

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

MARCH/APRIL INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION FULL REPORT

Last revised 5/26/2021

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to document the input from Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan interest group sessions held in March and April 2021. The findings represent high-level takeaways, opportunities and challenges, and potential evaluation criteria for the project team to consider when identifying options for the Park. A complete list of interest group discussion notes are found in Appendix A.

PROCESS OVERVIEW:

In January of 2021, the Fishers Peak State Park Master Plan team released a call for interest groups to sign up for interest group discussions with the intent to hold a variety of interest group discussions to engage governmental and non-governmental organizations and businesses with direct knowledge and expertise for the project. The purpose of these discussions was twofold: (1) to enable interest groups to share ideas, expertise, and thoughts on opportunities and challenges related to the park and (2) to build relationships between the project team and interest groups for the Master Plan process.

The registration process was open from January 29, 2021 - February 26, 2021. Interested groups were asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, which was distributed digitally through the Fishers Peak State Park master contact list as well as via partners including CPW, TPL, and TNC. Over 100 questionnaires were filled out. The attached Appendix B includes a list of groups that were invited and participated in the interest group discussion process. The following interest groups were convened in March and April of 2021:

- Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship
- Wildlife / Hunting
- Outdoor Recreation
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian
- Climbing
- Motorized Recreation
- Grazing and Agriculture
- Emergency Services
- Education and Interpretation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Local Businesses
- Local and Regional: Colorado
- Local and Regional: New Mexico
- State and Federal Agencies

Each interest group conversation was held virtually and lasted 1.5 hours. The project team presented a high-level overview of the project and process (Appendix C) and listened to interest group ideas based on targeted questions. A complete agenda and list of questions can be found in Appendix D.

The project team anticipates meeting again with the groups later in 2021 and following up with participants throughout the duration of the Master Plan.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

OPPORTUNITIES	
General appreciation to be engaged with the Master Plan	Participants were excited to be engaged in the Master Planning process and grateful to be given an opportunity to share their experiences and expertise. Maintaining this momentum and excitement will be a key factor for Master Plan success.
Emphasis on protecting natural resources and unique landscape of the Park	All groups noted the importance of conserving the special resources (wildlife, plant species, unique geographical features, etc) of the Park. While all wanted varying levels of access for the public to recreate on the Park, all recognized the importance of conserving habitat and designing recreation opportunities that have as little impact as possible on nature.
Desire for varied types of recreation opportunities that do not significantly impact existing nature	Groups noted the strong desire for a variety of recreation types for multiple skill levels . Not only is this an inclusive approach to recreation where recreationists can develop, grow and enjoy their specific skill sets, it also brings more people into the Park to learn about nature and the importance of stewardship.
Interest in unique experiences that aren't found elsewhere in the region (lookouts, wildlife viewing, challenging recreational trails, etc.)	One way to maintain visitation to the Park is to provide unique experiences (to the region and the state park system) that people want to enjoy on a regular basis. Considering how trails interact with viewing lookouts, specific rock or geographic features, wildlife viewing opportunities can create robust trail experiences that keep the user coming back for more.
Importance of tying park operations to the community (community economic benefit, and community opportunities to learn and give back)	The community was an important part of interest group conversations. Recognizing this Park is a resource for the community at the foot of the peak, the community is and should continue to be engaged in a meaningful way in the Master Plan. Interest group participants mentioned the economic benefit of increased recreation and opportunities for the community to learn about stewardship and give back to the Park. Volunteer groups

	offered expertise on community engagement and volunteer programming to sustain this interest.
Opportunity for unique education, interpretation, and creative experiences	Planning a new state park provides a unique opportunity to have interpretive programming focused on the history of the property. Participants highlighted the need to engage elders, youth, and community members in the development of interpretation messages. In addition, the unique landscape offers a wide variety of creative experience beyond traditional recreation (artist engagement, photography, etc.)
Desire for inclusive and equitable recreation and visitation opportunities	Providing multilingual ways to engage with the Park’s interpretive content was an important component of inclusivity. Additional ideas included hiring Park staff and recruiting volunteers to reflect the diversity of the community and considering accessibility in the infrastructure development of the Park as well as the accessibility of transportation to/from the Park.
Preservation and recognition of history and culture of the park (Tribes, grazing and ag)	Many groups recognized the Park is not only an important resource for the life that thrives there, but it is an important cultural resource as well. Participants noted a desire to reflect all facets of the Park’s history and highlight important components including Tribal history as well as the tradition of grazing and agriculture on the land.
Quality trails for easier maintenance	Recreation user groups noted the importance (and unique opportunity) to develop a well-designed trail system from the onset of the Park that will minimize future maintenance needs. With an increase in public lands users due to COVID, increasing interest in outdoor recreation, and a growing population, building well planned, constructed and designed trails for a variety of uses is a great way to ensure long-term durability of the Park.
Opportunities to Partner with Local, Regional and State Organizations and Agencies	There were multiple offers from organizations and agencies to assist with Park operations, maintenance, emergency response, interpretation and education. For example, museums, libraries and schools (including

	Trinidad State) offered to host exhibits, as well as student and volunteer projects. Another example includes local and regional agencies offering support for fire planning, mitigation, response and restoration.
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CHALLENGES	
Recognition of the challenge of Park management and operations - opportunities to collaborate regionally (emergency services, businesses, volunteer groups, etc.)	The Park covers an extensive amount of land, creating challenges in Park management. There are many opportunities to collaborate with entities within the region to help address these management challenges. Emergency services organizations, businesses, and volunteer groups have offered their expertise and skill sets to ensure safe and enjoyable Park visitor experiences.
Need for appropriate infrastructure and staffing to manage visitation and respond to community/visitor needs and interests (education/volunteer coordinator)	With a variety of interest and user groups expected to visit the Park, infrastructure and staffing were an important component for many interest groups when considering park operations. Groups recommended staffing the Park adequately to not only enforce rules but also educate visitors and to be a resource to members of the public. With too little resources, both in terms of staffing and infrastructure, management of the Park could be a challenge from the start.
Landscape challenges and opportunities that may drive recreation and land use	Certain landscape challenges and geographical features may dictate recreation and land use opportunities. For user groups, there may be specific areas of the Park that are appropriate for specific uses, and it's unclear how difficult visitor access to these areas will be or if uses will conflict with one another.
Differing recreational interests and needs	The Project Team spoke with a number of motorized and non-motorized recreation groups, and one of the greatest challenges that arose from these conversations is that this Park can't be everything to everyone. Many recreation user groups recognized the importance of positive interactions amongst recreation users and they identified

	that providing a large variety of recreational uses in the Park may pose a challenge for the team.
Community's desire for economic benefit may drive over-development of the Park	Community members are hopeful that increased recreation opportunities in the region will bring additional economic benefit. The challenge is to manage this hope and desire for economic growth with manageable recreational uses over the long term.
Visitor Management Across State Park Lines	Fishers Peak and Sugarite State Parks are adjacent to each other at the Colorado / New Mexico state borders. There is interest in addressing park visitation across the state line. One question that arose is whether it is possible to have park fees that allow access to state parks in both NM and CO. Another issue is addressing differing Park management approaches between the two state's park systems, such as allowing dogs. These issues may need to be raised to higher decision-making levels in the two states. There also is interest in coordinating and collaborating on trail connectivity, shared education and outreach, supporting the economy of neighboring communities, and other efforts.

POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA (BY FOCUS AREA):

These potential criteria represent two types of criteria used in the Master Plan to refine options and build a robust plan and management guide for the Park: 1) criteria that guide design and management approaches and 2) criteria that help evaluate options. These criteria do not reflect a full suite of what CPW will/won't do as a result of the planning process, but are concepts and ideas to be considered.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Will the wildlife habitat remain inhabited and conserved in their present condition or better?
- Will the native plant and animal species diversity be maintained?
- Are wildlife migration corridors and winter ranges maintained or improved?
- Are facilities and trails in locations that avoid and/or minimize impacts to wildlife and important wildlife habitats?
- Are human impacts to the natural systems appropriate for/minimal enough to meet conservation goals?
- Does the management philosophy of the Park involve an ecosystem management approach versus a focus on wildlife species or the provision of recreation opportunities? (eg. holistic assessment of the overall health of the habitat and ecosystems)

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Is the multi-use trail system allowing for each user group to have high quality outdoor experiences?
- Does the Park offer diverse recreation opportunities that can be used by many recreation interests and skill levels?
- Are recreation opportunities designed to minimize impacts to the Park's natural and cultural resources? (ie social trails, illegal parking, etc)
- Is recreation infrastructure and recreation opportunities planned to limit conflicts among users (hunters, recreationists, climbers, birdwatchers, etc.)?
- Are trails designed to appropriately accommodate planned uses?
- Will a diversity of seasonal visitor experiences be offered?
- Is there appropriate trail connectivity to other recreation opportunities (other parks, city, etc.)?
- Are trails designed to accommodate multiple uses and high visitation with minimal management and maintenance?
- Are there opportunities for longer (in mileage) trail experiences?
- Are there fun and entertaining opportunities to increase skill levels in different recreation opportunities?
- Is there easy access and connectivity to the park and it's trails (shuttles, connection to town, etc.)?
- Does the Park infrastructure offer opportunities to adapt to the needs of various users?

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Does the story told about the Park reflect all facets of Park history?
- Are there resources dedicated to cultural and historical preservation?
- Are the recreation opportunities planned and developed in ways that preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the property?
- Have the tribes provided input on evaluation criteria, since it is so crucial to understand the resources tribes want preserved?
- Is the Park honoring its cultural history around grazing and agriculture?

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Are there educational opportunities related to multi-use trails?
- Are there a variety of engagement opportunities for all users?
- Is there both diversity (in age, ethnicity/race, ability, recreation interest, etc.) of and significant number of individuals reached?
- Are there learning and experiential opportunities that involve and engage local and regional youth in the Park?
- Is the Park taking advantage of the potential for partnerships to support outreach and education? Does the Park have the resources and staff to accomplish this?

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Is the Park creating a sufficient amount of revenue for CPW?
- Does the messaging in the Park highlight the unique character of the community of Trinidad?
- Is there trail/access connectivity to promote regional recreation, including New Mexico?
- Are there opportunities to work with local businesses to highlight Park resources?

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along With Park Development And Operations Advance Objectives From All Vision Focus Areas

- Is the Park providing educational and stewardship (ie volunteer) opportunities for the local Trinidad area community?
- Is there staff and budgetary capacity to maintain infrastructure for high-use recreational activities?
- Are there community forums established where people can share information about the Park?
- Are there criteria or a process that helps establish funding priorities?
- Are there opportunities to partner with agencies and local businesses and organizations for emergency response, fundraising, and investment management?

NEXT STEPS AND NEEDS:

The following next steps were identified by interest groups as

- Maps and data to make more informed recommendations
- Understanding of areas that will be precluded from recreation based on environmental analysis
- Understanding of management philosophies (e.g., fire)
- Collaboration between states to understand opportunities for inter-state park passes and land management differences
- Motorized and non-motorized recreation sideboards
- Guidance on specific policy questions
 - Will the park name, Fishers Peak State Park, be part of the Master Planning discussion?
 - Will there be grazing on the property?
- Engage interest groups in-person on the property

APPENDIX A: INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Conservation/Environmental*

DATE: March 24, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary, Daniel Estes

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
RMFI
Denver Audubon
VOC
Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
Friends of Greenhorn Mountain Trails/ Sangre de Cristo Group Sierra Club(SdCG)
Colorado Wildlife Federation
Sierra Club

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

There is a collective responsibility for Park Management - FA 1, FA 2, FA 4, FA 6

Participants noted the importance of engaging the community in Park management, including through citizen science and participation of volunteers and friends groups. It was important to participants to help the community better understand and maintain the resource, particularly given capacity constraints of CPW and Park staff.

Opportunity to educate about natural systems and resources - FA 1, FA 4

Fishers Peak State Park provides a unique opportunity to highlight the importance of natural systems and resources that currently exist on the property. While participants recognized the role of recreation, there was a strong urge to maintain many of the special aspects of the Park for educational purposes for future generations.

Importance of protecting existing wildlife and ecosystems - FA 1

Participants agreed on the importance of protecting existing wildlife and ecosystems by maintaining migration corridors, birthing areas, etc. in undisturbed ways and recognizing wildlife and plant species as user groups in their own right. It was important for participants to have separate experiences for wildlife viewing opportunities away from noise and other recreation impacts.

Volunteer group expertise and offer for assistance - FA 1, FA 4

Many of the volunteer management groups on the call offered expertise in thinking through sustainable trail design as well as community engagement as it relates to volunteerism. The groups expressed excitement to collaborate with CPW on trail building and other recreation-based and nature-minded planning.

Inclusivity - FA 2, FA 4

Each breakout group mentioned the importance of inclusive opportunities - both in recreation as well as engagement and education. Volunteer management organizations offered assistance thinking through best practices on accessible infrastructure, and others noted the importance of inclusive interpretation, education, and outreach.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Wildlife habitat remains inhabited
- Migration corridors and winter range are conserved
- Separation of louder recreation activities and quieter, wildlife-based activities
- Provide opportunities for community learning
- Meet management goals
- Opportunities for stewardship and volunteering
- Range of recreation opportunities for various user groups
- Little opportunity for recreationists to stray outside of their area/trail

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- What wildlife data has the team already collected and through what mechanisms?
- How will TSJC and their new trails program be engaged in the Park development?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- Additional mapping and information to depict wildlife migrations and habitat areas
- Shared resource: iNaturalist App

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group was divided into two smaller breakout groups for discussion purposes. The following notes capture highlights from those break-out discussions.

Breakout Group #1:

Broad Discussion Input

- Expectation of collaboration - opportunities for visitors to help park managers maintain the resource (via stewardship, volunteering, etc.)
- Importance of inclusivity
- Planning the appropriate infrastructure to manage a large property and visitors
- Community responsibility for the resource

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Importance of preserving, protecting, and maintaining natural systems
 - Prevention of social trails
 - Conserve unfragmented habitat and wildlife viewing experiences
 - Elk severe winter range, birthing areas, etc.
- Fishers Peak is a beautiful amenity and it's important to ensure upkeep to benefit future generations
- Opportunities to develop/maintain volunteer Friends Groups (can assist with messaging, signage, etc.)
- Prevention of social trails

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Park has opportunity to facilitate community enjoyment of resources

- Louder activities on fringe area of park
- Anticipate high influx of visitors
- Avoid wildlife watching areas where there is significant noise pollution (from highway, other recreation users, etc.)
- Create trails to slow down movement of people on the landscape
- Separate Park entrances to create an undisturbed wildlife viewing area
- Develop dead-end side trails with viewing blinds to encourage wildlife viewing experiences

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Opportunity to provide education and training about the natural environment
 - Sometimes, Park Rangers have too much going on to engage people. Would like to see a dedicated position for marketing, outreach, and education
 - Inform users of the impacts of recreation off the trails and designated areas
- Engage in community science programming to bring the community into management of the resource
 - Create expectation that all partners, stakeholders, community members are working for the betterment of the Park together
- Market the Park in an inclusive way to reach all user groups and understand social implications
- Volunteers can really help other stakeholders/the public understand what is happening on the ground
 - Can measure success based on how many people are exposed to education
- Accessibility is an important component
 - Developing infrastructure (track chair programs, large picnic areas, thoughtfully placed seating/shade/rest areas)

Focus Area 6: Partnership along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from all Vision Focus Areas

- Infrastructure exists to manage and sustain visitation

Breakout Group #2

Broad Discussion Input

- Ability for existing groups (RMFI, VOC, etc.) to help train volunteers and rally around maintaining the resource
- Creation and support of Friends Groups has been helpful in maintaining public lands

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Consideration of important management to protect watersheds against wildfires
- Constructing trails appropriate for ecosystems
- Something to celebrate and something to protect
 - Phased approach will help ensure critical species aren't displaced
 - Keep remote feel
- Treating flora and fauna as their own user groups and building trails with wildlife in mind

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Sustainable trail network that can be used by all
- Consider recreation beyond trail use - what are the camping impacts?
- Don't shy away from collaborative processes and ensure all voices are heard - not just prominent recreation groups
- Features that are intriguing and trail networks that don't allow people to "cheat the system"
 - Switchbacks that don't encourage social trails
 - Fencing/visual blockages
 - Interpretive signage
- Management of trail standards

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Incorporate culturally important spots into planning

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Trail building experience also comes with engaging the community to expand capacity
- Groups also have existing experience creating accessible trail and recreation experiences and would be willing to provide insight

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Wildlife/Hunting*

DATE: March 25, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Daniel Estes (CDR Associates)

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
CPW Southeast Region Sportspeople Roundtable
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Desire to further develop the link between hunting and conservation - FA 1, FA 2, FA 4, FA 6 - Participants noted the significant role that sportspeople dollars played in the purchase of the Fishers Peak property and emphasized the importance of continuing to use hunting as a means to further conservation. They described specific ways their hunting-focused organizations can contribute to conservation efforts, including through funding habitat enhancement projects, conservation easements, and land acquisition. Participants also noted the importance of developing strategies to restore quality habitats damaged by beetle kill while simultaneously mitigating fire risk.

Erring on the side of conservation when developing facilities and infrastructure - FA 1, FA 2 - Participants generally advised caution when considering facilities and infrastructure development. They advocated for leaving portions of the Park untouched and highlighted the risks associated with opening the Park to

activities that can be hard on the land, such as ATVs. This perspective, they said, is based on the fact that the property has been relatively untouched by the public in recent decades due to its private standing, making it a unique and precious landscape. As one participant summarized, “the fewer the people the better, the fewer the roads the better, the fewer the trails the better.”

Understanding and incorporating non-hunter and hunter behaviors into the Master Plan - FA 2, FA 6 -

Participants drew attention to the potential challenges of developing a Master Plan that adequately addresses the interests of hunters and non-hunters—particularly when those groups are expected to coexist on the Park at the same time. Areas of concern under this banner include safety, wildlife disturbances, and general crowding issues. Participants advocated for considering seasonal closures to sections of the park for non-hunters and other measures to manage these issues.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Leaving a portion of the Park as close to natural state as possible
- Campgrounds, trails, and other facilities locations selected to reduce/minimize impact on wildlife corridors (e.g., calving areas)
- Plan that limits hunter interactions with other recreation users
- Evidence-based wildlife conservation approach that incorporates migratory routes and other significant data
- Plan that allows for youth and non-traditional hunters to participate in the sport

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Does the Park contain elk calving areas? (If so, plans should be developed that protect these areas from disturbance)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Daniel Estes, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Daniel presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group began discussion based on the predetermined questions associated with the Focus Areas. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Focus Area 1: NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

- Ideas for long-term preservation and sustainability included:
 - Leaving portions of the park undisturbed
 - Limiting the number of people who can hike to the peak per day
 - Proactive mitigation of beetle kill
 - Limiting the overall number of visitors
 - Understanding the breadth of wildlife corridors and then planning facilities for minimal disruption
 - Investing in good fire rings

Focus Area 2: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- The Mule deer foundation has funded studies examining heavy recreation use that could be a helpful resource for the Project Team.
- Intentionality in multi-use approach and planning (e.g., precluding mountain bikers and hunters from the same areas)
- Important for the hunting community to offer youth hunting experiences
- Education about hunter/hunting area etiquette for non-hunters is vital
- Limit ATVs and off-road vehicles to stymie the negative environmental impacts of off-road use
- Hiking and biking are both compatible with hunting
- During hunting season, some areas should be reserved strictly for hunting
- During mud season, consider restricting recreational activities that could damage trails (e.g., mountain biking)
- Camping will be the draw that brings people; this is both an opportunity (economic benefits) and a challenge (management and overcrowding issues)
- For high-impact activities, the team might consider guided options rather than allowing users to be independent
- Trails should be sustainable and easy to maintain - consider season closures to trails that risk damage from recreation users (e.g., mountain bikes during mud season)
- Communication, including signage, pamphlets, and online tactics, should inform users about hunting season and area etiquette (e.g., Bowhunters often do not wear orange like other hunters)

Focus Area 4: OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

- Education is critical to maintaining wildlife and natural systems
 - Sports persons dollars have been and should continue to be used for improving education amongst users
 - The public should receive more education on the impacts of sports persons dollars
- Signage can help with education and hunter awareness (e.g., “Archery season in progress”)
- Volunteer programs can be leveraged to speak to people in-person at campsites or throughout the Park to answer questions and educate about etiquette

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Outdoor Recreation*

DATE: March 26, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary, Daniel Estes

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Santa Fe Trail Association
City of Trinidad
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Fremont Adventure Recreation
Big Agnes
Colorado Mountain Club
Sugarite Canyon State Park

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Managing Expectations to Mitigate Conflict - FA 1, FA 2, FA 4

Participants highlighted the importance of robust education about the resources of the Park and the importance of conservation. Setting and managing expectations up front helps to mitigate user conflict, conflict with resources, and provides an overall better user experience.

Diverse User Experiences to Accommodate All Needs - FA 2

Diverse user experiences and levels of difficulty will attract more visitors to the Park. Opportunities for families, accessible recreation, and challenging trails encourage a diverse range of visitors. In addition, diverse users also requires specific areas and sections for particular recreation uses.

Unique and Well-Maintained Trails - FA 2

Participants highlighted the importance, and unique opportunity, to develop a well-maintained and designed trail system from the ground up. Trails should offer unique experiences that compliment the features of the Park.

Benefits of Recreation to the Economy - FA 2, FA 5

Recreation will naturally benefit the economy. Some participants were concerned that too great a focus on economic benefit to the community might overrun the Park with users and be a detriment to the natural and cultural resources.

Don't Overuse the Resource - FA 1, FA 2

Participants recognized the need for a balance between recreation and conservation. The natural environment that exists on the Park is important to all, and a dispersed and informed trail design process is important to have a little impact as possible on nature and wildlife.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Multi-use trail system and space for each user group to have their own area
- Dispersed impact
- Trail use is appropriate based on trail design
- Lack of negative impact on resources (social trails, illegal parking, etc)
- Revenue for CPW exists
- Diverse seasonal experience offerings
- Connectivity of trails with other recreation opportunities (other parks, city, etc.)

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline

- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group was divided into two smaller breakout groups for discussion purposes. The following notes capture highlights from those break-out discussions.

Breakout Group #1:

Broad Discussion Input

- Importance of bringing all voices to the table in the planning process
- Opportunity to manage expectations and define uses from the beginning without having to offend anyone who has been using trails
 - Manage for disappointment
 - Let people know opportunities ahead of time so they know what to expect

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Engage wildlife experts early to develop measured approach to trail building
 - Consider trail density and impacts on wildlife
- Ensure nature, history, and culture remain

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Need to develop a strategy to manage conflicts between recreation users
 - Motorized and non-motorized
- Accessibility is important part of recreation
- Well-built sustainable multi use trail system with specific user trails and/or directional trails
 - Sometimes it's best for user groups to have their own space
 - Durable trails for long-term management
- Consider how to limit capacity to not overwhelm the resource
- Disperse impact and spread it out
- Appropriate use of trails
- Watch for detrimental effects (eg parking on private property)
- Not possible to please everyone - but can measure for user satisfaction
- Opportunity to develop unique concepts that are appropriate for the terrain and not offered elsewhere in the region (eg. zipline, cross-country mountain bike system, rock climbing, etc.)
- Sporting opportunities appropriate for all age groups
 - People will go to a community for a trail system they like
- Seasonal diversity

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Importance of conservation-oriented education

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Community sees recreation as an opportunity to bolster economy
 - Concern that this may drive over-development
- Measure for revenue for CPW

Breakout Group #2

Broad Discussion Input

- Park should remain part of the community

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Visible presence of enforcement to ensure natural resources are conserved appropriately
- Identify and reserve sensitive areas
- Create trail systems that keep people on the trail
- Allow everyone to have a seat at the table for biological and cultural resource conversations
- Trail restrictions with explanations (nesting, birthing, etc.)
- Mitigate light pollution for wildlife populations

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Connecting the Park to other trail systems
- Enforceable and enforced rules
 - Use spotting scopes to monitor behavior
 - Issues often caused in proximity to vehicles - encourage people to be on the trails
- Multi-use trails and dividing people up
- Limiting mountain bike speed
- Guided tours further into the park to create more accessibility

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Use entertaining ways to provide education about trails. Some messaging is old and dated
- Robust interpretive program can make a large impact

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Naturally provides economic benefit for small communities

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Climbing*

DATE: March 30, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Daniel Estes (CDR Associates)

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Access Fund

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
THK
CPW
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Opportunity to engage and build local climbing communities - FA 2, FA 4, FA 6 - Erik (the only participant in this group) was excited to hear about the potential for climbing at Fishers Peak in large part because it presents an opportunity to develop a local climbing community, including both new and experienced climbers. Erik noted that this region is not currently known for its climbing and that interested individuals often travel elsewhere to climb. By opening Fishers Peak to climbing, locals will have the opportunity to engage in the sport closer to home, which in turn can lead to recreation, economic, and environmental stewardship benefits.

Management strategy will be key - FA 1, FA2, FA 6 - Erik described a variety of specific ideas and Master Plan concepts related to the management of climbing at the Park. He advocated for a flexible, science-based approach and emphasized the importance of thoughtful trail and staging area placement and development. He recommended a proactive approach to trail development in which management would work with climbing experts prior to opening the park to understand the areas climbers will want to go and then develop trails, where possible, to accommodate those movements. Other specific comments about management are captured in the notes below.

Excellent resources already available to be tapped - FA 1, FA 2, FA 6 - Erik provided the team with a range of ideas for resources to tap into throughout the Master Planning process. These include: Access Funds' system of icons that climbers recognize, body of literature on climbing and raptor management including successful education campaigns, nearby climbing organizations to engage, Access Fund's grant program, and others.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Equation that weighs the importance of various factors, including:
 - Quality
 - Approach length
 - Use levels
 - Number of climbing opportunities
- Predictive Use Level
- Number and quality of climbing routes
- Distance from parking to climbing destination
 - Significant drop off in usage when the distance is over 2 miles
- Sustainable and resilient trails

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- What will staging areas look like?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions**
 - Are there areas that will be precluded from climbing access based on the environmental analysis? (Note: Erik was not seeking an answer to this question, but mentioned it as an important policy consideration.)
- **Action items**
 - Kevin and Crystal to coordinate with Erik about a site visit to showcase and analyze potential climbing locations
 - Erik recommended the Project Team connect with San Luis Valley Climbers Alliance
- **Resources shared**
 - Access Funds' system of icons that could be used as a communication tool at Fishers Peak

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Daniel Estes, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming Erik Murdock, Access Fund. Erik was the only participant for the Climbing Interest Group. Daniel presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to Erik. Erik then introduced himself, providing an overview of his background and Access Fund's interest in Fishers Peak.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, Daniel began the discussion by asking Erik the predetermined questions associated with the Focus Areas depicted below. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Focus Area 1: NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

- Develop an intuitive trail system that decreases the desire for social trails
- Necessary to develop a human waste plan
- Wildlife needing to be considered when climbing routes are developed commonly include bats, raptors, and bighorn sheep.
 - There is a body of literature on climbing and raptor management that can be tapped
- Access Fund advocates for a flexible, science-based approach

Focus Area 2: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Fishers Peak is likely going to primarily used for ‘traditional climbing’
- This is going to be a regional destination (likely not national)
- Important to develop sustainable staging areas
- Mitigate user conflicts, including intragroup and intergroup conflict
- Crowding related to climbing likely will not be an issue at Fishers Peak
- Primarily dealing with basalt rocks on Fishers Peak – moderate quality, definitely climbable
 - Similar to Sugarite State Park in NM
- While Fishers Peak is likely going to be more about adventure climbing, there may be some opportunities for sport climbing and bouldering
 - Bouldering is a more inclusive style of climbing because it offers more options and requires less gear
- Typically land-managers have little involvement in climbing issues (to avoid liability), but there needs to be a plan for emergency services access

Focus Area 4: OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

- Signage at trailheads can be developed collaboratively with climbing organizations
 - Access Fund has developed a set of icons that climbers are used to
- There have been successful educational campaigns to train climbers to help protect raptors and their habitats
- Keep any messages about safety concise (e.g., “5 Safety Tips for Climbers”)

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES**

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Equestrian*

DATE: March 30, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Daniel Estes (CDR Associates)

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Rocky Mountain Back Country Horseman's Association
Boulder Area Trails Coalition
Bridledale Undevelopment Corporation
Kit Carson Riding Club

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Education about equestrian uses, benefits, and needs - FA 1, FA 2, FA 4 - Participants took time to provide thoughtful input regarding the values, needs, and unique attributes of equestrians. They emphasized that data, as opposed to rhetoric, should be used to make decisions about horse access in the Park. They noted that horses provide Park users with access options that are rarely available by other means, while also describing the specific infrastructure and facilities required to make horse access feasible (e.g., parking, water access, horse-friendly camping, etc.).

Values of preservation and conservation are paramount - FA 1, FA 4 - Participants described the desire of their organizations to contribute to the Park's sustainability and conservation needs. The group

highlighted specific natural resources they hope will be protected (see list in notes below). They also described the culture of equestrians being one committed to the long-term sustainability of public lands. Further, they drew the connection between the preservation of western heritage and equestrianism.

Opportunity for shared use and access across a variety of user groups - FA 2, FA 4 - The group noted the perceived challenges of horses mixing with other types of recreation Park users, including hikers, hunters and mountain bikers. However, they emphasized the opportunity Fishers Peak presents for building a community of diverse users and developing a culture of shared access. They described best practices for users interacting with horses on trails and brainstormed strategies for effectively communicating these practices to Park visitors.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Horse trailer access and parking
- Water and shade access
- Education opportunities related to shared use trails and horse etiquette
- Over ten mile trail rides
- Horse-accessible camping areas

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- Participants requested more detailed maps to help better understand where resources exist on the property (i.e., access to data layers)
- Recommendation: a representative from Colorado Horse Council would be a valuable addition to this group

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Daniel Estes, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Daniel presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group began discussion based on the predetermined questions associated with the Focus Areas. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Focus Area 1: NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

- Would like to protect and maintain public lands generally, and certainly Fishers Peak

- Recommendation: someone from Colorado Horse Council would be a valuable addition to this group
- *Specific natural resources that should be maintained and protected include:*
 - Combination of shade and views
 - Different micro ecosystems to enjoy
 - No bare rock
 - Areas with scenic vistas

Focus Area 2: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Decisions about recreation access should be made through a data-driven approach. Emotional rhetoric should be devalued in this process. There is a lot of emotion around horses.
- According to the data, horses do not have adverse impacts on ecosystems compared to other types of uses.
- Equestrians have fear around accessibility – they really care about Colorado and what they are leaving behind.
- *Needs for horse users include:*
 - Water access
 - Accessible camping
 - “If we can’t get there, we can’t ride there.”
 - Horse trailer parking
 - By denying horse trailer parking, even if horses are technically allowed, the Park will be rendered inaccessible to equestrians.
 - Size of vehicles has to be considered – consider reserved parking.
 - Monitoring appropriate uses of amenities
- *Attributes of a positive equestrian experience include:*
 - Potential for multi-day rides
 - Regional trail connections
 - Front range interface
 - Minimum of 10 mile trail rides
 - A place to stay
 - Diversity of trail systems and ecosystems
- *Best practices for sharing park with other recreation users include:*
 - Understanding there is more in common between equestrians and other users than there is different
 - It is really important to get along
 - Other users yield to equestrians (for equestrians, it’s a safety issue)
 - Yield triangle
 - Mitigating conflicts with joggers
 - Horses can use much more of a trail; families only go a few miles so we can share the trail
 - Multi-use trails as well as single-use trails

Focus Area 4: OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

- Fishers Peak presents an opportunity to educate youth about the values of honoring the land, leave no trace
- *Effective / specific communication and education strategies:*
 - Coexist
 - Sharing trails safely with horses - available at every trail head
 - Maybe this group can help create those materials

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES**

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Emergency Services*

DATE: March 31, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Las Animas County Search and Rescue
Colorado Search and Rescue Association
Trinidad Ambulance District/Las Animas County Search and Rescue
Hoehne Fire Protection District
Trinidad Fire Chief

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Understanding the State’s Fire Mitigation Plan / Philosophy - FA 1, FA 6

Participants highlighted the need to understand the state’s approach to fire management related to managing healthy ecosystems and catastrophic fire prevention/mitigation. In addition to requesting this philosophical approach, participants offered to assist with fire mitigation planning for strategies such as forest thinning, prescribed fire and structure protection.

Continued Good Communication Among Agencies - FA 6

Participants expressed appreciation for the good communication and collaboration from CPW to date and requested that the good quality communication continue. Specific areas of interest include - understanding what part(s) of the property are open now, which part(s) might open soon, where problem areas might be, availability of water, knowing types of activities allowed in the Park - for search and rescue and fire planning and response. For incident responses, It will be important to coordinate communication technologies such as radio technology/frequency and cell phone coverages, determine gaps in the systems, and develop approaches to address those gaps.

Shared Technical Platforms for Mapping and other site information - FA 6

Shared technical information and technology platforms, such as GIS-based mapping, would be helpful to emergency responders to understand the site and coordinate incident response. Participants recognized that property information would be sensitive and would commit to not sharing publicly. Different technologies were discussed including Avenza, ONYX, SAR TOPO and CAL TOPO; however, the key is that the technologies are discussed, considered and shared such that responders are working from the same shared information.

Access for Responders (e.g. Fire, Search & Rescue) - planning for incidents and understanding of park property - FA 6

Participants requested early access to Fishers Peak by the Emergency Agencies to understand landscape and anticipate problem areas. Participants requested both structured and unstructured property visits/tours so emergency responders can become familiar with landscape. Emergency responders are interested in training opportunities - both table tops and on site - that would help prepare the teams prior to incidents occurring. Access and training would allow for planning access for incident command, equipment staging, landing areas, dealing with visitor parking blocking access, emergency vehicle access and walk-in access. It was noted that visitors may go beyond the officially opened 250 acres.

Education for Park Visitors - Safety & Fire Mitigation - FA 4, FA 6

Emergency responders noted the importance of safety and fire-related education for visitors such as avoiding unsafe areas, understanding how to be prepared with sufficient water and clothing, not overextending physical abilities, campfire safety, etc. Education could include encouraging people to reach out for help when they need it. Also, there are opportunities to educate the public about ecosystem health and the relationship to prescribed fire and thinning activities.

Respecting the Natural Landscape - FA 1

While emergency responders want to plan for access, staging and response for incidents such as search and rescue and fire, they would like to do so in a way that minimizes impacts to the ecosystem. Carefully planned emergency accesses and temporary accesses to incidents that allow for habitat restoration post-incident are important considerations.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- There was not a thorough discussion of evaluation criteria.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- What is Fishers Peak State Park Fire Mitigation Philosophy and Plan?
- Can emergency response partners get on the site early for planning and assessment?
- Key questions to resolve about shared information and communication platforms - radio technology, cell coverage, GIS mapping, etc.

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions** - fire philosophy
- **Action items** - Site access, technology sharing and decision-making
- **Resources shared** - significant support services available - search and rescue, fire response, fire mitigation, fire restoration

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Tracy Winfree, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Tracy presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group had a discussion prompted by questions related to Vision Focus Areas established for Fishers Peak State Park. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Broad Discussion Input

- Emergency services support the Park when people are in trouble... Park and support us by providing good mapping and informing us about the resources that the park has.
- Understand the resources that are there - what equipment needs to be purchased?
- How can the Park help facilitate the emergency services at the worst time for the Park.
- If the Park changes that the information is kept up to date.
- Sheriff is responsible, we respond.
- Infrastructure - equipment, staging and access that is not blocked by the public and their vehicles.
- A lot on our side to be ironed out - pretty soon with nicer weather - we will be looking for areas for practical training - Request availability for areas for practical training.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Prescribed fire for ecosystem health and fire mitigation

- Carefully planned emergency access - plans to “avoid, mitigate and restore”

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Hunting - Responders will want to know where and when and how much so we can be prepared. How will CPW handle hunters? Basic understanding of what, where and access points.
- “Getting to the Peak” - rigorous, steep, technical? Will want to understand risks.
- Recreational activities or people being where they aren't supposed to be (Hunting, hiking, technical climbing)- people will go out of bounds - we just want to know where they are designed to be.
- Paragliding is becoming a bigger issue across the state - will it be allowed? If so where and where do they land

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- Public Education - about safety - convince people - no smoking, this is a dangerous area, prevention through education - interpretive signage.
- Willingness of people to call if they get in a bind when they are doing something they are not supposed to.
- Aren't prepared - think they are lost when they are not - and then the other side people don't call when they should - people don't know we are free.
- S&R is getting ramped up again - and it would be good for people to know that we are available
- Scheduling Public Events - hug a tree with kids, show and tell - bring the education out to the public - FP is a great opportunity.

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- What are some of the other access beyond the 250 acres. What is going to open up in the next phases? Concern for people crossing into unopened areas.
- What are the apps or the mapping that we can share? Interest in having access to Avenza and maps and other information that might be helpful for us to get on the same page and be working off the same sheet of music.
- There is a desire for a certain platform that we all use - GIS, etc. Fire, search and rescue - (Avenza,, Onyx, - what is the one platform?) - We choose the platform and then upload the information on roads, access points.
- Whatever we use we want to coordinate - and let us know what you don't want available to the public - just for emergency response.
- Suggestion - SAR TOPO- same platform and we are using the same information as a part of response - related to CAL TOPO - Local Fire Protection - uses Avenza on the wildland side - TNC was supposed to get us maps DSTC's resources - SARTOPO and
- High angle rescue operations - limited access to the Peak itself - good and bad - not many people can get there, but it will be a challenge for us to get there if someone is in trouble. Access when that emergency arises - how do we get there and what types of vehicles can we use? What do we have to do on foot.

- Through planning and budgeting for improvements to get to those areas without messing up some of the park.
- Hunting - Emergency response will want to know where and when and how much so we can be prepared. Basic information would be sufficient.
- Hunting, hiking, technical climbing, - people will go out of bounds - we just want to know where they are designed to be)
- Paragliding is becoming a bigger issue across the state - will it be allowed? If so where and where do they land (base jumpers too)
- The willingness of people to call if they get in a bind when they are doing something they are not supposed to. S&R is getting ramped up again - and it would be good for people to know that we are available.
- Visitors aren't prepared - think they are lost when they are not - and then the other side people don't call when they should - people don't know we are free.
- Communications - Where is there cell phone coverage in the park? Search where there is or is not cell phone service - How do the agencies talk to each other? Cell service, other?
- Fire Operational challenges for us are getting access and getting water. State will provide some air support with water and for building roads and access. Knowing the water supplies that are up there - are there sources? lakes and ponds? Ponds up higher?
- Radio Communications - what is the County on - VHF or 800 MH. Are you all on the same communication system?
- Hoenhe fire has its own repeater - S&R has its own repeater - VHF - and 800 MH service - CPW Rangers would have the appropriate clearances. About 80% of the park is covered by 800, and then VHF is good and cell coverage is pretty good too. Think we are pretty good from the beginning. Note - Will need to assess Communications - technology, connectivity, any needed investments to address gaps? Clear game plan for what is being used. How to get services on the "same channel".
- Early Access - (not just a structured visit - allow unstructured exploration) Get some early access for the emergency responders to give them a chance to wander around. Park Pass or opportunity to explore the landscape - beneficial for people who know the area and are a fire responder or search and rescue to explore it on their own.
- Training - getting a bunch of guys on the ground or table tops - scenarios - what will we do with a fire, a search of a certain time, and a rescue - Both on the ground and table tops are important. Table tops can help build relationships - get to know each other.
- Is there a maintained road or series of maintained roads - need to get to a subject as quickly as possible. - ACCESS ROADS - need to have consideration for conservation - hope to see something running into a center point (walk 5 miles instead of 10) - a central point to decrease the amount of time on foot.
- CPW' Fire Philosophy and Fire mitigation plans - associated with access plans. Pre planned structure protection, where will we protect this ridge, where are we going to cut fire lines? Will we let a fire run - for the ecosystem? Are we keeping the fire out of town?

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: Mountain Biking

DATE: March 31, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates
Overland Mountain Bike Association
Cloud City Wheelers Bike Club and Owner Trailside LTD
Boulder Mountainbike Alliance, Colorado Mountain Bike Coalition

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Variety of Trail Difficulty Levels to Encourage Growth - FA 2

A diverse trails system that has opportunities for growth (level of difficulty, unique features to learn from, etc.) encourages more people to enjoy mountain biking and develop increased skillsets.

Well-made and maintained trail system - FA 1, FA 2

Developing a sustainable and well-made trail system from the start encourages users to stay on the trail and avoid impacts to the environment. Quality of the trails is important for long-term maintenance of the Park and to keep users coming back to enjoy. Consider using natural resources (rocks, clay, etc.) from the Park to develop trails.

Specific Trail Features that Create Unique Experiences - FA 2

Build trails with the landscape of the Park in mind to ensure specific trail features (rock walls, arches, trees, overlooks) are highlighted and create a desire to use the trail system and grow in ability.

Anticipate High Levels of Usership - FA 2

Due to COVID, people will continue to use outdoor spaces more and more. Participants noted the importance of creating infrastructure to maintain this level of usership and that the Park isn't overcapacity shortly after it opens.

Connectivity and Accessibility - FA 2, FA 5

Creating connections between Trinidad Lake, the City of Trinidad, and other recreation areas develops a more robust system and also benefits the economy. Bikers can easily bike from downtown Trinidad to the Park, which mitigates some parking issues.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Opportunities for a variety of ages and skill levels
- Well-built trails from the beginning
- Fun and entertaining opportunities to build skillsets
- Easy trail access and connectivity (shuttles, connection to town, etc.)
- Capacity to maintain infrastructure for high-use

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group discussed key questions. The following notes capture highlights from those discussions.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Resources must be managed, recognition of recreation impacts
 - Camping and bike-packing can have some negative impacts to the resource if not managed properly

- Sustainable trails and creating a culture of natural resource stewardship from the beginning
- Inventory and understand sensitive areas up-front
- Pick where the trails are and create big areas between them for wildlife corridors
- For mountain bikers, the trail itself is the destination, so if the trail is made so that people love it, social trails will be less likely to develop

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Mountain bikers are willing to travel for a good trail system
- Good weather riding destination in the winter months for people in higher elevations
- Building mountain bike community in town that cares for the trails and can lend expertise to develop the trail system
- Want to see good, positive trail interactions which can be fostered with well-designed trails
 - Separation of uses
- Diverse types of riders - important to have opportunities for all ages
 - Variety of trails helps bring the community into the Park
- Enjoyment of inspiring views and destinations (lookouts, rock arches, trees, etc.)
- Avoid physical barriers to access trails
- Connecting recreation to volunteerism and stewardship
- Build trails right the first time - bike optimized trails
 - Creates less maintenance on the back end
 - Armor often, import materials in to harden the trail (on-site soil isn't always good enough), invest up front, drainage features
 - Don't be afraid to use clay to strengthen the tread; you should import materials that will do the job and make it sustainable
- COVID levels of usership will not return to pre-covid, and the system needs to be built with this in mind
 - Quality and quantity of trails are important given the high numbers of users
- Accessibility of trails from campground
- Technical trail features are desired; trails that allow us to improve our skills; features off to the side that aren't required but are optional
 - rock wall, jumps, "play areas"
 - Interesting trail features (a lines, b lines) enhance the trail experience
- Directional trails make a lot of sense in a place that is going to have a lot of use; one-way downhill trails is acutely missing from the front range
 - "multiuse trails with pockets of single use (for advanced users)"
- Effective trail signage - ski rating system
- Cell service throughout the park
- 50 miles of trail at minimum - want to ensure Park doesn't reach capacity six months after it opens
- Dispersed use is crucial
- Directional trails are better than closures and increase capacity and provide better user experience - no lollipop trails

- To be able to park and stay for a weekend is important

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Large events can help bolster economic benefit to the park (bike races, for example)
- Connect trail system to downtown so bike riders can bike to/from town
- Designated shuttle system within the Park would also attract users

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES**

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

DATE: April 1, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary, Tracy Winfree

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
High Mountain Institute
Keystone, Next100
National Wildlife Federation
GreenLatino
Recreation Program Manager, Colorado State Land Board
Inclusive Journeys
San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
Manager of Cherry Creek State Park, Colorado Parks & Wildlife
TWS
Colorado Water Conservation Board

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
CDR
TPL

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Reflection of Cultural Significance of the Park - FA 1, FA 3

To some communities, the peak is sacred and holds cultural significance. Reflecting that significance back to the community through the history of the Park is important. There are some sensitivities around the peak itself, and this should be considered in the interpretation and development of recreation opportunities.

Address Barriers to Participation - FA 2, FA 4

Understanding community needs and addressing barriers to outdoor recreation is an important component of Park development. Creating opportunities for accessible infrastructure (picnic tables, rest areas, shade, etc.) is important to engaging individuals of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Transportation is another important barrier to consider and address.

Mutual Sharing of Ideas - FA 4

This is an opportunity to think beyond “education” and consider how to engage elders, youth, and community members in the mutual sharing of ideas about the Park. Multi-lingual outreach is crucial for gathering stories and input for the Master Plan.

Park Management Reflects Diversity of Community - FA 6

Staff and volunteer groups should reflect the diversity of the community. It is important that Park staff not be seen as only rule enforcers, but resources for park visitors and can engage with visitors in a multi-lingual manner.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Adaptability and modularity for multi-generational use
- Robust engagement opportunities for users
- Story reflects all facets of Park history

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- What is the history behind the naming of the Park?
- What Tribes are engaged in the process and how?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy question** - is the naming of Fishers Peak State Park open for discussion in this Master Plan process?

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the

discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group was divided into two smaller breakout groups for discussion purposes. The following notes capture highlights from those break-out discussions.

Breakout Group #1

Broad Discussion Input

- Importance of access to get to the park - transit options, for example
- Multi-lingual outreach and interpretation helps connect with the community
 - Rangers that speak more than one language
- Positive interaction with Park staff - not just enforcing the rules

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Educate to protect species and habitat that exist there

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Identify and address barriers to participation in outdoor recreation
 - Identify demographic trends, conduct outreach and post-recreation surveys, multi-lingual marketing plan
- Ensuring everyone feels invited and comfortable is important
- Consider accessible infrastructure
 - Picnic tables, shade, rest areas, etc.
- Adaptability and modularity to accommodate multi-generational use

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Respecting history and context of the Park
 - The peak of the mesa is a sacred place for some cultures; consider highlighting this in the story
 - Providing honors and respect to the land
- Because of assimilation, some people have lost their heritage
- Don't want to improperly educate people
- Expand the story of the Park so it isn't one sided
- Hiring people that match the community to ensure culture is reflected in the management of the Park

- Work with elders to design signage, buildings, etc. that are accessible and informed
 - Diversity of history

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Some people are turned off by the term education - it may feel top down
 - Instead, mutual sharing of ideas
- Education center where people can have the conversations that are necessary
- Help people envision themselves there through marketing and education campaigns
 - Framing so people see themselves on public land
- Focus on astronomy and human connection
 - Big skies help connect people
- Ensure “Friends Of” organizations represent the community and diverse users
 - Diverse perspectives help accomplish more
- Help be a convener, conduit, or a communicator of challenges to help to link the right folks together
 - Make it easier for kids and families to experience nature
 - Engage specific voices that may not have been thought of in the planning process
 - Child-led leadership

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

Breakout Group #2

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Concern over people on the Peak and the implications for those who see the land as sacred
- Community-driven experiences from the onset
- Accessibility is easier to do from the ground up - a unique opportunity

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Tell stories of the history that has been there for a long time and be honest about some of the more uncomfortable history
- Consider re-naming the Park and use community outreach to inform the process
 - Provide the story behind the naming of the Park
 - Community identifies with “Fishers Peak”

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for all Coloradans and Visitors

- Listen in an equitable way
- Consider ways to make it more accessible
 - Free entry to Park for certain user groups

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Opportunity to revitalize the community and pay homage to history

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along With Park Development And Operations Advance Objectives From All Vision Focus Areas

- Opportunity to develop diverse and inclusive workforce from the beginning

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Education and Interpretation*

DATE: April 1, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Tracy Winfree & Daniel Estes

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Trinidad Carnegie Library
Pueblo Archaeological & Historical Society
Colorado Natural Heritage Program
The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
Trinidad Public Library
Trinidad State Junior College
Culebra Range Community Coalition, Bar NI Ranch Community Fund, Purgatoire Valley Foundation
Trinidad State Junior College
Indigenous Roots
Legacy Core Scanning, LLC

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Preservation of Landscape, Ecosystems - FA 1, FA 4

Participants identified Fishers Peak’s arge tracts of previously privately owned, undisturbed landscape, which need time to understand. Discussion highlighted the need to manage the land to preserve the flora, fauna and ecosystems that exist. Fishers Peak offers a unique opportunity for preserving habitat

and immersing people in learning about what is there, including comparing healthy v. unhealthy ecosystems.

Historical/Cultural Heritage - Telling full Story of Land (including/esp. indigenous people) - FA 3, FA 4

Discussion identified the need to capture stories about the land and its history and culture before we lose people connected to generations in/around Trinidad. Participants noted that it is important to discover and understand the longer term history, such as the culture and history of indigenous peoples who are/were part of this area. Fishers Peak offers an opportunity to share inclusive historical/cultural stories with current and future generations

Partnerships for Education - FA 1, FA 3, FA 4, FA 6

Many of the interest group participants represent educational institutions and they are interested in partnering with Fishers Peak, CPW and the partners to be part of educating people about the landscape relative to the ecosystem, sustainable trails and recreation, history and culture and other educational opportunities. Schools - elementary through Junior College (NM-CO) - can offer classroom space, specimen collecting/collection, and field trips and field work by and for students. Museums, Visitor Centers and Organizations/Societies can offer expertise, space and/or educational materials and volunteer efforts supporting gathering of and/or education related to artifacts, history, culture, archeology, flora and fauna, etc.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Number and type of students reached.
- Number of students pursuing a career in conservation.
- Tracking trends over time - goals at reaching beyond the classroom.
- Involvement of volunteers - numbers, experience, perspectives.
- Create feedback pathways to capture comments, perspectives, experiences.
- Capture who is visiting - demographics, return visits, from Trinidad, Denver, New Mexico, elsewhere?

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Are there ways to reach the non-traditional Park visitor?
- How are we serving and making the most of education and interpretation opportunities locally? Statewide?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions** - How quickly the site is planned and developed while still understanding what important natural and cultural/historical resources are on the site.
- **Action items** - Create an inventory of education and interpretation partnerships, including shared resource offers, including potential for new/collaborative programming
- **Resources shared** - Facilities to gather and study information - such as Rooms and Collections at the junior college, museums, K-12; Students who can help do the work; Volunteers who can help gather and disseminate data, information and stories

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Tracy Winfree, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Tracy presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group was divided into two smaller breakout groups for discussion purposes. The following notes capture highlights from those break-out discussions.

Breakout Group #1:

Broad Discussion Input

- Making amazing discoveries each time we visit the property (flora, fauna, archeology, geology)
- Need to make sure we understand what's there, through different seasons
- Capture historical and cultural stories
- Great opportunities for educational collaboration and partnership with schools, museums, visitor centers, societies and organizations - ranging from offering facilities to people to programming
- Concern about challenge to engage all of the stakeholders to work together
- Consider other educational examples: Excavating the Waco Mammoth National Monument Site (2015); The Santa Fe Trail at the Airforce Academy; City of Fort Collins Natural Area - Pine Ridge Natural Area

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- We want to support good planning so that we don't lose good resources. We are finding amazing stuff each time we go out. Feel like we are scratching the surface, including seasonal discoveries.
- A spot I am worried about (Marian V. Bald) - Perry's oatgrass community - that natural landscape and grass is - preserving the natural landscape.
- One of the big challenges is that dual challenge - educating the community and getting them there and keeping people informed about the various studies. How do we have patience - developed slowly and developed in a sustainable way.

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Concern about opening up the property to visitors and recreation when we do not know all we can about the landscape
- Ranch Mgmt - bring classrooms to the ranch as an outdoor laboratory - youth education and the environment - will work with Crystal and get the kids into natural environment

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

- Successful engagement and education means honoring prior people and prior knowledge. Families and ancestors of families hold stories about the peak and the park. Will help people feel invited.
- Capturing - while the voices are still active from the elders from the community - about the peak - archetypal - families and family lineage - still active - folkways recordings. Recordings that could be listened to in the same way that occurs in museums. Almost have an oral history room set up at the library - already have a few lined up. I need a lot of input - who and when. Losing those people every day
- We should all know why it is Fishers Peak - Lt Fisher was with Fremont Survey - There are probably other names - Pieces of the Native American population and why. Some of those things history -
- How to interface with other cultural opportunities - cartopia - blues festival - making sure there is visibility

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- Still contemplating how much we can do to involve students, field trips, special projects. Wildlife management and archeology - Will generate from its origin. Want to be with David Anderson when he goes up there
- Trinidad Junior College - Would like to explore possibilities that we would like to explore with students. Coordinate with the education staff. We are about education - Promote educational programs. Concurrent enrollment..HS and College
- Potential for getting school kids out on the Park - from Raton and Trinidad - all the way from elementary to Jr college students. Involve the students in a different way - they do data collection. Count the plants in the hoola hoop. Not just see but help study. Display their work, getting ownership of the landscape and knowledge.
- Do comparison communities - one that is rich and one that is devoid. Then they become stewards.

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- Trinidad Junior College - Would like to offer services to help coordinate with the agencies. Have a space that is a common work room that researches could use. Offer services and facilities.
- Traditional and Newcomers - hope I can off in some ways to increase engagement and overcome barriers of mistrust.

- Maybe there is a way to involve the public schools - bring your grandparents to school and then have the Library /Museum capture what those grandparents say. And goes to some of the other local communities too - not just Trinidad. Raton side is important .
- Many different ways to connect the partnerships: Museum connection; Opportunities on the site; Trinidad Visitor Center; Interactive types of activities. Same content that reinforces each other. Some might have a particular spin - like the archaeology museum. Include more than the ecological: historical - cultural - geological.

Breakout Group #2:

Broad Discussion Input

- Understanding the landscape - ecosystems, flora, fauna, geology, archeology
- Understanding the full history and culture of the property - not just white settler, but indigenous
- Opportunities for education for natural features and history/culture of the property
- Partnership: Educational and volunteer opportunities to protect the landscape
- Design trails and recreational activities in a way that respects the landscape

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Protecting the land - what does the land need? Relative to species and ecosystems
- Protection of the wildlife and of the endangered species: laws, policies - focus on protection

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Concern about what the rules are for recreation, such as around Mountain Biking, and impacts to landscape - also an opportunity for education
- Programming Ideas - Visitors healing more of themselves by sitting in nature - forest therapy

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

- One gap in knowledge is about indigenous culture - to help fill that gap - learning about the action behind
- Indigenous perspective can aid conservation and stewardship - letting the public know about what's iconic about southeastern Colorado
- European Invasion - time for healing - haven't treated this land well - opportunity to look at history and examine how things could be different

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- Inclusivity - making sure to ensure the marketing includes all people (POC, etc) - that there are things there for all people
- Important to forge partnerships with schools - informative programs that deal with Fishers Peak - do we send them out with an interactive scavenger hunt - could count how many people returned - visits and attendance
- Important to forge partnerships with schools - informative programs that deal with Fishers Peak - do we send them out with an interactive scavenger hunt - could count how many people returned - visits and attendance

- Educate visitors about “Leave No Trace” concepts - responsible recreation

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- Everyone is wanting to be collaborative partner in the community
- Trinidad public library - smaller children - partner in some way
- Indigenous Roots - Cultural education - native american history and culture - has done programs at Trinidad Lake State Park, could do programming at Fishers Peak
- Library - Flora and Fauna - get this information into the communities hands - interactive experience

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Local and Regional: CO*

DATE: April 2, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Daniel Estes (CDR Associates)

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Great Outdoors Colorado/CPW State Trails Committee (GOCO Rep) & Visit La Junta (City of La Junta
Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
City of Trinidad
City of Trinidad Tourism Board/Colorado Welcome Center
Las Animas County
Alamosa Parks and Recreation

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Pursuing innovative strategies to connect the local and regional community to the Park - FA1, FA 2, FA 4 - Participants were aligned in their support for connecting surrounding communities to the Park through a variety of communication, education, and partnership strategies. Ideas ranged from youth groups

assisting with trail building, to pre-recorded hiking tours highlighting sites of historical interest, to social media being utilized to inform users about Park conditions. Participants emphasized the importance of Fishers Peak being a place not just for recreation, but for learning and connecting to a shared sense of place. All of these ideas shared the common theme of the Park acting as conduit for community building and connection.

Community-driven and collaborative stewardship approach - FA 1, FA 2, FA 6 - Participants shared a variety of ideas related to the ongoing stewardship of the Park. Many of these ideas centered around creating group buy-in and a community ethos of shared responsibility for the Park's long-term success. Discussion topics in this category involved collaboration between CPW and partner organizations and/or members of the community and focused on issues such as group trail maintenance, community events such as races or learning sessions, and creating opportunities for local and regional youth to learn the value of sustainability at a young age.

Local history and culture is thoughtfully documented and shared - FA 3, FA 4 - As a more locally-focused group, participants noted the importance of documenting and connecting to the history of the area. Throughout the course of the conversation, they mentioned a variety of strategies, both novel and in use elsewhere, that could be adapted into the Master Plan. Some specific historical highlights mentioned by the group include the Santa Fe Trail's 200th anniversary, the fact that the land was once Mexican territory, and the tribal history. The group emphasized that Fishers Peak State Park presents an opportunity for robust historical preservation and education, and that these efforts should be prioritized throughout the Master Planning process.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Clear and plentiful signage
- A variety of educational opportunities are available
- Local and regional youth have opportunities to get involved
- Community forums are established where people can share information about the Park
- Resources are dedicated to historical preservation
- Quality bathrooms and bear proof trash cans are critical long-term infrastructure needs.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- *Will dogs ever be allowed?*
 - Project Team answer: Dogs are prohibited at least until the completion of this Master Plan in the beginning of 2022, but no long-term decisions have been finalized.
- *Will grazing be allowed? What about equestrian trails?*
 - Project Team answer: An equestrian interest group has been engaged and, similar to dogs, this is an issue that has yet to be decided.
- *What tribes are being consulted?*
 - Project Team answer: Two Ute Tribes (Southern Ute and Mountain Ute) as well as twelve others. CPW is following the SHIPO protocols and hope to get tribal representatives on

site soon. COVID has created some engagement barriers that the team is working through.

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- *Action item* - Crystal to share updated flyer with the Trinidad Welcome Center

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Daniel Estes, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Daniel presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group began discussion based on the predetermined questions associated with the Focus Areas. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Focus Area 1: NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

- CYCA presents a good opportunity for partnerships associated with preservation.
- Should be taking management steps to prevent the need for intensive regular trail/infrastructure maintenance – for example, using communication and education strategies to inform the public when trails are muddy to prevent damage. This could be done through social media (Facebook, CoTrex, AllTrails) or other channels.
- Graze it, Log it, or watch it burn – grazing can be a fire suppression tactic. This is an opportunity to provide access to the cattle association or lease it out.

Focus Area 2: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- The property is so vast it can be difficult to hike – horseback riding could help provide access.

Focus Area 3: THE PARK REMAINS A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE

- 2021 marks the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail - how do we integrate FPSP with the trail event?
- Opportunity to connect the Park to the community through summer workshops or evening education sessions (similar to those at TLSP)

- An opportunity for education related to the area's history: In 1848 this region was a part of Mexico. Fishers Peak could offer a brochure (e.g., The RiverWalk in Pueblo “welcome to old Mexico”)
- It’s a long history. It is worth considering specific eras and points in history that are important to highlight.

Focus Area 4: OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

- Partnerships should be created with the K-12 system and the junior college.
- The more information we disseminate the better.
- We should share the types of wildlife and habitat on the site.
- GOCO Generation Wild Community funded youth programming and equitable access organizations from five counties.
- Engaging youth is critical, both locally and regionally. This can include both small and large groups. For regional neighbors, like Alamosa, Fishers Peak is a great opportunity because it decreases the distance to trails.
- Ideas for youth engagement include the Junior Ranger program at Great Sand Dunes National Park.
- Education through social media (i.e., Facebook) or other channels could work to educate about and promote trail building. If feasible, this education could be targeted at individuals who have contributed to trail decline (e.g., by using muddy trails).
- Trinidad runs on Facebook, making it a great communication tool to engage the local community.
- Invite the community to help with the trail building. The college partnership with the park will help with trail building - Incentivize the interest to help and then they can serve as ambassadors to the park.
- There could be a Friends of Fishers Peak group convened online similar to the Friends of Trinidad Lake State Park group.
- Interpretive signage, potentially with a rentable transmitter for narration, is another idea for getting the most out of education at the Park. Lessons could focus on history, culture, and points of interest.
- Currently the Trinidad Tourism Board is developing a walking tour via phone app. Fishers Peak could do something similar and collaborate with the Tourism Board on this effort.

Focus Area 5: ECONOMIC BENEFIT EXISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE QUALITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- One opportunity for economic development is to explore the CDOT Mainstreet bill that includes two grant programs.
- Lifetime Fitness is going to have an inaugural race this year. Eventually they will want to utilize Fishers Peak. LifeTime Fitness is a local partner to consider teaming with in efforts to connect the community to the Park.

Focus Area 6: PARTNERSHIP ALONG WITH PARK DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS ADVANCE OBJECTIVES FROM ALL VISION FOCUS AREAS

- Taking a proactive approach to maintenance needs is crucial.
- Facilities are an important aspect of management. Quality bathrooms and bear proof trash cans are critical long-term infrastructure needs. These should be plentiful and include clear directions.
- One management approach idea is to use a scorecard at the end of the year to solicit feedback from the community.
- These types of roundtable discussions with the community would be great. Questions to ask include: How's it going, where do we go from here, etc.
- Ensure two-way communication; the park could use note cards to get feedback on site.
- Another management idea is for CPW to share with regional and statewide organizations current issues facing the park and letting them know how they can support CPW's management.

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES**

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Local and Regional: NM*

DATE: April 5, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Tracy Winfree

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
City of Raton Commissioner
Sugarite Canyon State Park Superintendent
NE Region Mgr NM State Parks

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
TNC
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Education - Coordination and Collaboration Across Focus Areas - FA 1, FA 2, FA 3, FA 4, FA 5, FA 6

Participants highlighted a number of opportunities to collaborate and coordinate on educating the public about a number of different Vision Focus Areas. For example, New Mexico land managers have been striving to communicate and educate park visitors through the lens of “Leave No Trace”. Also, the City of Raton and state land managers have information and educational materials available related to natural resources, recreational opportunities and cultural and historical stories in the region. New Mexico land managers expressed the importance of common messaging about personal safety and fire safety. Also highlighted is the opportunity for shared economic benefit by encouraging visitors to stay for longer periods to experience outdoor recreation opportunities in New Mexico and Colorado.

Reciprocity on Park Entrance Fees - FA 5, FA 6

Participants raised an issue about simplifying the visitor experience when crossing state lines. The discussion highlighted the need to address Reciprocity of Park Entrance Fees. Given connectivity of trails across state lines, will a visitor be required to purchase entry passes for both Sugarite State Park in New Mexico and Fishers Peak State Park in Colorado? The discussion moved toward raising this policy issue to higher-level decision makers in the state park systems in Colorado and New Mexico.

Connectivity & Management Consistency - FA 1, FA 2, FA 6

Land Management discussion topics ranged from the need for connectivity for recreational activities, such as hiking, equestrian and mountain biking trails, to the need to identify and support wildlife corridors, such as recognizing sensitive habitats and migration patterns across state lines. Participants also noted the need to identify differing management techniques, such as if dogs are allowed and dog leash requirements and invasive species management techniques. Differing management techniques may also require deliberation/collaboration with higher-level decision makers in each state.

Emergency Response Coordination/Collaboration - FA 6

Participants noted the need to share information and to collaborate on emergency response planning and activities. For example, land managers would like to share information about fire management, response and mitigation, including clarity around campfire rules. Also, it will be important to have open and shared communication when responding to incidents such as fire and search and rescue.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Evaluation criteria were not thoroughly discussed

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Request for higher-level decision-makers to engage on reciprocal park entrance fees and consider land management differences, such as dog management.

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions** - Park pass reciprocity, consider management/access differences (e.g. dogs)
- **Action items** - Identify and arrange meetings of high-level decision makers, draft agenda for policy considerations.
- **Resources shared** - educational materials, trails and property mapping, mapping and information to depict wildlife migrations and habitat areas, emergency response planning, communications platform

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Tracy Winfree, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Tracy presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group had a discussion prompted by questions related to Vision Focus Areas established for Fishers Peak State Park. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Broad Discussion Input

- Appreciation by New Mexico and City of Raton representatives for good communication that already exists and for being included in this park Master Plan process.
- Need to identify and raise up policy questions related to land management and potential visitor fee reciprocity.
- Importance of information sharing and collaboration across educational opportunities, cultural resources, trail planning and management, natural resources and habitat information and management, visitor communications, emergency planning and response, outdoor recreation supporting local economy, etc.
- Openness to sharing existing information, educational materials, trails plans, etc.
- Concern that Fishers Peak planning and development on a faster track relative to what New Mexico is working on, such as funding and land acquisition.

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Coordination/Communication regarding seasonal closures, such as on Lake Dorothy not opening up until August - a lot of people who base themselves Raton and then venture up into CO to recreate for the day, so helpful to know if those areas are closed
- Wildlife Fencing that is forcing Elk onto CO side - seasonal closures might come up during elk calving season - in discussions with CDOT to use 1-25.
- Sensitive areas in NM are often limited to foot traffic (Riparian, wildlife winter areas, etc)
- Keep the integrity of the watershed
- Don't love the land to death, overuse has become a problem
- Aquatic invasive species program in NM - Opportunities to work together on educational materials - better if users don't bring things back and forth (like wood)
- ACTION: Jared will share brochures about invasive species

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Would be good to connect with the trail system directly to the south (FP) - that's the one area that is key to developing this whole partnership with connecting trail system
- Worth having a conversation at the state level to reevaluate how visitors crossing state lines might have a better experience

- Had someone ask if they park in NM and walk into the park are they going to be charged twice?
 - CO's model would be pay to play - Currently if you do walk in there is a fee - based on today's policy, would assume that there will be fee to walk back and forth - CO state parks are paid for by users
- Raton - the reason we own the lake dorothy area is because of the watershed - so this is a concern for us in particular - want to make sure that users who cross the state line have a good experience
- Multi Use trails opens up to a variety of user groups
- People come to NM for peace and quiet, away from human activity - examples offered: climbing and equestrians

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

- Lots of history around this area - lots of sensitive sites - without revealing details or locations - coal camp areas - hickory and apache - raton ski basin + restaurant - cowboy camps throughout the area - could work together to put together a historical brochure or pamphlet
- The NM regional interpreter at Sugarite has developed a good relationship with schools in area, provides them with Coal camp tours and presentations, discusses protecting the environment and history, important to keep some of the sites out of the public eye
- NM has an outdoor equity fund that shares the goals of passing along knowledge and skills

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- NM emphasis on Leave No Trace
- Recreate responsibly is an important push for NM right now - have seen a huge growth in visitation - many people are getting out for the first time - trying to communicate these principles to this group
- Sugarite does 4-5 programs during the summer to introduce campers to basic etiquette (bear aware) - education is the key

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context of the Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Trails connectivity - want people to be able to flow from Raton to CO to Fishers: integrated set of trails is good for the regional economy
- Sponsoring and promoting events - trail running, mountain biking - NM has had success with these
- Could collaborate across visitor centers (Raton to Trinidad) - someone needs to think about who would be the best ppl to have these discussions

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- Inform and Coordinate on management approaches - Examples: NM allows pets on a leash (less than 10 ft) in all state parks; Weeding; Mowing

- Areas important for resource management coordination - fire management areas - there have been issues with this in the past (2011 fire at Sugarite canyon) - should coordinate on thinning projects
- Fire mitigation - Need to coordinate - can put us in touch with those who know more about NM fire mitigation approach, have experienced drought recently

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES**

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Local Businesses*

DATE: April 5, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Purgatoire Valley Const Inc., Milordo Farms, Moltreer Brothers LLC
San Isabel Electric Association and Southern Colorado Trail Builders
Corazón de Trinidad Creative District
Rising Sun Distillery
Local World Journal
City of Trinidad Office of Economic Development

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Importance of Recreation for the Economy - FA 6

Trinidad has seen a number of “booms” and “busts” in its history through mining and legalization of marijuana. These industries have come and gone, and many hope that recreation is an opportunity to bolster the local economy in sustainable way. Participants recommended partnerships between the Park and local businesses to bolster knowledge of opportunities the Park offers.

Accessible Opportunities for All - FA 2

Participants emphasized development of recreation options that enable families and users from all backgrounds to enjoy the resources.

Connectivity with Local and Regional Trails - FA 2, FA 6

Connectivity to local and regional trails provides options for Park users to visit town and to explore other recreation offerings in the surrounding area. Connectivity between Trinidad and the Park was a key element to support economic development, and there's an opportunity for partnership with the City to engage on this project.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Activities allow for a variety of backgrounds to engage
- Park highlights unique Trinidad culture
- Connectivity to promote regional recreation
- Opportunities to work with local businesses to highlight Park resources

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- When will more trails be open to the public?
- Does the state use any sort of benchmarking for construction rates, rate of completion, over/under budget?
- Are there other metrics to understand what kind of tourist visits there are? Are there metrics about group visits?
- Is there any precedent for private service commercial contracts?

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

The following notes capture highlights the group discussion.

Broad Discussion Input

- Engagement helps inform the community - journalists are more than happy to help with that goal

- Importance of an open and transparent process

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Opportunities for environmental education
- Interest in using natural systems and wildlife to support the artist community and provide unique opportunities for them to engage with the Park

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Develop a plan that indicates that the recreation opportunities are on the Park
- Need a multitude of ways to enjoy the park - something for all ages and abilities

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Equestrian use is an important part of Trinidad local history

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Ensure the Park features highlight Trinidad
- Work with local businesses to promote businesses supporting recreation (bike shops, for example)
- Connectivity of trails with the town and regionally
 - Community does have some resources to look into this more
 - TSJC also has a new program for trail building
- Interstate trail network is a marketable opportunity
- Opportunity for the park to engage in electric and solar
 - EV charging stations
 - Commercial solar installations
- Heavy emphasis on the importance of recreation on the local economy - hopeful this provides a really great opportunity for Trinidad
- Lodging and housing will be the next concern - how will the Town and community support the influx in visitors and employment opportunities?
- Important for local community to know about upcoming RFPs so locals can bid on the projects and support the economy

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *State and Federal Agencies*

DATE: April 6, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Tracy Winfree & Daniel Estes

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
History Colorado
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
Colorado State Forest Service
National Park Service
Colorado Division of Water Resources
Colorado Correctional Industries/Department of Correction, Heavy Equipment/Swift
Colorado Dept. of Public Safety - Div. of Fire Prevention and Control/ Battalion Chief / Arkansas River Region

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
ERO
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Understand/Protect the Resources On Site - Water (tributaries), Wildlife, Ecosystems, Forest, Archeological, Indigenous Culture, Historical - FA 1, FA 3, FA 4, FA 6

Participants cautioned that we do not don't know the full extent of what we are preserving/protecting. We need to take the time and make the effort to understand what is in at Fishers Peak State Park, including gathering information from tribes. The discussion included the need to protect health and connectivity at a “systems” level. Examples of systems include, but are not limited to ecosystems, water systems and tributaries, archeological sites and stories, healthy forest ecosystems and others. There is interest in capturing and evaluating information about the resources on the site along with a concern that there is pressure to open the park for recreation before the resource assessment can be completed.

Collaboration and Partnership Opportunities - FA 1, FA 2, FA 3, FA 4, FA 6

Participants offered that History Colorado, Forest Service, and others can help assess the site to provide resource insights and management advice (in addition to official Plan review and approvals). Also, CDOT, Corrections, Colorado Public Safety and others can offer expertise, planning, staffing and/or funding for capital projects, maintenance work/projects, emergency (fire) response and mitigation. An example includes Visitor Access planning, improvements and maintenance, which CDOT will need data for planning and will need time to align resources. Another example is Emergency/Fire planning, access planning, response, staging, mitigation, restoration can be made available and a request for site access to better understand the site. There is a request to access the site for a deeper understanding of preservation needs for natural and cultural resources.

Education Opportunities & Challenges - FA 4, FA 6

Discussion also highlighted that Fishers Peak is such a unique site and opportunity - to preserve and educate on many resources. While there is visitation pressure for recreation, it is also a great opportunity for Visitors to learn so much about the many resources. Education programs are also an opportunity to promote Visitor Safety. Fishers Peak is such a large, diverse and challenging site, it will be important for visitors to recreate within their abilities and within bounds. Prescribed fire education for forest health and preventing catastrophic fire is another opportunity.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Tracking wildlife movements before and after visitor use is opened
- Importance of baseline data of what exists on the site today
- Importance of getting tribal input on evaluation criteria - crucial to understand the resources tribes want preserved
- Trip generation rates - number and type - projections for future and then compare with actual trips and trends over time
- Criteria that help establish funding priorities

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- What are Fishers Peaks priorities for infrastructure investments? - Access points for CDOT and fire mitigation and response investments.
- What are the important natural and cultural resources that exist on the site today that need to be preserved and protected?

- Can we have more access to the site to better understand fire response planning and activities and to better understand resources on the property?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions** - Clarity this interest group process is in addition to agency permitting and review requirements
- **Action items** - Continued collaboration and communication with agencies for planning, response and programming improvements. Importance of consulting with Tribes. Access to experts for understanding the property.
- **Resources shared** - subject matter expertise, staffing, funding opportunities (capital, maintenance, programming),

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Tracy Winfree, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Tracy presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group was divided into two smaller breakout groups for discussion purposes. The following notes capture highlights from those break-out discussions.

Breakout Group #1:

Broad Discussion Input

- **Collaboration** Partnership offers - willingness to invest in visitor access capital improvements and maintenance; willingness to bring jail crews for fire mitigation, response and restoration; willingness to provide wildland fire response support, including burn plans, hand crews and a helicopter crew
 - Mutual benefit of training offenders in skills such as trail building, fire fighting and fire restoration
 - Collaborative approach established already is appreciated and would like it to continue
- **Communication** Emergency/Fire response benefits from building relationships, strong communications in advance of incidents
- **Access / Staging** Interest in Access to the site for Visitors and Access and Staging for Emergency Response

- Understanding CPW's/Fisher Peak **investment priorities** would be helpful to start getting requests into the funding approval process

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Forest thinning and prescribed fire can help with forest ecosystem health
- Jail crews can help with restoration projects (mutual benefit)
- Will be important to plan as best we can for fire emergency access that avoids impacts, can be mitigated, reseeded or restored and we can help with that

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Jail crews can help build and maintain sustainable trails (mutually beneficial due to gaining skills and abilities)
- Helpful for CDOT to know visitor access - trip generation projections - number and types of vehicles (e.g. cars, RV's, horse trailers) at which access points

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

- Will be helpful to know historical and cultural resources to be protected

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- Dept of Corrections - Mission - train offenders with meaningful job skills to maintain sufficient employment - eliminate idle time. Fire mitigation, fuel reductions.
- Regional Staff Battalion Chief - Largely on the Wildland Fire side - when we need a hand crew we use the jail crews - Denni's group is helpful. SWIFT crew in the shoulder season. County Sheriff is the Fire Warden - outside of the fire districts -
- State gets involved when the County has exceeded its ability - staff battalion chief responds to that incident. Financial support when a large incident management team is called in. State stays engaged. East Fork fire for example.
 - Build relationships before an incident.
 - Access to it. Use existing road networks. Think about sustainable or restorable access.
 - Crew is largely wildland fire , and a helicopter crew will be available too. Fuel reduction can be done.
 - Can help write burn plans -
- Funding is always a big thing - stationed in Canyon City - 90 minutes to get there - Is there facility space that would allow quicker response to the Park - An extra bay or two with extra shop space - to pre-position resources. If those considerations are made it can really help us - If we can share resources in that regard.
- CDOT - Roadway system - access - trip generation - understand times and numbers for roadway maintenance. Both maintenance and capital projects.
 - Currently not an optimal access to the Park - For the trail that is built now - CPW and THK have been meeting with CDOT - Trip generation - access points and where.

- Exit 2, 8 and 11 - would be great if they were super access points. Right location and right amenities
- Emergency Access - build a really good access - Fire or rock fall - CDOT is ready to close the road down. Multiple emergency access points.
- Fire last year - access from Exit 2, south end from NM, some of the old 2-track roads were improved. When you begin to open those areas - you might open to different types of access - Could freely move about the Mesa - we do our best to clean up.
- CDOT - Need to get prioritized projects on the list. And get them in the public process.

Breakout Group #2:

Broad Discussion Input

- Importance of identifying all of the resources on the site to know what needs to be preserved and protected (artifacts, ecosystems, flora, fauna, water resources/tributaries, etc)
- Planning visitor and recreation access in a way that allows time to understand and effectively protect what is there and allows enjoyment of the Park
- Importance of gathering stories, information and interests relative to cultural history, including and especially the tribes
- Offers of support through expertise, identification of resources, interpretation, investigation, etc.
- Support for healthy forests and fire planning and response

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Water resources - tributaries - want to make sure that Fishers Peak doesn't interrupt tributaries - might be able to develop springs - they have a database of well - wants to make sure FP stays in compliance
- Important to meet the standards and - paleontological resources - if permits and compliance issues come up
- State Forest Service - fairly established road system - concern: such a unique property, would caution folks when starting to expand access, property is so unique and wild for the patterns -
 - Southern $\frac{2}{3}$ of the park is where you've seen the most human activity so be cautious of the other places
 - Use primary road systems on the north end that already exist and build off of those - this should be the trunk system - more of a hands off approach - there are culturally modified trees on the property
- Prioritize protection of resources above recreational activities
- Track wildlife movements over time, before and after visitation is opened
- Springs - tree types - most notable springs are the ones right at the base of the basalt cliffs - hard to get in there, but very unique - old baldy - old growth ponderosa
- North facing slopes - gamble oak near big burn - few relics of the ponderosa pines
- Expects spring to be developed over time - north face of the peak is also interesting

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Constructing roads over canyons - could be live drainage - put in culverts - commercial to the public for springs, public well is something that needs to be augmented - if there is a source of water we want FP to be able to use it - work together
- Infrastructure development in some of the canyons that dip out to the highway - no one is going to be traveling there

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains a Cultural and Historical Resource

- Lots of cultural resources, not just artifacts, mines, etc - can also be environmental - works with tribes - traditional properties - additional properties - management plans - if there are cultural resources (Fossils, etc) - we hope there is a place to house those safely - prefer to leave things where they are - Can provide resources for helping to identify cultural resources - help find ways to avoid and mitigate
- Tribal consultation - crucial to understand what resources they want - work alongside with tribes if possible
- Happy to help interpret exhibits
- Probably lots of cultural resources - plus understand what's around mine areas (at least 3 mine sites)

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- If there is a visitors center - Roxborough state park is a good example of what has worked.

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- CO State Forest Service - Strategic Location - Opportunity for opportunities for fire mitigation
- TJS Archeology museum is a state approved repository would be a logical place to house collections - space is always an issue - so planning might require more room, collaboration could be done between history Colorado - want collections to be curated as close to the source as possible - management would probably best, however, at junior college
- Being able to invest money in treatments that benefit the park and the region

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Grazing and Agriculture*

DATE: April 7, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Melissa Rary

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
Colorado Farm Bureau
Marchetti Cattle Ranch

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
CDR
TNC

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Maintain Cultural and Historical Stories of Grazing and Agriculture - FA 3

For a long time, grazing and agriculture has been a staple of the economy in the areas surrounding Trinidad. Historically, the Fishers Peak property was grazed as well. Community members do not want to lose that heritage and want to ensure that cultural history is preserved and others are able to learn about it.

Grazing and Agriculture can Aid Park Management and the Economy - FA 5, FA 6

Participants noted some of the benefits of grazing and agriculture in that it can assist with park management and the biodiversity of the property as well as help bolster the economy, which already has a significant amount of grazing and agriculture.

Consider how Recreation May Impact Resources and Mitigating Conflict - FA 2

Participants recognised the importance of recreation, but also noted that recreation needs to be done right to mitigate erosion and environmental damages. Providing recreational and land uses in separate areas of the Park can help mitigate conflict that might occur between various interest groups.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Wildlife and water resources are well maintained
- Honor Park's cultural history around grazing and agriculture
- Separation of uses to mitigate conflict

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Was there a commitment to have grazing on the property?
- Who has been engaged in the grazing community to-date?

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Next steps** - Gathering and compiling stories of the property's history from neighbors and community leaders
- **Policy question** - what commitments have been made in terms of grazing?
- In person meeting to engage people who may not be comfortable with technology
- Outreach to additional representatives - Farm Bureau, Colorado Ranchers Association

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Melissa presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

The following notes capture highlights the group discussion.

Broad Discussion Input

- Importance for the Park to be a good neighbor
 - Understanding fencing needs is part of this
 - Communication is key - identify one point person to manage neighbor communications

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Grazing would help maintain biodiversity of the ecosystem
- Southern part of the Park lends itself best to grazing opportunities
- Hunting seen as an important element to wildlife conservation

Focus Area 2: Nature-based Outdoor and Recreation Activities Enhance the Visitor Experience

- Understand the importance of recreation, but this might impact the Park's natural resources (Water sources, ravine creation, etc.)
- Too much vehicle access would cause issues
- Appropriate design could mitigate erosion
- Separate different park uses to mitigate conflict

Focus Area 3: The Park Remains A Cultural And Historical Resource

- Grazing is an important part of the culture of the community and history of the property
 - Consider educational opportunities and events (cattle drives) to highlight this

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context Of The Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Cattle output is an important part of the Las Animas economy, grazing would provide an asset to cattle production

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
INTEREST GROUP DISCUSSION THEMES

INTEREST GROUP TITLE: *Motorized Vehicles*

DATE: April 9, 2021

LEAD FACILITATOR (NAME BOTH IF BREAK-OUTS WERE USED): Tracy Winfree

PARTICIPANTS:

ORGANIZATION
TPA/COHVCO

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

ORGANIZATION
CPW
THK
CDR

KEY THEMES/OUTCOMES:

Available Partnering Resources To Support the Park - FA 6

Discussion included offering resources such as trail design expertise, staff to help build and maintain trails, and grant funding opportunities. Also offered to support and/or help with education of the importance of the area, including cultural and historical, and how to recreate responsibly.

Uncertainty/Lack of Clarity Whether Off-Highway Vehicles Would Be A Fit for the Park - FA 1, FA 2, FA 5

Discussion included whether there was really a chance to include off-highway vehicle recreation and Fishers Peak State Park. It is not common to have such recreational activities at Colorado State Parks. Related discussion included whether Guided Tours for off-highway vehicles would be an option. There are links to economic benefits for Trinidad with Guided Tours or equipment rentals. Further discussion about options included considering a small off-highway vehicle recreational facility with a focus on education.

Are There Opportunities in the Vicinity if Not on the Park - FA 1, FA 2

One concept that was briefly discussed and would need further exploration is whether there are off-highway vehicle opportunities in the Trinidad / Las Animas County area that are not on Fishers Peak.

Concern for Impacts to an Undisturbed Landscape - FA 1

Recognizing the unique and relatively undisturbed landscape at Fishers Peak State Park, there was a suggestion of taking a holistic view of ecosystem health rather than an individual species by species count program.

Connectivity - FA 2, FA 6

As planning for the Park proceeds it will be important to identify connection needs in a variety of different areas such as Trails, Communications (such as cell coverage), community services that are supporting and available, and emergency services such as search and rescue and fire mitigation and response.

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- Best to use a full ecosystem approach - not just species counts, but holistic assessment of the overall health of the habitat and ecosystems
- Daily counts, visitor surveys -type of activity, quality of experience

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ASKED BY PARTICIPANTS:

- Not clear if Off Highway Vehicles are or will really be a welcome part of FP State Park.

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

- **Policy questions** - How much is OHV activity realistically part of the Park development? Guided tours a possibility? Limited Access with Educational programs a possibility? Keep abreast of best practices - use this area as a giant pilot for natural resource preservation balanced with recreational activities.
- **Action items** - Who else to recruit to this conversation beyond Scott Jones, who could help identify people? Captain Jack's Outside of Colorado Springs is a good model design to consider.
- **Resources shared** - Best Practices in Design, Staffing for building and maintenance, grant funding available

DISCUSSION NOTES:

Tracy Winfree, CDR Associates, kicked off the meeting by welcoming participants. Tracy presented the goals of the meeting (see meeting presentation and agenda included in report Appendix) and the discussion parameters to participants. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves and highlight why they are interested in Fishers Peak State Park.

The project team then provided a brief overview of the project to-date, including:

- Master plan goals and timeline
- Park vision and focus areas
- Animal & plant species found at the Park
- Sneak Peek opportunities & park map
- Next steps

Following a brief Q&A period, the group had a discussion prompted by questions related to Vision Focus Areas established for Fishers Peak State Park. The following notes capture highlights from the discussion.

Broad Discussion Input

- Openness to Off-Highway Vehicle recreation opportunities at Fishers Peak
- Ability to provide resources that would help the Park
- Opportunities to support the local economy
- Engaging more people from the OHV community

Focus Area 1: Natural Systems and Wildlife are Maintained, Conserved, and Protected

- Easy to count a particular species - value with species going up - but what about when other species counts go down (hard to get at the health - Better to go with More of a wholistic landscape analysis - Fire resiliency. Healthy landscape is good for the environment but also good for recreation.
- Want to be careful recreational activity would not impact natural and cultural resources.

Focus Area 2: Nature-Based Outdoor and Recreation Activities enhance the Visitor Experience

- Not sure we are part of the audience... As this moves forward - a little bit more engagement from us? - we are looking to engage and diversify the direction of the project. Hearing “why would I get involved with this” - FP is more bicycle oriented than motorized. Is it maybe not as narrow as it seems?... Broader in scope would be helpful - but not quite sure.
 - Context from CPW - OHV's do not have a huge organized presence in Trinidad - Purchase of the property - 1/3 of the price is from Fishing and Hunting license fees which purchased this land - so there is some level of maintenance for wildlife and ecosystems. Will need to be careful about what the property opens up for. This is a pretty unique property - amazed at what we are finding. Will be important to take good care of it.
- Rental or Guided operation? Don't see those as mutually exclusive - that is a good thing - Guides can go to a different part of the park in a less intensively managed area - guided can have educational and deeper appreciation of what is there.
- There are not a lot of opportunities in State Parks for Off Highway Vehicles... Trails for the motorcycle community. Fishers Peak is pretty good sized - could OHV's integrate in? Will there be a draw for camping - multi use opportunity. Someplace to build trails for kids, rock crawl for off-road.
- Ranch roads from private ownership - never constructed as a sustainable use for multiple vehicles.
- We have awesome success stories (Captain Jacks is a Model - or best practice) - If we do not do this now it will end up a black eye for the rec group and for the Parks system.
- Perhaps the park creates a Small facility and training about these elements.
- Try to engage our folks for some non-traditional state parks uses. We have not been a part of State Parks - really - Would like to be part of this one.

- Don't want to see trails going right up the ridge lines - the strength of the designed system fitting in is important. Want to get you someplace without visual impact, minimize or avoid natural impacts. Scenic lookouts - up on the hills and mesa - access to those are a concern - Give them access to locations they want to go with least impact.
- Keep abreast of best practices - use this area as a giant pilot for natural resource preservation balanced with recreational activities.
- FP is starting from nothing - unique opportunity to have this kind of start - Daily counts, surveying people. What did you think?

Focus Area 4: Outreach and Educational Opportunities Exist for All Coloradans and Visitors

- Draw in a broader demographic - these kinds of opportunities will be difficult to identify in the long-term as CO's population grows.
- Educational element as well. History of the area, cultural area, People are looking for a good experience across the board and that includes education

Focus Area 5: Economic Benefit Exists in the Context of the Qualities and Character of the Local Community

- Rental equipment that is available - helps build that type of leveraging opportunity. Good for the community to have this type of business opportunity - Also good for the recreationalist who might not have the right equipment.
- Renting mountain bikes, equestrian business opportunities

Focus Area 6: Partnership Along with Park Development and Operations Advance Objectives from All Vision Focus Areas

- Trails program and resources from the users group perspective - can bring in expertise in education and design - could be an amazing opportunity for people - not care about moto trail or not moto trail. Big and diverse chunk of land.. Perhaps we can help open it up to more diverse users for state parks.
- Support FP - already have the state trails program - management crews - seasonal staff, maybe permanent staff - Good: Mgmt half, and the other half on the Competitive side - can provide equipment like skid steers, and bld parking lots, we have the skillset in the program to come in and support the sustainable recreation experience - design, build - education.
- Great Oppty to come in - design motorized trail v an original old road - would lean on well designed for "Not fast, but always riding." Design and start the process - for the experience and then describe why it is the way it is.
- National folks from OHV org - that is what they do - capture and apply best practices. Rolling dip v trail reversal.

APPENDIX B: APPLICANTS AND ATTENDEES

The below organizations filled out the questionnaire to join interest groups. All were invited to attend the virtual discussions. **Bold indicates those in attendance**

Interest Group	Organization
Interest Group: Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship	
	Rocky Mountain Field Institute (RMFI)
	Denver Audubon
	Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado
	Arkansas Valley Audubon Society (AVAS)
	Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
	Southern Colorado Trail Builders
	Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
	Friends of Greenhorn Mountain Trails/ Sangre de Cristo Group
	Sierra Club(SdCG)
	Colorado Watershed Workgroups
	Colorado Partners in Amphibians and Reptiles
	Sierra Club
	Colorado Wildlife Federation
Interest Group: Wildlife / Hunting	
	Frontier archery club
	Rocky Mountain Elk foundation
	CPW Southeast Region Sportspersons Roundtable
	Southeast region sportspersons roundtable
	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION
	Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Interest Group: Outdoor Recreation	
	State Trails Committee
	Trinidad Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
	City of Trinidad, Office of Outdoor Recreation

	San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
	Adventures With Daniel
	Fremont Adventure Recreation
	Big Agnes
	Colorado Mountain Club
	City of Trinidad
	La Veta Trails
	Santa Fe Trail Association
	Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative
Interest Group: Motorized Recreation	
	TPA/COHVCO
Interest Group: Mountain Biking	
	Singletrack Trails Inc.
	Cloud City Wheelers Bike Club and Owner Trailside LTD
	Overland Mountain Bike Association
	Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates
	Boulder Mountainbike Alliance
	BMA rep for CMBC (Colorado Mountain Bike Coalition)
	International Mountain Bicycling Association
	Southern Colorado Trail Builders
Interest Group: Equestrian	
	Back Country Horsemen of Colorado
	Bridledale Undevelopment Corporation www.bridledale.org
	Kit Carson Riding Club
	Rocky Mountain Back Country Horseman's Association
	Boulder Area Trails Coalition
Interest Group: Climbing	
	Access Fund

Interest Group: Emergency Services	
	Las Animas County Search and Rescue
	Colorado Search and Rescue Assoc.
	Trinidad Ambulance District/Las Animas County Search and Rescue
	Hoehne Fire Protection District
	Trinidad Fire
Interest Group: Grazing and Agriculture	
	Colorado Farm Bureau
	Marchetti Cattle Ranch
Interest Group: Education and Interpretation	
	Trinidad Carnegie Library
	Pueblo Archaeological & Historical Society
	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
	The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
	Trinidad Public Library
	Trinidad State Junior College
	Culebra Range Community Coalition, Bar NI Ranch Community Fund, Purgatoire Valley Foundation
	Trinidad State Junior College
	Indigenous Roots
	Legacy Core Scanning, LLC
Interest Group: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	
	GALS Inc./The Girls Athletic Leadership Schools
	Americas for Conservation + the Arts/ Promotores verdes/ non-profit
	San Luis Valley Great Outdoors
	Inclusive Journeys
	Next 100 Colorado
	Sierra Club
	Continental Divide Trail Coalition
	TWS

	GreenLatino
	Colorado State Land Board
	Colorado Parks & Wildlife
	Colorado Water Conservation Board
	High Mountain Institute
	National Wildlife Federation
Interest Group: Local Businesses	
	City of Trinidad Office of Economic Development
	Purgatoire Valley Const Inc. ,Milordo Farms, Moltreer Brothers LLC
	3Peaks Dog Run & Eatery
	Local World Journal
	Rising Sun Distillery
	Trinidad Downtown Development Group
	Corazón de Trinidad Creative District
	San Isabel Electric Association and Southern Colorado Trail Builders
	Kip Hampden, LLLP
	Trinidad Lounge & Hotel, Trinidad Entertainment District
	Community Business owner
	Phil Long Toyota
	Curly's Bead and Gifts Emporium
	Trinidaddio Blues Fest
	Tourism Board
Interest Group: Local & Regional: Colorado	
	City of Trinidad Tourism Board/Colorado Welcome Center
	Tourism Board City of Trinidad
	Alamosa Parks and Recreation
	Mt Carmel Health, Wellness & Community Center
	Las Animas County
	Great Outdoors Colorado/CPW State Trails Committee (GOCO Rep) & Visit La Junta (City of La Junta
	City of Trinidad

	Purgatoire Watershed Partnership
Interest Group: Local and Regional: New Mexico	
	New Mexico State Parks Division Northeast Region
	Sugarite Canyon State Park
	City of Raton
Interest Group: State and Federal Agencies	
	USACE
	History Colorado
	Colorado State Forest Service
	National Park Service
	Colorado Department of Transportation
	Colorado Division of Water Resources
	Colorado Correctional Industries/Department of Correction, Heavy Equipment/Swift
	Colorado Dept. of Public Safety - Div. of Fire Prevention and Control

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND PRESENTATION

A scenic view of Fishers Peak State Park, featuring a dirt path leading through a dry, brushy landscape under a clear blue sky. The background shows rolling hills and a prominent peak. A large green rectangular overlay is centered on the image, containing white text. Below the green overlay is a white rectangular bar containing the dates of the event.

**FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK
MASTER PLAN**

**INTEREST GROUP
CONVERSATIONS**

March 24 - April 9, 2021

MEETING GOALS

- Enable interest groups (governmental and non-governmental organizations and businesses) to share ideas, expertise, and thoughts on opportunities and challenges related to the State Park
- Use interests and concerns from specific interest groups as one of the inputs to inform the Opportunities and Challenges Phase of the Fishers Peak Master Plan development
- Use interest group input to inform evaluation criteria for Park Programming Options
- Build relationships between the project team and interest groups for the Master Plan process



DISCUSSION PARAMETERS

Interest Group participants are expected to:

- Represent their organizations, rather than their personal perspectives;
- Have permission to speak on behalf of their organization;
- Communicate back to their organizations and/or communities of people they represent.

Your input is highly valued and will be synthesized with input from other interest groups as well as a variety of data, public input, and other sources of information.



AGENDA



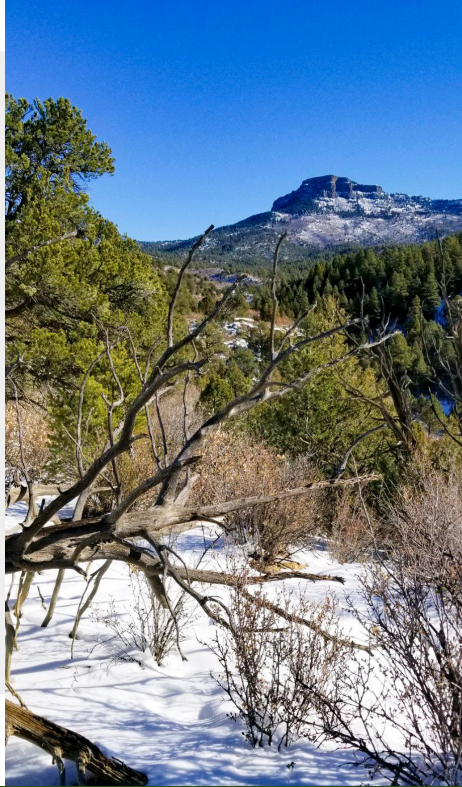
Welcome and Introductions

Background Information Presentation

Facilitated Discussion

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

INTRODUCTIONS



Please tell us...

- Name
- Organization
- Why are you interested in Fishers Peak State Park?

A scenic landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over a forested area. In the distance, a prominent flat-topped mountain range is visible. The foreground is filled with dense, green vegetation. A dark blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "BACKGROUND INFORMATION" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Master Plan is an overarching management guide which will identify desired future conditions to guide long-term management and development for the park.

INFORM
future CPW
leadership
and staff on
operations,
needs and
issues

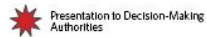
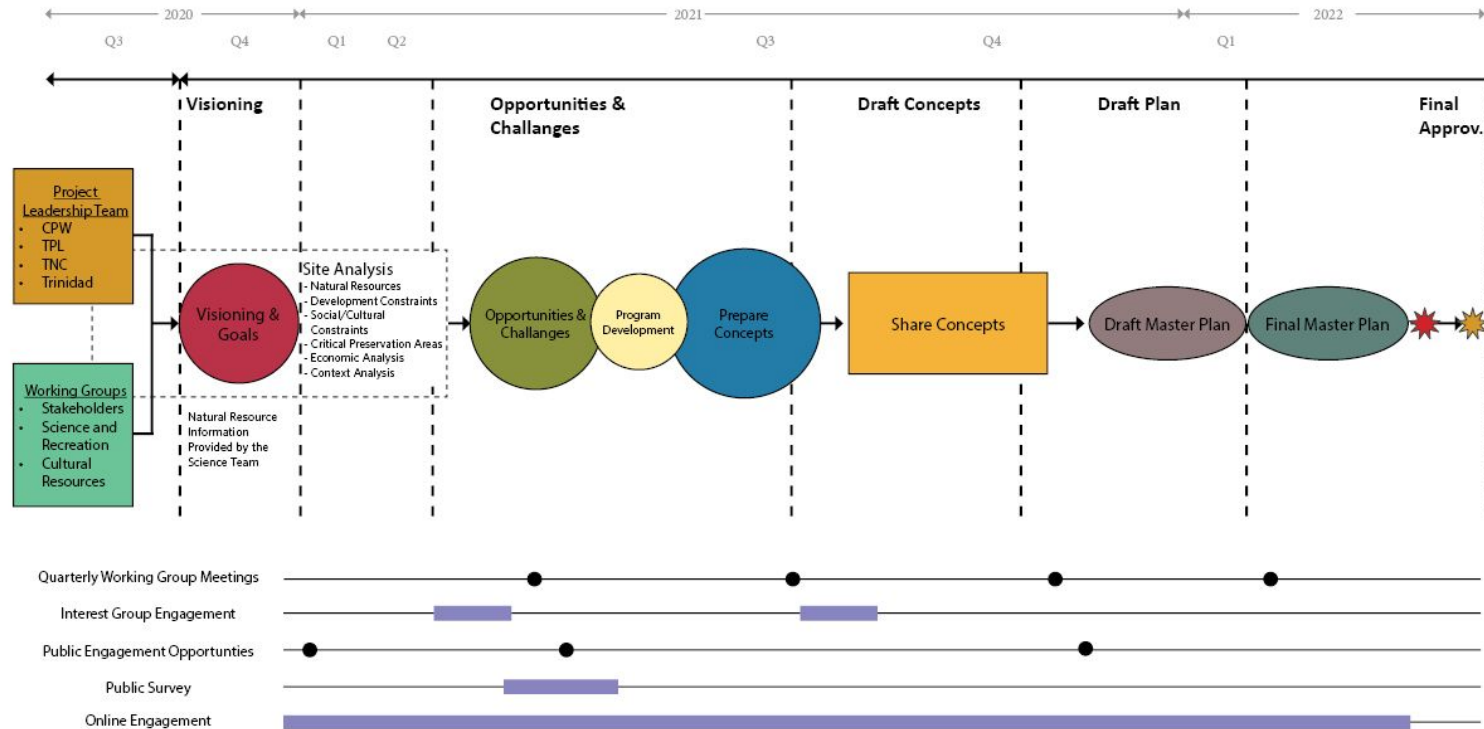
GUIDE the
management
of natural,
cultural and
recreational
resources

IDENTIFY
enhancement
opportunities

SERVE as a
guide for
future budget
allocations
and annual
funding
requests

DEVELOP a
phased
approach for
plan
implementation

Fishers Peak Master Plan Process



Presentation to Decision-Making Authorities



Completion of the Final Master Plan Document & Documentary



VISION & FOCUS AREAS

COMMUNITY VISION REPORT

LARGE GROUP VISIONING

LEADERSHIP TEAM REFINEMENT

PUBLIC PRESENTATION



VISION & FOCUS AREAS

VISION FOR PROPERTY

As it has for eons, Fishers Peak continues to provide for the life that thrives there and serves as a destination for those inspired by all that nature offers for generations to come



BLUEPRINT TO ACHIEVE VISION

Fishers Peak State Park offers a unique and synergistic blend of resource conservation, recreation, education, economic benefit, and cultural significance to the City of Trinidad, Las Animas County, and the State of Colorado.

VISION & FOCUS AREAS

FOCUS AREA 1: NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

FOCUS AREA 2: NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

FOCUS AREA 3: THE PARK REMAINS A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE

FOCUS AREA 4: OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

FOCUS AREA 5: ECONOMIC BENEFIT EXISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE QUALITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

FOCUS AREA 6: PARTNERSHIP ALONG WITH PARK DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS ADVANCE OBJECTIVES FROM ALL VISION FOCUS AREAS

ANIMAL & PLANT SPECIES

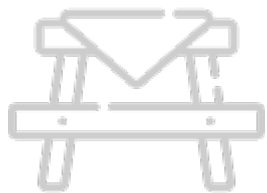


SNEAK PEEK



250 OPEN ACRES

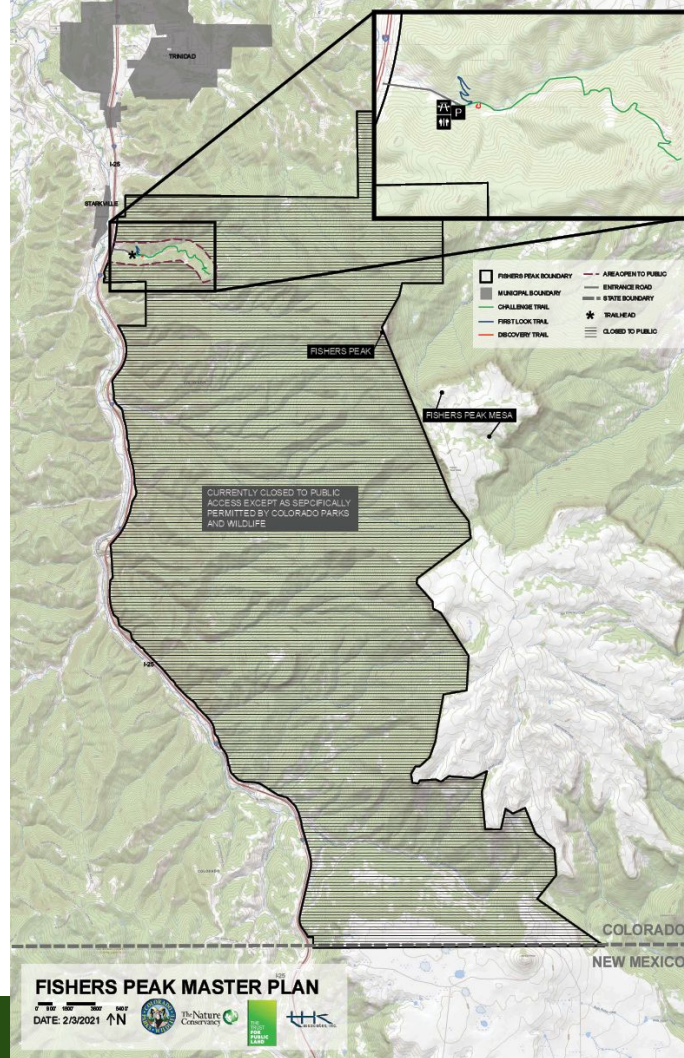
3 AVAILABLE TRAILS



PICNIC & RESTROOM FACILITIES



PARK MAP



NEXT STEPS

Engagement Next Steps

Will continue to engage interest groups during draft concepts phase

Anticipate site visit opportunities for interest groups this summer

Simultaneous consultation with Tribes as well as public survey



A scenic landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. The sky transitions from yellow to purple. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of trees and a dense forest. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the middle section of the image, with the word "QUESTIONS?" written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The bottom of the image shows a close-up of dry, tangled brush and green foliage.

QUESTIONS?

APPENDIX D: INTEREST GROUP AGENDA AND QUESTIONS

FISHERS PEAK STATE PARK

Interest Group Meeting Agenda & Questions

Purpose of Interest Group Conversations (Round 1):

- Enable interest groups (governmental and non-governmental organizations and businesses) to share ideas, expertise, and thoughts on opportunities and challenges related to the State Park
- Use interests and concerns from specific interest groups as one of the inputs to inform the Opportunities and Challenges Phase of the Fishers Peak Master Plan development
- Use interest group input to inform evaluation criteria for Park Programming Options
- Build relationships between the project team and interest groups for the Master Plan process

Pre-Meeting Materials:

- Agenda & Questions
- Links to Website - Partnership, Photos, Timeline, Sneak Peek Opportunities
- Vision and Focus Areas Document
- Community Vision Report
- Participation Agreement - Complete

Agenda:

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	RESPONSIBLE
20 MIN	Welcome, Introductions, Agenda	
10 MIN	Presentation: Background Information	
50 MIN	Facilitated Discussion	
10 MIN	Wrap Up & Next Steps	

Broad Questions (for all groups)

- How can Fishers Peak State Park support your organizational mission and vice versa?
- What is your organization's role in caring for this State Park?
- What best practices have you seen elsewhere with regards to public land management?

Focus Area Specific Questions:

VISION FOCUS AREA 1 NATURAL SYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE ARE MAINTAINED, CONSERVED, AND PROTECTED

- **Objective 1:** Existing natural resources and their conditions determine a baseline to inform long-term park management.
- **Objective 2:** The Park maintains ecological sustainability for wildlife habitats and populations.

Priority Questions for:

- Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship
- Wildlife / Hunting
- Outdoor Recreation
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian
- Climbing
- Grazing and Agriculture
- State/Federal Agencies

Focus Area 1 Questions:

- What do you think is the most important criteria for evaluating conservation-oriented management actions at the Park?
- In your opinion, how can public lands balance the needs of maintaining healthy, functioning natural systems while also providing meaningful recreation opportunities that benefit the Park as well as your organization?
- What natural resources (examples wildlife, plants, riparian areas, scenic vistas, natural sounds, dark skies, geologic exposures, varied topography, large trees, etc.) are you hoping are maintained, protected and conserved for your benefit?

VISION FOCUS AREA 2 NATURE-BASED OUTDOOR AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- **Objective 1:** Recreational activities complement the resources and local/regional context of the Park.
- **Objective 2:** The Park’s character relates to the recreational opportunities best suited for the Park landscape and topography.
- **Objective 3:** Visitor behavior and natural resource response informs phased recreation opportunities.

Priority Questions for:

- Conservation / Environmental / Stewardship
- Wildlife / Hunting
- Outdoor Recreation
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian
- Climbing

Focus Area 2 Questions:

- What do you think is the most important criteria for evaluating what are meaningful recreation-oriented opportunities for the Park?
- How can the Park managers achieve success in balancing recreation needs while also maintaining natural systems and wildlife?
- What measurements of visitor behavior and natural resource response to visitor behavior are important to inform recreation opportunity development and long-term management by CPW?
- Given your knowledge of existing natural resources in the area, what top recreational opportunity exists for this Park that may not be available in similar forms elsewhere in the surrounding area?

VISION FOCUS AREA 3 THE PARK REMAINS A CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCE

- **Objective 1:** Cultural and historical resources are honored, preserved, and protected.
- **Objective 2:** Local heritage, as well as history and ongoing significance of the Park property, informs recreation and interpretation opportunities.
- **Objective 3:** Best Management Practices seek to avoid impacts to and degradation/reduction of significant non-renewable resources.

Priority Questions for:

- Education and Interpretation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Grazing and Agriculture
- Local Businesses
- Local and Regional: Colorado
- Local and Regional: New Mexico
- State and Federal Agencies

Focus Area 3 Questions:

- How would you measure the State Park's success at achieving cultural and historical preservation?
- Based on your knowledge of the area or the Park, are there any cultural or historical stories that are significant? Which stories do you think should be emphasized? How can these stories be integrated into Park development and programming (educational, interpretive, etc.)?

VISION FOCUS AREA 4 OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR ALL COLORADANS AND VISITORS

- **Objective 1:** Inclusive, nature-based recreational and educational activities are available for everyone.
- **Objective 2:** Programming and interpretive content enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the Park's cultural, historical, and natural resources.

- **Objective 3:** Education and interpretive messaging foster visitor behavior that protects the Park’s resources.
- **Objective 4:** Local community residents continue to connect with and learn about the Park property and its resources.

Priority Questions for:

- Education and Interpretation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Local and Regional: Colorado
- Local and Regional: New Mexico
- State and Federal Agencies

Focus Area 4 Questions:

- How would you measure the State Park’s success in achieving outreach and educational goals?
- Do you have examples of best practices regarding interpretive messaging? What was compelling and effective?
- In what ways can educational messaging serve the local community? What are the needs/gaps in education (around the Park and/or in general) currently?
- What education opportunities could exist for the community to connect with the Park and Park to connect with the community?

VISION FOCUS AREA 5 ECONOMIC BENEFIT EXISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE QUALITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- **Objective 1:** The local economy expands and new business opportunities develop in a manner that preserves the community’s vision for prosperity.
- **Objective 2:** Improvement in local economic performance is related to recreational activities.
- **Objective 3:** Trinidad and the local area are seen as a destination.

Priority Questions for:

- Local Businesses
- Grazing and Agriculture

Focus Area 5 Questions:

- How would you measure Fishers Peak State Park’s successful contribution to Trinidad’s local economy?
- How does the Park fit into the current economic priorities for your business/organization?
- Who are and/or could be the major “players” in the Trinidad/Las Animas County economy related to the State Park?
- How can the Park and your organization work together to support the objectives of the Trinidad [Office of Outdoor Recreation](#)?

VISION FOCUS AREA 6 PARTNERSHIP ALONG WITH PARK DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS

ADVANCE OBJECTIVES FROM ALL VISION FOCUS AREAS

- **Objective 1:** Partners' expertise serve as a foundation to inform Park management.
- **Objective 2:** Partnership diversity and project story inspire similar projects around the nation for the benefit of public lands.
- **Objective 3:** Available financial resources and Park management sustain the quality and condition of the natural resources and recreation opportunities.
- **Objective 4:** Park management responds to the dynamic nature of visitor behavior, recreation trends, population trends, natural disasters (i.e., fire, flood, drought) and other changing conditions.

Priority Question for:

- Emergency Services
- State and Federal Agencies

Focus Area 6 Questions:

- What operational challenges exist for managing the Park? What are the opportunities to overcome those challenges?
- Are there any operational "models" or best practices you believe this State Park could consider for its Master Plan?
- How can the Master Plan better prepare you/your organization to assist with Park management and operations?

Additional Questions (as needed and applicable):

- Are there areas in the Park that you believe would offer the greatest opportunity for your activity or conservation interest?
- Are there locations in the Park that you're most concerned about?
- Are there connectivity needs? (Trails, infrastructure, wildlife movement)
- What systems or types of infrastructure or programming that your interest area would desire or be concerned about?