

BEAR CREEK WATERSHED UPDATE

Trail Condition Assessment

The Rocky Mountain Field Institute will be visiting the Bear Creek watershed in early June to reassess portions of the trail system that were identified as “hot spots, red zones, and orange zones” during the 2013 Rapid Trail Condition Assessment. This assessment will include portions of trails 667, 666, 720, 668 and 665. This effort will include an evaluation of the maintenance needed to repair sections of the trail system damaged during the September 2013 rain events. The Forest Service will utilize the results of this assessment to determine the feasibility of reopening the trail system closed by Forest Order 14-2.

RMFI will also assess maintenance needs for the sediment detention structures located within the watershed.

Forest Service personnel will be reassessing the condition of Trails 668, 701, and 720 for the possibility of reopening these trails for multiple uses. This assessment will be conducted when the trails are snow free and safe for motorized travel.

Trail Restoration

The Forest Service will be conducting site visits with a trails team from the San Dimas Technology and Development Center to identify trail restoration methods and techniques. The objective of this effort is to utilize the scientific knowledge of this team to identify new or substantially improved systems, processes, and procedures for the effective rehabilitation of trails contributing sediment to Bear Creek.

High Drive Restoration and Sediment Abatement

Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation is currently working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to repair damage to the road sustained during the September 2013 flooding. CH2M Hill is beginning the process of reevaluating the road, drainage system, and sediment sources and transport as a component of this undertaking.

Palmer Loop

Discussion about reopening Palmer Loop from High Drive is ongoing and a decision is expected next week.

NEPA

We thank you for getting the word out about the comment period that closed in March. We received over 700 letters and emails with signatures from over 900 people.

Based on the comments we are exploring the possibility of changes to the proposed action.

- We are looking for a sustainable trail into Jones Park from the south. If a trail alignment is found that provides access to some of the historic sites while not impacting the Greenback cutthroat trout, it will be included in the proposed action.
- We are looking at a new 668-701 connection that will be closer to the current 720 alignment. The new alignment will travel through some of the nicest areas along 720, but will stay out of the Bear Creek watershed. We are working on a contract with Troy Scott Parker of Natureshape to field verify the alignment.

- We are adjusting the “travel restricted to trail” boundary to allow access to the summits of Specimen and Sentinel rocks, Runs-down-fast Mountain, Tuckaway Mountain, Mays Peak and Mount Buckhorn.

We still expect to have a decision by late summer/early fall. The abundance of comments and extra information we are gathering in response to comments has put a crunch on our timeline, but the team remains committed to meeting the deadline.