

U.S. Forest Service
Magnolia Non-Motorized Trails Project Implementation Meeting
6185 Arapahoe Road, Boulder CO, 80303
April 21, 2017

U.S. FOREST SERVICE WELCOME

U.S. Forest service (USFS) representatives introduced themselves and Sylvia Clark, Boulder District Ranger, articulated the meeting objectives. Reid Armstrong, Public Affairs Specialist and Community Liaison for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, reviewed the agenda.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Matt Henry, Boulder Ranger District Recreation staff, and Jon Brooks, Boulder Ranger District Wilderness and Trails Manager, provided a brief overview of the Magnolia Trails Project. They provided an implementation timeline, clarified the zone strategy, reviewed funding and provided information on potential volunteer work days.

TABLE INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKER

Participants introduced themselves to the other participants at their table. Participants shared two challenges and two opportunities regarding the Magnolia Trails Project with their small group. A representative at each table wrote down each unique challenge and opportunity on a large sheet of paper and presented them to the large group. Key themes among participant responses are captured below:

Challenges:

- The transient population will have better access to the trails. This will decrease trail safety.
- There are long-term costs for trail management. Funding will be a challenge.
- The increased usage will have damaging impacts on wildlife. Specifically, it will disrupt the elk population.
- The time that it takes to get community agreement may lead to long delays of implementation. It is hard to build consensus across diverse and competing perspectives.
- Trail-by-trail compromises will negatively impact the whole trail system. For example, many of the social trails that are being obliterated are loved by the Nederland community.
- The new trails will likely be overcrowded and overused, which may lead to the construction of more social trails.
- New trails may not keep the rustic/backcountry character of the previous trails. The new trails and increased signage will change the character of Nederland trails.
- There are stakeholder voices missing from the decision-making process (e.g. horse riders and motorized vehicle users). There are also competing priorities between the stakeholder groups.

- Increased trail use will impact the environment. Specifically, there will be more trash on the trails.
- There will be more issues with parking.
- The social trails that are being converted into formal trails are too close to private property and are poorly designed. The likelihood of a public/private dispute is high.
- The presentation at the beginning of the meeting made it sound as though the USFS has already set the priorities.
- There is a concern about how the Magnolia Trails Project will merge with other USFS projects, specifically the Forsythe II clear-cutting project.
- The Magnolia Trails Project restricts access for the motorized vehicle community.

Opportunities:

- There will be a new sustainable network of trails and better trail management/monitoring/supervision (signage, etc.). The increased trail management will improve trail conditions and decrease sprawl.
- The signage will improve education about trail use.
- New users will get to enjoy the Nederland trail system.
- There will be more access to youth outdoor education programs.
- The trail experience will be better (no trash, better safety precautions, etc.).
- There will be better management of the transient population.
- The social trails will be reformed.
- The new trails will benefit the Nederland tourist economy.
- The implementation design can heal past rifts and increase cross-group collaboration.
- The Magnolia Trails Project has a more cohesive plan for trail access.
- There will be more hiking near the town center of Nederland.
- The project implementers will hopefully be aware of wildlife migration corridors and will reduce habitat fragmentation. It is important to include Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in conversations concerning the maintenance of habitat.
- There may be an opportunity to create dispersed campsites.
- The stacked loop system with wayfaring accessible by public transportation is great.
- The new trails will allow for easier navigation for recreation (mountain bikers, etc.).

PRIORITY RANKING FOR MAGNOLIA TRAILS IMPLEMENTATION WORK ITEMS

Participants submitted their completed priority ranking sheet for Magnolia Trails Project work items. The table below shows the range of ranking numbers for each work item and additional comments/rational noted on the sheet. (NOTE- Action items and priorities are not listed here in numerical order. Furthermore Priority ranking= #1 higher priority, #13 = lowest priority).

Action/Work Item	Priority (1-13) Mode	Comments/Rational
Converting approved social trails to system trails	1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 6, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most social trails are already widely known. Improve tread and thus user experience. • This is a quick and easy win. Legalize what is already there. • It would be best to work with existing trails. • Establish a baseline and use that to build trails. • Fragmentation needs to be reduced by 50%.
New trail construction approved in Decision Notice	1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 6, 6, 7, 10, 11, 11, 12, 13, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revision for the proliferation of social trails is an unmet need for new/different trail. • Putting in the new trails will reduce usage of social trails and wear and tear on existing approved trails until resources are available. • Get the established trails done first.
Maintain/Re-construct existing approved trails	1, 1, 3, 3, 3, 5, 5, 8, 8, 9, 11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be an ongoing process. • Make sure there is funding and capacity to do this before creating new trails.
Re-route trails in poor condition and decommission old section	2, 4, 4, 4, 7, 8, 8, 8, 9, 9, 9, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many places this is needed to improve sustainability and user experience. • Most trails have survived by themselves with little maintenance, so this is a low priority. Focus should be on new sections of trail first. • Erosion, gullies, and damage to tree roots is extensive and needs to be repaired.
Provide trailhead facilities (restrooms)	4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use = increased needs. • There should be one restroom at the West Magnolia Trailhead and Front Range Trailhead. • This may increase the number of transients. • Make sure that restrooms can be maintained.
Provide trailhead facilities (kiosks or signage)	3, 5, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8, 11, 11, 12, 12,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will improve navigation and user experience. • It is not critical as most trail systems are soon mapped by online trail providers.
Create connections to towns/other trail systems	2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 5, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding trail access disperses users. • This will strengthen connections to Nederland. • Trail connection to Nederland already exists near water facility. • This is a bad idea unless user compliance is fully established. • Trail connections reduce traffic and parking issues. • Trail connections to other trails should be built before connections to towns.

Obliterate or decommission trails not adopted by the Decision Notice	2, 2, 3, 3, 5, 10, 12, 13, 13, 13, 13, 13,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of these may still serve as connectors while the official system is build out. Only when all pieces are in place should these be decommissioned. • This is a last priority, unless it specifically impacts wildlife or private property concerns. • This will help wildlife adjust before new trail construction.
Relocate trails leading to and/or from private property	2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 7, 7, 10, 10, 10 11, 12,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of “new 16” to be farther from private property. • Ideally this should be done in conjunction with “new trail construction.”
Re-route/relocate or decommission trails that impact cultural or wildlife sensitive areas	1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 8, 8, 10, 11, 12,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaware of or if these exist. • Once monitoring is in place and informed decisions can be made. • Impacts to the documented elk migration corridor needs to be addressed. • The environmental assessment does not mention moose, and there is a significant migration through the area. • This will require studies, review, and implementation.
Secure funding for implementation (grants, cost-share, in-kind contributions)	1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7, 9, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is needed to complete the scope of the plan.
Develop monitoring protocols	2, 2, 2, 2, 6, 6, 6, 7, 7, 8, 8, 9, 10, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is necessary before decisions can be implemented on relocating trails for wildlife impact and trail degradation. • Monitor how the trail system affects elk migration and use adaptive management to close trails that have negative impacts. • Without monitoring, this project could result in a net increase in trail mileage and sprawl.
Develop educational protocols	2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 13, 13, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many educational protocols are already available. • This is especially important for riders.
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth management • Ensuring habitat connectivity and minimizing habitat fragmentation. • Develop a strategy for dealing with transients that live in the area during the summer months.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds could be secured through camping fees. • Increased regulation will be essential to managing trail locations.
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SMALL GROUP PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE

Participants worked in small groups to identify additional, specific priorities. Each participant was given three dots and asked to place a dot by the issues that they thought were most important to address. Each table's items are listed below in the order of priority, as decided through the dotting exercise.

GROUP #1	
New 23	4 dots
New 4	4 dots
Re-align 926 1E "lookout"	3 dots
Cross highway 72 (social 4) and connect it to East Magnolia	2 dots
West Magnolia Trailhead facilities (restrooms)	1 dot
Peak-to-Peak Trailhead (expand, facilities, kiosk, restrooms)	1 dot
Formalize trails within "some" radius of the Peak-to-Peak Trailhead (the whole area)	1 dot
Deal with transients	0 dots

GROUP #2	
Take animal corridors into consideration; take half/leave half	5 dots
Deal with campground issues	4 dots
Consider that it may be too early to worry about specific trails vs. other considerations.	4 dots
First get new trails in for the sake of public relations	1 dots
The first priority should be the highest-use areas (closest to Highway 72 Trailhead)	1 dot
Keep as much of the current trail character as possible	1 dot

GROUP #3	
Address wildlife concerns to allow for on-the-ground progress and funding establishment	6 dots
Create a better connection for Social Trail 4	6 dots

Begin construction on approved trails to keep project motivation and forward momentum	3 dots
Provide alternate designated trails before decommissioning social trails	1 dot

GROUP #4	
The final trail system should maintain large blocks of effective habitat (specific closures recommended by the public)	5 dots
Develop a monitoring protocol	3 dots
Increase accessibility/usability: signs, clear trailheads and routes to access the trail system.	2 dots
Use the same set of facts and maps, especially the CPW maps of wildlife and migration corridors.	2 dot
Manage growth and publicity	2 dots
Ensure that funding will be sufficient for enforcement and maintaining the system before building	2 dots
Where possible, prioritize decommissioning trails before building new trails.	1 dot
First re-route trails in poor condition and decommission old sections	0 dots
Maintain the rustic/backcountry nature of the trails	0 dots
Resolve the concern that restrooms will worsen the transient situation.	0 dots
Re-route away from private property	0 dots
Re-route or decommission trails that impact wildlife and use CPW mapping	0 dots

GROUP #5	
Start by simplifying Zone 1	7 dots
Define the scope of work for which we are seeking funding, including the access from town and the construction/decommissioning of trails	4 dots
Secure funding	4 dots
Create buffers for private property	3 dot

GROUP #6	
Seasonal closures for elk migration	3 dots

Trail design to avoid sensitive wildlife areas	3 dots
Elk/deer migration corridor	2 dots
Keep a rugged feel	1 dot
Preserve the environment	1 dot
Keep fat bike access to non-groomed trails in the winter	1 dot
Build new 23	1 dot
Make sure there are difficult trails for mountain biking	1 dot
Install toilets on West Magnolia Trailhead	0 dots
Build new 7 before 926.1 obliteration	0 dots
Create a connector between Social 4 and 925.1B	0 dots
Create hiking trails that restricts mountain bike use	0 dots

GROUP #6	
Engage volunteers to fix problem areas	3 dots
Do not route trails close to private property	2 dots
Increase management and law enforcement	1 dots

GROUP #7	
Keep the main investment in Zone 1 to condense use and impact. This creates density and allows for more effective use of education.	6 dots
Create two major parking/starting points	4 dots
Do a Buff Creek style freebie system to draw users to educational material.	1 dot
Social media/shots/apps: direct people to educational information	0 dots

WORKING GROUP FORMATION

Jon Brooks provided the participants with a brief overview of the purpose of the working groups. Participants were given the opportunity to sign up for working groups that focused on the following topics:

1. Layout, design, and user group needs
2. Monitoring and education
3. Maintenance, construction, and rehabilitation