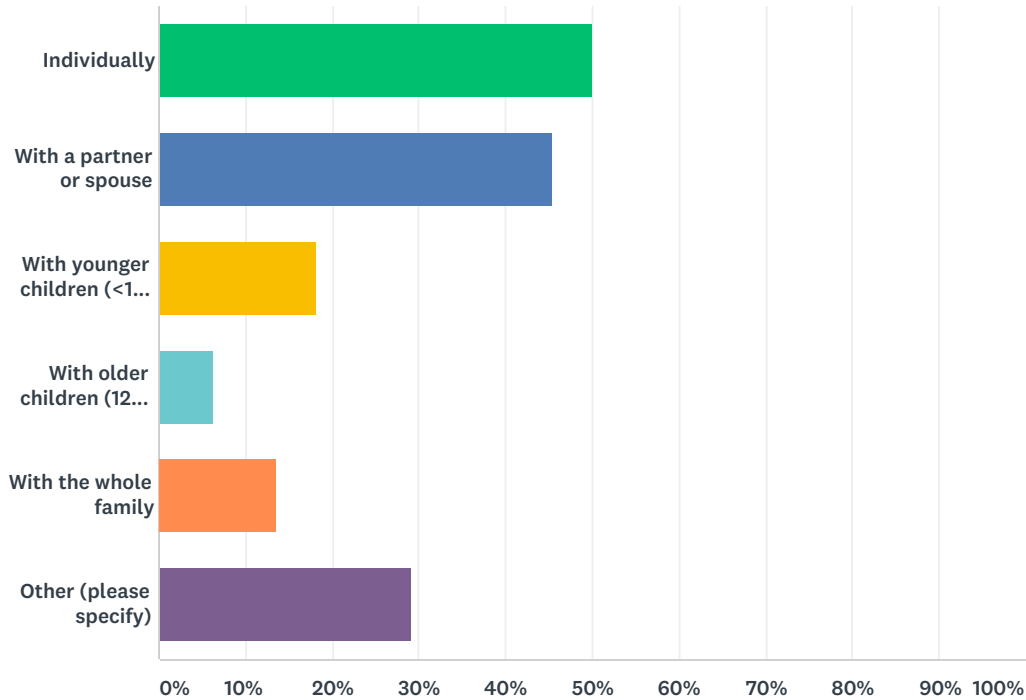
Answered: 179 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	59.78%	107
No	40.22%	72
TOTAL		179

**Q7 If you answered "Yes" to questions #6, please tell us with whom you visit Virginia Canyon Open Space or other public lands and trails in or around Idaho Springs: Please select all that apply**

Answered: 110 Skipped: 80



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Individually	50.00%	55
With a partner or spouse	45.45%	50
With younger children (<12 years of age)	18.18%	20
With older children (12-18 years of age)	6.36%	7
With the whole family	13.64%	15
Other (please specify)	29.09%	32
Total Respondents: 110		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	With friends	7/12/2018 12:40 AM
2	Friends	7/11/2018 11:34 AM
3	friends	7/11/2018 9:36 AM
4	I typically visit with friends.	7/11/2018 8:42 AM
5	Other mountain bikers	7/10/2018 3:32 PM
6	Dad	7/10/2018 3:19 PM
7	Groups of friends who ride bikes	7/10/2018 1:55 PM

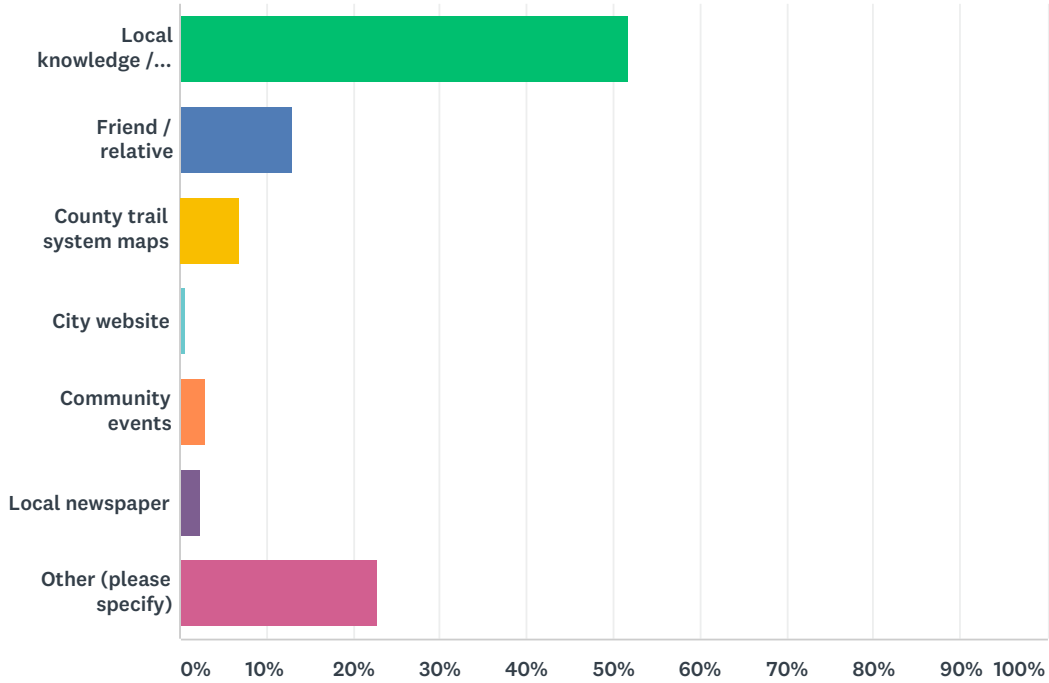


## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

8	With friends	7/10/2018 10:55 AM
9	Other people 20-40 year olds	7/10/2018 10:33 AM
10	Friends	7/10/2018 9:22 AM
11	Friends	7/10/2018 9:09 AM
12	Friends	7/10/2018 8:52 AM
13	Friends	7/10/2018 8:26 AM
14	Riding friends	7/10/2018 7:14 AM
15	Friends / peers that also mountain bike	7/10/2018 6:53 AM
16	with friends	7/9/2018 11:44 PM
17	Friends	7/9/2018 11:25 PM
18	Friends	7/9/2018 10:10 PM
19	W/friends	7/9/2018 8:58 PM
20	Friend	7/9/2018 8:49 PM
21	With friends!	7/9/2018 8:37 PM
22	Riding groups	7/9/2018 8:33 PM
23	Buddies	7/9/2018 8:08 PM
24	Other adults	7/9/2018 8:04 PM
25	Only been downtown for a beer	7/9/2018 7:04 PM
26	Friends	7/9/2018 6:48 PM
27	With friends who live in Clear Creek County	7/9/2018 6:00 PM
28	With friends	7/5/2018 2:15 PM
29	Friends	7/5/2018 1:18 PM
30	with friends	6/28/2018 11:29 AM
31	Dogs	6/27/2018 4:54 PM
32	N/A	6/27/2018 12:17 PM

## Q8 How do you know about Virginia Canyon Open Space?

Answered: 176 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local knowledge / live nearby	51.70%	91
Friend / relative	13.07%	23
County trail system maps	6.82%	12
City website	0.57%	1
Community events	2.84%	5
Local newspaper	2.27%	4
Other (please specify)	22.73%	40
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>176</b>

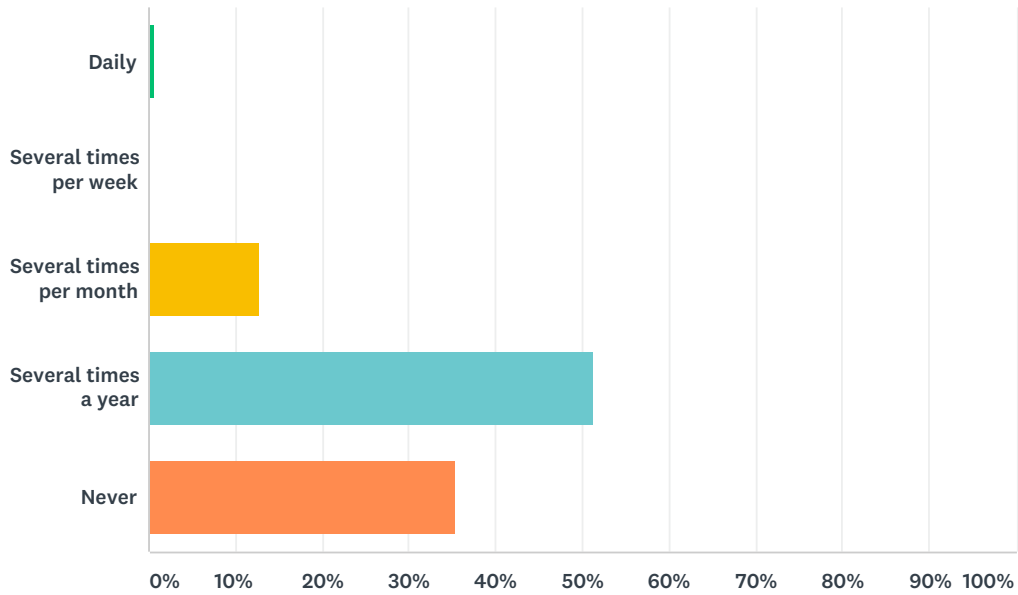
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Trail Update Website/Facebook	7/13/2018 1:04 PM
2	Proposed bike trails	7/12/2018 8:19 PM
3	COMBA	7/12/2018 1:15 PM
4	COMBA	7/12/2018 12:35 PM
5	Bike community	7/12/2018 12:40 AM
6	COMBA	7/11/2018 11:45 PM
7	Social media	7/11/2018 8:40 PM
8	303 train monitor Facebook group	7/11/2018 6:31 PM
9	COMBA	7/11/2018 1:47 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

10	COMBA	7/11/2018 9:51 AM
11	learned of it on the interwebz	7/11/2018 9:36 AM
12	Facebook group	7/11/2018 7:33 AM
13	COMBA	7/11/2018 5:04 AM
14	303 trail monitor	7/10/2018 9:08 PM
15	Front range mountain bike groups	7/10/2018 1:03 PM
16	FAcebook	7/10/2018 12:34 PM
17	COMBA	7/10/2018 11:50 AM
18	Facebook ad about this survey	7/10/2018 11:20 AM
19	Facebook group	7/10/2018 9:55 AM
20	COMBA	7/10/2018 9:22 AM
21	Facebook mtb trail group	7/10/2018 7:24 AM
22	COMBA	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
23	COMBA	7/10/2018 4:15 AM
24	Story about new trail system proposal	7/9/2018 11:38 PM
25	Social media	7/9/2018 10:10 PM
26	Social Media	7/9/2018 9:40 PM
27	Facebook post	7/9/2018 9:32 PM
28	Facebook	7/9/2018 9:26 PM
29	Facebook	7/9/2018 9:10 PM
30	Facebook	7/9/2018 8:51 PM
31	FB	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
32	Golden Giddy Up / Jeffco Open Space	7/9/2018 8:05 PM
33	Internet	7/9/2018 7:42 PM
34	mountain bike community	7/9/2018 7:21 PM
35	Comba	7/9/2018 7:04 PM
36	Social media	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
37	COMBA	7/9/2018 6:45 PM
38	Colorado Mountain Bike Association	7/9/2018 6:43 PM
39	I'm an advocate working on new trail systems	7/9/2018 6:25 PM
40	Have been involved in Open Space Planning	6/27/2018 1:57 PM

### Q9 How often do you visit Virginia Canyon Open Space? Please select one

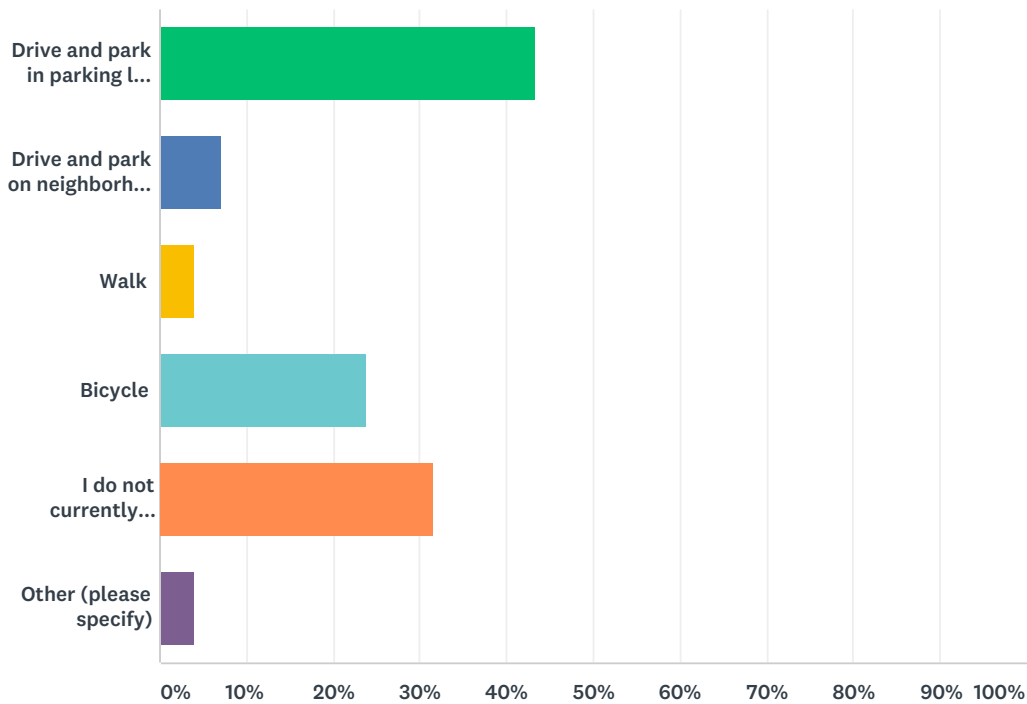
Answered: 158 Skipped: 32



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Daily	0.63%	1
Several times per week	0.00%	0
Several times per month	12.66%	20
Several times a year	51.27%	81
Never	35.44%	56
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>158</b>

## Q10 How do you typically access Virginia Canyon Open Space? Please select all that apply

Answered: 155 Skipped: 35

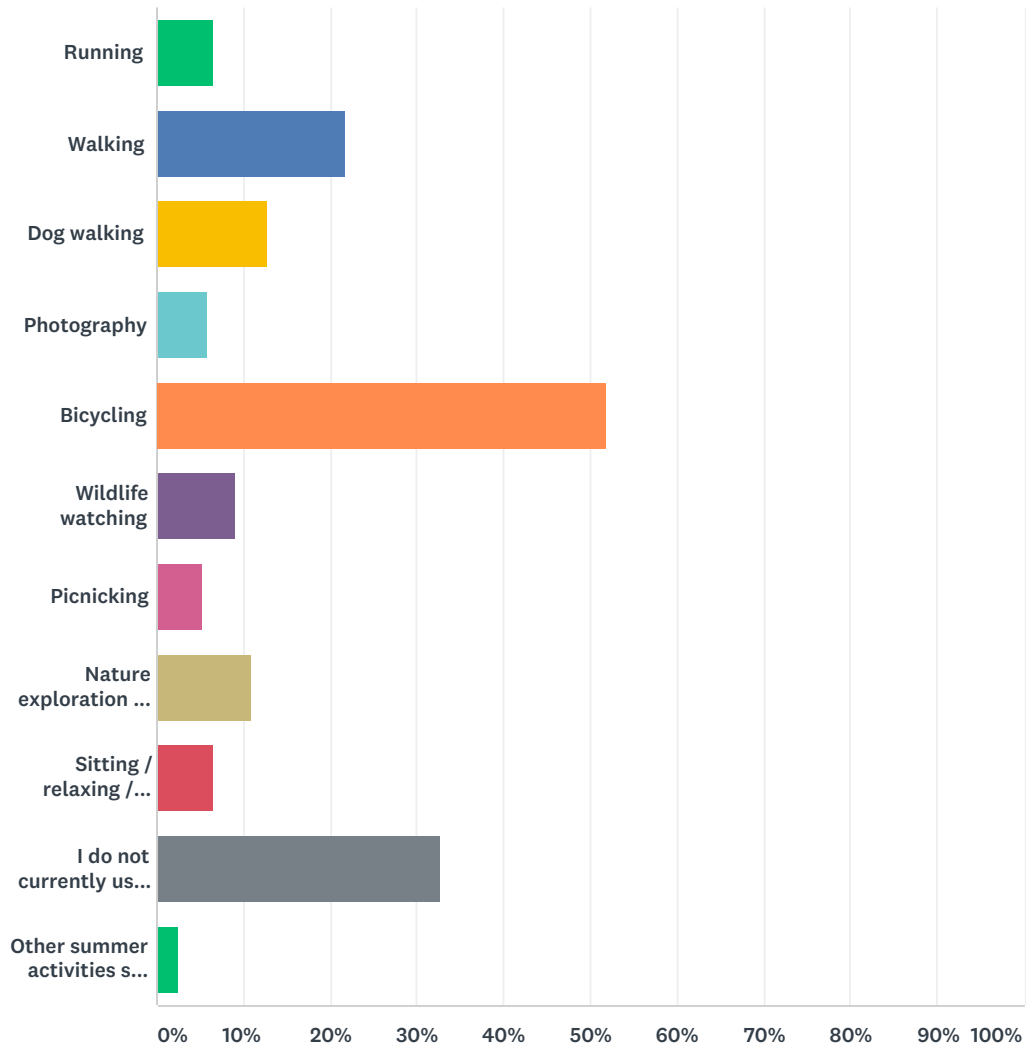


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Drive and park in parking lots / designated trailheads	43.23% 67
Drive and park on neighborhood streets	7.10% 11
Walk	3.87% 6
Bicycle	23.87% 37
I do not currently access VCOS	31.61% 49
Other (please specify)	3.87% 6
Total Respondents: 155	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I currently have not visited in a long time, but would gladly do so if there was a well maintained network of mountain bike specific trails	7/11/2018 11:32 AM
2	Mostly mtb up Virginia Canyon in the winter	7/11/2018 9:32 AM
3	I'd intend to park in designated areas	7/10/2018 11:24 AM
4	Drive and park in roadside pull outs	7/9/2018 8:38 PM
5	I do not currently, but woul Park in designated parking at trailhead	7/9/2018 6:46 PM
6	park at top and walk down to IS	6/28/2018 11:30 AM

# Q11 How do you CURRENTLY use Virginia Canyon Open Space? Please select all that apply

Answered: 156 Skipped: 34



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Running	6.41%	10
Walking	21.79%	34
Dog walking	12.82%	20
Photography	5.77%	9
Bicycling	51.92%	81
Wildlife watching	8.97%	14
Picnicking	5.13%	8
Nature exploration and play	10.90%	17
Sitting / relaxing / contemplation	6.41%	10

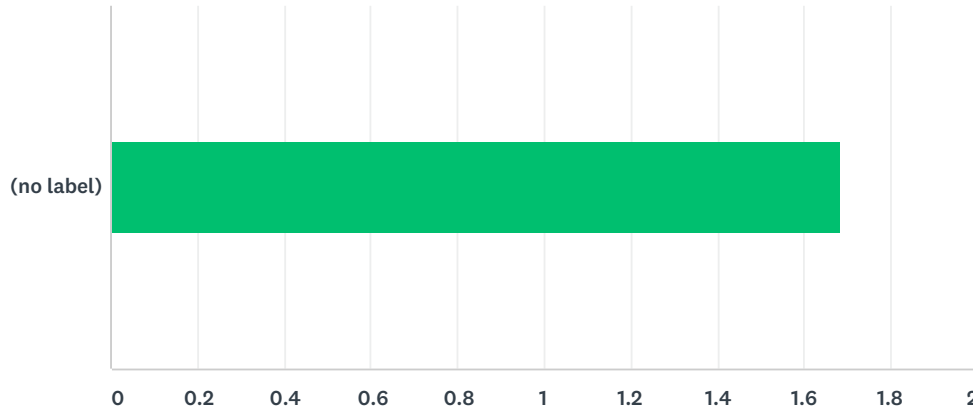
## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

I do not currently use VCOS	32.69%	51
Other summer activities such as (please specify)	2.56%	4
Total Respondents: 156		

#	OTHER SUMMER ACTIVITIES SUCH AS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Motorcycling	7/11/2018 9:32 AM
2	Burro Racing :)	7/9/2018 8:35 PM
3	S	7/9/2018 7:56 PM
4	I would use it for mtn biking	7/9/2018 6:46 PM

## Q12 Access to the Open Space

Answered: 133 Skipped: 57

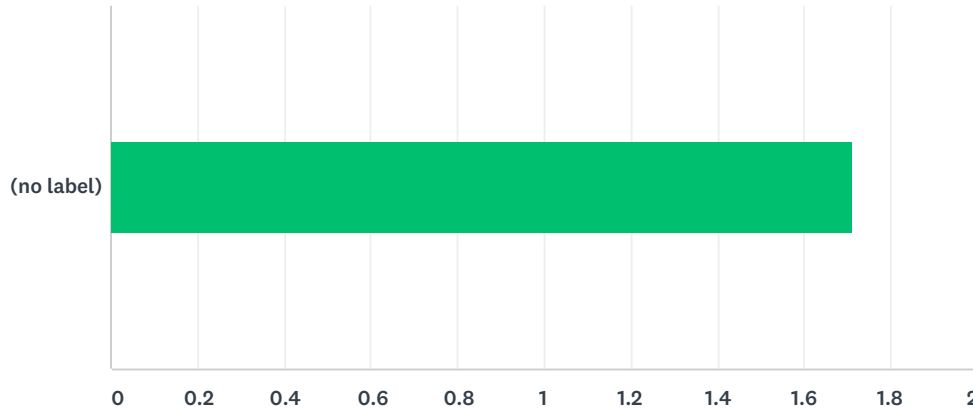


	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	32.33% 43	33.83% 45	8.27% 11	0.00% 0	25.56% 34	133	1.68



## Q13 Parking at or near the Open Space

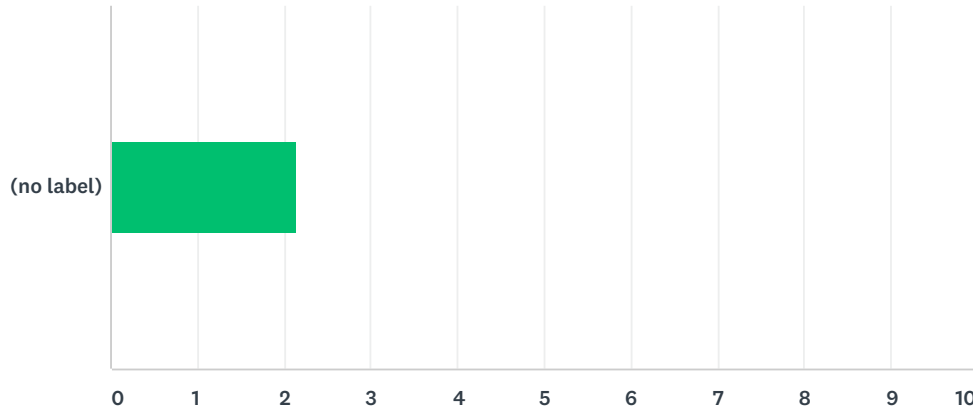
Answered: 133 Skipped: 57



	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	30.08% 40	36.09% 48	8.27% 11	0.00% 0	25.56% 34	133	1.71

### Q14 Picnic areas

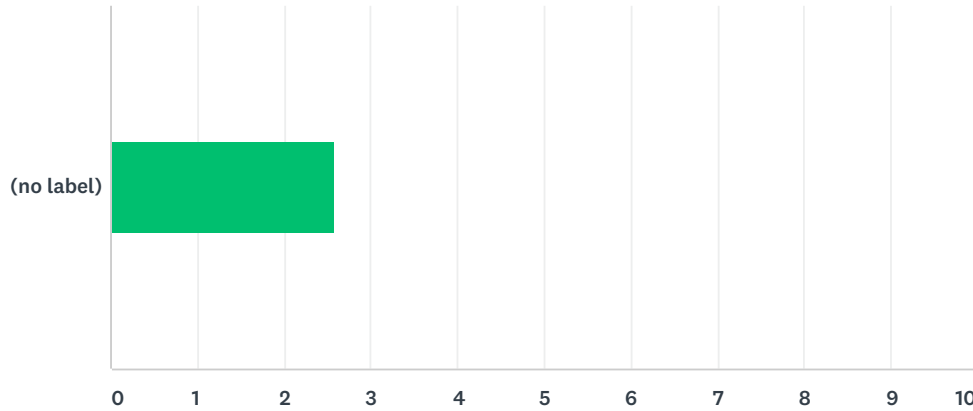
Answered: 131 Skipped: 59



	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	16.03% 21	20.61% 27	22.90% 30	0.76% 1	39.69% 52	131	2.14

## Q15 Desirable Wildlife Sightings

Answered: 133 Skipped: 57



	NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.75%	27.82%	29.32%	3.01%	39.10%	133	2.57
	1	37	39	4	52		

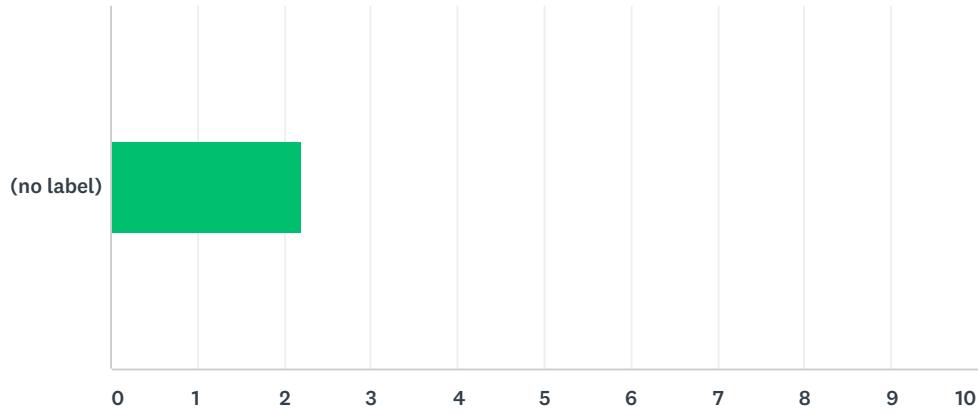
#	PLEASE LIST WHAT YOU CONSIDER AS DESIRABLE WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS	DATE
1	Moose, eagle, fox	7/12/2018 8:23 AM
2	Deer, elk, birds, etc.	7/11/2018 11:37 AM
3	large animals	7/11/2018 9:52 AM
4	Love seeing deer and elk	7/11/2018 9:41 AM
5	Basically seeing anything, in any capacity.	7/11/2018 8:56 AM
6	All wildlife, especially less common or less visible	7/11/2018 7:35 AM
7	Seeing deer, moose, birds, etc	7/10/2018 3:21 PM
8	ALL	7/10/2018 10:57 AM
9	not really	7/10/2018 10:36 AM
10	Any wildlife	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
11	If I see wild life I think it's great but they aren't there for my enjoyment so if I don't thats great too.	7/10/2018 8:50 AM
12	Sweet birds	7/10/2018 8:13 AM
13	Bear, Cats, Goats	7/10/2018 7:16 AM
14	Anything other than deer and squirrels.	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
15	Typically don't see wildlife. Would like to see something other than empty beer cans	7/9/2018 8:39 PM
16	Eagles, Mountain goats, fox, bobcat.	7/9/2018 8:31 PM
17	Bigger than a bird	7/9/2018 8:05 PM
18	No opinion	7/9/2018 7:49 PM
19	Anything	7/9/2018 7:31 PM
20	Deer, hawk, sheep, ground animals	7/9/2018 7:20 PM
21	Seeing a cougar.	7/9/2018 7:17 PM
22	Deer, foxes, birds	7/9/2018 6:47 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

23	Sheep	7/9/2018 6:02 PM
24	deers and stuff	7/9/2018 5:54 PM
25	Seeing the sheep and other animals	6/29/2018 8:41 AM
26	seeing different birds and animals	6/28/2018 11:35 AM
27	Seeing any wildlife!	6/28/2018 10:31 AM
28	Deer, Big Horn Sheep etc	6/28/2018 9:39 AM
29	Mountain goats, birds	6/27/2018 9:54 PM
30	I like the animals.	6/27/2018 4:55 PM
31	Sighting wildlife atypical to urban life (deer, fox,etc.)	6/27/2018 2:30 PM

## Q16 Education opportunities

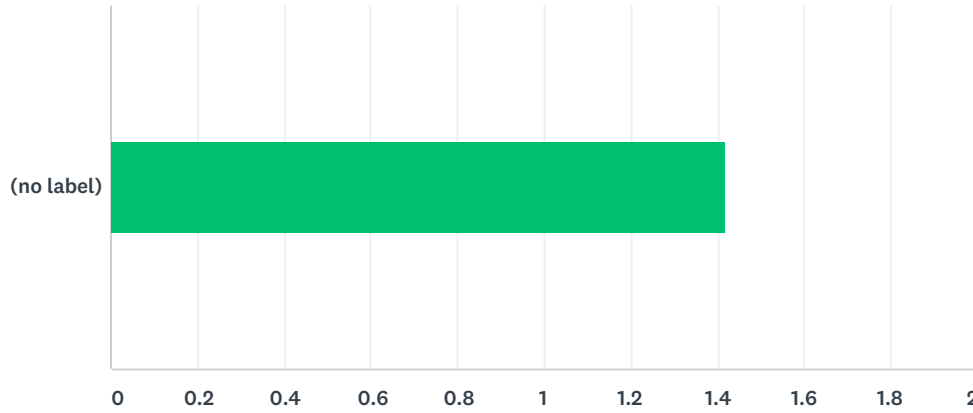
Answered: 133 Skipped: 57



	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	13.53% 18	12.78% 17	21.05% 28	0.75% 1	51.88% 69	133	2.19

## Q17 Trails

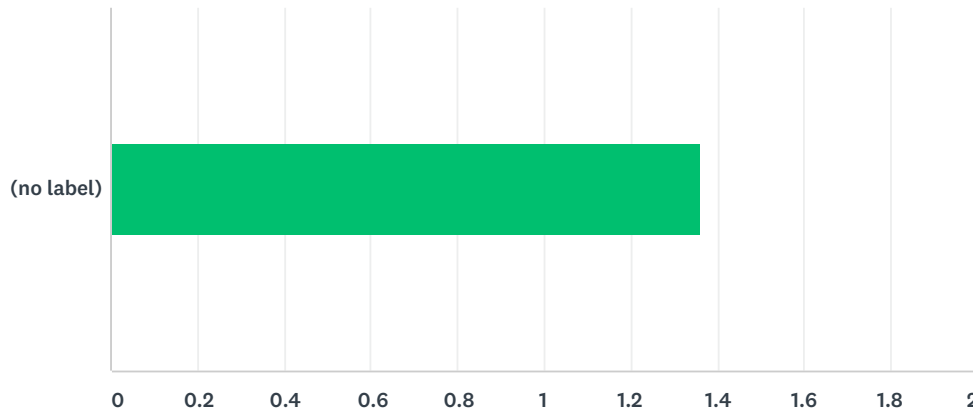
Answered: 135 Skipped: 55



	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	52.59% 71	19.26% 26	4.44% 6	1.48% 2	22.22% 30	135	1.42

## Q18 Trail connectivity to Virginia Canyon Open Space

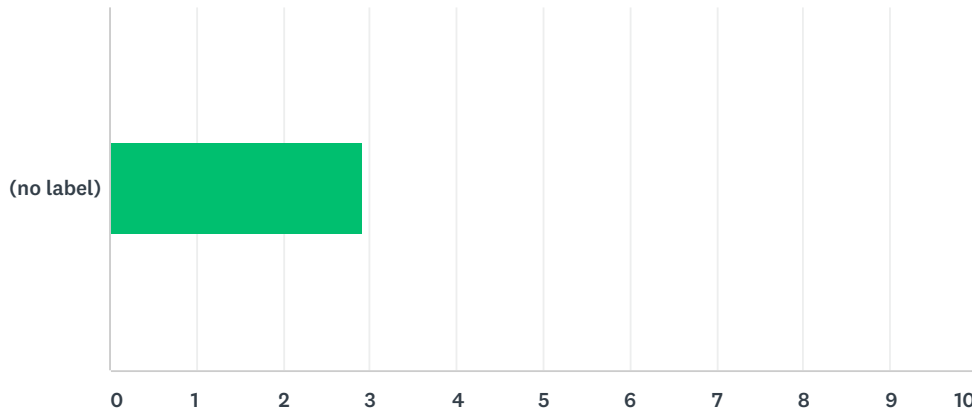
Answered: 133 Skipped: 57



	NOT ENOUGH	SOME, BUT NOT ENOUGH	THE RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO MUCH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	50.38% 67	24.06% 32	1.50% 2	0.00% 0	24.06% 32	133	1.36

### Q19 Trail safety (such as drainage issues, lighting at night, wild animals, etc.)

Answered: 130 Skipped: 60



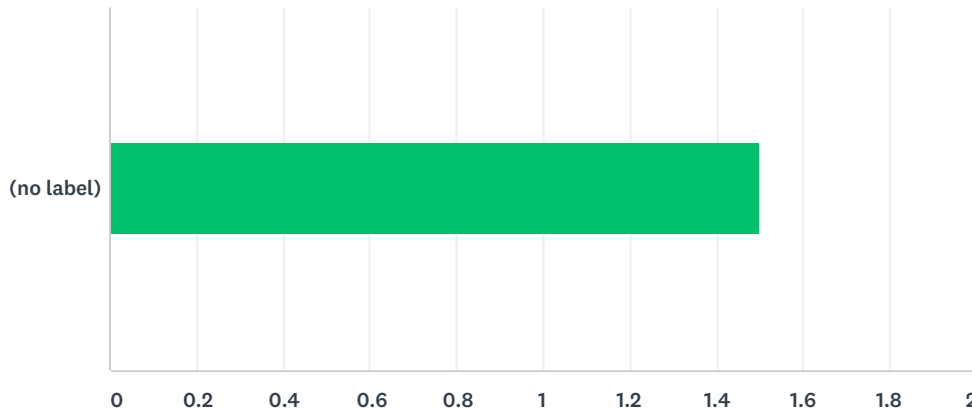
	VERY UNSAFE	SOMEWHAT UNSAFE	SOMEWHAT SAFE	VERY SAFE	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.62% 6	12.31% 16	33.85% 44	15.38% 20	33.85% 44	130	2.91

#	PLEASE LIST ANY TRAIL SAFETY ISSUES YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED IN THE CORRIDOR	DATE
1	The trails could get pretty aggressive. Part of the charm but also not entirely safe.	7/11/2018 8:56 AM
2	Erosion	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
3	Old trails need maintenance	7/10/2018 8:13 AM
4	Downhill bikers going 100mph (bit of an exaggeration) with no regard to other trail users, road users is a safety issue	7/9/2018 8:39 PM
5	Not familiar	7/9/2018 7:45 PM
6	Trails are not marked yet, erosion on some trails, downhill bikers are already using the area and build ramps etc. that are unregulated, this is extreme terrain in many places and trails are not visible or maintained, flash flooding in Gilpin Gulch needs to be addressed,	7/9/2018 7:20 PM
7	Mixing user groups is a safety hazard. Multi direction trails are a safety hazard.	7/9/2018 6:47 PM
8	Aggressively and often poorly built trails with unsafe features and no signage	7/9/2018 6:28 PM
9	Erosion issues	7/5/2018 1:22 PM
10	There are open mine shafts very near many of the trails and it's steep	6/29/2018 8:41 AM
11	Having to access roads and streets to get to the next trail	6/27/2018 1:17 PM



## Q20 Presence of undesirable elements (such as litter, noxious weeds, pet excrement, etc.)

Answered: 129 Skipped: 61

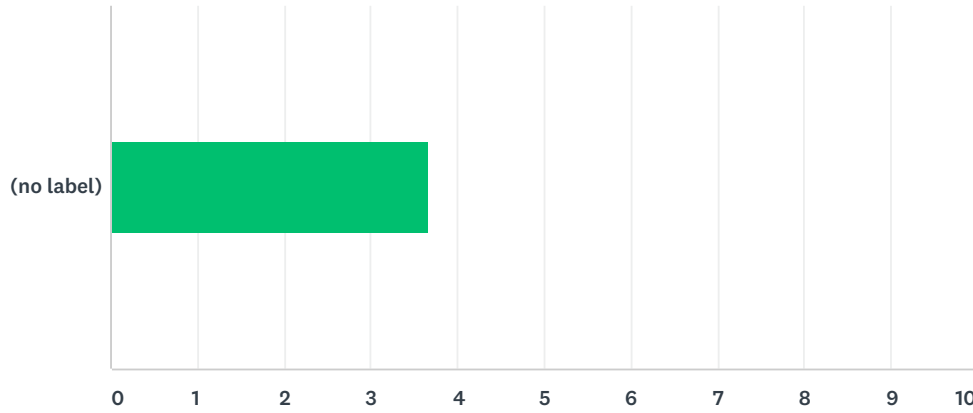


	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	34.11%	29.46%	1.55%	34.88%		
	44	38	2	45	129	1.50

#	PLEASE LIST WHAT YOU CONSIDER AS UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS IN THE CORRIDOR	DATE
1	Litter	7/11/2018 8:56 AM
2	litter, pet excrement	7/10/2018 10:56 AM
3	Pet waste	7/10/2018 7:40 AM
4	Trash, abandoned cars, washing machines, etc	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
5	Lots of trash and beer cans	7/9/2018 8:39 PM
6	Cans, bottles, fire rings, squatters, poop on trails would be bad	7/9/2018 7:20 PM
7	Human waste, dog waste, litter	7/9/2018 7:17 PM
8	Pet waste	7/9/2018 6:55 PM
9	Any signs of Humans	6/29/2018 8:41 AM
10	litter, noxious weeds	6/28/2018 11:35 AM
11	Signs of humans	6/27/2018 4:55 PM
12	Trash and debri from highway, graffiti in some areas	6/27/2018 1:17 PM

## Q21 Overall Ecosystem Health of Virginia Canyon Open Space

Answered: 131 Skipped: 59



	VERY UNHEALTHY	SOMEWHAT UNHEALTHY	HEALTHY	VERY HEALTHY	UNSURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	10.69% 14	47.33% 62	7.63% 10	34.35% 45	131	3.66

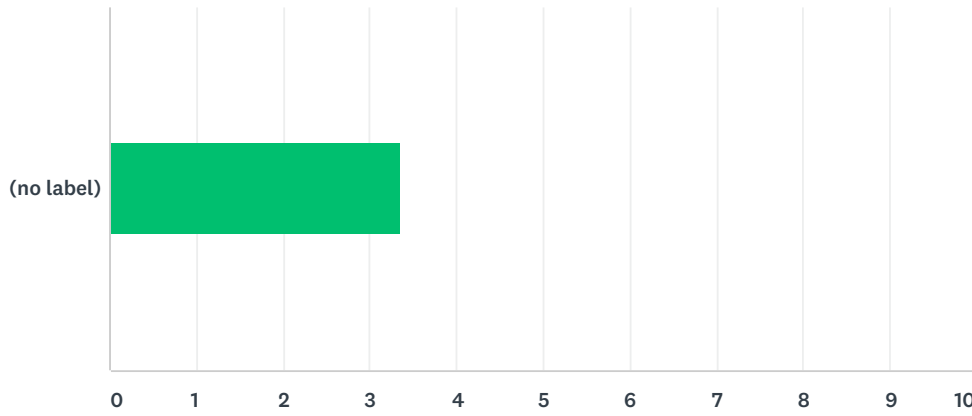
## Q22 If needed, please take the space below to provide any additional input about your current impressions of Virginia Canyon Open Space:

Answered: 22 Skipped: 168

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	more trails for all levels. There are enough green trails around, make Blue and Black trails please.	7/11/2018 5:01 PM
2	existing trails are fun but not really sustainable. Area is in needed of at least 1 quality climbing trail to access the downhill trails to avoid using the road. Trailhead signs and enough parking to handle more than just a small group of shuttle riders will be needed once the area is promoted.	7/11/2018 9:52 AM
3	Would like to see long scenic non technical climbs for good cardio workouts. Doing them now just riding on the road. Its a nice area in the winter as this area stays sunny and mostly snow free. Would like just one long not too rough trail for winter cardio workouts with lots of elevation gain. Not that interested in downhill racing trails but I know others want that so it would be Ok.	7/11/2018 9:41 AM
4	This area has been a staple in the mountain bike community for years. I can say I visit Idaho Springs regularly in the spring, winter, and fall to ride these trails and then have dinner at a local restaurant.	7/10/2018 3:39 PM
5	If there's no mountain biking, I likely will not be stopping	7/10/2018 1:11 PM
6	More downhill trails. Keep and incorporate existing legacy DH trails.	7/10/2018 9:30 AM
7	Nice place to visit!	7/10/2018 9:02 AM
8	Need to be able to understand what is private vs what is open space	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
9	Very nice place to visit.	7/10/2018 8:51 AM
10	More multi use trails	7/9/2018 8:55 PM
11	Happy to see proposed multi use trail plans.	7/9/2018 8:39 PM
12	Looking forward to more mountain biking opportunities!	7/9/2018 7:45 PM
13	Area 28/ Virginia Canyon Open Space needs to be open to all abilities of hikers and mountain bikers. Family friendly trails and disabled access should be a part of it as well. Area 28 Mt. biking should not be only for those cyclist who like extreme downhill terrain(that is who is using it now). Beginner, intermediate, advanced and extreme cycling can all be provided at area 28 if done correctly. I worry that people are already exploring the area( off the road) and may get lost or fall in a mine shaft. Signage about safety should at least go up. I live here and hope this happens!	7/9/2018 7:20 PM
14	Would love to use VCOS if there was more opportunities to mountain bike in the park.	7/9/2018 7:07 PM
15	There is a huge amount of potential within the area, and it would be incredible to have it developed.	7/9/2018 7:03 PM
16	Has great potential with the Area 28 expansion. If the correct type of trails are built i.e. difficult single direction, bike only downhill trails.	7/9/2018 6:47 PM
17	This is an excellent plot of land for a mountain bike and hiking trail system and a great way for Idaho Springs to boost their tourism industry. I believe development of a world class trail system in Idaho Springs would be a good thing for everyone.	7/5/2018 1:22 PM
18	You might show us where you are talking about. My only clue is somewhere up Virginia canyon.	6/28/2018 10:07 AM
19	I don't know where it is or how to get there.	6/27/2018 10:48 PM
20	The trail is ok, we stick to the areas that do not require access to the streets some additional parking would be helpful.	6/27/2018 1:17 PM
21	I don't think it should be developed into anything. Leave it alone for the wildlife so that they don't have people walking and riding bikes through their territory.	6/27/2018 12:20 PM
22	have no idea how to access it or where the trailhead(s) are...	6/27/2018 12:19 PM

### Q23 How important are recreational features such as trails, wildlife viewing areas, shade shelters, benches, etc.?

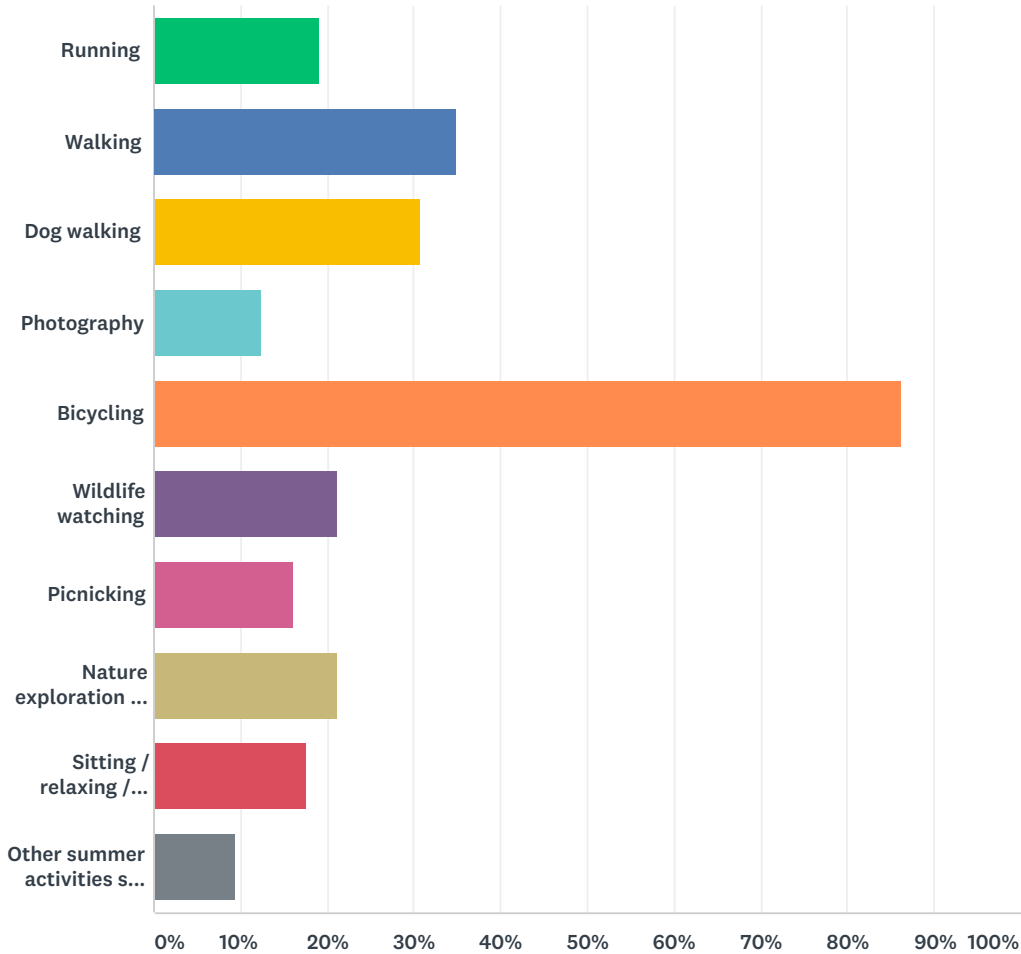
Answered: 133 Skipped: 57



	NOT IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	4.51% 6	15.04% 20	22.56% 30	57.89% 77	133	3.34

## Q24 Which activities WOULD YOU LIKE TO do within Virginia Canyon Open Space? Please select all that apply

Answered: 137 Skipped: 53



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Running	18.98%	26
Walking	35.04%	48
Dog walking	30.66%	42
Photography	12.41%	17
Bicycling	86.13%	118
Wildlife watching	21.17%	29
Picnicking	16.06%	22
Nature exploration and play	21.17%	29
Sitting / relaxing / contemplation	17.52%	24
Other summer activities such as (please specify)	9.49%	13

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

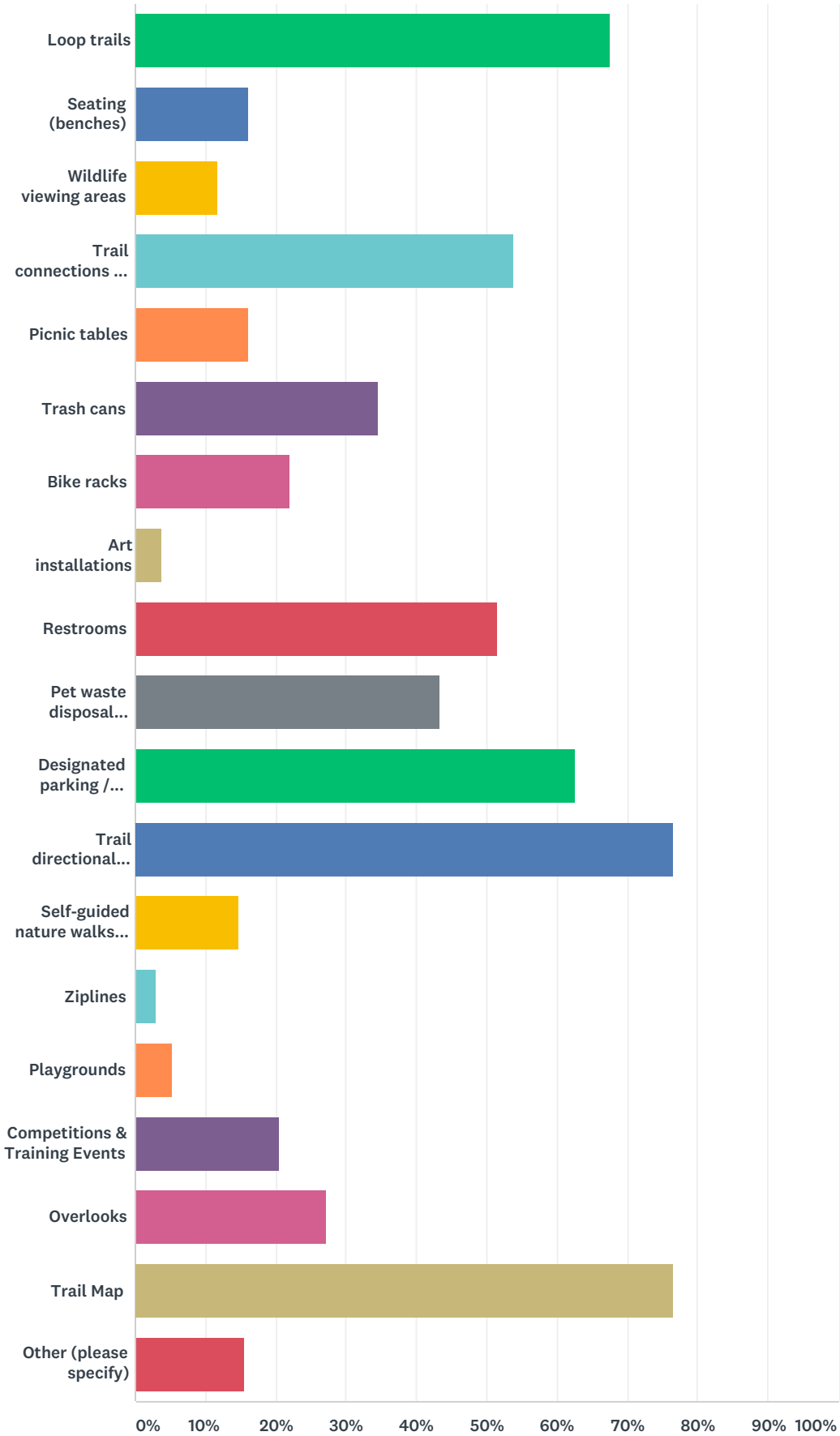
Total Respondents: 137

#	OTHER SUMMER ACTIVITIES SUCH AS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Mountain Biking	7/10/2018 10:40 AM
2	Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing	7/10/2018 9:05 AM
3	Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
4	Mountain biking	7/10/2018 7:29 AM
5	W	7/9/2018 7:58 PM
6	Hiking	7/9/2018 7:54 PM
7	Hiking	7/9/2018 7:44 PM
8	Purpose built mtn trails.	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
9	Disc golf	6/28/2018 9:38 AM
10	I would like snowshoeing	6/27/2018 4:56 PM
11	Hiking	6/27/2018 2:32 PM
12	disc (Frisbee) golf course would be great!	6/27/2018 2:20 PM
13	No activities	6/27/2018 12:21 PM

**Q25 Which of the following features WOULD YOU LIKE TO see incorporated into Virginia Canyon Open Space? Please select all that apply**

Answered: 136 Skipped: 54

# Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES



## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

Loop trails	67.65%	92
Seating (benches)	16.18%	22
Wildlife viewing areas	11.76%	16
Trail connections to neighborhoods and existing trails	53.68%	73
Picnic tables	16.18%	22
Trash cans	34.56%	47
Bike racks	22.06%	30
Art installations	3.68%	5
Restrooms	51.47%	70
Pet waste disposal stations	43.38%	59
Designated parking / Trailheads	62.50%	85
Trail directional signage	76.47%	104
Self-guided nature walks, including interpretive nature and historical signage, online nature guides, etc.	14.71%	20
Ziplines	2.94%	4
Playgrounds	5.15%	7
Competitions & Training Events	20.59%	28
Overlooks	27.21%	37
Trail Map	76.47%	104
Other (please specify)	15.44%	21
Total Respondents: 136		

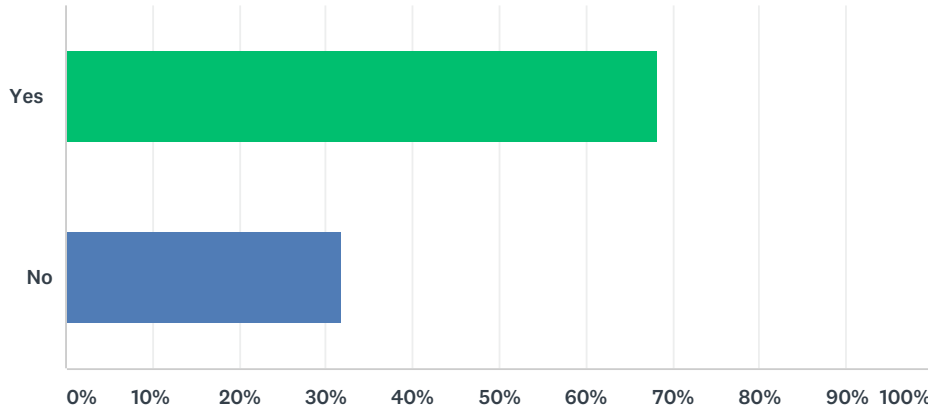
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Biking only trails	7/11/2018 11:47 PM
2	Please add in single direction mountain bike specific trails into the master plan. There should be downhill specific trails with challenging features for experts.	7/11/2018 11:41 AM
3	mountain Bike optimized trails!	7/10/2018 11:56 AM
4	Bike specific trails would be great and reduce user conflicts	7/10/2018 11:28 AM
5	Directional bike trails	7/10/2018 8:15 AM
6	Direction specific trails for bikes	7/10/2018 7:41 AM
7	Directional, bike-only trails	7/10/2018 7:29 AM
8	User specific, directional trails is vital to the overall experience for all user groups	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
9	Mtn bike only trails	7/10/2018 4:18 AM
10	Directional Mtb trails	7/9/2018 11:40 PM
11	MTB only	7/9/2018 9:12 PM
12	Mountain bike specific directional trail and hike specific trails	7/9/2018 9:10 PM
13	Bike only trails	7/9/2018 7:51 PM
14	directional, downhill, mountain bike only trails	7/9/2018 7:26 PM
15	Directional mountain bike trails for varying skill levels	7/9/2018 7:09 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

16	More directional, single-track MTB trails!	7/9/2018 7:08 PM
17	Single direction, mtn bike only , DH trails.	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
18	Directional, designated mountain bike and hiking trail system.	7/5/2018 1:25 PM
19	Recycling stations	6/28/2018 10:33 AM
20	disc golf course	6/27/2018 2:20 PM
21	No activities	6/27/2018 12:21 PM

## Q26 Is it important to attract tourists and travelers to Virginia Canyon Open Space?

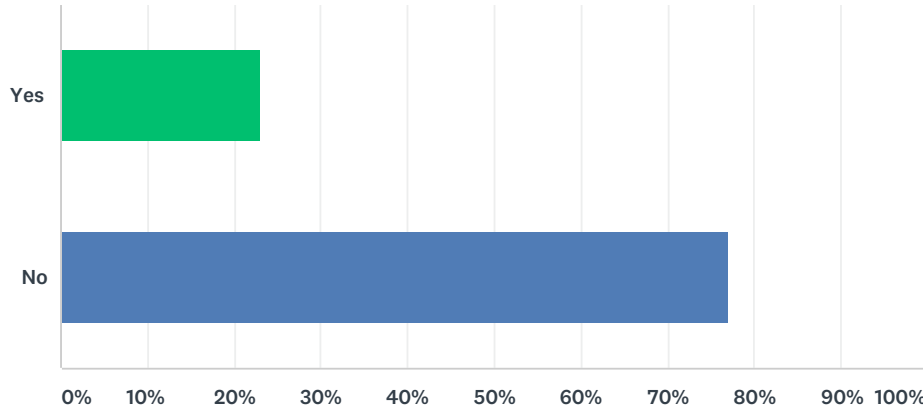
Answered: 135 Skipped: 55



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	68.15%	92
No	31.85%	43
TOTAL		135

**Q27 Have you ever utilized an E-Bike?E-bikes are regular bicycles with a battery-powered “pedal assist.” When you hop on and push the pedals, a small motor engages and gives you a boost, so you can more easily go up hills and cruise over challenging terrain. The motor is governed to stop propelling you further when you hit 20 to 28 mph, the same top speed of a standard bicycle.**

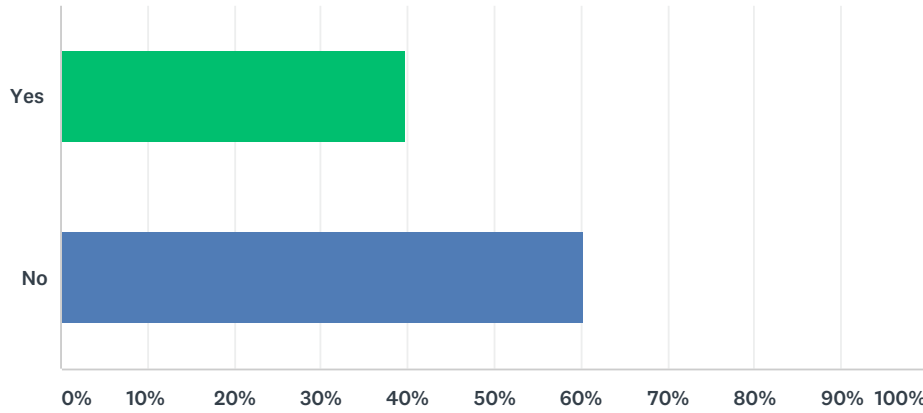
Answered: 135 Skipped: 55



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	22.96% 31
No	77.04% 104
TOTAL	135

## Q28 Should E-Bikes be allowed in Virginia Canyon Open Space?

Answered: 136 Skipped: 54



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	39.71%	54
No	60.29%	82
TOTAL		136

## Q29 What is most important to you about Virginia Canyon Open Space?

Answered: 87 Skipped: 103

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Access	7/13/2018 11:03 AM
2	directional mountain bike trails	7/12/2018 4:45 PM
3	I would like to see directional and designated use trails. I think it's important to have bike only trails and I would be ok with hiker only trails	7/12/2018 12:49 PM
4	Building a world class mountain bike focused trail network	7/12/2018 7:22 AM
5	Downhill bike access	7/12/2018 12:44 AM
6	Keep it rugged, do not try to make it something it is not. Virginia Canyon is at its finest when the trails reflect of the landscape	7/11/2018 5:04 PM
7	Catering to mountain bikes and hikers separately. creating trail systems that separate the mountain bikers from the hikers. Building directional mountain bike trails.	7/11/2018 4:41 PM
8	Hiker/biker friendly trails, either combined or separated. Clearly marked trails. Ideally, trail maps at trail junctions. Sufficient parking to avoid road side congestion.	7/11/2018 1:51 PM
9	Building an intricate network of mountain bike specific trails in VCOS will provide recreational and economic opportunity for the residents of Idaho Springs. Mountain bikers currently drive through IS in the summer to access the trails in Grandby and Winter Park. If a well designed and challenging mountain bike park existed in IS, many of those bikers would stop and then spend their money in IS instead of Winter Park.	7/11/2018 11:41 AM
10	More mountain bike trails.	7/11/2018 11:40 AM
11	unique downhill specific (steep) trails that aren't found anywhere else nearby.	7/11/2018 9:54 AM
12	building excellent flow trails for MTB	7/11/2018 6:20 AM
13	Directional trails and user specific trails where appropriate.	7/10/2018 9:43 PM
14	Directional downhill bike only trails	7/10/2018 9:12 PM
15	The mountain bike trails	7/10/2018 5:57 PM
16	It would be great if this space could continue to be used as a mountain bike oasis. This area has challenging terrain that cannot be found elsewhere in the state. This area also tends to remain dry for most of the year, so it is incredibly popular in the spring, winter, and fall.	7/10/2018 3:46 PM
17	An accessible place to go and escape the crowds of the front range	7/10/2018 3:23 PM
18	Bike optimized trails including directional bike only trails. These are safer for kids and cyclists and everyone!	7/10/2018 2:26 PM
19	Challenging bike-only directional trails and the preservation of existing downhill trails in the area that are formative for expert riders in the front range.	7/10/2018 1:58 PM
20	Sustainable mountain bike trail networks	7/10/2018 1:05 PM
21	mountain Bike Optimized Trails. I would definitely spend more time and money in idaho springs if there were awesome mountain biking loops close to town!	7/10/2018 11:56 AM
22	A place to bike would be great! If dogs are welcome, off leash is great, but the need for trash cans for poop outweighs the off leash request.	7/10/2018 11:33 AM
23	Interface of history and natural environment	7/10/2018 11:31 AM
24	Increasing tourism dollars within the city and decreasing pressure on JCOS parks.	7/10/2018 10:58 AM
25	Good, well built, and challenging mountain bike trails.	7/10/2018 10:58 AM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

26	Directional trails, daily restrictions on types of traffic. Like Centennial Cone, one day for bikers and one day for hikers/runners. The Apex model sucks because hikers and trail runners still get upset when bikes come down Enchanted Forest.	7/10/2018 10:40 AM
27	E bikes should only be allowed for old or handicapped people. Keeping the legacy downhill trails alive and challenging.	7/10/2018 9:32 AM
28	Bike specific trails. Directional trails.	7/10/2018 9:26 AM
29	Multiuse access for mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians.	7/10/2018 9:05 AM
30	Bike terrain, views	7/10/2018 9:00 AM
31	Access and safety	7/10/2018 8:58 AM
32	Multiuse access for mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians.	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
33	Making it multi use safely. Biking is going to get very popular as ebikes take off. Directional trails and bike only trails are a necessity!	7/10/2018 8:15 AM
34	The opportunity to have directional, bike-only trail options us HUGE.	7/10/2018 7:59 AM
35	Access via trails.	7/10/2018 7:45 AM
36	Making it a model for recreation areas in the front range. This is an opportunity to optimize an area for ALL user groups, including families, hikers, wildlife viewers, and mountain bikers by creating trails that are user specific and in the case of bikes, directional.	7/10/2018 7:29 AM
37	Directional and user specific trails (i.e. downhill/uphill only, bike/hike only)	7/10/2018 7:26 AM
38	This is a great opportunity for Idaho Springs to capture something that Jeffco can not, or will not. User specific, directional trails. This is being developed in trail systems all over the country with great success; Safety first, experience 2nd. With the # of users on our trails in CO and the very close proximity to the Front Range, Idaho Springs local economy would hit a home run with a solid, well thought out trail system. To be able to bring separation between user groups for the safety and enjoyment of all would be a huge boost and bring a lot of visitors to the area.	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
39	The mountain bike trails.	7/10/2018 6:59 AM
40	Directional, bike only trails	7/10/2018 4:18 AM
41	Opening a new network of cycling trails.	7/9/2018 11:41 PM
42	To keep it safe for all users	7/9/2018 11:40 PM
43	Mountain bike only trails	7/9/2018 11:12 PM
44	Bike trails	7/9/2018 11:08 PM
45	Equal access for all users. If there is a hike only trail, there should also be equestrian only and bicycle only trails. Or if there are certain days off the week that bikes aren't allowed, there should be certain days off the week that hikers and horses aren't allowed. Directionality is helpful as well.	7/9/2018 9:40 PM
46	Multi use trails Trails designed with purpose that are good for all users	7/9/2018 8:58 PM
47	Having bike trails	7/9/2018 8:52 PM
48	That it remains an open and free place to recreate. That the trails currently in Virginia Canyon are not affected.	7/9/2018 8:44 PM
49	That is done correctly and can be managed and maintained.	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
50	Minimizing impact on the current neighborhood. Providing parking lots for the anticipated overflow of people who won't crowd the neighbors. Being a great neighbor whether we're hikers, bikers, walkers or birders.	7/9/2018 8:35 PM
51	Mountain Bike Trails	7/9/2018 8:25 PM
52	I believe VCO can be a model for directional and user specific trails/trail system. As Colorado increases population, directional and user specific trail system will go a long way to reduce user conflicts and tension. Multi-use trails are a plenty. Have user specific and directional trails such as bike only (alternation directions perhaps?) are much needed.	7/9/2018 8:23 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

53	The trails that many people have put their time into over several years and that they aren't sanitized or made easier. It would be cool to add trails that are easier without changing the current trails.	7/9/2018 8:13 PM
54	a variety of trails, some that are specific to trail users only (i.e. hikers/runners only, bikers only, DH biker only) but also multi-use.	7/9/2018 8:10 PM
55	Mtb specific trails	7/9/2018 8:04 PM
56	Getting people outside.	7/9/2018 7:58 PM
57	Mountain biking and maintenance.	7/9/2018 7:54 PM
58	Great mountain biking	7/9/2018 7:51 PM
59	The quality of trails and the ease of access to those trails	7/9/2018 7:49 PM
60	Mountain bike trails	7/9/2018 7:44 PM
61	I would like to see Virginia Canyon become the gold standard for Front Range mountain biking. This must include trails that are mountain bike only and downhill directional only. I'm fine with multi-use for uphill bike trails but downhill bike trails should be bike only. Trails should incorporate both man-made features (jumps, berms, etc) as well as natural/technical obstacles. Trails should be built with a specific difficulty level in mind including trails designed as true expert level trails (as opposed to intermediate trails with "optional" difficult lines).	7/9/2018 7:26 PM
62	Another beautiful and close place to take my family for healthy activities.	7/9/2018 7:25 PM
63	If you build great mountain bike trails. People will come. They will not pass Idaho springs for fruit. There are plenty of great eateries.	7/9/2018 7:18 PM
64	Bike specific trails	7/9/2018 7:09 PM
65	It is close and scenic.	7/9/2018 7:09 PM
66	Terrain potential	7/9/2018 7:08 PM
67	Multi-use capability	7/9/2018 7:08 PM
68	Trails are well planned for connectivity, flow and intermediate to advanced in difficulty.	7/9/2018 6:57 PM
69	Directional trails	7/9/2018 6:56 PM
70	That the spirit of the social trail in the area 28 area is maintained. People will travel to Clear Creek if and only if unique fun trails are built. Mtn bike only, single direction, DH optimized trails.	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
71	Equitable access for all non-motorized users, and good user management.	7/9/2018 6:46 PM
72	Modern designed and built trail system that incorporates trail management techniques such as directional trails, separation by user, and separation by speed.	7/9/2018 6:31 PM
73	It will give me an opportunity to go outside and explore a natural open space with out having to drive all the way to evergreen. Having an open space area in Idaho Spring will bring the community, not only in IS, but in county's community as well.	7/9/2018 5:58 PM
74	Mountain bike trails	7/5/2018 1:25 PM
75	That it remains natural with as little signs of humans as possible	6/29/2018 8:42 AM
76	That the area be used for recreation and public purposes. :)	6/28/2018 11:38 AM
77	Improved accessibility and preservation	6/28/2018 10:33 AM
78	A new destination spot and improved recreational area	6/28/2018 10:02 AM
79	Vehicle access and the added traffic to an already under maintained road.	6/28/2018 8:08 AM
80	Not impacting local residents with extra traffic. Monitor speeds.	6/27/2018 10:50 PM
81	Not to many people	6/27/2018 4:56 PM
82	Designated and/or alternating use for hiking trails. Alternate use schedules similar to that of Centennial Cone Park in JeffCo for specified trails would be ideal.	6/27/2018 2:32 PM
83	having something for everyone - hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, overlooks, etc...	6/27/2018 2:20 PM



## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

84	Bike speed is a concern as there are some areas and tunnels that offer little view on any fast moving bicycle and is a safety hazard particularly for people with children... designated trails for hiking a bike lane in those hazardous areas and more visibility could help mitigate the risk	6/27/2018 1:22 PM
85	Accessibly	6/27/2018 1:06 PM
86	That it remain human free.	6/27/2018 12:21 PM
87	become more accessible to local residents wanting to get outdoors. I've never seen a sign directing folks to VCOS. I have a vague idea of where it is, but have no idea how to access it.	6/27/2018 12:21 PM

## Q30 If needed, please take the space below to describe your desired additions or improvements to Virginia Canyon Open Space.

Answered: 43 Skipped: 147

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	See above	7/12/2018 12:49 PM
2	Mountain biking will drive the most usage and tourism revenue and should be heavily prioritized.	7/12/2018 7:22 AM
3	Glad to hear some new fun trails will be opened here!	7/11/2018 11:47 PM
4	More Trails, Playgrounds and campgrounds would make this a much more lively place.	7/11/2018 5:04 PM
5	Strongly recommend one way mountain bike specific trails in addition to other trails that are designed for trail runners and hikers. This will reduce conflict and provide a better general experience for all recreational users. The mountain bike specific trails should appeal to those of all abilities including experts. There should be specific trails that are modeled off of the downhill trails at Winter Park as well as the Blackjack trail in Buffalo Creek.	7/11/2018 11:41 AM
6	A cool loop trail system like at Buffalo creek or other nearby areas would be awesome.	7/11/2018 11:40 AM
7	More trails and an uphill trail option to keep riders off the road.	7/11/2018 9:54 AM
8	Established trail system. Trail signage. Directional trails. Parking.	7/10/2018 3:46 PM
9	Accommodation for, and separation between, multi-use e.g. walkers/runners/bikers	7/10/2018 11:31 AM
10	More trails, more access to more parts of the open space.	7/10/2018 10:58 AM
11	More fun bike trails, not flat XC trails. Good all around trails that range from green to black.	7/10/2018 10:40 AM
12	Directional and bike specific trails. It's just safer and more fun for everyone!	7/10/2018 9:26 AM
13	I would like to see trails designed with mountain biking in mind (banked turns, flowing loop, technical sections). The Little Scraggy trail in Buffalo Creek is a great example of this.	7/10/2018 9:05 AM
14	Signage, more trails (some bike specific) avoidance of private property.	7/10/2018 9:00 AM
15	It would be great to see some trails developed with mountain biking in mind (banked turns, flowing single track loop).	7/10/2018 8:56 AM
16	Directional and bike only trails!	7/10/2018 8:15 AM
17	Progressive mountain bike trails like what the City of Steamboat Springs has done on Emerald Mountain	7/10/2018 7:29 AM
18	Technically challenging mountain bike trails	7/10/2018 7:26 AM
19	Said it above. Hiker only trails that allow hikers the opportunity to enjoy nature at a leisurely pace, safely, without having to constantly be worried about other user groups. Same for Mountain Bikes; directional trails without other users on them to allow for a unique experience to the Front Range.	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
20	I'd like to see it expand on what brings people there in the first place - near year-round mountain biking.	7/10/2018 6:59 AM
21	I'd like to see a network of cycling trails.	7/9/2018 11:41 PM
22	We could use a system of trails designed to keep users safe. That means directional Mtb trails and keeping the users educated .	7/9/2018 11:40 PM
23	Directional downhill mountain bike trails	7/9/2018 11:17 PM
24	Single track bike trails	7/9/2018 9:33 PM
25	Advanced-level, directional mtb trails.	7/9/2018 9:01 PM
26	Some good climbing trails Good downhill trails Good hiking trails Good biking trails. Once a trail is in place it disturbs nature so if you make consolidated and condensed trails then it's a bigger benefit with similar disturbance	7/9/2018 8:58 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

27	Multi use trails. Trailheads, signage, all the things listed above.	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
28	See answer #29	7/9/2018 8:23 PM
29	Mtb specific trails, directional trails	7/9/2018 8:04 PM
30	More bike only trails to make it safer for everyone.	7/9/2018 7:51 PM
31	Marked and visible mountain bike trails. Designated entrances.	7/9/2018 7:25 PM
32	Mountain bike trails	7/9/2018 7:09 PM
33	A trail system similar to others that have been developed in Ridgway (RAT), Salida (S Mtn and Methodist Mtn) and Grand Junction (Lunch Loops) is missing from this area, and would be greatly appreciated and used.	7/9/2018 7:09 PM
34	Directional bike trails	7/9/2018 7:08 PM
35	More directional, single-track MTB trails!	7/9/2018 7:08 PM
36	Bicycle only trails with enforced directions.	7/9/2018 6:57 PM
37	Single direction, mtn bike only trails. Between Floyd hill, Warren gulch, and area 28 Idaho Springs could rival any other bike town in CO. Bit only if the right trails are built.	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
38	Thanks for considering the often cast-aside mountain bikers!	7/9/2018 6:46 PM
39	Love the new plan!	7/9/2018 6:31 PM
40	I don't want to see it turned into a disneyland.	6/29/2018 8:42 AM
41	More hiking trails please!	6/27/2018 2:32 PM
42	As mentioned in some areas above, i think it would be great if the City could include a short 9 hole disc golf course in the area (or full 18 if you like). There isn't a whole lot kids in the County or City can do right now in our communities, and this could be a great opportunity to provide a bit more for them.	6/27/2018 2:20 PM
43	See above	6/27/2018 1:22 PM

## Q31 What would you like for the Open Space to be named?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 112

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Gold digger	7/12/2018 8:21 PM
2	Virginia Canyon	7/12/2018 4:46 PM
3	Area 28	7/12/2018 2:30 PM
4	Virginia Canyon	7/12/2018 1:17 PM
5	Don't care	7/12/2018 12:50 PM
6	Area 28	7/12/2018 8:25 AM
7	Area 28	7/12/2018 7:22 AM
8	Gold Rush Open Space	7/11/2018 5:05 PM
9	Area 28	7/11/2018 4:42 PM
10	Virginia Canyon Trail System	7/11/2018 1:52 PM
11	Idaho Springs Bike Loops	7/11/2018 11:43 AM
12	Idaho Springs Open Space	7/11/2018 11:40 AM
13	leave it as Area 28	7/11/2018 9:56 AM
14	Idaho Springs trails	7/10/2018 5:58 PM
15	Miner trail network	7/10/2018 3:49 PM
16	Ned overand memorial park	7/10/2018 3:24 PM
17	Idaho springs open space	7/10/2018 2:26 PM
18	I actually like Area 28	7/10/2018 1:19 PM
19	Virginia Canyon!	7/10/2018 1:06 PM
20	idaho springs bike park	7/10/2018 11:56 AM
21	Virginia Canyon Open Space	7/10/2018 11:34 AM
22	Virginia Canyon or Area 28 are both ok.	7/10/2018 11:32 AM
23	I got nothing good, sorry.	7/10/2018 10:59 AM
24	Area 28 seems ok	7/10/2018 10:59 AM
25	Area 28	7/10/2018 9:32 AM
26	I quite like Area 28!	7/10/2018 9:27 AM
27	Clear Creek Open Space	7/10/2018 9:11 AM
28	Goldigger trails	7/10/2018 9:05 AM
29	Gold mine open space	7/10/2018 8:15 AM
30	Alderaan	7/10/2018 8:00 AM
31	Name it after a local miner from back in the day that did something no one knows about	7/10/2018 7:42 AM
32	Area 28 is a great name	7/10/2018 7:23 AM
33	Area 28	7/10/2018 6:59 AM
34	Does not matter	7/10/2018 4:19 AM
35	Gold Digger's OS	7/9/2018 11:42 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

36	Area 28	7/9/2018 11:17 PM
37	Area 28	7/9/2018 11:08 PM
38	Area 28 sounds cool.	7/9/2018 9:34 PM
39	Springville	7/9/2018 8:59 PM
40	Idaho hermit open space	7/9/2018 8:46 PM
41	I love area 28	7/9/2018 8:41 PM
42	Have a lottery name choosing.	7/9/2018 8:36 PM
43	Clear Creek Open Space	7/9/2018 8:26 PM
44	"Virginia Canyon"	7/9/2018 8:25 PM
45	I think the local folks should decide since it is in their backyard	7/9/2018 8:12 PM
46	I like the current name!	7/9/2018 7:59 PM
47	Area 28	7/9/2018 7:54 PM
48	Virginia Canyon Open Space	7/9/2018 7:52 PM
49	Virginia Canyon Open Space	7/9/2018 7:50 PM
50	Mojo Wheels Open Space	7/9/2018 7:33 PM
51	Area 28	7/9/2018 7:27 PM
52	Virginia Canyon Wildlife Viewing and Mountain bike open space	7/9/2018 7:19 PM
53	Idaho springs trail area	7/9/2018 7:10 PM
54	Virginia Recreation and Open Space	7/9/2018 7:10 PM
55	Argos	7/9/2018 7:09 PM
56	Area 28	7/9/2018 7:05 PM
57	Sharing is Caring trail	7/9/2018 6:56 PM
58	OMG trails.	7/9/2018 6:53 PM
59	VCOP	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
60	Don't know	7/9/2018 6:52 PM
61	Virginia Canyon Open Space	7/9/2018 6:46 PM
62	Area 28	7/9/2018 6:32 PM
63	Area 28	7/9/2018 6:04 PM
64	Clear Creek Nature Park	7/9/2018 6:01 PM
65	OMG Trails	7/9/2018 8:51 AM
66	Area 28	7/5/2018 1:26 PM
67	Virginia Canyon Open Space	7/2/2018 1:01 PM
68	Gold Rush Open Space	6/29/2018 8:42 AM
69	Idaho Springs Mountain Trails Park	6/28/2018 12:53 PM
70	Oh My Gawd Open Space	6/28/2018 10:34 AM
71	Area 28	6/28/2018 10:02 AM
72	Virginia canyon	6/28/2018 9:39 AM
73	One of the historic mine claims...don't care which one	6/28/2018 8:09 AM
74	Try to name it something relating to our history	6/27/2018 9:56 PM
75	The Ridge	6/27/2018 4:58 PM
76	Something relevant to Idaho Springs' mining history.	6/27/2018 2:33 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

77	Argo Park	6/27/2018 1:09 PM
78	Virginia Canyon Open Space	6/27/2018 12:21 PM

## Q34 Please provide any additional comments:

Answered: 33 Skipped: 157

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Very enthusiastic about the MTB trail development with COMBA; Idaho Springs and CCC have been overlooked by the outside recreational community for far too long! This will be a much-needed economic boost for Idaho Springs and the county.	7/12/2018 1:18 PM
2	Thanks	7/12/2018 12:50 PM
3	Thanks for doing this	7/11/2018 5:05 PM
4	I would love to get involved in the building of the trails and structures	7/11/2018 4:43 PM
5	We are avid mountain bikers. We have experienced trail developments that have helped the local economy. We ride all over Colorado & we end up staying in, eating at, & enjoying the local establishments. We look forward to riding in Virginia Canyon and then topping off the day in Idaho Springs. Also, thank you for seeking input from various user groups; hopefully this results in a great shared recreational experience for all.	7/11/2018 1:59 PM
6	So excited!!!	7/11/2018 11:41 AM
7	so excited about this project!!	7/11/2018 6:21 AM
8	Thank you for putting time and effort into developing a great space for all to use!	7/10/2018 3:53 PM
9	I think features on trail are great. An A and a B line. It's wonderful when I can take my kids to ride a trail that can still be interesting and fun for me.	7/10/2018 9:29 AM
10	I'm looking forward to seeing the updates to this open space. Thank you!	7/10/2018 9:12 AM
11	Biker/hiker only trails rather than multi use trails would probably be best to avoid user conflict	7/10/2018 9:09 AM
12	I think properly designed mountain bike trails can bring people to Idaho springs in droves. There is a huge need for more MTB trails in front range area Good luck everyone!!	7/10/2018 7:44 AM
13	Also would be great if trails were open all night to allow night riding. The winter months are rough and it doesn't always work out that folks can make it to the trails before it gets dark.	7/10/2018 7:31 AM
14	Giddyup!	7/10/2018 7:00 AM
15	I am loving this area as a Mtb rider. Please try to keep it rugged and fun. We have to many buffed our trails in the front range.	7/9/2018 11:43 PM
16	I live in Parker and visit Idaho Springs often. This	7/9/2018 11:19 PM
17	Thank you for taking input.	7/9/2018 11:09 PM
18	This could be a world class mountain biking destination that will attract adventure tourists from accross Colorado and the United States bringing millions to the area	7/9/2018 9:12 PM
19	MORE MULTI USE TRAILS IN A NETWORK WITH EPIC RIDES/HIKES	7/9/2018 9:00 PM
20	Thanks for asking for input!	7/9/2018 8:36 PM
21	Directional downhill MTB trails would be a great draw to your area.	7/9/2018 8:32 PM
22	Looking forward to VCO being a model trail system that shows the 'Front Range' how to do trails system right and keep all trail users happy	7/9/2018 8:26 PM
23	Keep the current trails intact.	7/9/2018 8:14 PM
24	Thank you	7/9/2018 8:12 PM
25	Directional Downhill MTB trails please.	7/9/2018 7:33 PM
26	Thank you for allowing me to provide input. I am excited to see what can be developed in Idaho Springs.	7/9/2018 7:11 PM
27	Keep up the great work	7/9/2018 7:10 PM

## Virginia Canyon Open Space Community Survey

28	Thank you for asking these questions of the current and future users of this area!	7/9/2018 6:59 PM
29	Thanks!	7/9/2018 6:54 PM
30	Thank you!!!	7/9/2018 6:47 PM
31	Can't say enough about how well the City is pursuing this project. Alan is the man!	7/9/2018 6:33 PM
32	Trail appears to empty out in the middle of private property/commercial activity. Consider trail termination to the east away from commercial vehicles.	6/27/2018 9:57 PM
33	Always enjoy the history of the Argo Mill to Central City mines.	6/27/2018 1:11 PM



## APPENDIX C

# Area 28 & Virginia Canyon

*Recreation Area Concept*



**Prepared For City of Idaho Springs**

By Colorado Mountain Bike Association

June 2017

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Idaho Springs - Mayor Mike, Alan City Planner, Andrew City Manager  
Clear Creek County Trail Supervisor - James Kovaly  
Clear Creek County Mapping - Matt Taylor  
Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA) - David Knox Trails Leader Clear Creek  
County and Clear Creek Ranger District

## AUTHORS

David Knox - COMBA Trails Leader Clear Creek County & CCRD  
Gil McCormick - COMBA Board Member & Trails Team Lead

## PREPARED BY



PO Box 280415  
Lakewood, CO 80228-0415  
trails@comba.org

June, 2017

# Area 28 & Virginia Canyon Recreation Area Concept

## STUDY MISSION

**Mission:** Consider future land use and stewardship options for the area known as Area 28 owned by the City of Idaho Springs. Working with community leaders, the public, and interested agencies and organizations, formulate a vision for multi-use trails for the property. Consider mitigation and interpretation of the history on the site. Enhance economic benefits brought about by building a unique, world-class experience and thus attraction to and repeated use by hikers, mountain bikers from a broad demographic.

The process leading to this document included site reconnaissance visits and mapping of existing and potential trail corridors. This is an initial conceptual investigation and should not be considered a technical study or master plan.



## SITE DESCRIPTION



Known as Area 28, the study site consists of more than 400 non-contiguous acres owned by Idaho Springs shaped roughly like a triangle with hypotenuse facing north-west and base facing south. It is bounded by School of Mines claims near Hukill Gulch on the west, multiple patented mining claims on the north and north-west, the Argo Mill property on the south, Gilson Gulch and private property on the east. The middle of the property contains Virginia Canyon and Rosa Gulch.

The site consists of steep terrain, sharp granite and quartz rock formations, Ponderosa Pine, Spruce, mountain mahogany brush, and lush ravines. It lies between the Denver area foothills to the east, Loveland Pass and the Continental Divide to the west, Gilpin County, Russell Gulch and Central City to the north, Arapaho National Forest and views of Mt. Evans to the

June, 2017

south. There is a mix of deep ravines and rocky ridges generally facing south and east. Bighorn sheep, deer, elk, and wild cats are known to live in the area. Elevations range from 7600 feet to 8700 feet.

The area is well known for its extensive and long mining history and has many historical burro, foot, and prospector wagon trails following the ravines and ridges, connecting many mining claims. These trails still exist and can be observed from Virginia Canyon and Oh-My-God Road. Many prospect diggings and mines have been observed dating to as much as 140 years. The Argo Mill and Tunnel is a historical focal point. The site's historical features form a dramatic backdrop seen from the I-70 corridor and as far away as Mount Evans & Highway 103 to the south. Mineralization on the site is extensive and not limited to gold and silver.

Georgetown, Golden, Central City & Blackhawk, Echo Lake and Mount Evans are in easy driving distance. The City of Idaho Springs offers amenities and convenience for day and overnight visitors including shopping, accommodations, dining, rafting in Clear Creek, historical tours at the Argo Mill and Phoenix Mine, and other sightseeing adventures.



The site can be easily linked to the Idaho Springs Greenway via the Argo Mill thus eventually connecting to the Peaks-to-Plains Trails and the Beaver Brook Watershed via Santa Fe Mountain & Montane Park. Nearby attractions in Arapaho National Forest, Dumont, and Georgetown offer rafting, camping, hiking, four-wheeling, mountain biking, and other unique adventures. Conceptual trail corridors are specifically designed to take advantage of these linkages, and views of Squaw Mountain and Mount

Evans. Trail access and existing trails on the north is considered but complicated by private property.

Access is limited on the south by the Argo Mill and private residences with a few access points in between. The western section of the site is divided by Colorado School of Mines claims and

June, 2017

Virginia Canyon Road, Oh-My-God Road, Two Brothers Road. Access is blocked on the north-west by multiple mining claims and on the east by private property. The most favorable access points are from the Argo Mill (Rosa Gulch) on the south, and Virginia Canyon/Oh-My-God Road which roughly bisect the site, and those few access points among residences in town.

## GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Respect private property rights
2. Preserve and enhance sensitive resources, i.e., ecological, archeological, cultural and historical. Conform to conservation requirements. Keep the natural & historical character of the site while optimizing the recreational experience of hiking and biking.
3. Protect the visual integrity of the site
4. Offer safe & enjoyable recreation experiences of mountain biking. Include short trips of 2 hours to full day visits.
5. Offer access and linkage to an expansive network of trails connected by the Idaho Springs Greenway.
6. Promote economic benefits to the city of Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County by providing a world class experience attractive to out of town visitors as well as users from the Front Range urban areas.
7. Improvements must be affordable to build and maintain and should not be undertaken unless they can be managed and maintained effectively.
8. Promote quality tourism and economic benefits to the community
9. Address historical interpretation and impact mitigation in future planning and improvements.
10. Link to other trail systems

In regards to the mountain bike community seeking new areas to ride and quality experiences, we recommend referencing the Guide to Quality Trail Experience (GQTE)<sup>1</sup> recently published by the BLM. Three main points apply to all user types and are worth mentioning:

1. Environmental Sustainability: Preserving and enhancing natural resources.
2. Social Sustainability: Prevent/Manage potentials for overcrowded trails and user conflicts. This point is often overlooked or poorly anticipated which results in user conflicts, creation of unauthorized trails, and user abuse of authorized trails.
3. Economic Sustainability: City and County goal of attracting new and repeat users



June, 2017

from all over the greater Front Range and nationally. Continued economic benefit derived by adhering to Environmental and Social sustainability guidelines.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

### Benefits

- Easily linked to other trail systems using Idaho Springs Greenway and future Peaks-to-Plains Trail.
  - Beaver Brook via Santa Fe Mountain & Montane Park
  - Barbour Fork
  - National Forest and Clear Creek County trails
- Offers terrain for all user levels - hikers, bikers, & runners.
- Area is a museum of mining history
- Spectacular views of Clear Creek Canyon and Mount Evans.
- Nearby attractions include the Argo Mill, rafting, 4-wheeling, and camping.
- Attract users to amenities, dining, accommodations, and entertainment in historic downtown Idaho Springs
- Central City & Blackhawk are in easy driving distance.
- Continental Divide, Georgetown, and access to National Forest trails are nearby.

### Sustainable Building Standards

By building trails according to BLM & IMBA recommendations and using a qualified trail designer and trail building contractor cyclists, hikers, and other users of all levels will be attracted to the area and significant economic impact will arise from the mountain bike community. Additionally, management & maintenance costs and effort are consequently reduced. This has been a hard-learned lesson for COMBA and other organizations. Our collective experience has validated the methodology again and again. It is true that if we build it, they will come. But, if it's designed well and built sustainably, they will keep coming.

### Challenges Include:

- Trailheads and space for necessary amenities (bathrooms, trash, etc.) away from motorized traffic if possible.
- Separate users at the trailhead when possible
- Design trails and amenities for year-round use
- Best use of areas constrained by private property. Gaining easements.
- Protection of wildlife including Prebbles Mouse, Deer, Elk, Sheep, and wild cats.
- Preservation of on-trail sites of historical significance
- The landscape is steep in places making directional trails and separating user types necessary in places. Trail “Hubs” make sense for this terrain because the design allows for

June, 2017

multiple short distance loops from the same point.

- There is limited access to water
- Flash flood potential in ravines
- Wildfire potential. Involve Fire Authority early in the master plan phase
- Highway noise from I-70 on the south and local traffic on Oh-My-God Road. It is tranquil deeper in the site.
  - Site crosses Oh-My-God Road & Virginia Canyon Road
- Re-use and improvement of existing trails crossing private property.
- Private property bisecting Rosa Gulch & at the top of Santa Fe Mine Road
- Open mines
- Avoiding Argo daily operations

## SITE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS



The reconnaissance process led to a number of possible options for future use consistent with the character of the site, guidelines previously documented herein, deed stipulations, and conservation stipulations. Note that these options should be viewed to include phases in a longer-term development scenario.

**Option A: Preservation As-Is Wildland** - Minimally maintain the site in its present state as open space.

**Option B: Minimal Access** - Identify locations of interest, mark, promote interpretive historical areas, build and maintain minimal hiking trails.

**Option C: Destination Outdoor Recreation Venue** - Develop the site as a world class destination for a mountain biking,

and hiking venue. Creation of a network of trails that accommodates non-motorized uses. The network initially consists of: . Reuse of several existing trails is desired but complicated because they cross private property. However, those trails have been in use for nearly 15 years. This concept includes amenities such as parking, trailheads, informal picnicking, interpretive displays, and overlooks. Potentially the site could host competitive events such as cross-country, downhill, and/or enduro mountain biking races, and endurance foot races. A summary of some of the specific components of this approach include:

- Environmental Sustainability
  - Natural resource preservation.
  - Stewardship of the site with significant emphasis on a contingent of volunteers.
  - Built to IMBA/BLM standards.

June, 2017

- Social Sustainability
  - Non-motorized trail recreation: Hiking, Biking, Running.
  - Directional trails and trails for specific users
  - Historic and archeological interpretations of the history of Idaho Springs, Virginia Canyon, the Argo Mill, and nearby areas.
  - Support facilities and amenities such as sufficient parking for access, toilets, and rubbish collection.
  - Correctly signed trails
- Economic Sustainability
  - Attract users from the Denver urban area and nationally.
  - A major component of a larger network of trails extending into Clear Creek County, Gilpin County, and Arapaho National Forest to the south and west.
  - A world class destination experience of Rocky Mountain landscapes for mountain bikers, hikers, and runners.
  - Invite all users to an array of local amenities, entertainment, and accommodations and keep them coming back.

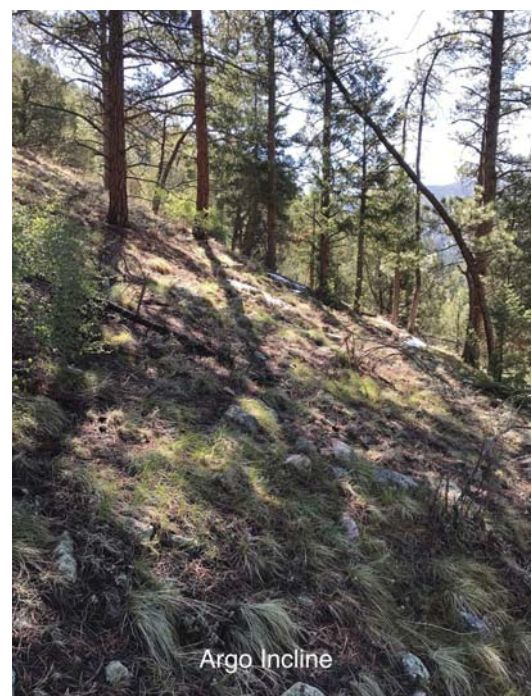
Option C is identified as the preferred option with recommendations for moving to the next step of more detailed feasibility investigation and master plan.

## MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE

To assure the long-term lifecycle of this vision for the site and its compatibility with the surrounding properties and conservation of the environment a sustainable and practical management plan should be put in place. Leadership, an administrative organization, and funding are key components. Volunteers and advocacy organizations can accomplish a major portion of the work. There will also be a need for agency oversight and professional services to assure a quality experience and preservation. Key guidelines and functions include:

### Management Guidelines:

- Sound & continuing planning, design, and maintenance.
- Conservation of wildlife, property, and environment.
- Design, build, maintain, and promote a unique world class outdoor recreation experience for multiple user types. In this case



June, 2017



non-motorized users; i.e., mountain bikes, hiking, running.

- Trail safety and user conflict mitigation
  - Some trails must be designated and designed for specific direction and user types. For example, downhill-only trails optimized for bikes and trail runners, climbing trails optimized for bikes, and trails optimized specifically for hikers & runners only.
  - Low speed uphill trails can be shared by all users
  - Designated Odd-Even days, alternating weekends, to mitigate overcrowding
  - Trail Ranger & Trail Patrol
- Quality control and standards, conduct regular assessments of trails and status of amenities. Follow IMBA/BLM trail building & management standards. Promote use of volunteers to maintain and repair trails. Close and remediate unauthorized trails.
- An effective and responsive system of community feedback. Promote public participation.
  - Form an Advisory User Committee at the Master Plan inception. Runners, Hikers, and Bicyclists
  - Find a Community Advocate
- Involve Fire/Rescue Authority - Trails can be used as fire breaks.
  - Vegetation thinning & mitigation
- Respect adjoining private property.
- Cost effective programs and sustainable funding sources.

#### **Management Functions:**

- Adhere to points of sustainability
  - Environmental
  - Social
  - Economic
- Regular inspections and assessments.
- Litter and trash removal.
- Trail surface maintenance and repair.
- Closure and remediation of unauthorized “social trails”.
- Responsive and proactive erosion control and remediation
- Repair, service, & management of amenities such as parking lots and toilets.
- Vegetation management including removal of invasive plants and rejuvenation of native vegetation
- Stream and drainage maintenance.
- Wildlife, shooting/hunting regulations, & pest management.
- Wildfire mitigation and management.
- Accident and incident tracking.
- Public Involvement - Community Advocate and User Group
- Safety patrols (can be volunteers), Trail Ranger (law enforcement).

June, 2017

- Coordinated volunteer activities.

## OVERVIEW OF COSTS

A general conceptual cost range for developing this site as a world class destination venue with approximately 13 miles of trails, four trailheads ( Argo Mill, Virginia Canyon, Santa Fe Mine Road, Buttermilk Gulch), and amenities such as overlooks and interpretive displays. Additional costs should be considered for continuing site management. As a benchmark, based on the standard estimation practice of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) we are using an average skewed to the terrain challenges of ~\$32K per mile to estimate professionally designed & constructed trails. Use of volunteers and Youth Corp (Groundwork Denver for example) will reduce that estimate by up to 30%.

### Key Cost Items To Consider:

- Master Plan Development ~\$30K
  - Includes Trail Design @ ~\$1,150.00 per mile
  - Remaining MP costs include architects, engineering, mapping, etc.
- Construction of Trail System @ ~\$32,000.00 per mile - Volunteers reduce this cost as much as 30%.
- Construction of Support Amenities. I.e., Trailhead Facilities @ ~\$75K per trailhead
- Overall Site Management 450+ acres @ \$150 per acre ~\$68K per year
  - Includes Annual Trail Maintenance - Again volunteers recommended to reduce this cost as seen in Douglas, Jefferson Counties, and Pike National Forest
  - Includes servicing parking lots and facilities, toilets, rubbish, etc.

## POTENTIAL FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

### Technical Advice and Support

- A study of natural resources and an environmental assessment coupled with site development planning is recommended for this site. Although not necessary it is recommended to consider the natural resource environment before constructing a trail. <http://www.eroresources.com>
- Smart trail planning conducted by a professional trail designer, although not necessary, in such a potentially highly visited and technically challenging area is recommended. Trail corridor, alignment planning, overall trail system, project management, contractor oversight, funding opportunities, volunteer management and maintenance prescription. An important consideration is defining trail uses, directions, and trail system management to improve the quality of the experience and reduce conflicts and congestion. Working in collaboration with a Natural Resources Consultant will best align the two aspects of the

June, 2017

whole-natural resource management and trail design/construction.

<http://contourlogic.com>

- Trail Construction can be built all by (a) volunteer groups by hand, (b) all by a contractor with machines, (c) or a combination of both. Hand built trails can save money on certain trail routes although could take more time. We recommend hand built trails for uphill hiker only trails. We strongly recommend bike trails, particularly descent trails, be built by seasoned contractors familiar with state of the art trail design to accommodate cyclists of all levels and meet highest standards of sustainability. However, hand built trails too are best built by seasoned trail building organizations who have experience in modern, sustainable trail building and management expertise.

### Funding

- Various sources of funding are available:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOCO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorado Lottery</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPW matching grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private donations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highway Admin)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation grants</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other sources and in kind donations including volunteer support</li> </ul>

### NEXT STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION (12 MONTH OUTLOOK)

1. Assemble a leadership and project planning committee & steering committee to create a master plan and implementation program with specific priorities, improvements, trail alignments, management plan, budget and phasing strategy. Special emphasis should be placed on the following points:
  - a. With respect to user priorities as collected from a COMBA poll of JCOS trail users this year, of 780 respondents, overcrowding and on-trail conflict was the most common comment.
  - b. Sufficient parking and bathrooms are especially important to the overall experience for all users. Space for parking and amenities affects the general usability, user safety, and economic success. Using I-70 traffic patterns as a basis, we estimate there could be as much as 400-500 users per day on average,

June, 2017

representing just 1% of 40K-50K vehicles passing by the site per day.

- c. Expanding the user community for year round use of the site should be expected and planned for in the design.
2. Commit staff and professional services to secure planning grants. Seek funding to engineer and construct amenities.
3. Pursue funding with partner stakeholders to build a pool of cash-match funds. Partner with advocacy organizations such as COMBA to pursue public & private sources of funding.
4. Identify projects that will form a logical and practical series of steps toward realizing the master plan's vision.
  - a. Pursue initial projects & project phasing. Complete one loop in phase 1.
5. Create User Group of Hikers, Bicyclists, and Trail Runners as an advisory group to the Steering Committee. Find a Community Advocate and involve the community early in the process.
6. Volunteer and in-kind labor donations can offset some portions of trail building costs if conducted with the guidance of a Professional or Seasoned Trail Builder.
7. After creating the Master Plan, a hiker only trail could be built immediately.

June, 2017

## Project Overview and Phasing

### Trailheads

Trailhead	Comments
Argo Mill/Gilson Gulch	East of Argo Mill near Gilson Gulch. Trails take a northerly direction
Two Brothers/Virginia Canyon Road	Intersection of Virginia Canyon Road and Two Brothers Road. Trails take a westerly direction
Santa Fe Mine Road	East of Oh-My-God Road. Shuttle drop.
Buttermilk Gulch Landing Zone	End of downhill only bike trail. Needs only a landing zone and not a full trailhead

June, 2017

## References

1. BLM Guide to Quality Trail Experience:  
[https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/Travel-and-Transportation\\_Guidelines-for-a-Quality-Trail-Experience-2017.pdf](https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/Travel-and-Transportation_Guidelines-for-a-Quality-Trail-Experience-2017.pdf)
2. Examples of Trail Experience:
  - a. Lower Rush Trail, Draper Utah - <https://vimeo.com/105456984>
  - b. Flow Motion Trail, Sandy Ridge, Oregon -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF\\_aKtqSAy4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF_aKtqSAy4)
  - c. Rouge River Trails, Oregon - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0Cq6zSClfi>
3. Corner Canyon Master Plan - <http://www.draper.ut.us/DocumentCenter/View/448>



June, 2017