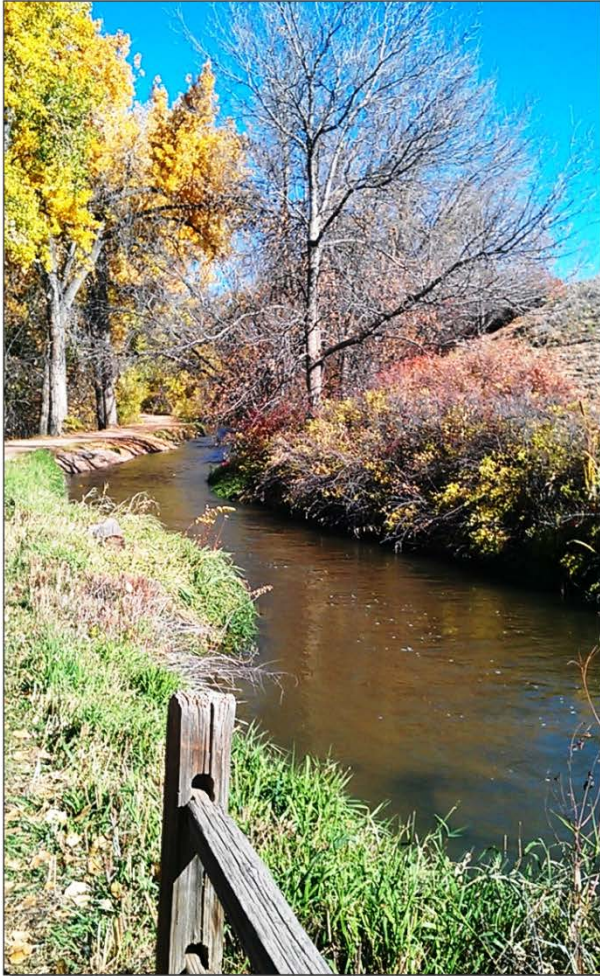


Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan

June 2016



**El Paso County Community Services
Planning Division**



~ Acknowledgements ~

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Figure 1 - Fountain Creek Regional Park Cottonwoods Show Off Their Fall Colors

CHAPTER 1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Fountain Creek Regional Park is a 390-acre linear park situated along the banks of Fountain Creek between the cities of Colorado Springs and Fountain. Naturally divided into different and unique sections, it includes a creek-side regional trail, Willow Springs Ponds, Fountain Creek Nature Center, Duckwood Active-Use Area, Cottonwood Meadows, and Hanson Trailhead. The Nature Center serves as the focal point for learning about Fountain Creek, the watershed, and riparian ecology, while further south, the Duckwood Active-Use area consists of a 12 acre site with multi-purpose athletic fields, picnic pavilions, basketball court, and a playground.

Before European settlers first arrive in the Fountain Creek Valley in the 1850s, Native Americans, primarily from the Ute and Cherokee Nations, traveled and camped along the creek on journeys northward along the Colorado Front Range, or westward up Ute Pass, to the hunting grounds of South Park and the surrounding mountain ranges. European settlers established wagon roads along the creek, one of which was located within the boundary of Fountain Creek Regional Park. The creek allowed for the irrigation of surrounding, fertile farm lands through the building of canals, such as Chilcott Ditch. The creation of neighboring Fort Carson in 1942 led to the rapid development of the surrounding communities of Security, Widefield, and Fountain.



Figure 2 - Chilcott Ditch and Fountain Creek Regional Trail in the fall.

The park's first acreages were acquired by El Paso County in 1982, with the remaining area either purchased or donated throughout the late-1980s to mid-1990s. Park amenities were built almost immediately, with Duckwood Active-Use area completed by the mid-1990s and the Fountain Creek Nature Center completed in 1992. Other than the 2014 Nature Center expansion project, the park has not been updated significantly and is subject only to routine and periodic maintenance cycles. Trails and other park infrastructure, such as playgrounds and restrooms, are in need of either major upgrades or total modernization to coincide with today's public needs and recreational standards.

Master Plan Purpose

The Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan is a guiding document whose purpose is to strategize and provide outdoor recreation opportunities and land stewardship within the park. The planning process was designed to comprehensively address the needs of Fountain Creek Regional Park, specifically active use areas, trails, open space, and recreation and cultural services facilities. The Master Plan endeavors to provide a sustainable approach to allocation of resources for the next five to ten years, and to provide the elements of a first phase of improvements that will be initiated immediately. The process established essential goals, while incorporating needed changes and new ideas based on input by

stakeholders and analysis of data. The Master Plan will guide El Paso County Park's efforts to continue to provide a high quality of parks, recreation, and cultural services that are valued by citizens.

Since Fountain Creek Regional Park was original constructed, there have been many changes in the demographics of, and interests among, park users. The community is requesting new, updated, and/or different facilities as a result of the population growth and cultural changes within the region, as well as national trends. The survey conducted as part of this Master Plan documents some of these new requests, and demonstrates that the development of the Fountain Creek Master Plan is a very timely and worthwhile activity. It will be used by County Park staff and policy makers to aid in decisions related to capital improvements, maintenance, and land stewardship for years to come.

Master Plan Vision

El Paso County Parks currently manages approximately 390 acres of active use areas, native open space, an educational nature center, regional and internal park trail corridors, wetlands, and active floodplains within Fountain Creek Regional Park. This Master Plan is intended to provide a vision for the future of Fountain Creek Regional Park, continuing the facilities and services that citizens value along with providing new facilities, recreation opportunities, and cultural services programs. It explores existing conditions and future needs from the vantage point of the public, stakeholders, and County staff and leaders to provide a roadmap for the future. This vision is further expressed through the following goals, action items, and implementation plan.

Planning Process

The Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan process began in September 2015 with the establishment of a Master Plan Team, comprised of El Paso County staff members from both the Community Services Department (Planning, Park Operations, Cultural and Recreational Services, Community Outreach, Environmental) and Public Services (Transportation, Engineering), as well as a member of the Parks Advisory Board and employees from the City of Fountain. County staff prepared a community survey, which was launched online in December 2015 seeking comments from the general public related to park improvements. The Master Plan Team used the survey results, in combination with input from stakeholder interviews and the first public meeting held in January 2016 to develop site-specific concept plans illustrating park enhancements for consideration in the Master Plan. In addition to the second public meeting held in April 2016, the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan was presented at public hearings before the Park Advisory Board for endorsement and the Board of County Commissioners for final approval, both in June 2016. Below is the timeline utilized and updated throughout the master planning process.

Fountain Creek Regional Park - Master Plan Project Timeline										
Task	2015				2016					
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Conduct Meetings with Master Plan Team										
Prepare Master Plan Outline Documents										
Review Existing Plans and Documents										
Create Master Plan Team										
Establish List of Key Stakeholders										
Stakeholder Interviews										
Establish Online Public Survey										
Create Project Web Page										
Data Collection and Analysis										
Prepare Existing Conditions Chapter										
Compile and Analyze Public Survey Results										
Conduct First Public Meeting (01/27/16)										
Compile First Public Meeting Input										
Analyze Inputs and Develop Recommendations										
Develop Master Plan First Draft										
Conduct Second Public Meeting (04/28/16)										
Develop Master Plan Second Draft										
Produce Final Master Plan										
PAB Presentation / Approval (06/08/16)										
BoCC Presentation / Approval (06/28/16)										
Approved Master Plan for Public Distribution										

Figure 3 - Master Plan Timeline

Summary of Master Plan Goals

The establishment of goals specific to the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan was based upon not only the overall El Paso County Parks system goals and objectives, but also through a thorough analysis and understanding of the community preferences demonstrated by the results of the public survey, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and input from the Master Plan Team. As a result, the following goals have been established for this Master Plan:

- **Overall Park and Recreation Area**
 - Create a sustainable future for Fountain Creek Regional Park with respect for social, economic, and environmental values.
 - Identify and site future park amenities and facilities with continued respect for the natural environment.
 - Continue to meet the recreational and cultural needs of the citizens.
 - Improve ADA accessibility when renovating or developing new facilities.

- **Regional and Internal Park Trails**
 - Work collaboratively with other agencies and organizations to promote connectivity between communities and destinations.
 - Plan, maintain, and build trails and trail facilities to a more sustainable standard using a hierarchy of multi-use trails and current best management practices.

- **Open Space**
 - Preserve open space for passive recreation.
 - Preserve and enhance open space for wildlife habitat.
 - Avoid development within the floodplain to preserve watershed function and avoid unnecessary infrastructure repair costs.
 - Maintain and enhance the functionality of the wetland and riparian areas.

- **Recreation and Cultural Services Programs and Facilities**
 - Continue to support the Fountain Creek Nature Center as a premier destination, community gathering place, and a hub for environmental education and stewardship.
 - Continue to provide and enhance environmentally-based programs and interpretation opportunities throughout Fountain Creek Regional Park.
 - Provide a venue for cultural and community events.

- **Management and Administration**
 - Continue the maintenance and enhancement of existing park facilities.
 - Increase enforcement of park rules and regulations as a means to reduce multi-use conflicts.
 - Promote effective stormwater management by controlling runoff, preserving the floodplain, and providing streamside setbacks to minimize adverse impacts downstream.
 - Consider strategic acquisitions adjacent to park land and the Nature Center to allow for expansion and protect park values.
 - Consider conservation easements to protect natural resource values.

- **Community Awareness**
 - Promote environmental awareness through healthy, active, outdoor opportunities.
 - Educate citizens on the impact and dynamic nature of Fountain Creek and about the Fountain Creek Watershed.
 - Provide information on park facilities, programs, and rules governing use.

- **Implementation and Funding**
 - Generate partnership opportunities for projects and programs.
 - Enhance Fountain Creek Regional Park's facilities and programs through new and existing funding sources and partnerships.

Summary of Action Items

Based upon the Master Plan Goals list above, the following action items were developed:

Overall Park and Recreation Areas – Many of the recommendations brought forth in the public survey and stakeholder process addressed issues and infrastructure improvements that impact Fountain Creek Regional Park as a whole. Although these action items are perhaps more general in nature, they were taken into consideration when planning the other more specific categories, with a continued effort to follow the goals set forth for the overall park area. Action items are comprised of forest and noxious weed management, expansion of parking areas, park access, maintenance improvements, and the availability of restrooms throughout the park.

Active Use Areas – Fountain Creek Regional Park offers a wide variety of active use facilities at Willow Springs Ponds and Duckwood Active-Use Area, with opportunities for proposed activities at Cottonwood Meadows to the south. While improvements are recommended, emphasis is placed on maintaining and improving existing facilities and minimizing impacts to surrounding open space areas. This is accomplished through the utilization of the current active use areas or open areas that are currently under-utilized, yet don't present significant impact on natural resources or wildlife habitat.

Recommended action items include the installation of new playgrounds, community gardens, a creekside recreation area, demonstration gardens, a dog park, disc golf course, and expanded parking to

serve new uses, while new trails, ranging from winding singletrack to more substantial internal park trails, are planned for both areas. Maintenance items include forestry work, noxious weed management, and multi-use athletic field restoration.

Regional and Internal Park Trails – Fountain Creek Regional Trail, a segment of the Colorado Front Range Trail, has often received high marks as a regional non-motorized transportation asset, as reflected in the public survey, public meetings, and through conversations with trail users. At Fountain Creek Regional Park, the County currently provides and maintains approximately 4 miles of regional and internal park trails, most of which are six to eight-foot wide gravel surfaced trails that accommodate multiple uses. In addition to the trails, the Duckwood Active-Use Area has approximately 1 mile of concrete sidewalks that allow for smooth-surface exercise opportunities.

This Master Plan envisions the repair, enhancement, addition, or relocation of over 2 miles of trails, including trails in the proposed dog park, conversion of some social trails into singletrack hiking and mountain biking trails, and those sections of regional trail damaged in the flood events of 2015. Proposed trail improvements include using sustainable trail design practices to minimize the cost of future maintenance and infrastructure cost.

Open Space – With its current layout, Fountain Creek Regional Park contains approximately 345 acres, or 88 percent, of natural open space, comprised primarily of native grass meadows, protected wetlands, deciduous cottonwood forests, and lowland floodplains. These areas are utilized for either conservation purposes or for passive recreational activities, such as hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing. Results from both the public survey and stakeholder interviews revealed that park users not only prize these open spaces, and want to keep them natural, maintained, and in some cases, restored. Master Plan goals, as stated previously, call for preservation of open space for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, to preserve watershed function, and to maintain and enhance wetland and riparian areas.

The expanse and open layout of the Duckwood Active-Use Area allows for the construction of new facilities (playgrounds, gardens, parking lots, athletic fields) within a concentrated area already categorized as “active use” without the need to disturb current open spaces. This infill philosophy employed in developing the Master Plan, concentrating new, higher impact uses in the Duckwood Active-Use Area, helps preserve open space while allowing El Paso County Parks to fulfill its mission to provide new and improved facilities and services that citizens desire. While some new activities and facilities require the utilization of open space, these improvements do not require large-scale earth moving and destruction to the surrounding environment, and instead, flow passively with the current landscape without creating significant visual or environmental impacts.

Recreation and Cultural Services Programs and Facilities – The Fountain Creek Nature Center is among the most popular facilities in Fountain Creek Regional Park. Its ecology-based educational programs, camps, and family activities are highly valued by local organizations, residents, and visitors – ranking high in the public survey and stakeholder interviews. As the park evolves, care must be taken to balance recreational use of the park with preservation of natural resources as potential educational and interpretive opportunities. Goals focus on the continuing support of the Nature Center as a premier destination, community gathering place, and hub for environmental education and stewardship. Action items include the continuation and expansion of educational programs, construction of natural play areas, improvement and expansion of the Nature Center facilities, collaboration with youth organizations, and expansion of Nature Center staff.

Management and Administration – A focus on effective and efficient management and administration of Fountain Creek Regional Park will ensure that the park remains financially and environmentally sustainable for years to come while meeting resident and visitor needs. Master Plan goals call for the continued maintenance and enhancement of existing park facilities, while addressing existing and future needs, with a continuing respect for the natural environment. To address these goals, action items include increasing security, enforcement and public education, effective stormwater management, strategic land acquisitions, and continuing partnerships with local organizations and government agencies.

Community Awareness – The ongoing efforts of the Fountain Creek Nature Center and the Community Outreach programs have contributed greatly to the popularity and sustainability of Fountain Creek Regional Park. Nature Center camps, educational and interpretive programs, community events, and volunteer opportunities, such as Creek Week, have brought thousands of visitors to the park every year.

Outreach programs provide awareness, sponsorship, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities to support programs and facility development of El Paso County parks, trails, open spaces, Nature Centers and other facilities. Outreach services provide citizens with opportunities to benefit the community and improve the quality of life through programs such as Adopt-A-Park/Adopt-A-Trail, friends groups and nature center volunteers, as well as donation opportunities through such programs as Partners in the Park and the Trust for Community Parks. Action items are centered around the formation of friends or volunteer groups for the development, administration, and maintenance of select park facilities, as well as increased community outreach.

Implementation and Funding – The phasing, or prioritization, of capital improvement projects for Fountain Creek Regional Park as expressed in the Implementation Plan in Chapter 8 was derived from input by the public, stakeholders, and Master Plan Team members, with endorsement by the Park Advisory Board and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. The capital improvement budget addresses new and improved facilities and critical maintenance needs, while taking into account available funding, benefit for cost, project complexity, and improvement urgency. The Implementation Plan includes a first phase budget for select projects that will use Ballot Question 1A funds and regional park fees.

In a continuing effort to enhance the Park's facilities and programs, Master Plan goals recommend generating and researching new partnership opportunities and funding sources to assist with the planning, development, and implementation of new projects and programs. Chapter 8 provides a detailed explanation of existing and possible funding sources, and a structured view of the proposed phased improvements, to be completed within the next ten years.



Fountain Creek Regional Park & Nature Center



Fountain Creek Nature Center



Duckwood Active-Use Area



Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area



Willow Springs Pond



Fountain Creek Regional Park is a 460-acre linear park situated along Fountain Creek between the cities of Colorado Springs and Fountain. The park includes a creek-side trail, Willow Springs Ponds, Hanson Nature Park, and Fountain Creek Nature Center. The Willow Springs Ponds are stocked on a regular basis with trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, catfish and white sucker fish, and fishermen must possess a Colorado fishing license to fish there. Downstream of the ponds, the recently updated Fountain Creek Nature Center serves as the focal point for learning about Fountain Creek, the watershed, and riparian ecology. Farther south, the Duckwood active play area consists of a 12-acre site with multi-purpose fields, picnic pavilions, and a playground.

Driving Directions:
Fountain Creek Regional Park can be reached from Interstate 25. Exit 132A, east on Highway 16 for .50 mile; take Fountain exit to Highway 85 south .50 mile to Cattail Marsh Road.

Park Hours:
5 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Reservation season:
April – October

Fountain Creek Nature Center
320 Pepper Grass Lane,
Fountain, CO 80817
(719) 520-6745
www.elpasocountynaturecenters.com
Tuesday - Saturday:
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Map 1 - General Map of Fountain Creek Regional Park



Fountain Creek Regional Park
 Reservation season:
 April – October



Willow Springs Ponds



Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area



Fountain Creek Nature Center



Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area



Map 2 - Detailed Inset Maps of Fountain Creek Regional Park

CHAPTER 2 – HISTORY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF FOUNTAIN CREEK REGIONAL PARK

Introduction

Situated along the fertile and shaded banks of Fountain Creek, the land that now encompasses Fountain Creek Regional Park has experienced an interesting past. Native Americans, European settlers, New Mexican armies, and western travelers have all made their presence known along Fountain Creek. A critical component of this Master Plan was a thorough evaluation of historical and cultural resources in the park.

In early April 2016, Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig (FHU) and Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc. conducted a cultural resources assessment of Fountain Creek Regional Park to establish a baseline for information regarding existing and potential cultural resources located within the park. The land encompassing the park, which is located along Fountain Creek, was acquired through purchase and donation between 1982 and the mid-1990s. As a result of the park's relatively short existence, no cultural resource inventory has been conducted in the past. Objectives for the cultural assessment were to provide a basic level of information regarding all known cultural resources as well as potential sites that have not previously been surveyed. The results of the assessment provided critical information pertaining to cultural resources that will help inform future surveys, planning projects, and interpretive material for areas within the Fountain Creek Regional Park.

Native American History and Early Settlers

Between A.D. 1350–1450, numerous Native American groups occupied the area along the Arkansas River Basin. Toward the latter part of this date range, the Jicarilla Apache are considered to be the primary residents of the region. The use of the Platte River Basin, and the greater High Plains region, escalated starting around A.D. 1500. This is also seen in the mountains, which were used by the Utes, Shoshoni, Comanche, and the Plains tribes, from both the eastern and western parts of Colorado.

During the 1700s, Apache groups had abandoned the Arkansas Basin and were forced into northern New Mexico after being pushed out by Comanche Indians who now occupied the plains along the Front Range. The Comanche obtained horses and rifles through trade with the Spanish who claimed the region as part of northern frontier of New Mexico as early as 1598. Hostile raiding of Spanish settlements and attack of other Native American tribes in the region led to hostility toward the Comanche. In 1779, a campaign was launched by New Mexico Governor Juan Bautista de Anza, against the Comanche Indians. The Governor's army of Spanish soldiers and Ute and Apache Native American allies traveled north from Santa Fe through the San Luis Valley into present day South Park. From there they travelled east over the mountains through Ute Pass, following Fountain Creek

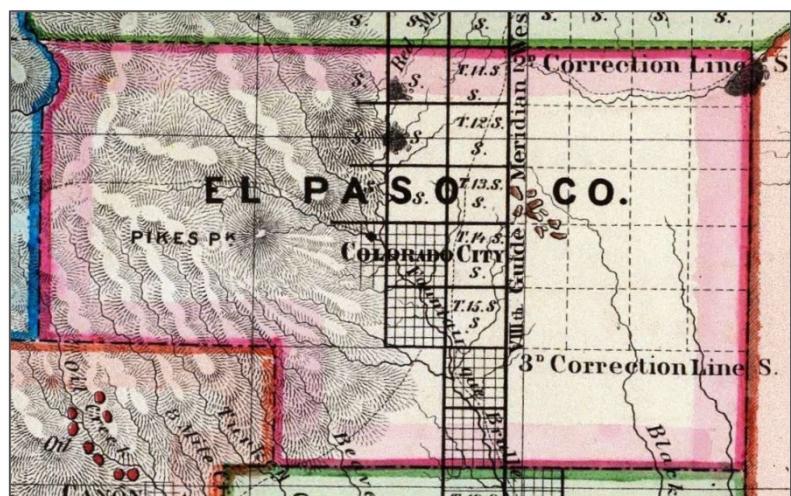


Figure 4 - Map of El Paso County Derived from 1866 Map of Colorado. Dotted Line East of Fountain Creek is the Cherokee Trail

south past the modern day Town of Fountain to where they eventually had their first engagement with the Comanche's near modern day Wigwam. Governor Anza's campaign against the Comanche's ended with the death of Comanche Chief Cuerno Verde after cornering him and his men near the base of Greenhorn Mountain of which was named after the fearless Comanche leader.

By the 1819–1820 expedition led by Major Stephen Long, the principal tribes occupying the region consisted of the Comanche, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apaches. Ethnographic studies completed for these tribes indicate that mound burials were not part of their mortuary practices. The burial practices of the Comanche, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apaches were similar and consisted of placing the deceased in the ground covering the grave with rocks. As for the Ute prior to the reservation period, crevice burials were preferred, whereby the deceased was placed within a rock crevice with the body typically covered with rock. Other documented Ute mortuary practices included placing the deceased in open pits, placed on scaffolds, cremation, or even leaving the corpse on the ground surface.

Evidence of Ute tribe in the Pikes Peak region includes the Ute Indian Trail, which traveled west from the confluence of Fountain and Monument Creeks, near present-day downtown Colorado Springs, over Ute and Wilkerson Passes, and into the high mountain valleys. Furthermore, the Ute Indians were responsible primarily for region's many fine examples of culturally-modified trees (CMTs), also known as Ute Prayer Trees. While none exist in Fountain Creek Regional Park, many of these pathfinding, burial, or medicine trees can be found north and west of Colorado Springs, in Black Forest and along Ute Pass.

The land now occupied by Fountain Creek Regional Park is located just north of the City of Fountain, which is located at the confluence of Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek (originally known as Sand Creek). In 1833, Jimmy Hayes of which the name Jimmy Camp Creek was derived, became the first white inhabitant in the region. By 1857, the present location of the City of Fountain was settled by immigrating Quakers Amos and Mary Terrell. After constructing the first house in 1958, the Terrells ran a stage coach station and eating house out of the building (Historic Fountain Colorado, 2013). In 1871, the town was surveyed and platted, and soon after, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was constructed through the area.

Fish culturalist Walter Belveal owned the ponds in and adjacent to Fountain Creek Regional Park from the 1920s to the 1960s. He stocked them with trout, catfish, bass, and bluegill and made them available to local fisherman. Belveal's former farm, which lies within Fountain Creek Regional Park, has been preserved for the long term benefit of the community as a shady wetlands habitat for

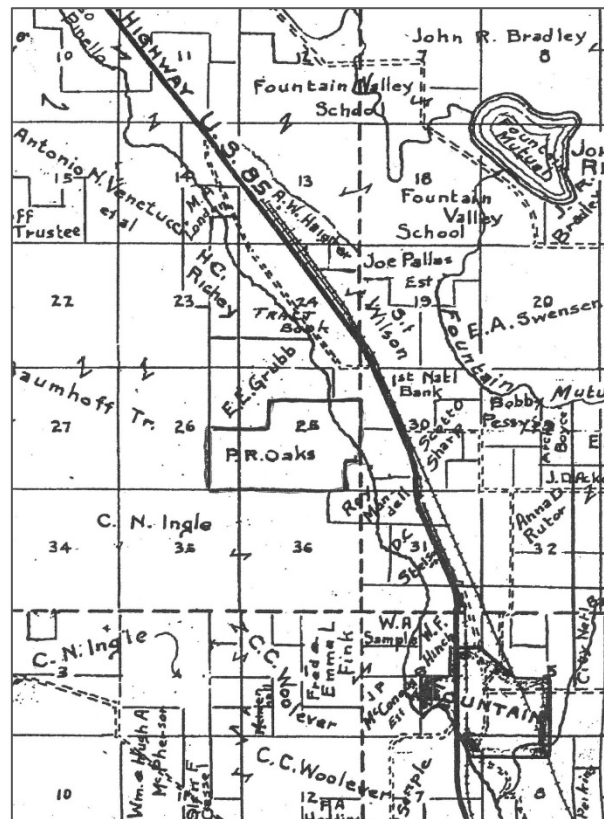


Figure 5 - Land Ownership Map (Approximately 1951)

birds and animals, and for which visitors can stroll, jog, or cycle (Hahn, 2012). Other prominent land owners included the Oaks Family, who operated a large farm along Fountain Creek from the late 1800s until the mid-1950s. The land comprising the park was purchased initially by El Paso County in 1982 and then later expanded from the late-1980s through the mid-1990s to its current size of 390 acres.

Land Ownership

Fountain Creek Regional Park began its existence in 1982, through the negotiated purchase of 7.5 acres of land from the Rice family. Over the next decade and a half, an additional 390 acres was added to the park, either through donations of land or negotiated purchases. The following table, a recreation of an original hand-typed file, shows the land acquisitions that established Fountain Creek Regional Park, as well as those lands that eventually led to the creation of Christian Open Space to the south of the park, and Schreder Open Space, which is located immediately north of the Fountain Creek Nature Center.

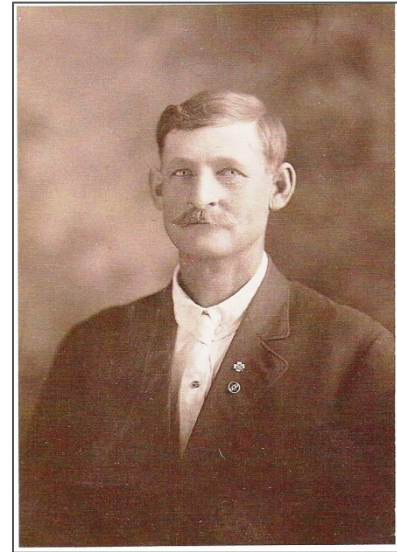


Figure 6 - Mr. P.R. Oaks (1865-1943), Former Owner of Lands Now Within Fountain Creek Regional Park

Cultural Resources

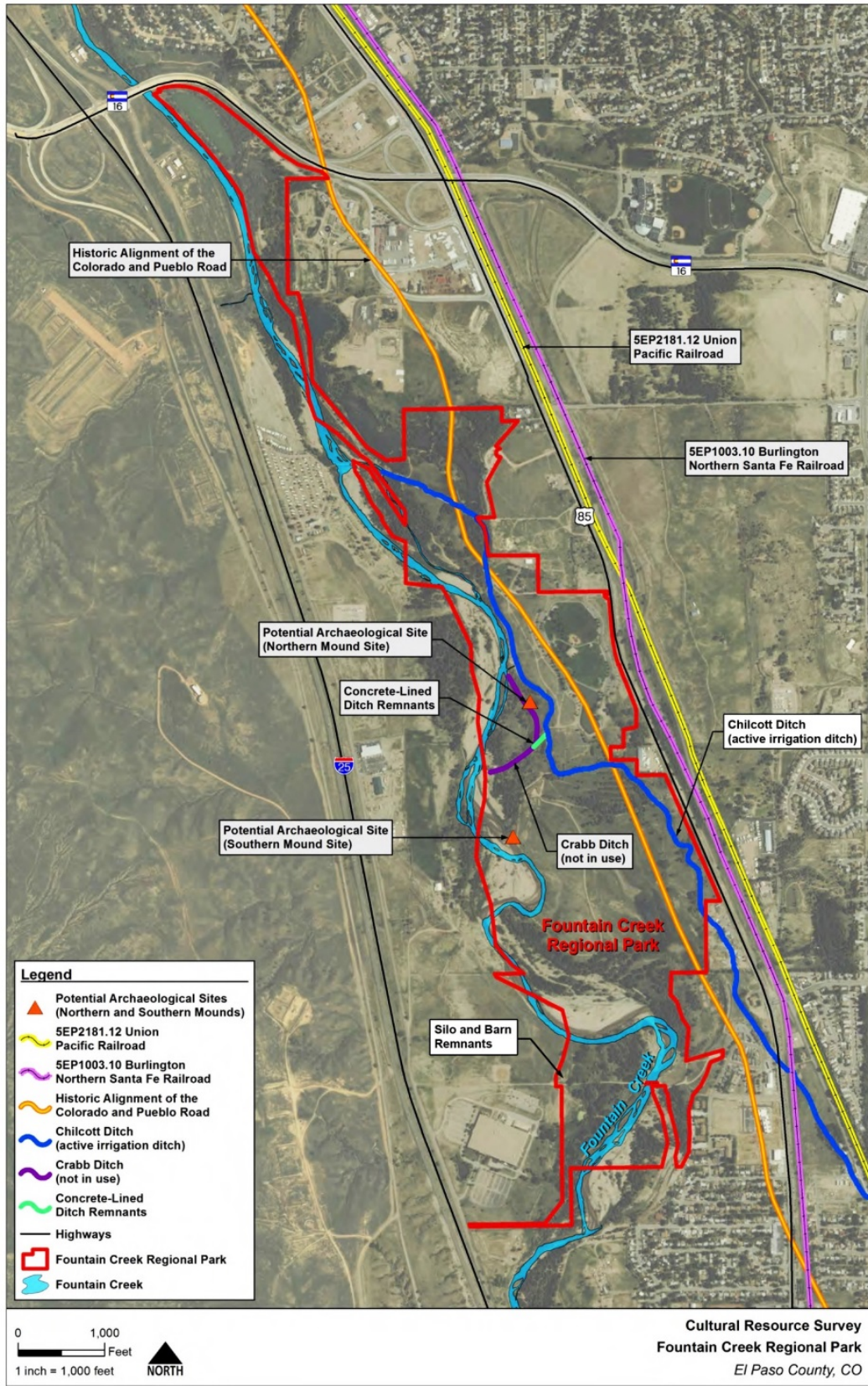
A literature review was conducted by FHU for the area within Fountain Creek Regional Park to determine if there was potential for other un-surveyed cultural resources to be located within the park boundaries. The literature review included several previous Office of Archaeological and Historic Preservation (OAHP) historical context reports, General Land Office (GLO) survey plat maps, review of previously recorded cultural resource site forms and other cultural resource reports, and review of Alpine Archaeological Consultants separate cultural resource analysis. On April 8, 2016, FHU conducted a field survey of

FOUNTAIN CREEK REGIONAL PARK			
CURRENT PROPERTY OWNERSHIP OR JURISDICTION			
<u>AGREEMENT DATE</u>	<u>PREVIOUS OWNER</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u>
10/31/85	Durbin	60.25	1993 Trail
10/09/87	Bonanza	14.58	1989
10/09/87	Bonanza	4.50	Island
05/28/82	Rice	7.54	1990
04/28/88	Western Sportsman	20.91	1989
08/02/88	Hal King	.85	
09/30/88	Hal King	38.20	
09/30/88	Hanson	5.98	1993 Trail
07/28/88	Skinner	2.86	
12/14/87	Bradley	30.82	1992 Trail
01/21/88	Bradley	1.76	1993 Trail
05/08/91	Bradley	6.00	1992
01/04/91	Finkbeiner	5.53	
07/08/91	Coulter	106.75	
03/07/94	Francis	32.91	
12/31/94	HRB	12.58	
01/--/98	Christian	76.12	Christian Open Space
--/--/02	Skinner	6.10	
12/07/06	Schreder	<u>11.60</u>	Schreder Open Space
	TOTAL:	445.48*	

* Includes Christian Open Space and Schreder Open Space, which are not included in the acreage of Fountain Creek Regional Park.

Figure 7 – El Paso County Recreation of Land Acquisition File for Fountain Creek Regional Park

Fountain Creek Regional Park to verify the location of potential resources identified from the literature review. Four un-surveyed potential cultural resources were identified within the park including the Colorado and Pueblo Road, Chilcott Ditch, Crabb Ditch and Silo and Barn Remnants from a site at the southwest corner of the park. Figure 10 illustrates the location of potential cultural resources within the Fountain Creek Regional Park, while a summary of each potential resource is outlined below.



Map 3 - Locations of Cultural Resources within Fountain Creek Regional Park

Colorado and Pueblo Road. Review of early maps of the region, including the GLO survey maps indicate the presence of an early wagon road along the east side of the Fountain Creek floodplain. One map dated 1863, located at the northwest corner of Fountain Creek Regional Park, identifies the early road as the Colorado and Pueblo Road, an early stage road connecting early communities in the region. The 1863 GLO Plat shows the old stage road running northwest to southeast between Fountain Creek and modern day US 85 within the land now occupied by Fountain Creek Regional Park. Early stage roads were crude, unimproved trails that were little more than wagon tracks with the largest stones removed from the pathways to keep covered wagons from overturning. Many of these early roads were constructed along existing native trails. The Cherokee Trail originally followed the Arkansas River through eastern Colorado, before branching off at Pueblo and continuing north along Fountain Creek. Like the Cherokee Trail, the Colorado and Pueblo Road followed along the eastern bank of Fountain Creek, providing the incoming settlers with a southern route to the gold fields during the late 1850s. The Colorado and Pueblo Road may have been constructed along portions of the Cherokee Trail. Over time, the demand for better and safer roads with the increased number of settlers led to the modification and/or abandonment of many of these early wagon roads.

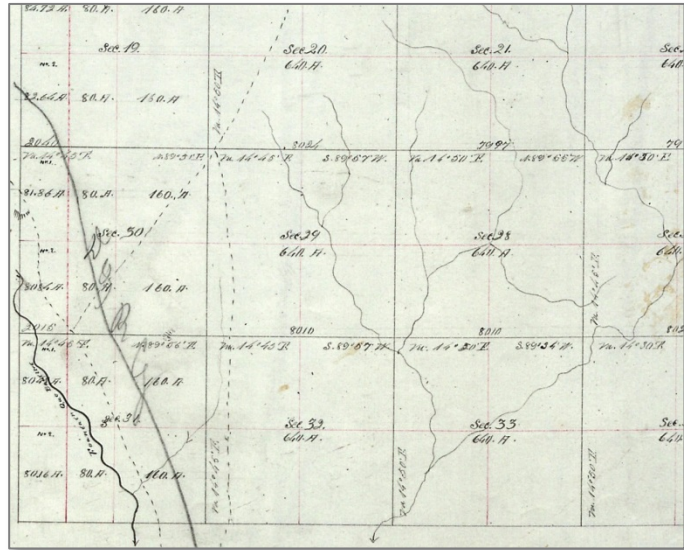


Figure 8 - 1863 GLO Plat Showing the Colorado and Pueblo Road Running Along Fountain Creek

Only one previous survey of the Colorado and Pueblo Road was identified within El Paso County. That survey found few remnants of the original stage road and was found to be not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Field visits conducted by both FHU and Alpine Archaeological Consultants found no trace of the Colorado and Pueblo road within Fountain Creek Regional Park. The fertile land along Fountain Creek has been intensively cultivated since the original land patents were issued in the 1860s and 1870s, which likely led to the destruction of the original stage road.

In addition to the old stage road, there is mention of an old stage station located along the Colorado and Pueblo Road that was established by early Fountain settlers Amos and Mary Terrell. The stage station was mentioned in local historical accounts of the area as being located approximately one mile south of the present day Widefield School and one-quarter of a mile west of present day US 85. This would likely be located in the area surrounding the Fountain Creek Regional Park maintenance building. However, a reconnaissance survey of that area did not confirm the location of the stage station or any former building remnants.

Chilcott Ditch. The Chilcott Ditch runs a total length of approximately 9.4 miles, traversing southeast from the headgate on Fountain Creek, which is located within Fountain Creek Regional Park. The ditch traverses through the City of Fountain, flowing through a pipe beneath Jimmy Camp Creek and

ending at the Calhan Reservoir. Construction of the original ditch was finished by the Spring of 1866 with a holding capacity of 2 feet by 5 feet. Original owners of the ditch include L. Bell, O.S. Loomis, H. Burns, George Rhodes, William Newby, H.P. Bosworth, J. Ames, W. Sweatland, W.T. McGee, J.C. Woodbury, and Rev. Sluty. In 1874, the ditch was widened by 3 feet with the intention of irrigating 3000 acres of land. That same year, the Chilcott Ditch Company was incorporated. The ditch was modified again when the Calhan Ditch was construction in November of 1909. A number of tail water ditches have since been cut from the Calhan Reservoir flowing south and ultimately back into Fountain Creek. Today, the ditch is still utilized as a water conveyance structure providing service to the region.



Figure 9 - Chilcott Ditch Headgate

While two other segments of the Chilcott Ditch have been previously recorded in the past, one of which warranted eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, the other segment did not due to past modifications which diminished the integrity of the ditch to convey historic significance. The overall Chilcott Ditch has been determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places for its contribution to the development and settlement of the agricultural community and economy in the region. A reconnaissance survey of the Chilcott Ditch located within Fountain Creek Regional Park illustrated a ditch resource that appears to maintain a good level of integrity as a result of its location along the historic ditch alignment, earthen channel, and presence of features including the headgate and diversion structures. If formally surveyed, it is likely that the segment of Chilcott Ditch within Fountain Creek Regional Park would support the overall eligibility of the ditch resource.



Figure 10 - Chilcott Ditch Diversion Structure

Crabb Ditch. One of the older ditches in the area, the Crabb Ditch is a relatively short ditch structure that provided irrigation to land along the east side of Fountain Creek just south of Duckwood Road. The ditch historically was appropriated the water rights from Fountain Creek in 1861 when it was originally



Figure 11 - Remnants of Crabb Ditch

constructed. Additional water rights appropriations brought the total land irrigated to approximately 100 acres. The original ditch had a holding capacity of 1 foot by 3 feet and an average grade of 5.28 feet per mile. The original length of the ditch was 1,000 feet. The decreed point of diversion of the Crabb Ditch was originally located on the easterly bank of Fountain Creek within Fountain Creek Regional Park. The City of Fountain first acquired a portion of the Crabb Ditch water rights in the 1970s, and later bought the remaining water rights from the Simmons family in 2007. At that time, the City petitioned for a change in use from irrigation use to municipal use and also for a change of the point of diversion of the water rights from the original Crabb Ditch headgate to the headgate of the Chilcott Ditch. The Simmons family originally utilized Crabb Ditch water to irrigate approximately 58 acres of alfalfa and grain corn between 1960 and 1969. The irrigated area was reduced to 35 acres from 1970 to 1990 and eventually reduced to nothing by 1991.



Figure 12 - Crabb Ditch with Fountain Creek Regional Trail in the Background

No segments of the Crabb Ditch have been recorded in the past, and the ditch has been out of service for many years, allowing tree and brush growth to obscure the majority of the original alignment. However, remnants of Crabb Ditch are identifiable in the area along Fountain Creek Regional Trail, and are located approximately 1,500 feet south of the Duckwood Road parking area. While it is unlikely that the segment of Crabb Ditch within Fountain Creek Regional Park would be considered eligible to the National Register of Historic Places due to its deteriorated condition, disturbance to this resource should be avoided if possible since it still provides a basic insight into former land use of the area within the park.

Silo and Barn Remnants. Located in the southwest corner of Fountain Creek Regional Park, on the west side of Fountain Creek, are the remnants of a former barn structure and concrete silo. Little is known about the date of construction for these structures and their original ownership and review of local records including the El Paso County Assessors records show no indication of a building on this parcel. However, review of historic USGS



Figure 13 - Silo and Barn Remnants

topographical maps indicate an outbuilding at this particular site in 1948 which reinforces the idea that the structural remnants are from an earlier time. Additional outbuildings are also shown to the south of the silo and barn remnants, though field inspection did not uncover the location of any additional

building remnants in the vicinity of this site. While few records of the buildings were found and the majority of this site has been lost to the deteriorating effects of time, the consultant recommended that the site be protected from additional disturbance and could provide cultural interest to park users through the addition of interpretive signage along the adjacent trail.

Burial Mounds

In 1992, a local informant, Mr. Jim Skinner, advised the El Paso County Park Department of two alleged “burial grounds” within Fountain Creek Regional Park. One mound was rumored to contain Native American burials, whereas the second mound was believed to contain a mass grave of Euro-American individuals killed during a Native American raid on a stage stop in 1850. As early as 1944, Mr. Skinner’s grandfather, Alfred R. Ward, owned land in close proximity to the possible burial locations. When Mr. Ward planned to build an irrigation ditch through the area, a local Native American objected, stating there were burial mounds nearby. According to Mr. Skinner, Mr. Ward rerouted his planned ditch and avoided the mounds.

The possible mound locations were visited twice by Park personnel. In October 1992, Mr. Skinner accompanied Judith Daley (Fountain Creek Representative), Austin Box (Ute Indian Advisor), Sharon Flotho (Fountain Creek Docent), and Terre Watt (Fountain Creek Docent) to the mound locations. A few months later, in January 1993, Bob and Michelle McDonald (Colorado Archaeological Society), Tom Wynne (University of Colorado-Colorado Springs Anthropology Department), and Bill Arbogast (a professional archaeologist) visited the site with Superintendent of Planning and Construction, Susan Johnson.

During the October 1992 visit, Mr. Skinner guided the group to several possible mound locations. According to a 1992 park memo, the northernmost mound was 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 inches high. Farther south-southeast, four additional mounds were identified, each measuring approximately 8 ft. long, 3 feet wide, and 3 feet high. Each possible mound location was staked by Park personnel. In January 1993, when the archaeologists visited the site, it was recommended the locations be mapped and avoided during future construction activities. The archaeologists agreed it was best not to test or excavate the mounds to determine if human remains were present.

Potential Northern Mound. The northern location was plotted 90 feet south of the Fountain Creek Regional Park Trail on the eastern extent of the Fountain Creek floodplain. The area is densely covered with kosha, cottonwood saplings, and wild rose bushes, and lies within a small stand of cottonwood trees. The location is also partly covered with leaf litter and downed cottonwood branches and twigs, resulting in only fair ground visibility. The general area is largely undisturbed aside from the construction of Crabb Ditch, which was built in the mid-1880s and diverts water from Fountain Creek approximately 400 ft. northeast of the northern location.

The possible mound location was inspected, but no feature resembling a mound was visible. Using the mound location as a center point, a 4-acre area surrounding the northern location was inspected for evidence of a mound feature. The site inspection identified a 21 feet by 33 feet, 1½ feet high, slightly raised area on the northern side of Crabb Ditch, approximately 56 feet southwest of the plotted mound

point. The area is covered with wild rose, kosha, and two cottonwood saplings. The raised area was extensively examined for any potential artifacts and for evidence that it was man-made, however, no artifacts were found and there was no evidence to suggest that the raised area was man-made. Aside from this raised area, no additional areas of interest were identified.

Mr. Skinner noted that his grandfather was first informed of the possible burial mounds when he intended to construct an irrigation ditch in the area. It seems unlikely that the Mr. Ward's irrigation ditch is Crabb Ditch, which was built approximately 60 years prior to Mr. Ward owning land in the area. However, it is possible Mr. Ward intended to modify the existing ditch. It is also possible that Mr. Ward planned on excavating a small, unnamed field ditch to irrigate his land. The presence of a small



Figure 14 - Possible Location of Northern Burial Mound

irrigation ditch near the raised area identified by Alpine is consistent with Mr. Skinner's account. However, the size of the raised area identified by Alpine is inconsistent with the description provided in the 1992 park memo, which describes the northern mound as 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 inches high. The mound found by Alpine is five times longer, over 16 times wider, and only half as tall.

Overall, Alpine's examination of the raised area found at the northern location was inconclusive. The raised area was found in the correct general location given the 1992 information; however, the size of the mound was not consistent with the previous descriptions. Without conducting subsurface testing to definitively identify human remains, it is unknown whether the raised area represents a burial mound.

Potential Southern Mound. The southern location consists of four points plotted approximately 0.3 miles southwest of the northern location. According to Mr. Skinner, the location represents a historical mass grave of local inhabitants that were killed in a raid by Native Americans. According to the 1992 park memo, only one family member survived the raid, a small child who hid in the upper barn. The 1992 park memo describes each mound as being approximately 8 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 3 feet high. Field notes from the 1992 site visit state, "*Mass grave-close to beginning of berm-west side 40 yds. large down cottonwood. separate from berm between trail & berm-cottonwood on top of mound nearby. old bridge crosses Crabb Ditch.*"

The berm, mentioned in the field notes, refers to an 800-ft.-long, nearly 5-foot-tall, shallow, V-shaped levee built to deflect the river away from the bottomlands to the southeast. Unfortunately, when Alpine

visited the southern mound locations, their plots were found to be in the current, heavily eroded floodplain of Fountain Creek. The potential mounds would have been removed during the 2013 flooding in El Paso County. A 4-acre area surrounding the southern mound locations was examined to determine if the potential mounds might still exist. No mounded features were identified. The examination of the area also entailed a detailed inspection of the newly cut river bank. This inspection did not find any skeletal



Figure 15 - Location of Southern Burial Mounds

remains, and additionally, the soil profile contained no evidence to indicate the presence of disturbed soils associated with the excavation and later burial of human remains.

Although Alpine’s fieldwork found no likelihood of intact burial mounds at the reported location, historical research was performed to determine the validity of a stage stop in the vicinity and any documentation that would corroborate the attack. The research included the examination of early GLO maps online, including the 1866 GLO Plat and the 1862 Diagram of Exterior Lines. The maps found that the mound locations are in close proximity to the Colorado and Pueblo Road that followed the eastern side of “Fontaine Qui Bouille” or Fountain Creek. Although the use of the road through the area makes it plausible that a stage stop was present, there is no evidence that one existed as the maps post-date the rumored 1850 incident.

Based on literary research, the stage stop in question may well be one of two stage stations built by Amos Hubbard Terrell and his wife Mary Tapscott Terrell in the Fountain area (Hahn 2012; Historic Fountain Colorado 2013). The Terrells were Quakers who migrated to the west in the 1860s because of their opposition to the Civil War. Making their way into the Colorado Territory, the Terrells settled near the junction of Fountain Creek and Jimmy Creek in the early 1860s. Aside from homesteading the land, the Terrells also established a stage station and eating house for settlers and miners passing through Fountain Valley. It seems that the stage station was successful, because the Terrells established a second stage station 3 miles to the north at a point where the road branched and continued to Colorado City (Hahn 2012). This branch of the road is depicted on the 1866 GLO map, and the location of the second stage station was described in more detail during an oral interview with descendants of Amos Terrell in 1942. The location is described as northwest of the Terrell homestead “a quarter of a mile west of the modern paved Highway 85 and one mile south of the present Widefield School.” The station continued to operate into the late 1860s, but was later operated by Mrs. Terrell’s brother Henry Hutchin (Historic Fountain Colorado 2013).

The historical descriptions place the station in close proximity to the reported mound locations; however, Alpine found no physical remains of the possible station in the areas investigated. Although historical research has possibly identified the Terrell stage station as the stage stop referenced by the 1992 informant, the research did not corroborate the death of the stage stop inhabitants. This, coupled with the recent erosion and flooding of the area, strongly suggests that if any historical remnants were ever present, they have since been destroyed.

Conclusion. Because the northern mound location retains some likelihood for buried cultural deposits, the consultant recommends that the area be avoided during future construction activities. If avoidance is not feasible during future development, park officials should consider using an archaeological monitor if ground disturbance is to be undertaken. The southern mound location, however, has been destroyed by flooding and erosion. It is improbable that burials are present, and no further action is necessary at the southern mound location.



Figure 16 - Cheyenne Mountain forms a backdrop to Fountain Creek as it winds through Fountain Creek Regional Park

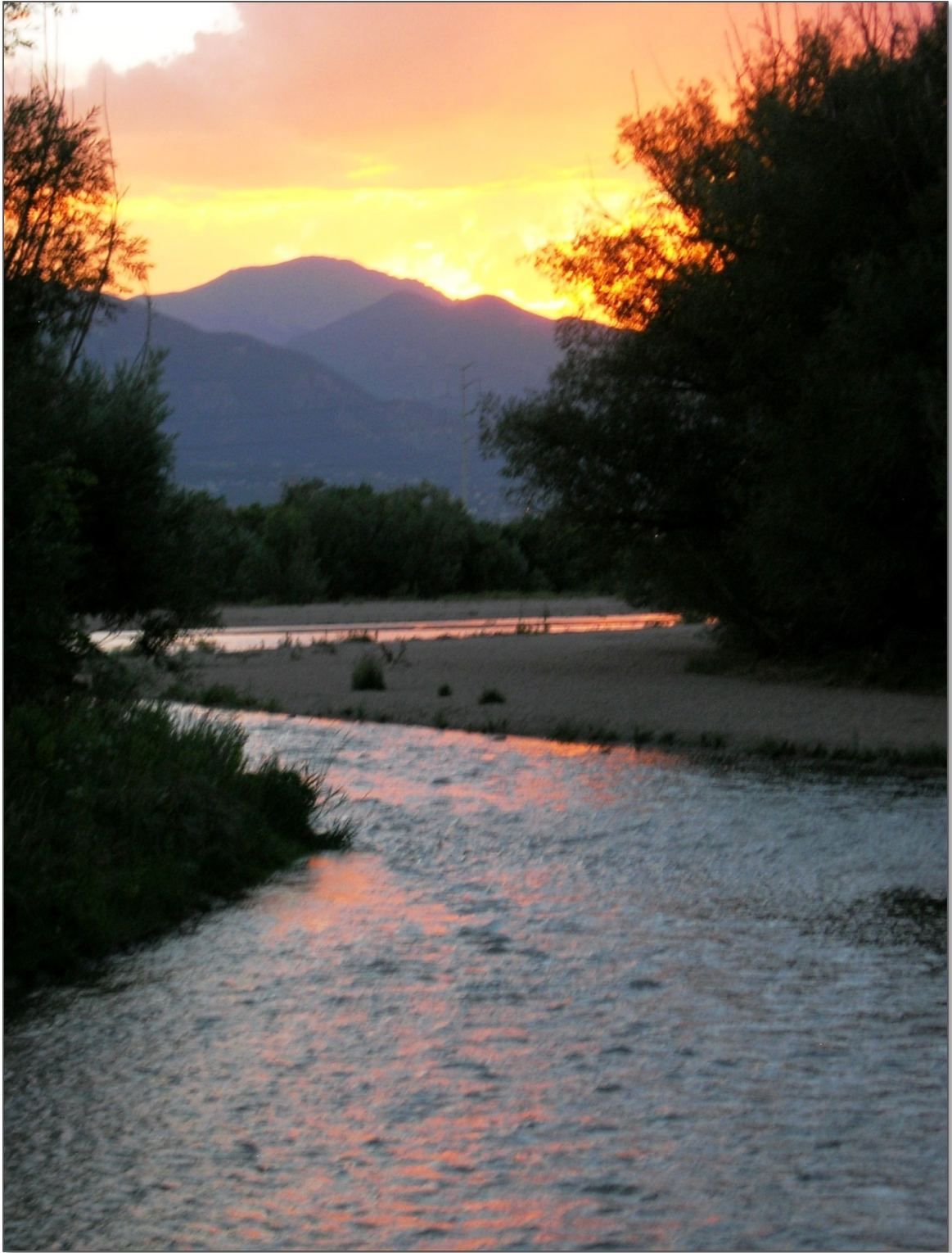
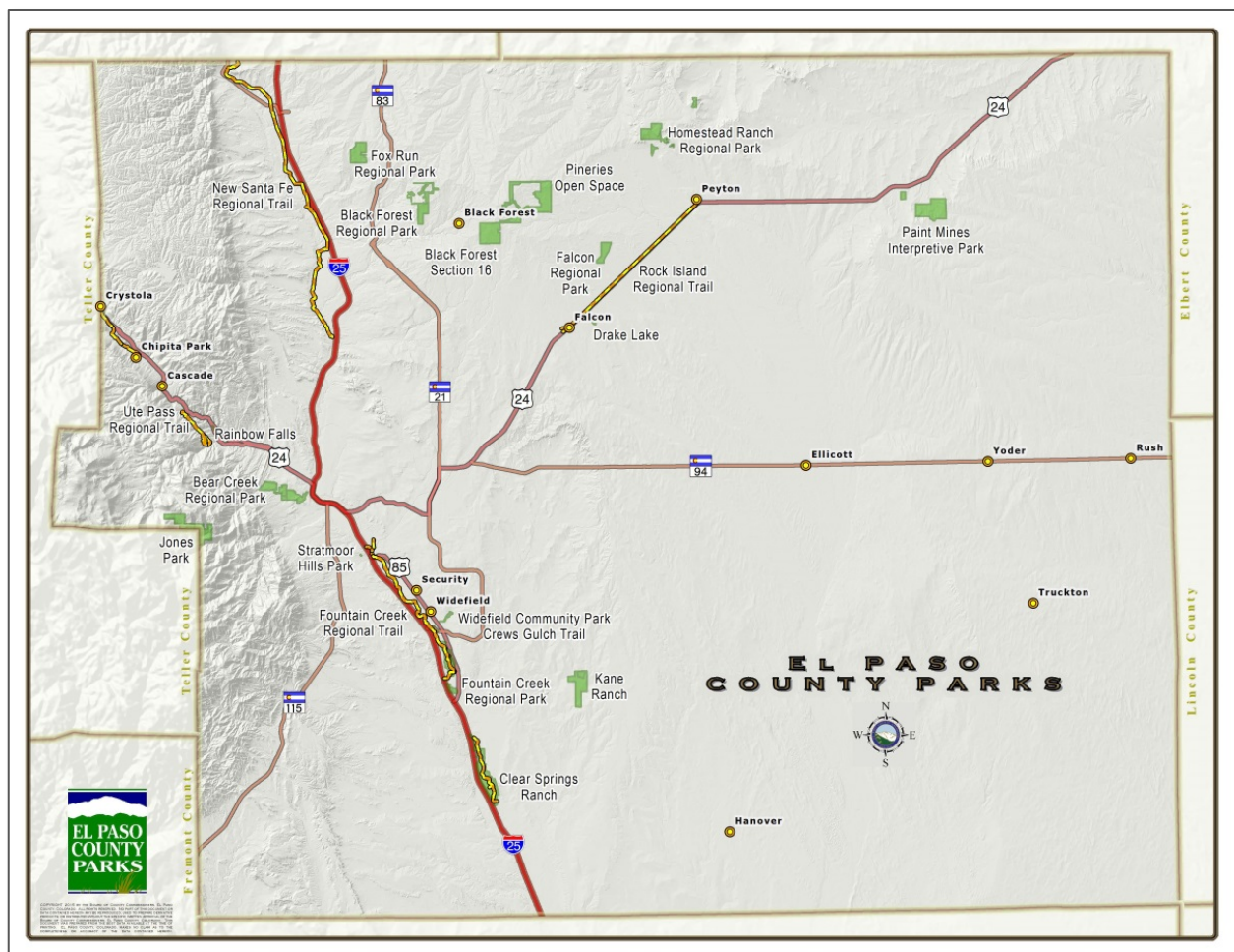


Figure 17 - The Sun Sets Behind Pikes Peak and Fountain Creek

CHAPTER 3 – EXISTING CONDITIONS

Topography

Fountain Creek Regional Park is situated on relatively flat terrain along the winding banks of Fountain Creek, which flows north to south through the High Plains and Foothills east of the Colorado Front Range and has impacted greatly the overall park landscape. The park contains many man-made ponds, natural wetlands, open meadows, and clusters of mature cottonwood tree groves near the creek itself. Elevation in the park decreases gradually from north to south, with a maximum elevation of 5,642 feet above Willow Springs Ponds, to approximately 5,538 feet at the point where Fountain Creek exits the park. According to the Utah State University Southwest GAP Landform analysis, most of Fountain Creek Regional Park is comprised of valley flats, level terraces, and gently sloping hills. Although numerous man-made benches, irrigation canals, and fields highlight the park's terrain, evidence of these natural floodplain terraces exist along the eastern and southwestern boundaries, further proof of the meandering nature of Fountain Creek. (Data: EPC Parks Master Plan, USU Southwest GAP Analysis)



Map 4 - El Paso County Park System

Climate

Located in a semi-arid climatic environment that extends east from the Colorado Front Range, visitors to Fountain Creek Regional Park can expect to see annually nearly 250 days of sunshine, and relatively moderate temperatures. The average maximum yearly temperature is 62.9 degrees, topping out at an average of 86.2 degrees during July. The average minimum yearly temperature is 35.8 degrees, with January possessing the lowest average monthly temperature of 17.8 degrees. Although figures vary depending on the source, annual precipitation averages approximately 15.6 inches, with the greatest amount of precipitation falling between May and August. The semi-arid climate with its moderate temperatures results in an annual snowfall rate of 39 inches. (Data: Western Regional Climate Center, NOAA)

Geologic Features and Soils

Geologic Surface Features – Fountain Creek Regional Park’s geologic and soil characteristics are a direct result of its location in the floodplain of Fountain Creek. The park’s terraced grasslands, marshy wetlands, and gravelly creek bed are evidence of current and past geomorphologic processes that lend to the current geologic make-up. The 1977 Robinson Geologic Hazards Study outlined the following distribution of geologic surface features within the park boundaries (Data: Robinson Study, USGS, 1977):

1. **Physiographic floodplain.** Erosion and deposition presently occur here and is generally subject to recurrent flooding. It includes the 100-year floodplain along major streams where floodplain studies have been conducted. Extensive detailed geologic, soils engineering and hydrologic investigation is required for any development planning. Utility corridors and structures may utilize some of these areas only after extensive design for the specialized problems involved. This geologic area comprises 295 acres or 75% of park area, primarily along Fountain Creek’s floodplain and Cottonwood Meadows.
2. **Stable alluvium, colluvium, and bedrock on flat to gentle slopes (0-5%).** Here, geologic hazard emphasis addresses surface and subsurface drainage. General geologic and soils engineering investigation is required to verify the uniformity of geologic conditions and general properties of surficial deposits and bedrock. This area makes up 53 acres or 13.5% of the park, primarily encompassing the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
3. **Stable alluvium, colluvium, and bedrock on gentle to moderate slopes (5%-12%).** Here, geologic hazard emphasis addresses surface and subsurface drainage. Reconnaissance geologic investigation and mapping is required to delineate surficial deposits, bedrock, areas of potential instability, and drainage features. Standard soils engineering investigation is needed to define general engineering properties, including bearing capacity of surficial deposits & bedrock. This area is located primarily along the Chilcott Ditch corridor east of Cottonwood Meadows, this group comprises 37.6 acres or 9.6% of the park area.
4. **Low terrace and valleys of minor tributary streams.** This geologic area is subject to periodic high flows, sheet flooding, and stream bank erosion. Geologic hazard emphasis addresses surface and subsurface drainage. Reconnaissance geologic investigation and mapping is required to delineate surficial deposits, bedrock, areas of potential instability, and drainage features. Standard soils engineering investigation is needed to define general engineering properties including bearing capacity of surficial deposits and bedrock. The area comprises 5.8 acres near the Fountain Creek Nature Center.

Soils – In 1981, the US Department of Agriculture, National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS, formally the Soil Conservation Service (SCS)) performed an extensive soil survey in El Paso County, and identified six soil types within Fountain Creek Regional Park, many of which are described as

being suited to support wetlands, grasslands, and riparian wildlife habitats. They are as follows (Data: National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)):

1. ***Ellicott Loamy Course Sand.*** This deep, somewhat excessively drained soil is on terraces and floodplains. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown loamy coarse sand about 4 inches thick. The underlying material to a depth of 60 inches is light brownish gray coarse sand stratified with layers of loamy sand, loamy coarse sand, and coarse sandy loam. This soil type is found on the east bank of Fountain Creek, in such park areas as Willow Springs Ponds, the western sections of Cattail Marsh and Cottonwood Meadows – all within the 100-year floodplain.
2. ***Schamber-Razor Complex.*** These gently rolling to steep soils are on eroded breaks and remnants of granite outwash over shale. The Chamber soil is deep and well-drained. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown gravelly loam about 5 inches thick. The underlying material is brown very gravelly loam about 9 inches thick over light yellowish brown very gravelly sand that extends to a depth of 60 inches or more. The Razor soil is moderately deep and well drained. Typically, the surface layer is light brownish gray clay loam about 3 inches thick. The subsoil is grayish brown heavy clay loam or clay about 15 inches thick. The substratum is grayish brown clay that grades to calcareous shale at the depth of about 31 inches. At Fountain Creek Regional Park, it is found in the central and eastern area around the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
3. ***Nunn Clay Loam.*** This deep, well-drained soil is on terraces, fans, and uplands, and is formed in mixed alluvium. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown heavy clay loam about 19 inches thick. The substratum to a depth of 72 inches is light olive brown sandy clay loam in the upper part and light brownish gray clay in the lower reaches. It is found in the central areas of the park, particularly southwest of the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
4. ***Ustic Torrifluvents.*** These deep, well drained soils are found on terraces and floodplains along major drainages, such as Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown to very dark grayish brown gravelly sandy loam to clay loam 6 to 18 inches thick. The stratified underlying material, to a depth of 60 inches, ranges from heavy clay loam to sand. This soil is located along the west bank of Fountain Creek, as well as on the eastern terraces of Cottonwood Meadows.
5. ***Fluvaquentic Haplaquolls.*** These deep, poorly drained soils are in marshes, in swales, and on creek bottoms. These soils are stratified. Typically, the surface layer is light gray to very dark gray loamy fine sand to gravelly loam 2 to 6 inches thick. The underlying material, 48 to 58 inches thick, is very pale brown to gray, stratified heavy sandy clay loam to sand and gravel. The lower part of some of these soils, at depths ranging from 18 to 48 inches, ranges from light blueish gray to greenish gray. The water table is usually at a depth of less than 48 inches, and it is on the surface during wet periods. Cattail Marsh and the eastern, wetland portion of Cottonwood Meadows contain this soil type.
6. ***Manzanola Clay Loam.*** This deep, well-drained soil formed in calcareous loamy alluvium on fans, terraces, and valley side slopes. Typically, the surface layer is grayish brown heavy clay loam about 26 inches thick. The substratum is grayish brown clay loam to a depth of 60 inches or more. The lower part of the subsoil and the substratum contain visible soft masses of lime. It is found only in the far southwest corner of park on the west bank uplands of Fountain Creek.

Hydrography

Background – The Fountain Creek Watershed is located along the central Front Range of Colorado. Encompassing 927-square miles, the watershed drains south into the Arkansas River at Pueblo. The watershed is bordered by the Palmer Divide to the north, Pikes Peak to the west, and a minor divide 20 miles east of Colorado Springs. A watershed is a region that drains into a river, river system, or other body of water. John Wesley Powell, the 19th century geologist and explorer, described a watershed as, "that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community."

The geographic area is characterized by extremes in temperature and precipitation, large elevation changes (14,115 feet on Pikes Peak to 4,640 feet at Pueblo), steep gradients, diverse ecosystems, and a multitude of residential, commercial, and agricultural water uses. Portions of El Paso, Teller, and Pueblo counties make up the watershed, which includes the eight municipalities of Pueblo, Colorado Springs, Fountain, Manitou Springs, Green Mountain Falls, Woodland Park, Palmer Lake, and Monument.



Figure 18 - Fountain Creek and Pikes Peak

Of its 927-square miles, approximately 485-square miles drain through Fountain Creek Regional Park. Other than Pueblo, which lies 35 miles to the south, and the City of Fountain, all of the other aforementioned municipalities are encompassed in the area upstream from the park. Fed by nearly 450 upstream miles of perennial and intermittent streams, Fountain Creek has proven to be a challenging environment by nature, varying from nearly dry, ankle-deep conditions during drought periods to a wide, powerful channel carrying more than 21,000 cubic feet per second during high flow rainfall events. Increased flows are worsened by continued development in the upstream communities, where concrete, asphalt, and rooftops increase stormwater runoff and can push Fountain Creek to the limits of its capacity.

Forest Fire Impacts – In June 2012, The Waldo Canyon Fire burned 18,250 acres of ponderosa pine forest and over 350 homes in western El Paso and eastern Teller Counties. The fire perimeter lies completely within the Fountain Creek Watershed and exacerbates the volatility of the Fountain Creek and tributary flows by stripping land in the upper portion of the watershed of long-standing, stabilizing vegetation. Burned areas in the Upper Fountain Creek Watershed are expected to take more than a decade to recover, given



Figure 19 – Homes Burn in the Mountain Shadows Neighborhood During the Waldo Canyon Fire, June 2012

the severity of the burn, topography, and the soil characteristics. This means that downstream areas, such as Willow Springs Ponds and the Hanson Trailhead area on the main stem of Fountain Creek along with adjacent low- and moderate-income residential areas and utility infrastructure, remain at risk.

One year after the Waldo Canyon Fire, the Black Forest Fire erupted in north-central El Paso County, burning 13,110 acres of new- and old-growth ponderosa pine forest, along with nearly 500 homes. Like the Waldo Canyon Fire, the burn stripped the land of stabilizing grasses, shrubs, and trees, and turned the soil hydrophobic in nature – unable to absorb water. Monument Creek and its major tributaries, which drain into Fountain Creek, began to experience unprecedented flows from rainfall events in the months following the fire. A single storm event, tracking west-to-east across El Paso County, could impact both burn areas, creating catastrophic flows in Fountain Creek.

Major Rain Events – Since streamflow records were first implemented in the early 1900s, the Fountain Creek Watershed has been impacted by major storm events that led to loss of life, property, and land mass along the creek. Major storm and subsequent flood events were observed in June 1921, May 1935, June 1965, April/May 1999, September 2013, and May/June 2015, the latter two of which were exacerbated by not only the effects of the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest Fires, but also by increased urbanization and channelization of upstream creek and stormwater management systems. Each one of these storms also contributed to major changes in the Fountain Creek channel, as illustrated below. Hundreds, if not thousands of acres of adjacent land was eroded and deposited downstream in the form of vast sandbars and debris fields. At Fountain Creek Regional Park, the 2013 and 2015 flood events led to the destruction of hundreds of feet of the Fountain Creek Regional Trail, as well as the loss of nearly 12 acres of park land, most of which are located in the Hanson Trailhead area of the park.



Figure 20 - May 1935: Bijou Street Bridge



Figure 21 – June 2015: Trail Damage at Hanson Trailhead

Stream Restoration – Restoration and improvements in the Fountain Creek Regional Park reach of Fountain Creek have been envisioned for many years. The Fountain Creek Watershed Study and Watershed Management Plan (2009) by the US Army Corps Engineers ranked the project area sixth out of 13 potential projects for channel improvement and establishment of wetland vegetation. The Strategic Plan for the Fountain Creek Watershed (2009) was completed by the Fountain Creek Vision Task Force just prior to establishment of the Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District in 2009. This policy document advocates collaborative projects with multi-pronged benefits, such as projects that address water quality and sedimentation, flooding and stormwater management, recreation and the natural environment. The District subsequently adopted the Fountain Creek Corridor Restoration Master Plan (2011) which advanced the concepts of riparian buffer zones, maximizing the floodplain, side detention, wetland creation, creek realignment,

bankfull bench and bank sloping, and revegetation/habitat restoration. Specific recommendations for the Hanson Trailhead area include channel realignment, wetland creation, bankfull bench and bank sloping, and revegetation. The US Geological Survey prepared a flood control study, Remediation Scenarios for Attenuating Peak Flows and Reducing Sediment Transport in Fountain Creek, Colorado, 2013, which identified the need for bank stabilization in the project area.

The general public has expressed its support for a lasting solution to flooding and erosion problems along the Fountain Creek Regional Trail and in the Hanson Trailhead area. As part of the Master Plan process, an online survey (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) sought input from the public in regards to the current and future state of the park. Survey respondents strongly favored more access to Fountain Creek, and creek-focused, nature-oriented activities. Floodplain protection ranked high as a basis for goals to be included in the master plan. Concept plans developed for this Master Plan include the Creekside Recreation Area that will be further planned and constructed once flood restoration projects have been completed.

Vegetation

Fountain Creek Regional Park supports vast riparian deciduous forest habitats comprised of an overstory dominated by plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides* spp. *monilifera*), lanceleaf cottonwood (*Populus x acuminata*), crack willow (*Salix fragilis*) and Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) and a shrub understory that includes western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*), Wood's rose (*Rosa woodsii*) and stands of coyote willow (*Salix exigua*). The riparian corridor also contains an infestation of both Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) and tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), invasive exotic species which contribute to ecosystem degradation.



Figure 22 - Cottonwood Grove and Grasslands

In addition to the riparian corridor, Fountain Creek Regional Park also supports upland areas of shortgrass prairie. Grassland areas are dominated blue gramma (*Bouteloua gracilis*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*) and Cuman ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya*).

Thriving wetlands are present in abundance at both the Cattail Marsh and Cottonwood Meadows areas. Wetland vegetation is dominated by narrowleaf and broadtail cattail (*Typha angustifolia* and *latifolia*), common threesquare (*Schoenoplectus pungens*), cloaked bulrush (*Scirpus pallidus*) and common spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) are also abundant. Additionally, Cattail Marsh supports a large stand of showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*). (Data: EPC Environmental Services, US Fish and Wildlife Service Wetlands Inventory, USU Southwest GAP Analysis)



Figure 23 - Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area

Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs)

Fountain Creek is the primary riparian corridor within El Paso County providing aquatic habitat and important habitat for numerous resident and migrant bird species as well as small mammals, beaver, muskrat, raccoon, fox, coyote and deer. In addition to the riparian corridor, Fountain Creek Regional Park also supports highly valuable wetland habitat which is utilized by numerous wildlife species for feeding, foraging and nesting as well as shortgrass prairie habitat which provides an important habitat component to birds, mammals and reptiles.

A Survey of Critical Biological Resources in El Paso County was completed by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) in December 2001. CNHP, a program based at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, is a member of the international Natural Heritage Network and is focused on tracking and ranking Colorado's rare and imperiled species and habitats, preserving the natural diversity of life by contributing the essential scientific foundation that leads to lasting conservation of Colorado's biological wealth, and providing information and expertise on these topics to promote the conservation of valuable biological resources. As a result of the survey, three Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs) were identified in the vicinity of Fountain Creek Regional Park. These PCA designations are reflected in the El Paso County Parks Master Plan as a candidate open space areas. Descriptions of each PCA are as follows (Data: Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP):

Fountain Creek PCA – The Fountain Creek site includes three areas that are known to be used by wintering Bald Eagles for roosting and feeding, one of which is located partially within Fountain Creek Regional Park. Riparian vegetation, including mature cottonwood trees, grows along Fountain Creek. Bald Eagles use the cottonwood trees for roosting and for hunting perches from which they attack black-tailed prairie dogs and other prey. Other birds that have been recorded from the site include Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Mexican Spotted Owl, Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover, Lewis's Woodpecker and there is a historical record of the Ovenbird. The Triploid Colorado Checkered Whiptail, an imperiled reptile, is also recorded from the site as are the northern leopard frog and swift fox.

There are occurrences of Mesic Tallgrass Prairie, Great Plains Shortgrass Prairie, and Montane Grassland inhabited by the rare butterflies the Dusted Skipper, Crossline Skipper, and Colorado Blue. Other rare plant community occurrences within the site include Narrowleaf Cottonwood and Common Chokecherry (*Populus angustifolia* / *Prunus virginiana*), Montane Riparian Forest (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* / *Betula occidentalis*), Lower Montane Forest (*Corylus cornuta* shrubland), and Mesic Oak Thickets (*Quercus gambelii* / *Carex inops*). Numerous rare plants occurrences have been recorded from the site. Some of the rarer and more recent records include the Pikes Peak Spring Parsley, James' Telesonix, Rocky Mountain Columbine, and Golden Columbine.

Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creeks PCA – Within the Fountain Creek Watershed, the Colorado Division of Wildlife has documented Arkansas darter, a globally vulnerable small plains fish, in two reaches of Fountain Creek, including the stretch in Fountain Creek Regional Park. Arkansas darter (*Etheostoma cragini*) occur within the riparian corridor of Fountain Creek between Williams Creek north to the between the towns of Widefield and Fountain. Arkansas darter are a small eastern plains fish native to streams in the Arkansas River basin and are known to inhabit small, shallow, clear streams that are often spring-fed and have sandy substrates, slow current, cooler water, and aquatic vegetation. In Fountain and Jimmy Camp creeks, Arkansas darters are probably most abundant in spring-fed marshes adjacent to the creeks. Other fish species that have been documented to occur with the Arkansas darter include fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*), flathead chub (*Platygobio gracilis*), longnose dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*), and brook stickleback (*Culaea inconstans*).

Reaches of Fountain Creek support a riparian forest of plains cottonwood with coyote willow. Unfortunately, Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), crack willow (*Salix fragilis*), and tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), all invasive exotic species, comprise much of the vegetative cover and thus contribute to ecosystem degradation. However, the riparian vegetation provides important habitat for a range of bird species and is an important migration corridor along the Front Range. In fact, Fountain Creek Regional Park, located within the site, has been designated by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area (IBA) of Colorado (Cafaro 2000). The IBA designation is based on the area providing essential wetland habitat and resources for resident and migrant species. Observers have recorded over 250 bird species in the park. A Great Blue Heron rookery supporting over 50 pair is located in the riparian area. Other wildlife known in the riparian area include beaver, muskrat, and white-tailed deer.

Widefield Fountain PCA – The Widefield Fountain PCA includes a relatively flat, low-lying strip of land along Fountain Creek that extends southward from Colorado Springs to Wigwam Road. The western portion of the Widefield Fountain site is located along Fountain Creek and consists mainly of the open, flat, floodplain along Fountain Creek and several of its tributaries. This portion of the site is covered by a mosaic of soil types (see Soils section). The complex distribution of soil types, especially within the floodplain of Fountain Creek, precludes the identification of clearly discernible patterns of preferential use of soils by the prairie dogs.

Historically, much of the Widefield Fountain site was covered with floodplain, riparian, and native shortgrass prairie vegetation. Although patches of these vegetation types remain, large portions of the site, especially the flat, relatively rich-soiled floodplain along Fountain Creek, were converted to agricultural croplands during the past 100 years. The cultivation of many of these areas was subsequently abandoned, producing "old-field" (weedy, early-successional) habitats. Vegetative cover on these fields now varies greatly: some areas are characterized by high proportions of bare soil, whereas other areas support dense stands of invasive, early-successional perennial and annual species. Other agricultural fields within the site remain under cultivation. Horse pastures planted with mixed grasses are common near the towns of Widefield and Fountain. Grazing of domestic livestock occurred historically on much of the site, and today grazing continues on many areas, especially to the north of Kane Road. In some locations grazing has been very heavy and it apparently has substantially altered the vegetative composition.

At least 4 rookeries (colonial breeding sites) of the Great Blue Heron are known along Fountain Creek within this site. The Widefield Fountain site also provides essential wetland habitats and resources for many species of migratory birds. In addition, both Fountain Creek and Jimmy Camp Creek support the Arkansas Darter (*Etheostoma cragini*), a globally vulnerable and state imperiled species of fish that is classified as sensitive (Forest Service) and threatened (State of Colorado), and that is a candidate for listing as a federally threatened/endangered species.

Scenic Resources

Scenic resources, as defined by Scenic America, are "the visual attributes of landscape that include features having natural, cultural, social, historic, archaeological, and recreational significance; and views that are distinctly characteristic of a region" (Byers & Ponte 2005). Internal Revenue Service Code §1.170A-14 expands the definition of "scenic" for conservation easement purposes, to include the preservation of open space for the scenic enjoyment of the general public. The IRS Code suggests the factors to be considered when evaluating scenic and open-space qualities of a landscape include: the compatibility of the land use with other land in the vicinity, visual contrast, openness, relief from urban

closeness, harmonious variety of shapes and textures, the degree to which the land use maintains the scale and character of the landscape (to preserve open space, visual enjoyment, and sunlight for the surrounding area) and consistency of the proposed scenic view with a state scenic identification program. Various land management agencies and land trusts also have methodologies for assessing and protecting visual quality that echo the characteristics described above.



Figure 24 - Canada Geese Float on one of the park's many ponds, while Pikes Peak shines in the background.

Fountain Creek Regional Park supports a large variety of attractive plant types including many species of cottonwood trees, willows, native grasses, and wetlands vegetation, including cattail and milkweed. Creekside willow clusters, expansive cottonwood riparian areas, native grasslands, terraced floodplains, and a vast sandy creek bottom give this park its unique visual character. Over-development of Fountain Creek Regional Park could degrade its scenic values due to the fact that it is largely undeveloped, in contrast to the urbanized Interstate 25 corridor and surrounding urbanized areas such as Security/Widefield, Fountain, and Fort Carson. Situated primarily within the Fountain Creek valley, the park is not entirely visible from points outside the park that are accessible to the general public. Only Duckwood Active-Use Area is visible from Highway 85, Willow Springs Ponds is visible from Highway 16, and portions of the park are visible from Interstate 25. Views from inside the park boundaries showcase magnificent views of Pikes Peak, Cheyenne Mountain and other peaks along the mountain backdrop of the Southern Front Range. Surveys have shown that park users value scenic resources of the park. Because the public has access to the entire 390-acre park, and an assortment of outstanding views, scenic resources at the park warrant continued preservation.

Land Use and Park Service Areas

Based on a park users presumed willingness to travel to a facility, the 2013 El Paso County Parks Master Plan established service areas for each type of park facility, including regional and neighborhood parks, in an effort to determine gaps in available park services for El Paso County residents. Local access to parks was measured with a 5-mile radius for neighborhood parks, while regional access was measured with a 15-mile radius for regional parks.

Fountain Creek Regional Park fulfills the function of both a neighborhood park and a regional park, depending primarily on the facilities and activities sought by the park user. Residents of nearby neighborhoods may utilize the park for exercise, playgrounds, fishing, or dog walking, while outlying populations may travel greater distances for special events, such as educational nature camps, that may not be provided by their own neighborhood park facilities.

Using these 5- and 15-mile radii, Planning staff analyzed the demographics and land use of each service area, to provide better understanding of the population and area that the park serves. Utilizing a geographic information system (GIS) and parcel/land use data available from the El Paso County Assessor's Office, a spatial analysis was performed to identify land uses within the regional and neighborhood park service areas, with an additional analysis performed for those properties within 1000 feet of the park's boundaries as an effort to highlight the adjacent land use.

The tables highlight the major land use categories located within the aforementioned 15- and 5-mile service areas and those land uses within 1000 feet of the park boundary. The 15 mile radius reaches rural locations to the east of the park, thus increasing the acreage of agricultural grazing land and state lands. Because the 15-mile radius also includes large portions of Colorado Springs, the residential land use acreage is also a prominent category.

The 5-mile radius is very similar to the 15-mile, with only minor adjustments between the categories. This is due, in part, to the mix of land uses around Fountain Creek Regional Park. The communities of Widefield, Security, and Fountain all fall within this catchment, as do the rural residential and agricultural grazing lands just beyond community.

The 1000-foot radius shows a variety of land use types. While the residential neighborhoods of Widefield, Security, and Fountain continue to dominate the land use landscape, industrial and commercial uses move from the bottom to near the top of the acreage list. While still prominent, agricultural grazing lands fall off slightly, due in part to the industrial nature of the land use in the Fountain Valley.

Although not represented in the land use tables, it is worth noting that the Fort Carson military installation is a dominant land use and major employer in the vicinity of Fountain Creek Regional Park.

Land Uses Within the Fountain Creek Regional Park Catchment Areas		
Land Uses Within 15 Miles		
Use Code	Use Description	Total Acres
81	Agricultural Grazing Land	94,718.51
9129	State Land	66,257.07
1112	Residential	65,235.54
9149	Political Subdivision	47,471.85
9119	Federal Land*	28,072.09
520	Vacant Land	20,900.37
2145	Commercial Land	11,135.32
2125	Other Lands	6,774.99
4127	Agricultural Dry Farm Land	4,355.23
9139	County Land	3,659.12
4115	Agricultural Irrigated Land	3,462.56
3130	Industrial Land	1,851.27
Land Uses Within 5 Miles		
Use Code	Use Description	Total Acres
82	Agricultural Grazing Land	11,846.78
9149	Political Subdivision	10,784.86
1112	Residential	10,573.01
100	Vacant Land	2,382.81
2125	Other Lands	1,764.86
4115	Agricultural Irrigated Land	1,636.63
9129	State Land	1,210.58
200	Commercial	874.17
9139	County Land	705.04
4127	Agricultural Dry Farm Land	420.40
300	Industrial	338.59
9119	Federal Land*	25.88
Land Uses Within 1000 Feet		
Use Code	Use Description	Total Acres
1112	Residential	242.75
300	Industrial	160.70
520	Vacant Land	155.00
82	Agricultural Grazing Land	143.77
200	Commercial	112.06
9149	Political Subdivision	62.54
2125	Other Lands	40.46
4129	Agricultural Dry Farm Land	23.24
4115	Agricultural Irrigated Land	14.86
9129	State Land	7.69
9119	Federal Land*	2.18
<i>*Note: Due to lack of parcel information, Federal Land does not include Fort Carson.</i>		

Table 1 - Land Use Table

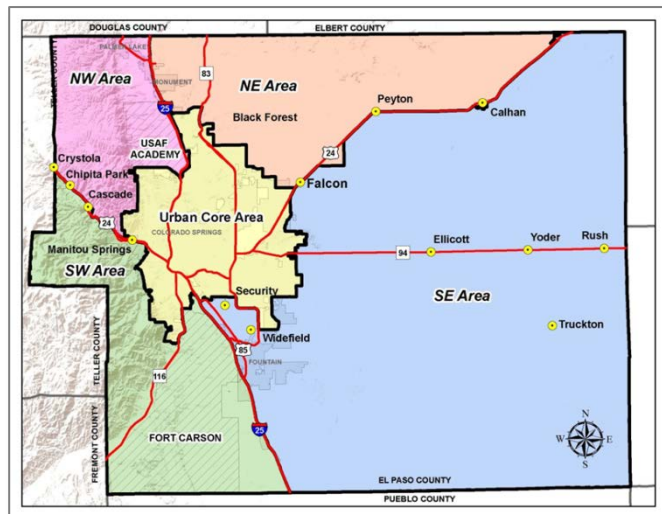
Demographics

El Paso County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the Rocky Mountain Region and is now the second most populous County in Colorado, according to the United States Census Bureau. In 2005, the population was 546,250, and by 2010 the population was 622,263, an increase of approximately 13% under less than robust economic conditions. Post-recession recovery and an increase in military training operations at Fort Carson helped to propel the countywide population to nearly 675,000 in 2015. Population is concentrated along the Interstate-25 corridor, with approximately 70 percent of all County residents living in the Colorado Springs Metropolitan area. Most of the county residents live in the western one-third of the county.

While most of the population lives in cities or towns, a significant number of El Paso County residents live in unincorporated areas that are developed to urban densities, including military bases. These developments – such as those found in Security, Widefield, and surrounding the Fountain Valley – present demands on the County to provide public services, including parks and recreation facilities.

Due to the large size and high level of diversity in El Paso County, the 2013 El Paso County Master Plan divided El Paso County into demographic subareas. Fountain Creek Regional Park is located within the Southeast subarea, as are the communities of Security, Widefield, and Fountain.

The population data used in this demographic profile of El Paso County was derived from ESRI Business information Solutions, with data based on the U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey, as well as GIS analysis performed in ESRI Community Analyst. Data outlined in this section will be compared to both that of El Paso County as a whole and, when available, of the El Paso County Parks Master Plan Southeast Subarea.



*Figure 25 - El Paso County Master Plan (2013)
Demographic Subareas*

As noted in the Land Use section, Fountain Creek Regional Park fulfills the function of both a neighborhood park and a regional park, depending primarily on the service being sought by the park user. Population and demographics are further evaluated below based on these service areas.

Population. In 2015, the population of El Paso County was 674,471, having seen a growth of 8.4% since 2010, when the population was 622,263. The 2013 Southeast Subarea showed a 2010 population of 81,935 and a projected 2015 population of 88,215 for an increase of 7.6%. During that same time period, the 15-mile service area of Fountain Creek Regional Park, which encompasses the southern sections of Colorado Springs, increased at a lower rate of 4.9% from 438,617 to 460,397, due in part to the massive expansion of housing opportunities in the northeastern sections of Colorado Springs, outside of the catchment area. The 5-mile service area increased at a greater growth rate of 9.9%, from 72,448 in 2010 to 79,687 in 2015. This larger population increase was bolstered by the expansion of new housing developments in the Widefield, Security, and Fountain area. This smaller service area does not include southern Colorado Springs which had little growth during the same period,

and therefore, the overall growth percentage was not decreased. As compared to the 2013 Southeast Subarea values, the 5-mile service area also showed a larger growth rate, as eastern El Paso County had very little growth over the same period.

Households and Housing Units. In 2014, El Paso County had 240,154 households with an average household size of 2.62 persons. The 15-mile service area had 181,634 households in 2015, with an average of 2.46 persons per household, while the 5-mile service area had 25,579 households averaging 2.92 persons per household. The 5-mile service area has not only seen a larger increase in population over the last 5 years, but household size is significantly larger than that of El Paso County as a whole.

In 2014, El Paso County had 262,154 housing units – an increase of 3.7% from 2010, which saw 252,852 units. During the 2010-2015 time period, the housing units in the 15-mile service area increased 4.6% from 184,221 to 192,721. In the 5-mile service area, housing units increased 8.9% from 24,215 to 26,371. These housing unit figures are similar to the population values noted previously.

Median Household Income. In 2014, the median household income of El Paso County was \$57,487, while the 2015 value for the 5-mile service area was a very similar \$56,228. The 2015 15-mile service area median household income was \$48,148, due to the inclusion of low-income areas in southeastern Colorado Springs. The annual rate of increase for both catchment areas is projected to increase approximately 2.6% from 2015 to 2020.

Man-Made Resources

Fountain Creek Regional Park offers public recreational facilities in the form of picnic pavilions, multi-use athletic fields, a playground, horseshoe pits, sand volleyball and basketball courts, and basic park amenities. The park also provides nearly 7 miles of multi-use, non-motorized trails that wind throughout the park and along Fountain Creek. The Fountain Creek Regional Trail is part of the long Front Range Trail that crosses the state north-to-south from Wyoming to New Mexico. Approximately 3.25 miles of Fountain Creek meanders along the western boundary of the park, while Chilcott Ditch winds 1.5 miles through the park. Adjacent and nearby park lands, which are also managed by El Paso County, include Ceresa Park to the immediate north and Widefield Community Park to the northeast along Crews Gulch.

Fountain Creek Regional Park has a variety of improvements for both recreational and educational uses and extensive open space. The three main areas that contain these improvements are illustrated on the general reference maps provided at the end of Chapter 1. Below is a discussion of the main improved areas within Fountain Creek Regional Park, starting in the north with the section of the park known as Willow Springs Ponds, and then traveling southward to the other major sections, ending at Hanson Trailhead area.

Willow Springs Ponds. Located to the south and west of Highway 16, Willow Springs Ponds features the two major water features of its namesake, which are primarily utilized by the public for fishing and wildlife viewing. This section of the park also includes a restroom, 2 horseshoe pits, picnic pavilion, picnic tables, and 6 gravel parking lots that service the ponds, picnic area, and Fountain Creek Regional Trail trailhead.

Fountain Creek Nature Center. Outdoor and environmental education opportunities are provided by the Fountain Creek Nature Center, located south of Willow Springs Ponds in the central section of the Property. Constructed in 1992 and expanded in 2014, the Fountain Creek Nature Center houses an interpretative center with educational exhibits, community room, staff offices, conference room, viewing deck, and public restrooms. The center is accessed via Pepper Grass Lane and Highway 85 and is served by a gravel parking lot. Outside the Nature Center, in the Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area, there is an outdoor classroom, 5 observation blinds, 2 ponds (Rice Ponds are located on the adjacent property), and an extensive trail network. Substantial wetland and riparian open space areas surround the nature center, and provide excellent interpretive opportunities.



Figure 26 - Fountain Creek Nature Center and Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area

The mission of the Fountain Creek Nature Center is to connect people to their natural and cultural resources and inspire them to become stewards of our parks and environment. Fountain Creek Nature Center offers year-round public programming and quality environmental education programs for school children from preschool through 8th grade. Guided programs, led by professional environmental educators and trained volunteers, give students the opportunity to interact with hands-on exhibits, observe wildlife, explore the wetlands during a hike, watch an educational puppet show or short film and, most importantly, connect with nature. All programs are designed to help students develop an awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the ecosystem and the processes that shape it. Programs meet Colorado's New Academic Standards.

Each year, the Nature Center accommodates approximately 100,000 visitors providing 600 interpretative programs or special events to participants. Programs range from short nature walks to week-long summer camps. The Center also accommodates field trips for all El Paso County School Districts, averaging 6,000 students each year. Interpretive programs, special events, guided and self-guided tours and media presentations are offered all year.

Fountain Creek Maintenance Shop Area. The South District Maintenance Shop, located just north of the Duckwood Active-Use Area, includes a storage yard that is used for outdoor storage of various landscape materials, equipment and vehicles. The area also contains various storage sheds as well as a fueling station. The main shop building accommodates an operations office, maintenance worker's offices, break room, a vehicle bay for maintenance and repair of park equipment, and indoor storage of tools and materials.

Duckwood Active-Use Area. The central and most developed section of Fountain Creek Regional Park, Duckwood Active-Use Area includes 2 multi-use athletic fields served by a series of 6 paved parking lots and paved access roads. Organized active recreation facilities in this area include a basketball court, 2 sand volleyball courts, 2 horseshoe pits, a large traditional playground, 3 large pavilions, 4 small pavilions, and a restroom, which are all located adjacent to the playing fields and connected by a network of paved sidewalks. Duckwood Pond sits in the southern section of Duckwood, near one of the

large pavilions and surrounded by paved sidewalks. The Fountain Creek Regional Trail passes by Duckwood, and a gravel parking lot near the maintenance shop serves as a trailhead.

Cottonwood Meadows. This natural open space is located to the south of the Duckwood Active-Use Area and is accessed by the Fountain Creek Regional Trail. While no man-made facilities exist within Cottonwood Meadows, it does feature a vast grassland meadow, wetlands, and cottonwood groves adjacent to Fountain Creek. Chilcott Ditch creates the eastern border of the meadows, while Fountain Creek is the western boundary.



Figure 27 - Playground and Pavilions at Duckwood Active-Use Area

Hanson Trailhead Area. This area, near the southern tip of Fountain Creek Regional Park, was donated by the City of Fountain to El Paso County in 1997. It features a gravel parking lot at the trailhead to Fountain Creek Regional Trail. This area was damaged heavily during the floods of September 2013 and May/June 2015, and will undergo trail and creek restoration in 2016 and 2017.

In summary, the following facilities exist at Fountain Creek Regional Park:

- 1 nature center
- 1 maintenance yard
- 16 acres of irrigated turf
- 2 multi-use athletic fields
- 1 playground
- 1 basketball court
- 2 sand volleyball courts
- 4 horseshoe pits
- 8 picnic pavilions
- 3 sets of restrooms (including those in the nature center)
- 61 picnic tables
- 28 trash can cribs, including 4 which are bear-proof
- 9 BBQ grills
- 17 benches
- Approximately 7 miles of trails of varying widths.
- 6 paved parking areas and paved access roads at Duckwood Active-Use Area
- 9 unpaved parking areas at Willow Springs Ponds, Fountain Creek Nature Center, Duckwood Active-Use Area, and Hanson Trailhead Area.

Fountain Creek Regional Park offers such a great variety of amenities and resources that it is one the most frequently-utilized parks within the County's park system. The Nature Center hosts more than 70,000 visitors annually, many of whom also use other park facilities. In 2015, 260 reservations of facilities at the park were made, including users of picnic pavilions, athletic fields, and trailheads. Paid reservations for these various facilities brought in nearly \$24,000 to the County Park system, and served over 15,000 people. The funds generated from these rentals are used along with with other revenue sources to pay for park maintenance, equipment, and facility repairs.

CHAPTER 4 – PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INPUT

Introduction

In developing the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan, El Paso County Parks was committed to encouraging a broad spectrum of County stakeholders to participate in an open and transparent public involvement process. This process was designed to provide citizens and organizations information about the purpose of the Master Plan and the facilities and services provided by the County at Fountain Creek Regional Park, and to solicit ideas and priorities related to existing and future facilities, trails, and open space, as well as recreation, education and cultural programs offered by the Fountain Creek Nature Center.

Public Survey

Beginning in December 2015, a community survey was created by the Master Plan Team, and posted on an internet website to collect input from citizens about Fountain Creek Regional Park. The El Paso County Public Information Office issued a press release to all local news agencies, and additional notices were placed on social media, including Facebook and Twitter. Furthermore, these social media postings were shared by other agencies and organizations on their own sites. The online survey was active from mid-December 2015 until mid-January 2016. When concluded, over 350 survey responses were received. Input from the surveys was used in conjunction with the comments from the public meetings and stakeholder interviews to establish an inventory of issues, needs, and opportunities at the park. The complete survey results can be found in the appendices at the end of the Master Plan.

Please select your age group:				
	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
19-24 years old	2	0.9%		
25-34 years old	24	10.2%		
35-44 years old	47	20.0%		
45-54 years old	51	21.7%		
55-64 years old	59	25.1%		
65 and older	52	22.1%		
Totals	235	100.0%		

Figure 28 - Survey Results - Age Group

Demographics – The survey’s respondents were evenly distributed across age categories, although younger respondents (age 19-24 years old) comprised of less than 1% of the total. Most responding households were comprised of two individuals – making up half of the total responses. Household income brackets were spread evenly, with three-quarters of all responses reporting \$50,000 a year or more. The most surprising statistic, however, was the lack of military presence with survey respondents. Over 66% of respondents claimed no individual or household connection to the military – either active or retired. This result contradicts the fact that Fountain Creek Regional Park is often the site of military physical training sessions, is known to be used by Fort Carson families and civilian employees, and perhaps can be explained by a

Please list all activities you / your household have participated in or facilities you've used at Fountain Creek Regional Park Only. (check all that apply)				
	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
Hiking / Walking	228	75.2%		
Nature Center	175	57.8%		
Regional Trail	159	52.5%		
Wildlife viewing / Bird watching	149	49.2%		
Dog walking	98	32.3%		
Open space / Passive recreation	89	29.4%		
Cycling / Mountain biking	80	26.4%		
Photography	76	25.1%		
Educational programs / Camps	69	22.8%		
Playgrounds	66	21.8%		
Picnic tables / BBQ grills	59	19.5%		
Running / Fitness	55	18.2%		
Pavilions / Rentals	54	17.8%		
Fishing ponds	49	16.2%		

Figure 29 - Survey Results - Current Park Usage

lack of military personnel having knowledge of the survey.

Current / Favorite Activities – The survey asked respondents to list all of the activities they participate in while at the park, and went on to ask which individual activity was their favorite. The survey results demonstrated that the park’s trail and sidewalk system is its most popular feature, with over 75% of survey participants’ ranking hiking and walking as either the most common activity or individual favorite activity (30.6%). The Fountain Creek nature Center ranked high in both categories, with the corresponding Wildlife Viewing and Educational Programs ranking high as favorite activities.

Improve / Expand – Given the popularity of the trail and sidewalk system, it’s not surprising that most respondents would like to see the regional and secondary (singletrack) trail system either improved or expanded, especially in light of the fact that recent flood events in 2013 and 2015 heavily damaged large sections of the regional trail. Improvement or expansion of the Nature Center and its programs was popular, as was the improvement of the fishing ponds at Willow Springs.

From the below list, which one activity or facility is your favorite? (choose only one)			
	Counts	Percents	Percents
			0 100
Hiking / Walking	94	30.6%	
Wildlife viewing / Bird watching	44	14.3%	
Nature Center	34	11.1%	
Cycling / Mountain biking	21	6.8%	
Regional Trail	18	5.9%	
Educational programs / Camps	16	5.2%	
Dog walking	15	4.9%	
Fishing ponds	11	3.6%	
Disc golf	11	3.6%	
Photography	8	2.6%	
Playgrounds	7	2.3%	
Picnic tables / BBQ grills	5	1.6%	
Running / Fitness	5	1.6%	
Open space / Passive recreation	4	1.3%	
Pavilions / Rentals	4	1.3%	
Multi-use athletic fields	3	1.0%	
Basketball court	2	0.7%	

Figure 30 - Survey Results - Favorite Activity

Additional Activities or Programs – The survey asked respondents, through an agreement ranking, which activities or programs they would like to see at Fountain Creek Regional Park. A demonstration garden proved to be the most popular response, followed closely by cultural events, a natural playground, outdoor interpretive displays, and a beach/creekside recreation area. Figure 35 shows the top fifteen improvements, with relatively even gradient between each proposed activity or program. Some activities, such as disc golf, also garnered a lot of support in the open comments sections, demonstrating a well-informed and cohesive local community of disc golf enthusiasts. Furthermore, unlisted park amenities, such as restrooms, parking lots, and park entrance signage, also ranked high in the open comments section,

Additional activities or programs	Completely Agree	Partially Agree	Neutral	Partially Disagree	Completely Disagree	Totals	Mean	Mean	
								1	5
Demonstration garden (xeriscaping, attracting bird / butterflies, etc.)	114 45.2%	70 27.8%	55 21.8%	3 1.2%	10 4.0%	252 100.0%	4.09		
Cultural events (concerts, art fairs, festivals)	97 38.3%	81 32.0%	54 21.3%	7 2.8%	14 5.5%	253 100.0%	3.95		
Natural playground	63 25.9%	90 37.0%	75 30.9%	5 2.1%	10 4.1%	243 100.0%	3.79		
Outdoor Interpretive / Interactive displays	79 32.4%	62 25.4%	82 33.8%	8 3.3%	13 5.3%	244 100.0%	3.76		
Photography opportunities	66 27.4%	56 23.2%	109 45.2%	5 2.1%	5 2.1%	241 100.0%	3.72		
Beach / Creekside recreation area	79 32.4%	72 29.5%	54 22.1%	11 4.5%	28 11.5%	244 100.0%	3.67		
Community garden	69 28.9%	67 28.0%	72 30.1%	14 5.9%	17 7.1%	239 100.0%	3.66		
Amphitheater	65 27.0%	49 20.3%	87 36.1%	15 6.2%	25 10.4%	241 100.0%	3.47		
Exercise course	44 18.0%	72 29.4%	95 38.8%	18 7.3%	16 6.5%	245 100.0%	3.45		
Disc golf course	70 27.3%	38 14.8%	89 34.8%	20 7.8%	39 15.2%	256 100.0%	3.31		
Singletrack mountain bike trails	55 22.4%	47 19.1%	88 35.8%	14 5.7%	42 17.1%	246 100.0%	3.24		
Dog park (off leash)	61 25.1%	46 18.9%	65 26.7%	27 11.1%	44 18.1%	243 100.0%	3.22		
Archery range	46 19.1%	42 17.4%	100 41.5%	17 7.1%	36 14.9%	241 100.0%	3.19		
Geocaching	29 12.3%	36 15.3%	134 56.8%	17 7.2%	20 8.5%	236 100.0%	3.16		
Splash park (zero-depth)	43 17.6%	49 20.1%	86 35.2%	21 8.6%	45 18.4%	244 100.0%	3.10		

Figure 31 - Survey Results - Proposed Improvements

prompting inclusion in the analysis and planning stages of the Master Plan process.

Stakeholder Interviews

A series of stakeholder interviews were designed to solicit information about Fountain Creek Regional Park from those somewhat familiar with it through administrative use, customer or member usage, or collaborative relationship with the County. Most stakeholders were fellow providers of recreation facilities and programs. Stakeholders that participated in this means of input included school districts, adjacent local governments, military installation, metropolitan and water districts, and local trails and open space advocates. A formal invitation, along with an interview outline, was emailed to prospective stakeholder organizations and included the following questions as a means to identify issues of interest and concern related to Fountain Creek Regional Park:

- Please describe your organization, its primary purpose, and the general demographic of customers it serves.
- How does your organization as a whole utilize Fountain Creek Regional Park and/or the Fountain Creek Nature Center, either recreationally or administratively?
- What are Fountain Creek Regional Park’s best assets?
- Of the existing programs and/or facilities, which would you like to see expanded or improved?
- What new programs and/or facilities would you like to see at Fountain Creek Regional Park?
- What should be the overall goal of the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan?
- Would your organization be able to support or assist in the ongoing maintenance and future development of Fountain Creek Regional Park? (e.g., in-kind services, grants, donations, programs, etc.)

Stakeholder interviews were held over the course of a week in January 2016 via phone, reaching eleven participants. As the interviews progressed, common themes, hopes, and concerns emerged. Input was received regarding a broad range of facilities, programs, and activities in Fountain Creek Regional Park, with encouragement for improved and new trails, education programs, preservation of open space, utilization of Fountain Creek as an amenity, floodplain restoration, wetlands expansion, as well as new facilities and programs such as a performing arts venue, community garden, and development of a creekside recreation area. The summary of input from the stakeholders is provided in the appendices.

Public Meetings

El Paso County hosted two public meetings in January and April 2016 to provide information about the planning process and to collect public input on elements of the Master Plan. The meetings were held at the Fountain Creek Nature Center, and involved both a staff presentation on the plan, as well as an open house to allow individuals to view specific maps and project descriptions. Public feedback was solicited through general discussion and voting on specific facility improvement priorities through an interactive “sticker” exercise, which allow participants to select those activities of which they most often participate, and those new facilities or programs they wanted to see implemented in the park. Top ranking new facilities included cultural events, outdoor interpretive and interactive displays, a dog park, community garden, and demonstration gardens, although participants voiced concerns over the proposed initial placement of the dog park within riparian and floodplain areas, thus prompting its relocation to the Duckwood Active-Use Area.

Meeting notes summarizing the comments provided at both the January and April public meetings are included as Appendices at the end of this Master Plan. Additional public hearings were held before the Park Advisory Board and Board of County Commissioners in June 2016 prior to final plan adoption and public distribution.

Public Review of Draft Master Plan


In late-April 2016, the draft Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan was made available online for public review for a period of 3 weeks. During this time, citizens were able to review the Master Plan goals and recommendations, as well as view various maps and concept plans outlining the park’s future. Numerous comments were received via email voicing concern over the placement of the proposed dog park within the Willow Springs Ponds area. Comments were also centered on forest management practices and how they relate to riparian environment and wildlife habitat. Due to these suggestions, comments, and concerns, revisions to the Master Plan were made to relocate the dog park to the Duckwood Active-Use Area, and to address potential forestry management. These changes are discussed in detail in Chapter 7, The Plan.

County Website and Email

The County maintained a website dedicated to the Master Plan throughout the planning process. The website provided a summary of the Master Plan process, a link to the public survey, public survey results, the project timeline, public meeting presentations, and public meeting input summaries. A list of citizens, including their email addresses, was generated based upon participants who signed up at public meetings as “Interested Parties” or contacted staff directly. These people were contacted via email and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process.

Fountain Creek Regional Park Planning

Fountain Creek Regional Park is a 460-acre linear park situated along the banks of Fountain Creek between the cities of Colorado Springs and Fountain. The park is owned and operated by El Paso County. It includes a creek-side regional trail, Willow Springs Ponds, Hanson Nature Park, and the Fountain Creek Nature Center, the latter of which serves as the focal point for learning about Fountain Creek, the watershed, and riparian ecology. Farther south, the Duckwood active use area consists of a 12 acre site with multi-purpose athletic fields, picnic pavilions, basketball court, and a playground.



The park was acquired and built originally in the late 1980s. A planning process is underway to develop a master plan for Fountain Creek Regional Park to address not only the current state of the park, but to gather public input to effectively plan for future improvements. Beginning in mid-December 2015, El Paso County Parks asked for citizen input to develop the master plan for Fountain Creek Regional Park through participation in a community-wide online survey (see survey results below). The survey questions addressed favorite features of the park, satisfaction with existing facilities and maintenance, and what additional improvements the community would suggest.

Shortly after the completion and analysis of the survey in mid-January 2016, citizens were invited to participate in the first of two public meetings, which took place at Fountain Creek Nature Center on the evening of January 27th. The meeting presented the results of the online survey and information about the park, and asked for further input from the public (see meeting results below). The second public meeting, scheduled for late March 2016, will present the findings of all public and stakeholder input, as well as alternatives for the Master Plan and proposed future improvements for Fountain Creek Regional Park.

The master plan is scheduled to be completed in June 2016, with the first improvements to follow soon thereafter.

Additional Information:

- [Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan Timeline](#)
- [Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan Work Plan](#)
- [Online Public Survey Results](#)
- [Public Meeting Presentation \(January 27, 2016\)](#)
- [Public Meeting Input Results \(January 27, 2016\)](#)
- [Fountain Creek Regional Park Map](#)

For more information, please feel free to contact Ross Williams, El Paso County Community Services Planning Division Park Planner, at 719-520-6984 or email rosswilliams@elapaso.com.

Figure 32 – FCRP Master Plan Website

CHAPTER 5 – MASTER PLAN GOALS

Goals serve to establish the foundation of the Master Plan, as they guide decisions on future use of the property and provide direction and structure for the master planning process. The goals and objectives created for this plan were derived from the El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013), input from the Master Plan Team, and from citizens as part of public input opportunities. The existing Parks mission and goals and specific goals for Fountain Creek Regional Park are as follows.

El Paso County Parks Master Plan – The El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013) includes the following Mission Statement:

“The Mission of El Paso County Parks is to enhance quality of life in El Paso County by:

- *Acquiring, developing, maintaining, and preserving regional parks, trails, and open space.*
- *Providing responsible resource management for open space lands characterized by unique natural environments.*
- *Providing natural and cultural history interpretation, education, and information services.*
- *Supporting major community events and festivals that celebrate our County’s heritage and culture.”*
- *Providing and managing visitor destinations and experiences.”*

In concert with this Mission Statement, a number of goals and objectives were established in the Parks Master Plan for the County Parks organization as a whole. Included among these goals are several statements related to regional parks such as the Fountain Creek Regional Park. The following are examples of these goals:

- *“Balance passive/active use of county parks and open space and determine what is most appropriate for individual sites based on community need and master planning processes.”*
- *“Provide high-quality and safe experiences for users of county park facilities and recreational areas.”*
- *“Enhance communication and engagement with users to maximize satisfaction with the visitor experience.”*
- *“Maintain a consistent and equitable level of services by filling gaps in existing service levels and providing new facilities and services to meet future population demand.”*

The goals and the overall mission statement listed above assist in providing a basis for the planning of Fountain Creek Regional Park and for the further development of goals and recommendations to be included in the plan.

Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan Goals – The establishment of goals specific to the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan was based upon not only system-wide goals and objectives, but also a thorough analysis and understanding of the community preferences demonstrated by the results of the public survey, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and input from the Master Plan Team. The Team’s original “rough draft” goals were refined to better reflect the interconnected values of similar goals, then categorized into groups based upon their specific function within the overall plan. As a result, the following goals have been established for this Master Plan:

- **Overall Park and Recreation Area**
 - Create a sustainable future for Fountain Creek Regional Park with respect for social, economic, and environmental values.
 - Identify and site future park amenities and facilities with continued respect for the natural environment.
 - Continue to meet the recreational and cultural needs of the citizens.
 - Improve ADA accessibility when renovating or developing new facilities.

- **Regional and Internal Park Trails**
 - Work collaboratively with other agencies and organizations to promote connectivity between communities and destinations.
 - Plan, maintain, and build trails and trail facilities to a more sustainable standard using a hierarchy of multi-use trails and current best management practices.

- **Open Space**
 - Preserve open space for passive recreation.
 - Preserve and enhance open space for wildlife habitat.
 - Avoid development within the floodplain to preserve watershed function and avoid unnecessary infrastructure repair costs.
 - Maintain and enhance the functionality of the wetland and riparian areas.

- **Recreation and Cultural Services Programs and Facilities**
 - Continue to support the Fountain Creek Nature Center as a premier destination, community gathering place, and a hub for environmental education and stewardship.
 - Continue to provide and enhance environmentally-based programs and interpretation opportunities throughout Fountain Creek Regional Park.
 - Provide a venue for cultural and community events.

- **Management and Administration**
 - Continue the maintenance and enhancement of existing park facilities.
 - Increase enforcement of park rules and regulations as a means to reduce multi-use conflicts.
 - Promote effective stormwater management by controlling runoff, preserving the floodplain, and providing streamside setbacks to minimize adverse impacts downstream.
 - Consider strategic acquisitions adjacent to park land and the Nature Center to allow for expansion and protect park values.
 - Consider conservation easements to protect natural resource values.

- **Community Awareness**
 - Promote environmental awareness through healthy, active, outdoor opportunities.
 - Educate citizens on the impact and dynamic nature of Fountain Creek and about the Fountain Creek Watershed.
 - Provide information on park facilities, programs, and rules governing use.

- **Implementation and Funding**
 - Generate partnership opportunities for projects and programs.
 - Enhance Fountain Creek Regional Park's facilities and programs through new and existing funding sources and partnerships.

CHAPTER 6 – INPUT COMPILATION AND SITE ANALYSIS

Input Compilation

As noted in Chapter 4, El Paso County Parks sought to incorporate input from the public through an online survey, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. By soliciting comments, suggestions, and solutions to problems, County Staff was able to identify reoccurring themes, generate a large spectrum of goals and recommendations, and prioritize proposed maintenance and improvements to existing and future park facilities. Staff undertook a technical analysis of the physical attributes of the site so that new uses can be located in the most suitable areas.

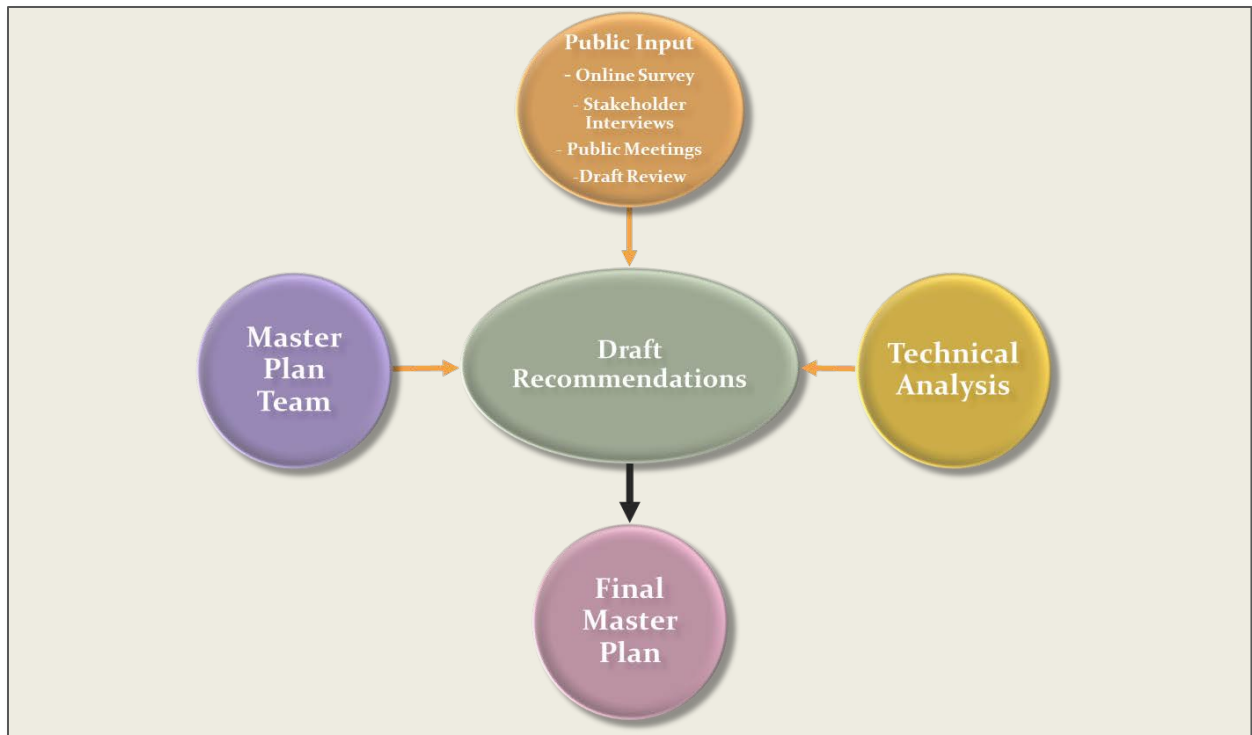


Figure 33 - The Master Plan Process

Site Analysis

Fountain Creek Regional Park is situated on relatively flat terrain along the dynamic and winding banks of Fountain Creek. The park is comprised of valley flats, level terraces, and gently sloping hills and contains many man-made ponds, natural wetlands, open meadows, and clusters of mature cottonwood tree groves near the creek itself. Numerous man-made benches, irrigation canals, and fields highlight the park's terrain, and evidence of natural floodplain terraces exist along the eastern and southwestern boundaries, further proof of the meandering nature of Fountain Creek.

Given Fountain Creek Regional Park's unique combination of natural resources and man-made features, as outlined in Chapter 3, a site analysis was necessary to pinpoint those areas that are not conducive to development, and identify areas suitable for construction of new or improved facilities without disturbing critical wildlife habitat or environmentally-sensitive areas, such as wetlands, riparian forests, and floodplains. Following the guidelines set forth in the Master Plan goals, an objective was to keep the open space/active-use area ratio near 80%/20%, so infill of current active-use space was necessary to achieve this ration and reduce the impact to open space acreage.

The Site Analysis map displays man-made and natural landscape features that are critical when planning infrastructure: Fountain Creek and its creek bed, floodplains and floodways, wetlands, steep banks, and park entry points. On-site visits strengthened the analysis through firsthand knowledge of viewsheds, ground characteristics, and maintenance needs. In preparation for the analysis, floodplain data was derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program, and the wetlands data was obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory (2014). Fountain Creek and its creek bottom were digitized from 2014 aerial photography, owned by El Paso County. Also included are 30% slopes, trees, and terrain hillshade, all generated from 2011 topographic elevation data, also owned by the County.

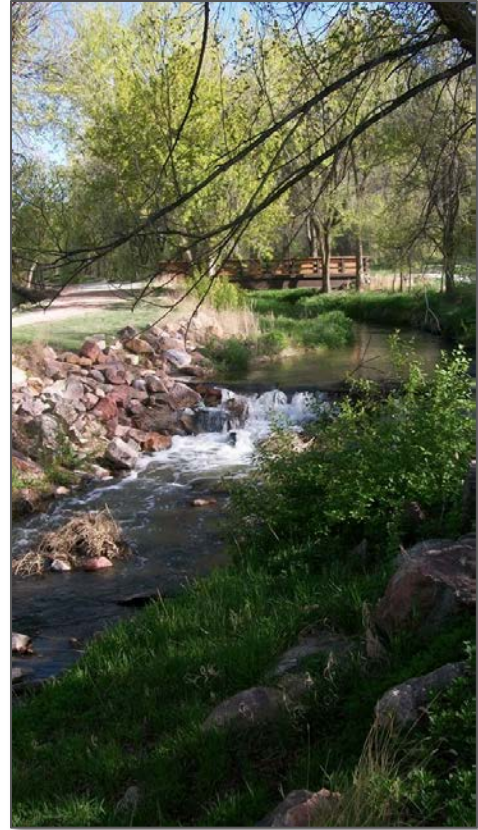


Figure 34 – Crews Gulch Flows Through the Willow Springs Ponds Area

The data was introduced into a geographic information system (GIS), and layered with park boundaries, roads, and building footprints in an effort to delineate those areas where planned infrastructure development should be avoided or constructed in such a way as to have a negligible impact to the surrounding environment.

Concept Plan

The Site Analysis laid the foundation for the development of the Concept Plan, which explores the relationship between different uses and site features. The Concept Plat is essentially a design development tool, integrating master plan goals, public input, and Master Plan Team collaboration to help effectively strategize the placement of park improvements, while taking into account the opportunities and constraints presented in the Site Analysis. The following general improvements were considered when developing the Concept Plan:

- Demonstration Garden
- Natural Playground
- Sculpted Playground
- Beach/Creekside Recreation Area
- Community Garden

- Multi-Use Athletic Field
- Amphitheater
- Exercise Course
- Disc Golf Course
- Singletrack Hiking/Biking Trails
- Dog Park
- New or Expanded Trails

Due to its vast open layout design, Duckwood Active-Use Area, the hub of active use facilities in Fountain Creek Regional Park, was a desirable location for many of these improvements. This is due primarily to gentle topography, proximity to parking lots and existing facilities, available building space, easy access from Highway 85, and minimal disturbance of natural open space. The Willow Springs Ponds area also provides opportunities for renovation as well as new facilities.

With the exception of the singletrack and interpretive nature trails, disc golf course, dog park, and creekside recreation area, most of the recommended improvements were placed within the bounds of the Duckwood Active-Use Area. These particular activities, requiring larger layouts and more varied terrain, were placed in areas just outside of Duckwood, thus creating a sort of low-impact recreational “ring” around the central active-use hub.

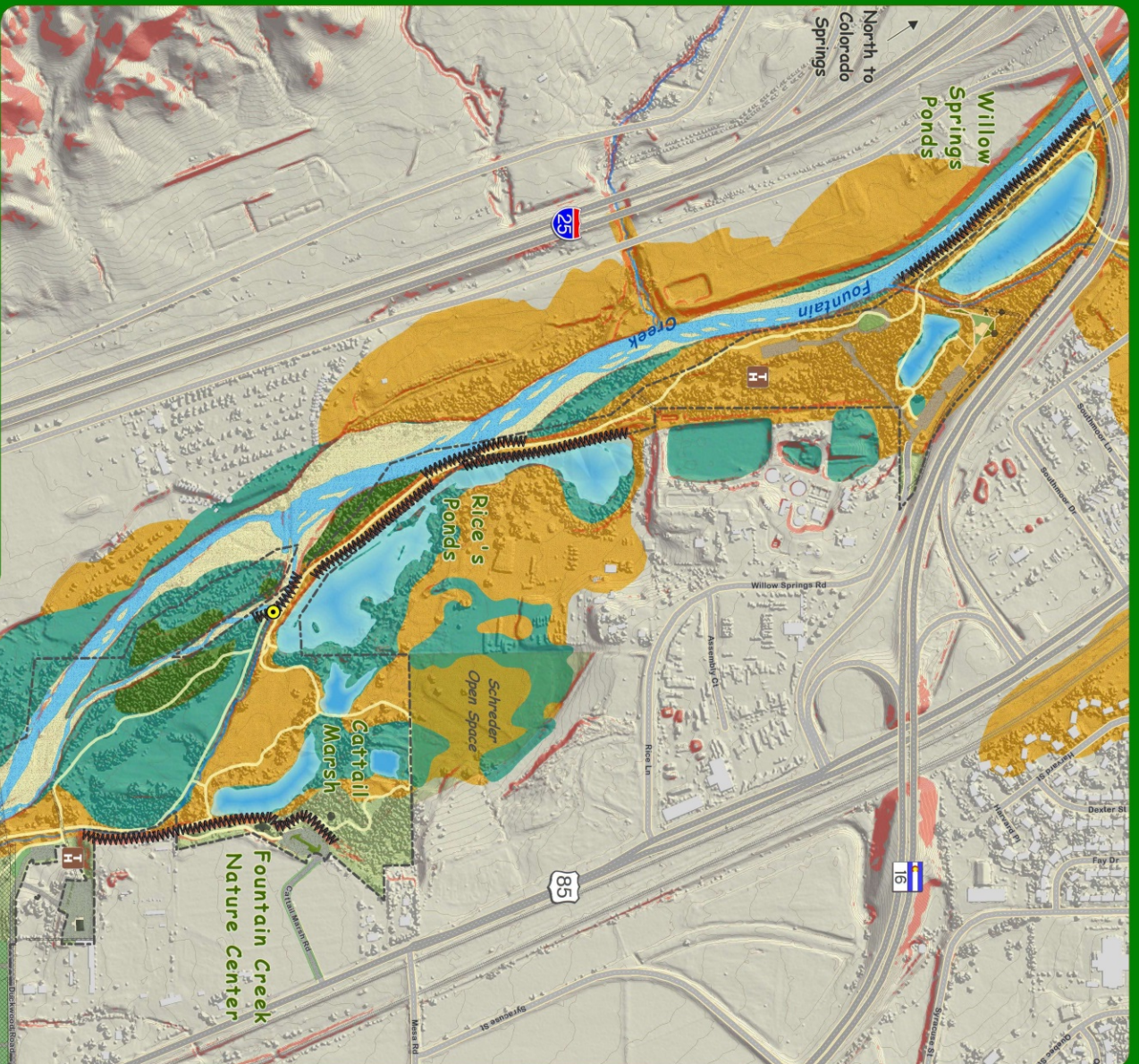
While these improvements may use previously unused open space land (up to 32 acres), their construction does not require large-scale earth moving and destruction to the surrounding environment, and instead, flow with the current landscape. The creekside recreation area will allow park users easier access to Fountain Creek, and will utilize the natural landscape, thus eliminating the need to disturb the floodplain with the construction of hardened structures.

Only low impact facilities with minimal investment in infrastructure, such as trails, are placed within floodplain areas. Proposed new facilities have minimal impact on wetlands; where jurisdictional wetlands are affected, El Paso County Parks will work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to secure needed permitting and will implement best management practices.

The Site Analysis and Concept Plan maps are found on the pages 45 and 46.



Figure 35 - Duckwood Pond and Pavilion



Fountain Creek Regional Park Site Analysis



Legend

- Fountain Creek
- Sand Bars / Creek Bottom
- USFWS NWMI Wetland Areas
- USFWS NWMI Riparian Areas
- FEMA Floodplains / Floodways
- CDOT Wetland Mitigation Area
- Utility Easements
- 30%+ Slopes
- Park Boundary
- Cultural Resource Sites
- Steep Embankments
- Existing Trails
- Streams / Canals
- Highways / Streets / Roads
- Railroads

Site Analysis Methodology

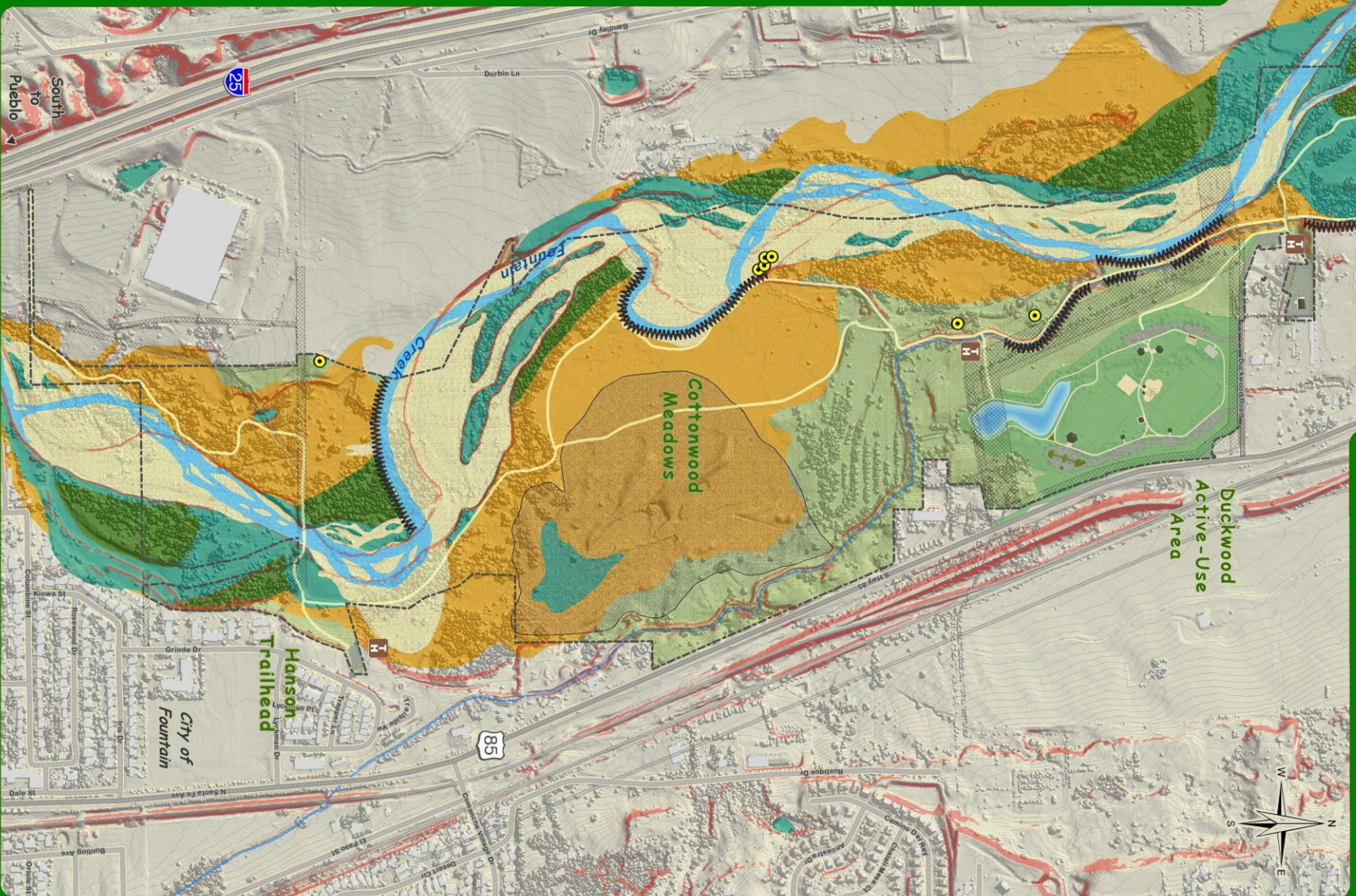
Fountain Creek Regional Park is situated on relatively flat terrain along the dynamic and winding banks of Fountain Creek. The park is comprised of valley flats, level terraces, and gently sloping hills and contains many man-made ponds, natural wetlands, open meadows, and clusters of mature cottonwood tree groves near the creek itself. Numerous man-made benches, irrigation canals, and fields highlight the park's terrain, and evidence of natural floodplain terraces exist along the eastern and southwestern boundaries, further proof of the meandering nature of Fountain Creek.

The Site Analysis map displays man-made and natural landscape features that are critical when planning infrastructure: Fountain Creek and its creek bed, floodplains and floodways, wetlands, park entry points. On-site visits strengthened the analysis through firsthand knowledge of viewsheds, ground characteristics, and maintenance needs. In preparation for the analysis, floodplain data was derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program, while the wetlands data is available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory. Fountain Creek and its creek bottom were digitized from 2014 aerial photography, owned by El Paso County. Also included are 30% slopes, trees, and terrain hillshade, all generated from 2011 topographic elevation data, also owned by the County.

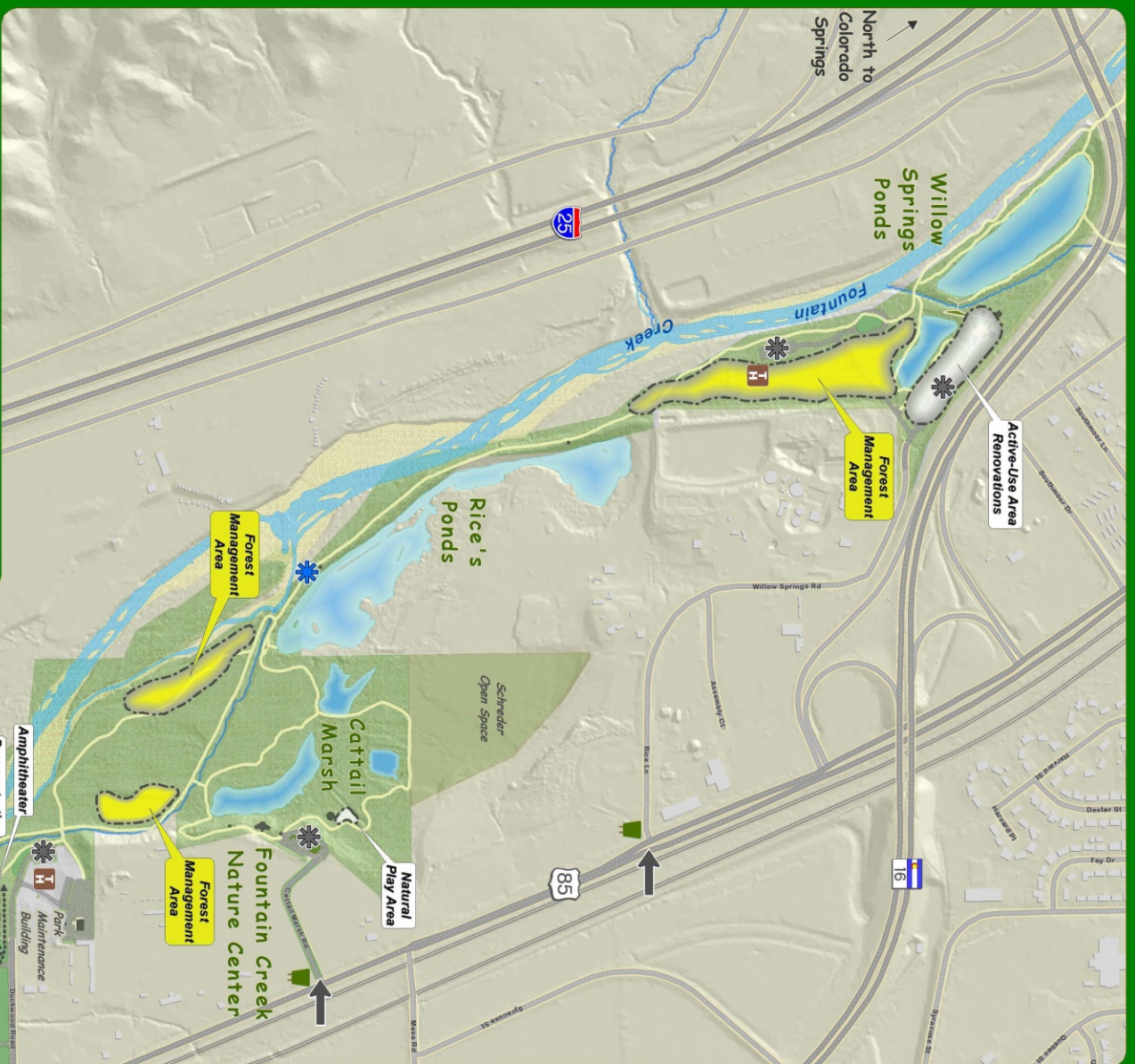
The data was introduced into a geographic information system (GIS), and layered with park boundaries, roads, and building footprints in an effort to delineate those areas where planned infrastructure development should be avoided or constructed in such a way as to have a negligible impact to the surrounding environment. While some of the more sustainable improvements were placed within the floodplain, none were located in known wetland areas.





Fountain Creek Nature Center Pond



Map 5 - Site Analysis Map

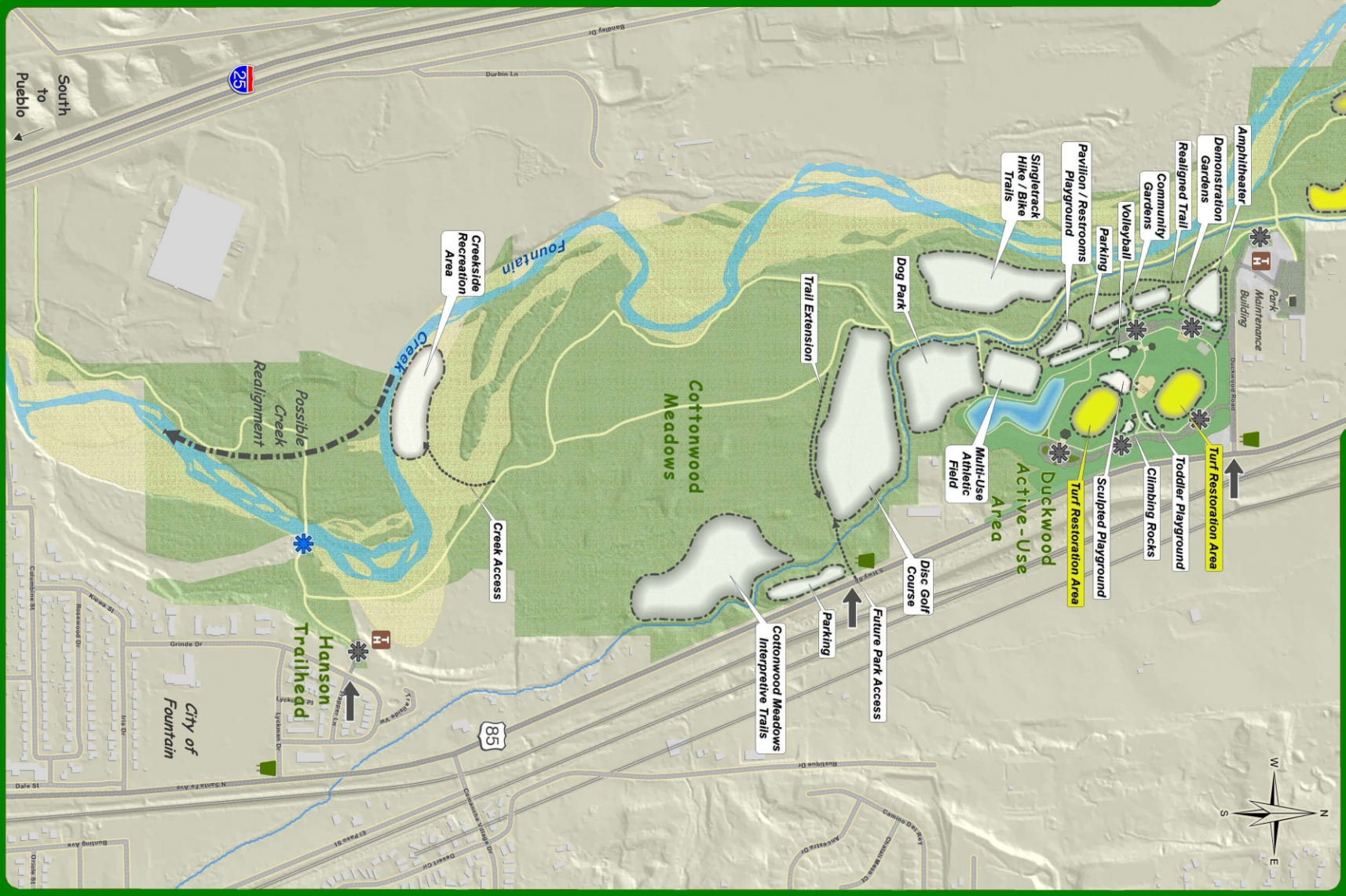


Fountain Creek Regional Park Concept Plan

Legend

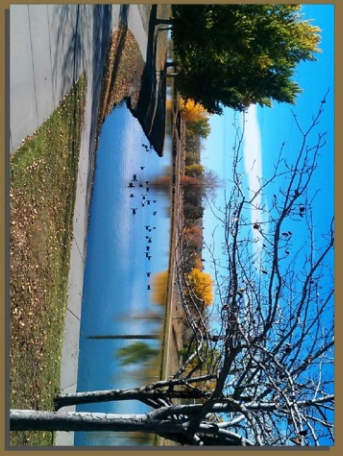
- Parking Lots
- Creek Access Points
- Park Entry Points
- Proposed Maintenance Areas
- Proposed Improvement Areas
- Trails
- Highways, Streets, and Roads
- Railroads
- Streams and Canals
- Fountain Creek
- Sand Bars / Creek Bottom



Concept Plan Methodology

The Site Analysis laid down the foundation for the responsible development of the Concept Plan. Integrating master plan goals, public input, and Master Plan Team collaboration, the Concept Plan allows planners to effectively strategize the placement of park improvements, while taking into account the restrictions set forth in the Site Analysis.

Due to its vast open layout design, Duckwood Active-Use Area, the hub of active use facilities in Fountain Creek Regional Park, was a desirable location for many of these improvements, due primarily to gentle topography, proximity to parking lots and existing facilities, available building space, easy access from Highway 85, and minimal disturbance of natural open space.



Duckwood Active-Use Area

Map 6 - Concept Plan

CHAPTER 7 – THE PLAN

Introduction

This Master Plan has been developed through the input of the Master Plan Team, stakeholders, and the general public via outreach and communication process outlined in Chapter 4. The Master Plan Team collaborated on a monthly basis to generate goals and objectives, analyze public survey comments, evaluate comments from the public meetings, and address priorities for master plan recommendations. As members of the Master Plan Team, Fountain Creek Nature Center staff and South District Park Operations staff were key contributors, bringing in-depth knowledge of Fountain Creek Regional Park as well as experience with current management and maintenance issues. Combined, these valuable sources of input helped ensure that recommendations included in this chapter will make the best use of limited resources. Given available resources, the Master Plan Team assumed that action items would be implemented according to a phased schedule. More information about implementation and phasing is included in Chapter 8. In accordance with many of the master plan goals, this plan was developed with sustainability and responsible resource management as key principles.

The proposed improvements and management actions evolved from various options presented to the Master Plan Team and general public. As stated in Chapter 5, goals specific to the Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan update were based upon not only the overall El Paso County Parks system goals and objectives, but also through an understanding of the community preferences demonstrated by the online public survey, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. The public input was vital, as it illustrated what was important to park users, and focused the overall master plan process.

The recommendations that follow are organized into categories that reflect the established master plan goals:

- **Overall Park and Recreation Areas.** This category also includes recommendations for improvements and maintenance to *Active-Use Areas*, further broken down by the specific park area.
- **Regional and Internal Park Trails**
- **Open Space**
- **Recreation and Cultural Services Programs and Facilities**
- **Management and Administration**
- **Community Awareness**
- **Implementation and Funding**

Action Items

Based upon the Master Plan Goals outlined in Chapter 5, the following action items were developed:

Overall Park and Recreation Areas – Many of the recommendations brought forth in the public survey and stakeholder process addressed issues and infrastructure improvements that impact Fountain Creek Regional Park as a whole. Although these recommendations are perhaps more general in nature, they were taken into consideration when planning the other more specific categories, with a continued effort to follow the goals set forth for the overall park area.

1. Complete ongoing forest stewardship efforts that maintain forest biodiversity, regeneration capacity, and vitality while addressing wildlife habitat and public safety concerns. The efforts will include utilizing generally accepted forest management principles and consulting with El Paso County natural resource specialists regarding wildlife habitat.
2. Complete ongoing noxious weed management in consultation with El Paso County Environmental Services staff that will focus on sensitive environmental areas including wetlands and riparian environments.
3. Add more restrooms to the park and make them more readily available year-round. Explore the utilization of portable restrooms as alternative to expensive, permanent facilities.
4. Expand parking lots in all areas of the park as appropriate for existing and proposed uses, especially those that experience high vehicle loads during peak periods and special events. Explore the use of permeable parking lot surfaces to control stormwater runoff.
5. Improve and/or repair parking lot, building, and facility lighting.
6. Upon renovation of turf facilities, such as multi-use athletic fields and play/picnic areas, and based upon the availability of funding, explore improvements to the existing irrigation systems.
7. Consider the addition of park maintenance staff to keep pace with the addition of new facilities.
8. Explore the expansion of the Maintenance Shop yard to allow for increased vehicle and material storage.
9. Develop and enhance educational/informative interpretive and interactive displays throughout the park.
10. Collaborate with City of Fountain Utilities, Electric Department, to explore the burial of the overhead powerlines that currently run through the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
11. Develop park entrances along Highway 85 with standardized identification and wayfinding signage and lighting.
12. Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Transportation to improve points of access.
13. Improve ADA accessibility throughout the park when renovating facilities and developing new facilities, with a focus on active-use areas.

Active Use Areas – Fountain Creek Regional Park offers a wide variety of active use facilities at Willow Springs Ponds and Duckwood Active-Use Area, with opportunities for proposed activities at Cottonwood Meadows to the south. The following improvements are recommended, with emphasis on maintaining and improving existing facilities and minimizing impacts to surrounding open space areas. This is accomplished through the utilization of the current active use areas or open areas that are currently under-utilized, yet don't present significant impact on natural resources or wildlife habitat.

Willow Springs Ponds

1. Convert current inactive fish cleaning station into small picnic pavilion.
2. Install turf along northeast side of small pond to the edge of the main



Figure 36 - Proposed Turf and Trail Area at Willow Springs Ponds

parking lot, to encompass the current playground and pavilion areas to encourage picnicking and active play.

3. Install small sculpted playground and/or climbing rocks in location of original playground (now removed).
4. Create internal park trail around the small pond to help preserve proposed turf area and existing natural area.
5. Improve internal park trails around the large pond to help preserve the existing natural area.
6. Conduct forestry work at Willow Springs to remove hazardous trees and deadfall while preserving the high-quality mature Cottonwood trees that comprise the riparian Cottonwood forest and wildlife habitat recognized by the CNHP.
7. Improve lighting in the park area and parking lots.
8. Install a restroom and map kiosk at the trailhead and proposed dog park area.

Duckwood Active-Use Area

1. Develop outdoor amphitheater in the northwest corner of area near trailhead.
2. Create demonstration gardens along berms on west side of the active area.
3. Lay out community gardens west of active use area and proposed demonstration gardens.



Figure 37 - Traditional Playground at Duckwood Active-Use Area

- Establish a volunteer or friends group to manage the garden and the leasing of garden plots.
4. Relocate volleyball court to location adjacent to west parking lots to make room for proposed sculpted playground.
5. Create sculpted playground south of existing traditional playground. The sculpted playground would have manufactured equipment with a nature theme.
6. Improve lighting in park area and parking lots.
7. Promote the planting of mixed disease- and drought-resistant deciduous trees for increased shade, wind breaks, wildlife habitat, and visual enhancement of the surrounding park environment.
8. Extend the western parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity and in preparation for proposed multi-use athletic field and dog park.
9. Develop a 5-acre fenced off-leash dog park for the southwestern area of the Duckwood Active-Use Area, to include trails, a small dog area, and such park amenities as benches, signage, and sustainable landscaping. Establish a volunteer group to help with the management and maintenance of the dog park.
10. Lay out new multi-use athletic field in southwest corner of active use area, west of Duckwood Pond. Rotate field use between the three athletic fields, allowing for adequate recovery of turf during high-use periods.

11. Install picnic pavilion, small playground, and restroom near the proposed multi-use athletic field and dog park.
12. Install toddler playground near current east parking lots and restroom.
13. Install climbing rock(s) near east parking lots and current restroom.
14. Create retaining/sitting wall with adjacent sidewalk to accent the elevated topography between the north and south halves of the active use area, and encourage local art groups to enhance wall surface through community-based art projects.
15. Expand east parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity.
16. Renovate the turf in both of the existing multi-use athletic fields.

Cottonwood Meadows

1. With input from local disc golf groups, plan and develop a 9-hole disc golf course with typical disc golf course amenities such as tee boxes, baskets, benches, and course map kiosks. Engage the groups in the management and maintenance of the course.
2. Pending U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval, develop a network of trails encompassing an approximately 8-acre terraced meadow east of the Cottonwood Meadows wetland mitigation area and west of Chilcott Ditch. Along the ½-mile trail network, include such park amenities as an overlook, interpretive signage, and benches. Utilize the area to educate the public on the benefits of wetlands, open grassland meadows, environmental mitigation efforts, and the history of irrigation in the Fountain Creek region.
3. Discontinue the practice of mowing the natural grass areas in Cottonwood Meadows to allow for the reestablishment of the natural grassland.
4. Plan and develop a park entrance and paved parking lot at the current gated entrance off of Highway 85 in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Transportation.
5. Install a restroom and informational kiosk at the proposed parking lot.



Figure 38 - Proposed Disc Golf Course north of Cottonwood Meadows

Hanson Trailhead Area

1. Plan and develop the Creekside Recreation Area near the Hanson Trailhead. This project will include the construction of a Tier IV singletrack hiking trail from Fountain Creek Regional Trail to the designated creekside area. Although minimal site furnishings are recommended, the addition of interpretive displays will allow the user to understand the dynamic nature of Fountain Creek, including the natural development of the Creekside area itself. This project is contingent on the completion of a FEMA flood restoration project using FEMA and other funding sources. FEMA-funded work includes trail and bridge repairs. The County is also

exploring the possible realignment of Fountain Creek through the Hanson Trailhead area in an effort to protect infrastructure and restore the creek to a more sustainable and less damaging configuration. The final alignment will determine the location of the Creekside Recreation Area, as well as other project specifications.

Regional and Internal Park Trails – Fountain Creek Regional Trail, a segment of the Colorado Front Range Trail, has often received high marks as a regional non-motorized transportation asset, as reflected in the public survey, public meetings, and through conversations with trail users. At Fountain Creek Regional Park, the County currently provides and maintains approximately 4 miles of regional and internal park trails, most of which are six to eight-foot wide gravel surfaced trails that accommodate multiple uses. In addition to the trails, the Duckwood Active-Use Area has approximately 1 mile of concrete sidewalks that allow for smooth-surface exercise opportunities.

This Master Plan envisions the repair, enhancement, addition, or relocation of over 2 miles of trails, including trails in the proposed dog park, conversion of social trails into singletrack hiking and mountain biking trails, as well as those sections of regional trail damaged in the flood events of 2015. Proposed trail improvements include using sustainable trail design practices to minimize the cost of future maintenance and infrastructure costs. Some of these principles include the use of trail tread cross slopes to keep water in sheet flow, grade reversals to keep water from gaining momentum, and kinks to divert water off of the trail. When needed, sustainable trail reclamation practices will also be performed to effectively close social trails or when relocating major trail corridors.



Figure 39 – Proposed Nature Trail Area in Cottonwood Meadows

These are the trail action items – most are directly related to other action items:

1. Develop 1,150 feet of Tier III trails around the south pond at Willow Springs Ponds in an effort to cut down on bank erosion and to provide for a stable and level platform from which to fish.
2. In the proposed Duckwood Active-Use Area dog park, construct approximately 1,800 feet of Tier III trails.
3. In the Duckwood Active-Use Area, relocate approximately 1,725 feet of Tier I trail to accommodate the development of the proposed community gardens, the amphitheater, and southwest multi-use athletic field.
4. At base of the proposed Duckwood retaining wall feature, construct approximately 425 feet of concrete sidewalk and an additional 500 feet of Tier IV singletrack hiking trail north of the existing traditional playground.
5. West of Duckwood Pond and the proposed multi-use athletic field and dog park, construct approximately 2,600 feet of Tier IV singletrack hiking and mountain biking trail. This trail could be constructed through collaboration with local trail advocacy organizations.

6. At the Cottonwood Meadows, construct approximately 2,400 feet of Tier III trails. These trails will provide interpretive opportunities focused on the adjacent wetlands.
7. Surrounding the proposed Cottonwood Meadows Disc Golf Course, convert existing service roads to 1,530 feet of Tier I trail and 1,365 feet of Tier III trail, the latter of which runs adjacent to the Chilcott Ditch.

Open Space – With its current layout, Fountain Creek Regional Park contains approximately 345 acres, or 88 percent, of natural open space, comprised primarily of native grass meadows, protected wetlands, deciduous cottonwood forests, and lowland floodplains. These areas are utilized for either conservation purposes or for passive-use recreational activities, such as hiking, cycling, photography, and wildlife viewing. Results from both the public survey and stakeholder interviews revealed that park users not only prize these open spaces, and want to keep them natural, maintained, and in some cases, restored. Master plan goals, as stated previously, call for preservation of open space for passive recreation, wildlife habitat, to preserve watershed function, and to maintain and enhance wetland and riparian areas.

The expanse and open layout of the Duckwood Active-Use Area allows for the construction of new facilities (playgrounds, gardens, parking lots, athletic fields) within a concentrated area already categorized as “active use” without the need to disturb current open spaces. This infill philosophy employed in developing the Master Plan, concentrating new, higher impact uses in the Duckwood Active-Use Area, helps preserve open space while allowing El Paso County Parks to fulfill its mission to provide new and improved facilities and services that citizens desire. Five new activities, however, require the utilization of open space outside of the Duckwood area, although with relatively low impact activities: creekside recreation area, singletrack hiking and biking trails, disc golf course, dog park, and interpretive nature trails. While these five improvements may use up to 32 acres (8%) of previously unused land, their construction does not require large-scale earth moving and destruction to the surrounding riparian environment, and instead, flow passively with the current landscape without creating significant visual or environmental impacts.



Figure 40 - Cottonwood Meadows and Wetlands Mitigation Area

Singletrack and interpretive nature trails, generally considered a passive open space activity, are 1- to 2-foot wide and encourage users to stay on the trail, rather than creating damaging social trails. Although 5.5 acres are designated for singletrack, with an additional 7.9 acres designated for the Cottonwood Meadows Interpretive Trails, only very small areas will actually be affected. The 9.8-acre Cottonwood Meadows disc golf course is comprised only of tee boxes, baskets, and mowed natural grass – the

surrounding landscape is left untouched, and current access roads will be converted to properly-designed trails. At approximately 3 acres in size, the Creekside Recreation Area will include the construction of a singletrack hiking trail from Fountain Creek Regional Trail to the designated creekside area. Minimal site furnishings are recommended, while the addition of interpretive displays will allow the user to understand the dynamic nature of Fountain Creek, including the natural development of the Creekside area itself. Lastly, the dog park adjacent to the Duckwood Active-Use Area, at 5 acres, is intended to give the user as natural experience as possible, using a small loop trail system and the existing natural land cover, rather than a structured design. Except for the singletrack trails and some connecting trails, proposed improvements are located outside of floodplains, and all are located outside of designated wetland and riparian areas. The County will secure permits from the Regional Floodplain Administrator, if needed (trails generally do not require a floodplain development permit), prior to construction in the floodplain and will utilize best management practices to avoid impacts on adjacent riparian areas.

Recreation and Cultural Services Programs and Facilities

– The Fountain Creek Nature Center is among the most popular facilities in Fountain Creek Regional Park. Its ecology-based educational programs, camps, and family activities are highly valued by local organizations, residents, and visitors – ranking high in the public survey and stakeholder interviews. As the park evolves, care must be taken to balance recreational use of the park with preservation of natural resources as potential educational and interpretive opportunities. Goals focus on the continuing support of the Nature Center as a premier destination, community gathering place, and hub for environmental education and stewardship. Furthermore, the master plan goals stress the importance of providing and enhancing environmentally-based programs and interpretation opportunities throughout Fountain Creek Regional Park.



Figure 41 - Volunteers with the Water Stewardship Program

The following are action items for Recreation and Cultural Services:

1. Expand cultural and educational ecology-based programs.
2. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that will assist in establishing Fountain Creek Nature Center as a premier regional tourist attraction.
3. Construct a natural play area at the Nature Center, preferably using logs and other natural elements derived from Fountain Creek Regional Park. Work with local volunteer groups to assist with the acquisition of playground materials (logs, rocks) and with the construction of the playground itself.
4. Create more nature program opportunities for teenage children, particularly during the summer months
5. Collaborate with local school districts and youth organizations to develop more volunteer opportunities for teenagers.
6. Increase Fountain Creek Nature Center staff to accommodate the proposed expansion of education programs, volunteer opportunities, and public events.

7. Add interpretive signage along Fountain Creek Regional Trail to interpret topics such as, but not limited to watershed function and protection, creek ecology, healthy waters, healthy living, alternative energy, and wildlife.
8. Improve Nature Center access from Highway 85 and parking lots, to include better signage and lighting.
9. Pave the parking lots at Fountain Creek Nature Center. Explore the use of permeable parking lot surfaces to control stormwater runoff.

Management and Administration – A focus on effective and efficient management and administration of Fountain Creek Regional Park will ensure that the park remains financially and environmentally sustainable for years to come while meeting resident and visitor needs. Master Plan goals call for the continued maintenance and enhancement of existing park facilities, while addressing existing and future needs, with a continuing respect for the natural environment.

The following are action items for park management and administration:

1. Through the use of increased security patrols, signage, and user education, enhance the enforcement of park rules and regulations as a means to reduce multi-use conflicts and ensure user safety.
2. Promote effective stormwater management by controlling runoff.
3. Preserve the Fountain Creek floodplain to minimize adverse impacts downstream.
4. Coordinate stormwater management and watershed restoration with other agencies and organizations, such as the Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District, the Watershed Collaborative, and the Greenway Fund, to achieve mutual goals and reduce the impact of flooding and runoff on park infrastructure.
5. Consider strategic property acquisitions to protect park values from encroaching development.
 - a) Explore acquisition of land adjacent to the Fountain Creek Nature Center and Cattail Marsh Wildlife Area to improve access and allow for expansion of facilities and programs.
 - b) Explore acquisition of land to provide a buffer from development adjacent to open space areas and to provide for the possible expansion of park facilities.
 - c) Explore acquisition opportunities that will allow for protection of infrastructure from flooding and sustainable design of new and improved facilities.
 - d) Explore acquisition of land to expand the Maintenance Shop area to improve function and increase storage area.
6. Explore the establishment of a conservation easement over certain areas of the park to promote the preservation of open space, wildlife habitat, and floodplain riparian areas in an effort to minimize the potential impacts of future development.
7. Continue Community Services Outreach Programs to establish “friends groups” to assist with periodic and routine supervised maintenance and construction projects, and support of such proposed facilities as the demonstration gardens, community garden, and dog park.
8. Continue to cultivate partnership opportunities with the City of Fountain, the Watershed District, military installations, school and metropolitan districts, and trail and open space advocacy groups.

9. Continue to explore a dedicated funding source to develop, operate, and maintain park facilities at a level commensurate with their importance to the community. Additional funding could help El Paso County Parks expedite the implementation of recommendations outlined in this Master Plan.

Community Outreach and Awareness – The ongoing efforts of the Fountain Creek Nature Center and the Community Outreach programs have contributed greatly to the popularity and sustainability of Fountain Creek Regional Park. Nature Center camps, educational and interpretive programs, community events, and volunteer opportunities, such as Creek Week, have brought thousands of visitors to the park every year.

Outreach programs provide awareness, sponsorship, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities to support programs and facility development of El Paso County parks, trails, open spaces, Nature Centers and other facilities. Outreach services provides opportunities to benefit the community and improve the quality of life for County residents with volunteer opportunities such as Adopt-A-Park/Adopt-A-Trail, friends groups and nature center volunteers, as well as donation opportunities through such programs as Partners in the Park and the Trust for Community Parks.

The following are action items for Community Awareness:

1. Establish a friends or volunteer group to assist with the development, administration, and maintenance of the proposed community garden.
2. Explore partnership opportunities for development of the demonstration garden.
3. Establish a friends or volunteer group to assist with the development, administration, and maintenance of the dog park.
4. Formalize a group to assist with the development, administration, and maintenance of the disc golf course.
5. Utilizing standard and social media, as well as signage, promote park rules and regulations in an effort to reduce user conflicts, vandalism, and unintended damage.

Implementation and Funding – The phasing, or prioritization, of capital improvement projects for Fountain Creek Regional Park as expressed in the Implementation Plan in Chapter 8 was derived from input by the public, stakeholders, and Master Plan Team members, with endorsement by the Park Advisory Board and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. This initial capital improvement budget gives consideration new and improved facility and critical maintenance needs, while taking into account available funding, benefit for cost, project complexity, and improvement urgency. In a continuing effort to enhance the Park’s facilities and programs, Master Plan goals recommend generating and researching new partnership opportunities and funding sources to assist with the planning, development, and implementation of new projects and programs. Chapter 8 provides a detailed explanation of existing and possible funding sources, and a structured view of the proposed phased improvements, to be completed within the next ten years.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines are intended to aid in the design and implementation of the proposed site improvements and amenities with a cohesive and visually-appealing pallet of materials that can be implemented throughout Fountain Creek Regional Park. Given the age of the park and its well-established and publically-recognized existing furnishings and structure architecture, new site improvements such as playgrounds, furnishings, fencing, structures, and general thematic elements should blend with the current layout. At the same time, facilities should embody current trends in park improvements. El Paso County Parks also strives to use best management practices in the design and construction of park improvements. The intent of the Design Guidelines is to provide guidance on design elements that will be carried through the park and phased implementations.



Figure 42 - Typical Fountain Creek Regional Park Amenities - Benches, Water Fountain, Pavilion, Picnic Tables, and Trash Cans

As noted throughout this Master Plan, Fountain Creek Regional Park provides for a mix of active and passive activities. All projects should include thoughtful planning of the site, grading, drainage, parking areas, fencing, lighting, access to trails, signage, and site furnishings. All projects must be performed in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal rules, regulations, and standards.

Drainage and Grading – Although the park has relatively flat topography, many small drainages cross the park, generally in an east-to-west fashion, before draining into either Chilcott Ditch or ultimately into Fountain Creek. Where small drainages exist, drainage improvements, such as culverts, bridges, berms, or retention ponds will be necessary for when planning new trails, athletic fields, or playgrounds. Improvements should not increase runoff from what historically exists. Disturbance of more than an acre triggers City of Fountain and State erosion control and air quality permitting.

Site Furnishings – Site furnishings within the park should provide benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, picnic tables and other site furnishings as necessary. Furnishings should be reasonably consistent and compatible in style through the park and forms that blend with the landscape. Earth tone colors of greens, tans, and browns should be used that matches and/or complements the existing and new structures. Types of site furniture selected should be durable, vandal resistant.



Figure 43 - Drainage Channel at Duckwood Active-Use Area

Playgrounds – Presently, Fountain Creek Regional Park has one playground, located in the Duckwood Active-Use Area. This playground is more traditional, featuring such amenities as swings, slides, climbing bars, and bridges. The playground is also served by two picnic pavilions.

New playgrounds are recommended under this master plan, to be located at Willow Springs Ponds, Fountain Creek Nature Center, and Duckwood Active-Use Area. These new playgrounds will follow the current trends in playground design and construction, which allow for a more creative and free-flowing play experience.

One type, natural playgrounds (or at their most informal, natural play areas), consist of naturally-occurring materials, such as sand, water features, boulders and tree trunks/stumps, with materials that are from or mimic the natural environment. These types of playgrounds, recommended for Willow Springs Ponds and Fountain Creek Nature Center, allow children to creatively mix the essence of free play with educational opportunities.

Modern approaches to traditional playgrounds are also recommended, primarily for use at the Duckwood Active-Use Area. One playground, designed for toddlers and small children, would feature slides, steps, and other activities that promote physical development, without the intimidation of a larger playground.

Recommended to be situated near the current traditional playground, a new playground – consisting of climbing rocks, bridges, stepping stumps, sand diggers, swings, and slides – would be developed to offer a more advanced play opportunity. This playground



Figure 44 – Example of a Toddler Playground - Note Adult for Scale



Figure 45 - Example of a Natural Playground Utilizing Natural Materials



Figure 46 - Example of a "Sculpted" Playground Using Sustainable Materials

would feature sustainable materials that mimic naturally-occurring materials, so as to allow for greater sustainability and ease of maintenance. Like the natural playground, this “sculpted” playground would allow children a higher level of free play, combined with activities that promote physical strengthening, balance, and education, the latter of which would be achieved through choice of play equipment and through environmentally-based interpretive activities.

Trail Standards – All trails in Fountain Creek Regional Park will conform to El Paso County’s trail classifications and standards, and will be constructed for sustainability. As outlined in the El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013), currently four trail standards exist: Tier I, which is the primary standard for Primary Regional Trails; Tier II, which may be used for Primary and Secondary Regional Trails, depending on location; Tier III, which is primarily used for well-traveled internal park trails; and Tier IV, which is a singletrack trail. Two types of trails – Tier I Regional Trail and Tier III Internal Park Trails – exist currently in the park. This Master Plan recommends the addition of Tier IV singletrack trails for hiking and mountain bike use, along with the realignment or creation of new Tier I, Tier III, and Tier IV trails where necessary, such as in the dog park and adjacent to the disc golf course.

Trailheads and Parking Lots – Trailheads in the Fountain Creek Regional Park consist generally of a crushed limestone surface with minimal furnishings (parking blocks, post and dowel fencing), while most primary parking lots are surfaced with either road base, crushed limestone, or asphalt/concrete paved surfaces. Recommendations outlined in the master plan include the paving of parking lots with heavy use, landscaping, and message kiosks for park and community information. Furthermore, restrooms are recommended for two new parking lots, due to their remote locations, as well as increased lighting for early morning and evening events, where safety is a key issue. Parking lots are designed primarily for standard passenger cars, however, turnarounds and large-vehicle parking spaces have also been considered in the site-specific improvement plans.



Figure 47 - East Parking Lot at Duckwood Active-Use Area

Signage – A successful signage program provides regulatory, interpretive (educational) and directional or wayfinding information. All County signs should be designed in accordance with El Paso County Parks standards. Signs should be compatible and consistent with accurate trail identification and wayfinding.

1. **Regulatory** – Regulatory signage is used to identify the rules and regulations. It should be placed in strategic access points such as staging areas and trailheads and may include: hours of operation, appropriate use and activity information, park rules and regulations, and public notices and general information.
2. **Interpretive** – Interpretive signage is used to identify and educate about topics such as natural and cultural resources. It should be placed in strategic areas such as staging areas, viewpoints and other features of interest. Interpretative signage can include: trail etiquette, identification and description of key plant and tree species, wildlife habitat and education about land stewardship and resource degradation (public misuse, urban runoff, noxious plants invasion, overuse, trash, feral animals, etc.).

3. **Directional** – Directional signage is used to identify location, direction, distance and places of interest for trails users. Markers should be placed at strategic intervals or at strategic areas such as viewpoints or intersections. Directional signage should include designation and length and provide trail user location.



Figure 48 - Park Entrance Sign at Duckwood Active-Use Area

4. **Wayfinding** – This sign type includes park entry signs, general park boundary markers, trail maps, and wayfinding signage specific to Park facilities.

5. **Road** – Road signs inform motorists of trail system access points and provide warning at trail crossings.

Fencing – Three types of fencing are utilized within Fountain Creek Regional Park, each for a different purpose. These fence types include:

1. **Chain Link or Square Weave** – To be used primarily at the athletic fields, dog park and to secure areas of outdoor storage. This fencing would be typical galvanized steel wire, posts and gates. Fence heights will vary depending on use but would generally be in heights of 4, 6, or 8 feet. A concrete mow strip may be desirable at the base of fences with adjacent turf fields for maintenance purposes. Landscaping screening is recommended in association with outdoor storage fencing to minimize visual impacts.

2. **Wire Fence** – Three-strand smooth wire fencing is used to outline the boundary of the park, especially in areas that border private property that houses livestock. Smooth wire allows for safe passage of wildlife.

3. **Two-Rail or Three-Rail Post and Dowel Fence** – Post and dowel fencing would be used primarily to delineate spaces and provide barriers in appropriate areas, such as areas adjacent to roadways and around parking lots. This type of fence promotes proper trail use and reduces overland foot traffic in high-use areas. This is the preferred alternative to split-rail fencing, which is not as durable.

Structures – Structures should be designed to mimic or blend with existing architecture (e.g., restrooms, pavilions) in order to maintain the existing visual character and create an identifiable look and feel for the overall park. A user may recognize the yellow restrooms at Willow Springs Ponds and Duckwood Active-Use Area, will expect that other restrooms will generally look the same in other locations in the park.



Figure 49 - Restroom at Duckwood Active-Use Area



Willow Springs Ponds

Site-Specific Improvements Plan

Proposed Improvements

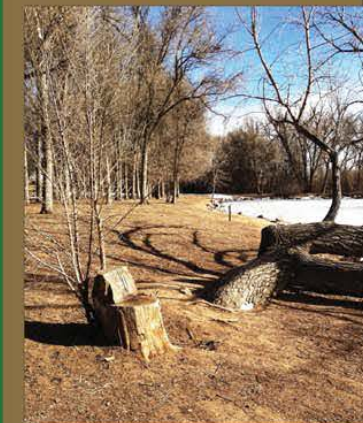
- 1) Convert fish cleaning station to picnic gazebo
- 2) Install turf along northeast side of small pond to edge of parking lot, to encompass the playground and gazebo areas.
- 3) Install sculpted playground in original location.
- 4) Create trail surrounding small pond.
- 5) Improve trails surround large pond.
- 6) Conduct forestry work in southern area.
- 7) Improve lighting in park area and parking lot.
- 8) Install map kiosk at trailhead parking lot.



Willow Springs North Pond



Fish Cleaning Station



Willow Springs South Pond

Scale = 1:500
1 Inch = 40 Feet



Duckwood Active-Use Area

Site-Specific Improvements Plan

Proposed Improvements

1. Develop outdoor amphitheater in the northwest corner of area near trailhead.
2. Create demonstration gardens along berms on west side of the active area.
3. Lay out community gardens west of active use area and proposed demonstration gardens.
4. Relocate volleyball court to location adjacent to west parking lots.
5. Create sculpted playground south of existing traditional playground.
6. Improve lighting in park area and parking lots.
7. Promote the planting of mixed disease- and drought-resistant deciduous trees throughout park.
8. Extend the western parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity.
9. Develop a 5-acre fenced off-leash dog park for the southwestern area of the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
10. Lay out new multi-use athletic field in southwest corner of active use area, west of Duckwood Pond.
11. Install picnic pavilion, small playground, and restroom near the proposed multi-use athletic field and dog park.
12. Install toddler playground and climbing rocks near current east parking lots and restroom.
13. Create retaining/sitting wall with adjacent sidewalk to accent the elevated topography between the north and south halves of the active use area.
14. Expand east parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity.
15. Renovate the turf in both of the existing multi-use athletic fields.



Multi-Use Athletic Field and Restroom



Duckwood Pond

Scale = 1:600

1 Inch = 50 Feet



Duckwood Active-Use Area

Site-Specific Improvements Plan

Proposed Improvements

1. Develop outdoor amphitheater in the northwest corner of area near trailhead.
2. Create demonstration gardens along berms on west side of the active area.
3. Lay out community gardens west of active use area and proposed demonstration gardens.
4. Relocate volleyball court to location adjacent to west parking lots.
5. Create sculpted playground south of existing traditional playground.
6. Improve lighting in park area and parking lots.
7. Promote the planting of mixed disease- and drought-resistant deciduous trees throughout park.
8. Extend the western parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity.
9. Develop a 5-acre fenced off-leash dog park for the southwestern area of the Duckwood Active-Use Area.
10. Lay out new multi-use athletic field in southwest corner of active use area, west of Duckwood Pond.
11. Install picnic pavilion, small playground, and restroom near the proposed multi-use athletic field and dog park.
12. Install toddler playground and climbing rocks near current east parking lots and restroom.
13. Create retaining/sitting wall with adjacent sidewalk to accent the elevated topography between the north and south halves of the active use area.
14. Expand east parking lot to the south to allow for increased parking capacity.
15. Renovate the turf in both of the existing multi-use athletic fields.



Singletrack Trail Area

Chilcote Ditch



Scale = 1:600
1 Inch = 50 Feet

Map 9 - Duckwood Active-Use Area (South) Site-Specific Improvement Plan

Cottonwood Meadows

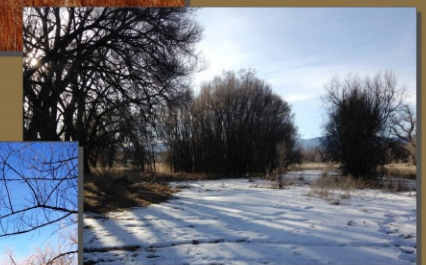
Site-Specific Improvements Plan

Proposed Improvements

- 1) With input from local disc golf groups, plan and develop a 9-hole disc golf course with typical disc golf course amenities such as tee boxes, baskets, benches, and course map kiosks. Engage the groups in the management and maintenance of the course.
- 2) Pending U.S. Army Corp of Engineers approval, develop a network of trails encompassing an approximately 8-acre terraced meadow east of the Cottonwood Meadows wetland mitigation area and west of Chilcott Ditch. Along the 1/2-mile trail network, include such park amenities as an overlook, interpretive signage, and benches. Utilize the area to educate the public on the benefits of wetlands, open grassland meadows, environmental mitigation efforts, and the history of irrigation in the Fountain Creek region.
- 3) Plan and develop a park entrance and paved parking lot at the current gated entrance off of Highway 85 in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Transportation.
- 4) Install a restroom and informational kiosk at the proposed parking lot.



Interpretive Area



Disc Golf Area



Disc Golf Area

Scale = 1:1,000
1 Inch = 85 Feet



Map 10 - Cottonwood Meadows Site-Specific Improvement Plan

CHAPTER 8 – PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Existing Revenue Sources

El Paso County Parks is comprised of three major divisions – Park Operations, Planning, and Recreation and Cultural Services. Community Outreach staff provides support for Parks and other County programs, as needed. El Paso County Parks is operated on a predetermined yearly budget through a variety of funding sources. In addition, capital improvement and maintenance projects, such as those proposed in this master plan, are funded through the following sources:

General Fund Tax Support – El Paso County Parks are funded in part by approximately \$1.2 million each year from the County General Fund. These funds are supported from a combination of property tax and sales tax, as well as various fees and charges. These funds are used for administrative and supervisory salaries, materials and supplies, and other general operation expenses.

Conservation Trust Funds – El Paso County Parks currently receives approximately \$1.2 million annually from the State of Colorado’s Conservation Trust Fund (CTF). El Paso County utilizes a majority of the annual allotment for ongoing maintenance. Therefore, there are no CTF funds available for park or open space development and capital improvements at this time.

Development Fees and Land Dedication – Development fees are one-time charges imposed on residential subdivision development projects at the time of final platting to recover capital costs for public parks facilities needed to serve new developments and the additional residents, employees, and visitors they bring to the community. State laws and local regulations, with a few minor exceptions, prohibit the use of development fees for ongoing maintenance or operations costs.

El Paso County Parks receives regional and urban park fees from new housing development in the County. The regional park fees can be used for development of park facilities or the purchase of park property or open space. The regional fees must be used in designated areas where the fees were collected. Urban park fees can be used for the development of neighborhood or pocket parks and recreation facilities by the County or by another governmental or quasi-governmental entity, such as a metropolitan district, through the County’s Urban Park Grant Program.

User Fees – User fees are charged for a variety of individual or group uses currently generating approximately \$500,000 per year for the park system overall. Examples of user fees employed by El Paso County include park and recreation facility rentals, recreational program fees, booth leases (for vendors in parks, special events, and tournaments), special use permits, admissions/ticket sales, and County Fair fees.

Grants – Grants often supplement or match funds that have already been received. For example, grants can be used for programs, planning, design, seed money, and construction. Due to their generally unpredictable nature, grants are often used to fund a specific venture and should not be viewed as a continuous source of funding. El Paso County Parks aggressively pursues grants for individual park and trail projects from Great Outdoor Colorado (GOCO), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), State Trails grants, federal enhancement funds, and state and local private foundations. FEMA grants have been an important funding source for 2013 and 2015 flood recovery projects.

Volunteer Programs – Programs such as adopt-a-park and friends of the park may be created with and supported by the residents, businesses, and/or organizations located in the park’s vicinity. These programs allow volunteers to actively assist in improving and maintaining parks, related facilities, and the community in which they live. In addition, volunteers help to reduce the burden of hiring staff for certain activities, and aid in engaging the community in the operation of their park. In the case of Fountain Creek Regional Park, volunteer and friends groups could be established to assist in the ongoing improvement and maintenance of such proposed improvements as the community garden, demonstration garden, dog park, and disc golf course. These examples illustrate the creative efforts that have been undertaken to continue to provide park and recreation services while enduring the reduced funding available to maintain service levels.

Additional Funding Opportunities

In addition to the current and more recognizable funding sources listed above, additional funding opportunities may be available to supplement existing funds. Examples of these are recreation service fees, payments for utility and telecommunication infrastructure on park property, merchandising, naming rights, gifts in perpetuity, bonds, real estate and assessment fees, leases and easements, permits and licensing rights, and various federal park and open space funds. A dedicated park funding source could help El Paso County Parks expedite the implementation of recommendations outlined in this Master Plan. These additional funding opportunities are explained in detail in Chapter 9 of the El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013).

Capital Improvement Costs and Phasing

The phasing, or prioritization, of capital improvement projects for Fountain Creek Regional Park was derived from working with citizens and organizations through the public input process, which included a public survey, interviews, meetings, and continuing collaboration with Master Plan Team members. An initial capital improvement budget for new and improved facilities and critical maintenance needs was developed. Benefit for cost, project complexity, and improvement urgency were considered in project prioritization.

The following table, Table 1, provides proposed Phase I improvements, including a general improvement name, a description of proposed action items, and estimated capital improvement costs, the latter of which is based upon previous projects of a similar nature. The Phase I improvements are tied to an initial budget of \$250,000, comprised of \$125,000 in Ballot Question 1-A Funds and an additional \$125,000 in regional park fees. These primary improvements are scheduled to be completed within one to two years, dependent on available staffing and planned in accordance with the El Paso County Parks Capital Improvement Program.

Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan Capital Improvement Costs - Phase I		
Phase One	Action Items	Estimated Costs
Cottonwood Meadows Parking Lot	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, complete work	\$35,000
Cottonwood Meadows Disc Golf Course	Plan with local disc golf groups; In-house, bid materials, construct tees and baskets, construct ~1,530' of Tier I and ~1,365' of Tier III trails, install amenities (benches, course map), develop maintenance schedule	\$30,000
Duckwood South Athletic Field Turf Renovation	Solicit bids, complete work, close to establish new turf, develop athletic field rotation schedule, re-open	\$85,000
Duckwood Demonstration Gardens	Work with partners to develop design, solicit bids, establish irrigation network, complete work	\$15,000
Duckwood Community Gardens	Seek volunteers or establish friends group to assist with the design and maintenance and operation of a community garden.	\$0
Duckwood West Singletrack Hike/Bike Trail	Seek input from local groups or volunteers, finalize layout, solicit bids , construct ~2,600' of Tier IV trail	\$5,000
Duckwood Dog Park (Interim Location)	Solicit bids, construct 1,500' fencing and gates, construct temporary gravel entrance road and parking area, install amenities (bench, dog waste station), relocate trail connection, establish friends group, develop maintenance schedule	\$60,000
Nature Center Natural Play Area	Develop detailed plan, solicit volunteers and bids, construct play area with amenities	\$5,000
Park Main Entrance Signs	Order standardized signs from regular vendor, in-house installation, improve sign lighting where necessary, improve landscaping	\$15,000
Total Cottonwood Meadows Phase I Improvement Costs:		\$65,000
Total Duckwood Active-Use Area Phase I Improvement Costs:		\$165,000
Total Nature Center Phase I Improvement Costs:		\$5,000
Total General Park Phase I Improvement Costs:		\$15,000
Total Phase One Costs:		\$250,000

Table 2 - Proposed Phase I Improvements and Estimated Costs

The following table – Table 2 – provides future phase improvements, to be completed over the next five to ten years. These projects are dependent on available funding and planned in accordance with the El Paso County Parks Capital Improvement Program. These projects may be further broken down into individual phases as funding becomes available.

Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan Capital Improvement Costs - Future Phases		
Future Phases	Action Items	Estimated Costs
Cottonwood Meadows Parking Lot Restroom	Solicit bids, install restroom	\$125,000
Cottonwood Meadows Interpretive Trails	Solicit bids, finalize trail layout, construct ~2,500' of Tier III trail, install amenities, including benches and interpretive displays	\$35,000
Duckwood Dog Park (Final Location)	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, prepare ground surface, plant native grass seed, relocate interim dog park fencing, gates, and amenities, construct additional 600' fencing and entrance gate, construct ~1,700' of Tier III trail, install amenities (benches, additional dog waste station, watering station, shade structures), plant trees and landscaping	\$100,000
Duckwood North Athletic Field Turf Renovation	Solicit bids, complete work, close to establish new turf, develop athletic field rotation schedule, re-open	\$85,000
Duckwood Community Gardens	Solicit bids, establish irrigation network, construct fencing and access gates	\$20,000
Duckwood Exercise Course	Solicit bids, complete work	\$30,000
Duckwood Amphitheater	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, construct amphitheater to include stage, seating, turf, electrical	\$160,000
Duckwood Volleyball Court Relocation	Solicit bids, complete work	\$6,000
Duckwood Sculpted Playground	Solicit bids, move volleyball court, construct playground, install amenities	\$65,000
Duckwood Toddler Playground	Solicit bids, construct playground with amenities	\$20,000
Duckwood Climbing Rock	Plan with local groups or solicit bids, install climbing rock(s), install amenities	\$15,000
Duckwood Retaining Wall Feature	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, construct 425' of sidewalk and 500' of Tier IV singletrack at base of wall, complete work, work with local groups to plan future enhancements	\$30,000
Duckwood East Parking Lot Expansion	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, close parking lot, complete work, re-open	\$125,000
Duckwood West Athletic Field Construction	Solicit bids, establish irrigation network, complete work, close to establish turf, develop athletic field rotation schedule	\$125,000
Duckwood West Athletic Field Restroom	Solicit bids, install restroom	\$175,000
Duckwood West Athletic Field Playground	Solicit bids, complete work	\$40,000
Duckwood West Athletic Field Pavilion	Solicit bids, complete work	\$38,000
Duckwood West Parking Lot Construction	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, complete work	\$250,000
Duckwood West Trail Relocation	Solicit bids, construct 1,725' of Tier I trail, install amenities if necessary	\$20,000
Hanson Creekside Recreation Area	Solicit bids, prepare design plans, construct trails, amenities, interpretive displays	\$60,000
Willow Springs Parking Lot Paving	Solicit bids, close parking lots, complete work, re-open	\$155,000
Willow Springs Pond-Side Trails	Solicit bids, construct 1,150' of Tier III trails, complete work	\$10,000
Willow Springs Trailhead Kiosk	Solicit bids, complete work	\$13,000
Willow Springs North Pond Aerator (if necessary)	Solicit bids, complete work	\$60,000
Willow Springs Turf and Landscape Installation	Solicit bids, complete work	\$100,000
Willow Springs Pavilion Conversion	Solicit bids, remove fish-cleaning station, repair roof, complete work	\$5,000
Willow Springs Pavilion Construction	Solicit bids, complete work	\$38,000
Willow Springs Playground Construction	Solicit bids, complete work	\$30,000
Willow Springs Lighting Upgrades	Solicit bids, complete work	\$15,000
Total Cottonwood Meadows Future Phase Improvement Costs:		\$160,000
Total Duckwood Active-Use Area Future Phase Improvement Costs:		\$1,304,000
Total Hanson Trailhead Future Phase Improvement Costs:		\$60,000
Total Willow Springs Future Phase Improvement Costs:		\$426,000
Total Future Phases Costs:		\$1,950,000
TOTAL COSTS ALL PHASES:		\$2,200,000

Table 3 - Proposed Future Phases Improvements and Estimated Costs

Maintenance Costs

Many of the recommended Fountain Creek Regional Park Master Plan improvements are intended to reduce future maintenance costs. The utilization of sustainable infrastructure design principles, and use of high-quality, sustainable materials with strength to withstand heavy usage, will lead to more cost-effective operations, better utilization of El Paso County staff time, and reduced planning and maintenance costs over time.

General maintenance costs can be categorized as routine and periodic. Routine maintenance costs are less intensive and are done on a consistent schedule. Periodic maintenance requires significant staff time but is done less frequently. The proposed Phase I and Build-Out capital improvements outlined in the plan will require both routine and periodic maintenance and will require relative increases to the costs estimated in the following two tables.

FCRP Master Plan Current and Estimated Phase I Maintenance Costs						
Routine Maintenance	Action Items	Current Annual Work Hours (\$17.5/hr)	Phase I Annual Work Hours (\$17.5/hr)	Change Annual Work Hours	Current Annual Costs	Phase I Annual Costs
General Maintenance - Summer	Trash removal, public water testing, playgrounds, and other grounds repair and maintenance (28 weeks)	1,100	1,650	550	\$19,250	\$28,875
General Maintenance - Winter	Trash removal, sign and fence maintenance, water testing (24 weeks)	950	1,150	200	\$16,625	\$20,125
General Repair and Maintenance Supply Costs	Herbicides, trash bags, cleaning and equipment maintenance/paper supplies	*	*	*	\$2,500	\$2,900
Vandalism Repair and Replacement/Costs	Vandalism repair and replacement materials and supplies/slides/fence	*	*	*	\$2,000	\$2,800
Electrical Costs	Electrical costs (2015 service level)	*	*	*	\$6,000	\$7,200
Restroom and Pavilion Cleaning - Summer	Sweeping, blowing, raking, trash removal, dusting, mopping (28 weeks)	840	1,020	180	\$14,700	\$17,850
Turf Maintenance	Mowing (average 26 weeks)	504	504	0	\$8,820	\$8,820
Periodic Maintenance	Action Items					
Turf Maintenance	Fertilization, aeration, weed control	45	60	15	\$788	\$1,050
Turf Maintenance Supplies	Fertilizer cost (2105) - Three applications per year	*	*	*	\$3,500	\$3,500
Irrigation Maintenance Labor	Visual inspection of heads, water adjustments, pump inspection, scheduling, repair and maintenance	280	280	0	\$4,900	\$4,900
Irrigation Repair and Maintenance Supplies	Head, lines, pump, controls, electrical	*	*	*	\$3,000	\$3,000
Natural Grass Area Maintenance	Mowing (average 3-4) times per year	112	208	96	\$1,960	\$3,640
Painting Maintenance	Paint supplies, pavilions, signs	*	*	*	\$3,000	\$7,500
Gravel Parking Lot Maintenance	Grading, box blading (4 times per year)	50	85	35	\$875	\$1,488
Snow Removal - Winter	Clearing sidewalks, asphalt parking lots (average 10 events)	60	60	0	\$1,050	\$1,050
Other Maintenance	Action Items					
Asphalt Parking Lot Maintenance	Asphalt repair, sealing, sweeping, striping, crack filling as needed	0	0	0	\$0	\$0
Forest Management	Tree pruning, thinning, removal, and fire mitigation	416	530	114	\$7,280	\$9,275
Sidewalk Maintenance	Crack repair, tripping hazard mitigation, section replacement	0	0	0	\$0	\$0
Regional Trail Maintenance	Tier I - \$1,000 per linear mile per year: box blading and surface repair	4.25 Miles	4.55 Miles	0.30 Miles	\$4,250	\$4,550
Secondary Trail Maintenance	Tier III - \$800 per linear mile per year: box blading and surface repair	2.60 Miles	3.25 Miles	0.65 Miles	\$2,080	\$2,600
Singletrack Trail Maintenance	Tier IV - \$400 per linear mile per year: resurfacing and surface repair	0 Miles	.65 Miles	0.65 Miles	\$0	\$260
Total Estimated Maintenance Costs:		4,357	5,547	1,190	\$102,578	\$131,383

Table 4 – Phase I Current and Estimated Phase I Maintenance Costs

FCRP Master Plan Post-Phase I and Estimated Build-Out Maintenance Costs						
Routine Maintenance	Action Items	Post-Phase I Annual Work Hours (\$17.5/hr)	Build-Out Annual Work Hours (\$17.5/hr)	Change Annual Work Hours	Post-Phase I Annual Costs	Build-Out Annual Costs
General Maintenance - Summer	Trash removal, public water testing, playgrounds, and other routine grounds repair and maintenance (28 weeks)	1,650	2,600	950	\$28,875	\$45,500
General Maintenance - Winter	Trash removal, sign and fence maintenance (24 weeks)	1,150	2000	850	\$20,125	\$35,000
General Repair and Maintenance Supplies	Herbicides, trash bags, cleaning and equipment maintenance	*	*	*	\$2,900	\$4,000
Vandalism Repair and Replacement	Vandalism repair and replacement materials and supplies	*	*	*	\$2,800	\$4,000
Electrical Costs	Electrical costs (2015 service level)	*	*	*	\$7,200	\$16,000
Restroom and Pavilion Cleaning - Summer	Sweeping, trash removal, dusting, mopping (28 weeks)	1,020	2,000	980	\$17,850	\$35,000
Turf Maintenance	Mowing (average 26 weeks)	504	659	155	\$8,820	\$11,533
Periodic Maintenance	Action Items					
Turf Maintenance	Fertilization, aeration, weed control	60	80	20	\$1,050	\$1,400
Turf Maintenance Supplies	Fertilizer cost (2105) - Three applications per year	*	*	*	\$3,500	\$5,000
Irrigation Maintenance Labor	Visual inspection of heads, water adjustments, pump inspection, scheduling, repair and maintenance	280	420	140	\$4,900	\$7,350
Irrigation Repair and Maintenance Supplies	Head, lines, pump, controls, electrical	*	*	*	\$3,000	\$4,500
Natural Grass Area Maintenance	Mowing (average 3-4) times per year	208	288	80	\$3,640	\$5,040
Painting Maintenance	Paint supplies, pavilions, signs	*	*	*	\$7,500	\$5,000
Gravel Parking Lot Maintenance	Grading, box blading (4 times per year)	85	110	25	\$1,488	\$1,925
Snow Removal - Winter	Clearing sidewalks, asphalt parking lots (average 10 events)	60	75	15	\$1,050	\$1,313
Other Maintenance	Action Items					
Asphalt Parking Lot Maintenance	Asphalt repair, sealing, sweeping, striping, crack filling as needed	0	0	0	\$0	\$0
Forest Management	Tree pruning, thinning, removal, and fire mitigation	530	610	80	\$9,275	\$10,675
Sidewalk Maintenance	Crack repair, tripping hazard mitigation, section replacement	0	0	0	\$0	\$0
Regional Trail Maintenance	Tier I - \$1,000 per linear mile per year: box blading and surface repair	4.55 Miles	5.00 Miles	0.45 Miles	\$4,550	\$5,000
Secondary Trail Maintenance	Tier III - \$800 per linear mile per year: box blading and surface repair	3.25 Miles	4.50 Miles	1.25 Miles	\$2,600	\$3,600
Singletrack Trail Maintenance	Tier IV - \$400 per linear mile per year: resurfacing and surface repair	.65 Miles	.65 Miles	0 Miles	\$260	\$260
Total Estimated Maintenance Costs:		5,547	8,842	3,295	\$131,383	\$202,095

Table 5 – Post-Phase I and Estimated Build-Out Maintenance Costs



Figure 50 - Two Canada Geese Enjoy the Winter Sunshine and Grass at Duckwood Active-Use Area

~ Bibliography ~

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- 14) Fountain Creek Corridor Restoration Master Plan, 2011
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- 17) The Conservation Easement Handbook, The Land Trust Alliance and The Trust for Public Land, Byers, E. & Ponte, K.M., 2005
- 18) United States Census Bureau: (<http://www.census.gov/en.html>)
- 19) American Community Survey: (<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>)

~ Appendices ~

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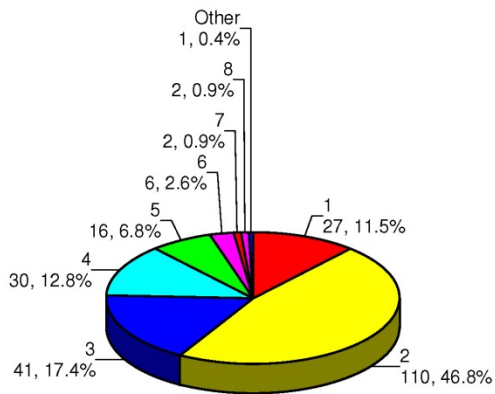
Fountain Creek Park Master Plan Survey

Demographics

Age Group of Respondent

Please select your age group:				
	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
19-24 years old	2	0.9%		
25-34 years old	24	10.2%		
35-44 years old	47	20.0%		
45-54 years old	51	21.7%		
55-64 years old	59	25.1%		
65 and older	52	22.1%		
Totals	235	100.0%		

Number of People That Live in Respondents Household



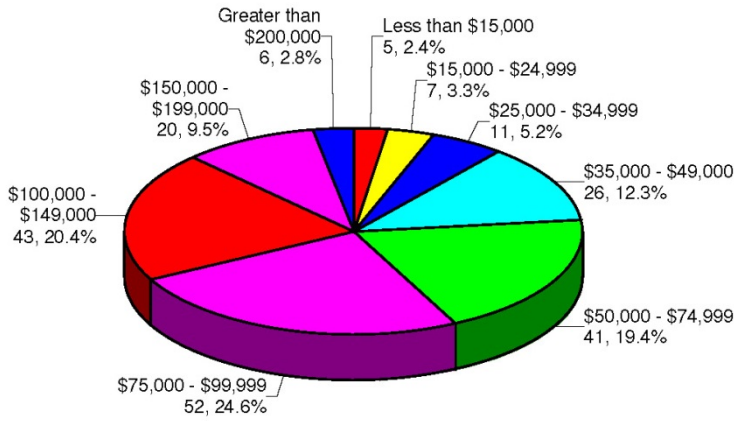
How many people live in your household?

Ages Per Household

4 Years Old or Younger-Number in household		
1	80.0%	20
2	20.0%	5
3	0.0%	0
4	0.0%	0
5	0.0%	0
6	0.0%	0
Totals	100.0%	25
5-9 Years Old-Number in household		
1	65.6%	21
2	31.3%	10
3	3.1%	1
Totals	100.0%	32
10-14 Years Old-Number in household		
1	76.7%	23
2	20.0%	6
3	3.3%	1
4	0.0%	0
Totals	100.0%	30
15-18 Years Old-Number in household		
1	85.7%	18
2	14.3%	3
3	0.0%	0
Totals	100.0%	21
19-24 Years Old-Number in household		
1	87.0%	20
2	13.0%	3
Totals	100.0%	23
25-34 Years Old-Number in household		
1	56.1%	23
2	43.9%	18
Totals	100.0%	41
35-44 Years Old-Number in household		
1	44.2%	23
2	55.8%	29
4	0.0%	0
Totals	100.0%	52
45-54 Years Old-Number in household		
1	44.6%	25
2	55.4%	31
Totals	100.0%	56
55-64 Years Old-Number in household		
0	11.4%	10
1	40.9%	36

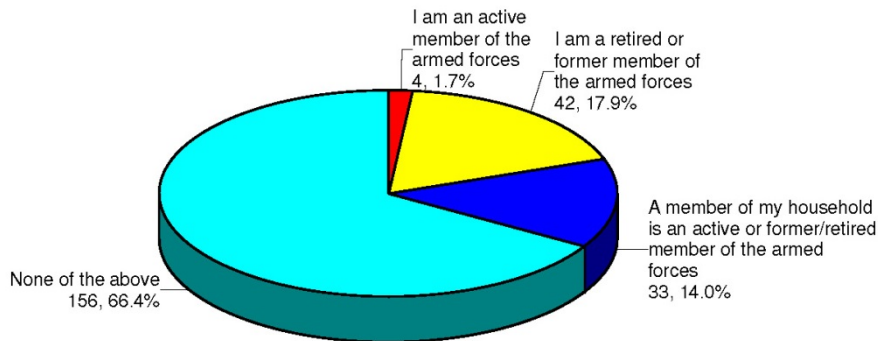
2	46.6%	41
two	1.1%	1
Totals	100.0%	88
65 and Older-Number in household		
1	55.0%	33
2	45.0%	27
Totals	100.0%	60

Household Income



Household Income:

Military Status

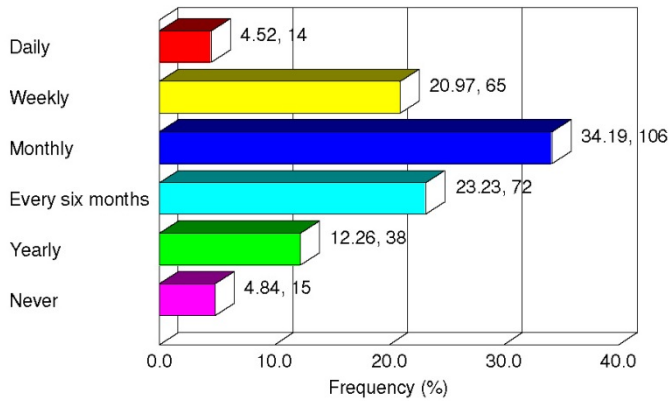


Military Status:

Familiarity

Frequency of Visits to Fountain Creek Regional Park

On average, how often have you or others in your household visited Fountain Creek Regional Park in the last year?












Activities Respondent has Participated in or Facilities Used

Please list all activities you / your household have participated in or facilities you've used at Fountain Creek Regional Park Only. (check all that apply)

	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
Hiking / Walking	228	75.2%	<div style="width: 75.2%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Nature Center	175	57.8%	<div style="width: 57.8%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Regional Trail	159	52.5%	<div style="width: 52.5%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Wildlife viewing / Bird watching	149	49.2%	<div style="width: 49.2%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Dog walking	98	32.3%	<div style="width: 32.3%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Open space / Passive recreation	89	29.4%	<div style="width: 29.4%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Cycling / Mountain biking	80	26.4%	<div style="width: 26.4%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Photography	76	25.1%	<div style="width: 25.1%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Educational programs / Camps	69	22.8%	<div style="width: 22.8%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Playgrounds	66	21.8%	<div style="width: 21.8%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Picnic tables / BBQ grills	59	19.5%	<div style="width: 19.5%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Running / Fitness	55	18.2%	<div style="width: 18.2%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Pavilions / Rentals	54	17.8%	<div style="width: 17.8%; background-color: red;"></div>	
Fishing ponds	49	16.2%	<div style="width: 16.2%; background-color: red;"></div>	

[Continuing table]


















Please list all activities you / your household have participated in or facilities you've used at Fountain Creek Regional Park Only. (check all that apply)

	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
Secondary / Singletrack trails	36	11.9%		
Multi-use athletic fields	28	9.2%		
Basketball court	21	6.9%		
Disc golf	9	3.0%		
Volleyball court	8	2.6%		
Horseback riding	6	2.0%		
Horseshoe pits	6	2.0%		
Volunteering	2	0.7%		
Other	11	3.6%		
Totals	*	*		

* Note: Multiple answer percentage-count totals not meaningful.

Favorite Activity or Facility

From the below list, which one activity or facility is your favorite? (choose only one)

	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
Hiking / Walking	94	30.6%		
Wildlife viewing / Bird watching	44	14.3%		
Nature Center	34	11.1%		
Cycling / Mountain biking	21	6.8%		
Regional Trail	18	5.9%		
Educational programs / Camps	16	5.2%		
Dog walking	15	4.9%		
Fishing ponds	11	3.6%		
Disc golf	11	3.6%		
Photography	8	2.6%		
Playgrounds	7	2.3%		
Picnic tables / BBQ grills	5	1.6%		
Running / Fitness	5	1.6%		
Open space / Passive recreation	4	1.3%		
Pavilions / Rentals	4	1.3%		
Multi-use athletic fields	3	1.0%		
Basketball court	2	0.7%		

[Continuing table]

From the below list, which one activity or facility is your favorite? (choose only one)			
	Counts	Percents	Percents
			0 100
Other	5	1.6%	
Totals	307	100.0%	

Current Park Usage

	Frequencies:				Totals
	Improve	Expand	Leave as is	Neutral / no opinion	
Park Usage					
Basketball court	6.9%	2.3%	30.4%	60.4%	100.0%
Fishing ponds	23.6%	12.2%	27.8%	36.5%	100.0%
Horseshoe pits	2.8%	5.9%	31.5%	59.8%	100.0%
Multi-use athletic fields	8.6%	7.8%	28.7%	54.9%	100.0%
Nature center	18.5%	26.3%	43.3%	11.9%	100.0%
Observation blinds	17.4%	19.3%	31.7%	31.7%	100.0%
Open space for passive recreation	15.0%	26.5%	31.9%	26.5%	100.0%
Parking lots	14.1%	13.3%	47.3%	25.4%	100.0%
Pavilions / Rentals	11.0%	11.8%	38.8%	38.4%	100.0%
Picnic tables / BBQ grills	15.0%	15.4%	30.4%	39.1%	100.0%
Playgrounds	14.6%	17.8%	25.7%	41.9%	100.0%
Regional trail	36.7%	32.6%	21.7%	9.0%	100.0%
Secondary / Singletrack trails	23.6%	23.6%	24.3%	28.6%	100.0%
Volleyball court	3.6%	2.4%	34.1%	59.8%	100.0%

Please let us know if there are any other existing facilities you'd like to see improved or expanded.		
Disk Golf Course	25.0%	9
Dog park	5.6%	2
Addition of a disc golf course	2.8%	1
Allow float tubes on the ponds. Artificial lures only would keep the trash down. A	2.8%	1
clean up tall weeds in central area in Nature Center parking lot	2.8%	1
Disc golf. Pickleball	2.8%	1
Fountain Creek Regional Trail Connection With Pikes Peak Greenway Trail! Such a		
major north south route it's sad to see it in such disrepair.	2.8%	1
Hansen Trail Head	2.8%	1
I just want the area to be clean. Please keep the pond clean, please clean up the		
beachy area near fountain creek, and keep the trails in great condition.	2.8%	1
I know the nature center was just remodeled, but it's always great to have more, or		
changing, interactive activities.	2.8%	1
I'd like to see a skateboard park added to the area	2.8%	1
Need to get better irrigation to fields. Need to make upgrades to Willow Ponds turf.	2.8%	1
none	2.8%	1
Paved trail for cycling	2.8%	1
porta-potties added to regional trail	2.8%	1
Restrooms along trail, similar to Canon City river walk.	2.8%	1
Road 85 needs three lanes at the entrance of the Nature Center (a turning lane in the		
middle so you don't stop the traffic going North)	2.8%	1
safe access points/traffic signals	2.8%	1
Sorry, don't know as I don't use the park; No time or is too far away?	2.8%	1
Sports field improved	2.8%	1
Surveillance camera at north parking lot	2.8%	1
the creek and trails should be cleaned up more often	2.8%	1
The restrooms	2.8%	1
there are walking trails along the creek that are washed out, and parts of the		
playground equipment that have been broken for a while.	2.8%	1
We need to repair the flood damage.	2.8%	1
We would love to see an archery range at Fountain Creek.	2.8%	1
You could add a small arms shooting range (hand guns only)	2.8%	1
Totals	100.0%	36

Future or Proposed Park Usage

Additional activities or programs	Completely Agree	Partially Agree	Neutral	Partially Disagree	Completely Disagree	Totals	Mean	Mean	
								1	5
Demonstration garden (xeriscaping, attracting bird / butterflies, etc.)	114 45.2%	70 27.8%	55 21.8%	3 1.2%	10 4.0%	252 100.0%	4.09		
Cultural events (concerts, art fairs, festivals)	97 38.3%	81 32.0%	54 21.3%	7 2.8%	14 5.5%	253 100.0%	3.95		
Natural playground	63 25.9%	90 37.0%	75 30.9%	5 2.1%	10 4.1%	243 100.0%	3.79		
Outdoor Interpretive / Interactive displays	79 32.4%	62 25.4%	82 33.6%	8 3.3%	13 5.3%	244 100.0%	3.76		
Photography opportunities	66 27.4%	56 23.2%	109 45.2%	5 2.1%	5 2.1%	241 100.0%	3.72		
Beach / Creekside recreation area	79 32.4%	72 29.5%	54 22.1%	11 4.5%	28 11.5%	244 100.0%	3.67		
Community garden	69 28.9%	67 28.0%	72 30.1%	14 5.9%	17 7.1%	239 100.0%	3.66		
Amphitheater	65 27.0%	49 20.3%	87 36.1%	15 6.2%	25 10.4%	241 100.0%	3.47		
Exercise course	44 18.0%	72 29.4%	95 38.8%	18 7.3%	16 6.5%	245 100.0%	3.45		
Disc golf course	70 27.3%	38 14.8%	89 34.8%	20 7.8%	39 15.2%	256 100.0%	3.31		
Singletrack mountain bike trails	55 22.4%	47 19.1%	88 35.8%	14 5.7%	42 17.1%	246 100.0%	3.24		
Dog park (off leash)	61 25.1%	46 18.9%	65 26.7%	27 11.1%	44 18.1%	243 100.0%	3.22		
Archery range	46 19.1%	42 17.4%	100 41.5%	17 7.1%	36 14.9%	241 100.0%	3.19		
Geocaching	29 12.3%	36 15.3%	134 56.8%	17 7.2%	20 8.5%	236 100.0%	3.16		
Splash park (zero-depth)	43 17.6%	49 20.1%	86 35.2%	21 8.6%	45 18.4%	244 100.0%	3.10		
Bocce ball court	21 8.7%	41 17.0%	128 53.1%	21 8.7%	30 12.4%	241 100.0%	3.01		
Zip line (children's low level)	36 14.8%	46 18.9%	86 35.4%	22 9.1%	53 21.8%	243 100.0%	2.96		
Ice skating	26 10.6%	40 16.3%	112 45.7%	26 10.6%	41 16.7%	245 100.0%	2.93		
Baseball / Softball fields	19 8.1%	38 16.2%	114 48.5%	29 12.3%	35 14.9%	235 100.0%	2.90		
Pickleball / Paddleball courts	15 6.4%	36 15.3%	123 52.1%	23 9.7%	39 16.5%	236 100.0%	2.85		
Shuffleboard court	10 4.1%	32 13.3%	132 54.8%	27 11.2%	40 16.6%	241 100.0%	2.77		

[Continuing table]

Additional activities or programs	Completely Agree	Partially Agree	Neutral	Partially Disagree	Completely Disagree	Totals	Mean	Mean	
								1	5
Tennis courts	20 8.4%	22 9.2%	117 49.2%	27 11.3%	52 21.8%	238 100.0%	2.71		
In-line hockey facility	15 6.3%	20 8.4%	123 51.9%	27 11.4%	52 21.9%	237 100.0%	2.66		
Skateboard park	12 5.0%	39 16.3%	88 36.7%	28 11.7%	73 30.4%	240 100.0%	2.54		

Please list any other activities or facilities you would like to see provided at the Fountain Regional Park.

- Off leash dog park please! Pet owners need more run areas for their pups.
- do not over develop the park. It is a wildlife preserve and should be maintained as such. Open space without development is important to every community. Other parks can fill many of the recreational needs listed above.
- WiFi
- bathrooms and drinking fountains please
- Please just focus on making this a clean beautiful area. This place isn't broken, what exists just needs to be improved.
- I check Archery Range which is the reason I wanted to see survey. Would not need to be large 2 to 4 lanes should meet local need. It is a long way from this area to Bear Creek Park. Safe place needed in the valley for individuals (like me) and for youth groups (such as scout troops) to shoot.(last one of these Archery did not even get mentioned.
- Life ring station
- I'm totally for improvements that enhance, promote, and educate folks on birding and nature viewing and conservation.
- hunting
- none
- keep majority of park natural.
- More creekside venues.
- I want to that the park is kept neat and builds and ground taken care of. How come do we need to make our regional parks with lots of activities. She the intro verge want areas guitar and little or no improvements. Our taxes are included with improvements.
- Field grass and surface improvements
- A variety of nature and bird classes/nature education would be appreciated. An education facility or expansion to the nature center would facilitate this and encourage an appreciation for nature and natural surroundings.
- rock climbing opportunities
- Just a dog park
- How about a small arms range (hand guns only)?
- A facility to park bicycles, so you could maybe rent a space where to park bikes so they would be safe and protected and you wouldn't need to bring them each time you want to ride.
- This is sounding like the same push in Bear Creek park where development=improvement=good. How about things like safety and maintaining natural areas?
- This park should remain a nature park. It might make a difference in my answers if I knew where these things would be, but if they interfere with wildlife, athletic courts etc. should not be in the park other than Duckweed which is already there.

Park Primary Focus, Goals, and Objectives

What is one thing you would change about Fountain Creek Regional Park?

- 10.0% Need Disc Golf Course / Better Disc Golf
- 2.9% More trail signage
- 2.1% More parking
- 0.7% A sewage/bathroom smell at times in part of park
- 0.7% A bridge from the East side of 85 to a few of the park Trail Heads or parking areas so it is easy and safe to walk/bike to
- 0.7% a few more benches
- 0.7% A few more trees would be nice for shade.
- 0.7% A toddler playground is needed
- 0.7% Access in and out
- 0.7% Add a dog park
- 0.7% Add a water park/splash area
- 0.7% Add Disc Golf and Add a beach area
- 0.7% Add disc golf. Colo Sprgs metro is way behind other metro areas on disc golf expansion.
- 0.7% Add more funding for park operations and repair
- 0.7% Add more sitting benches around park area
- 0.7% add tennis courts
- 0.7% Adding a well-designed, family-friendly disc golf course
- 0.7% Addition of a disc golf course
- 0.7% Adults only small arms range -- hand guns only.
- 0.7% Amount of trash, debris, and dog poop
- 0.7% archery range
- 0.7% Better maintenance of the Regional bike/walking trail. Better education about the levy and canal system.
- 0.7% better weed control
- 0.7% closer and safe access to creekside
- 0.7% Continue as is
- 0.7% Continue to keep it clean- bathrooms. Expand
- 0.7% Cost of lanai rentals
- 0.7% create a water-based creekside play area
- 0.7% Dogs of leash large trail or rather a good hike with dogs
- 0.7% Drainage plan to reduce erosion issues
- 0.7% Enforce the rules. People ignore the signs. Dogs off leash could result in fighting and law suits.
- 0.7% Enhance interaction/connection to the Creek
- 0.7% Expand the trail system, access points
- 0.7% Find a way to keep the bridge from collapsing down near the Hanson entrance (area 7)
- 0.7% fully realize it is almost impossible.
- 0.7% Get rid of geese poop
- 0.7% goose control seriously nasty!
- 0.7% Having restroom facilities available year round at Willow Springs - even if it means bringing in Portables. Our weather is pleaseant through the year that having the restroom closed causes problems.
- 0.7% I don't know
- 0.7% I want to make sure human use doesn't push wildlife away from the park.
- 0.7% I would hire more professional staff to develop public programs, and to interpret the natural environment and history of Fountain Creek area.
- 0.7% I would like to see more active use areas and sports fields, such as baseball and softball fields.
- 0.7% I would love to see a disc golf course get installed. Perfect fit for the landscape.
- 0.7% Improve Infrastructure such as irrigation and parking lots and pavilions
- 0.7% improve maintenance and upkeep
- 0.7% Improve signs on trails
- 0.7% improve the surrounding regional trail to improve connectivity
- 0.7% improve trails
- 0.7% Improve Willow Springs
- 0.7% Increase funding for maintenance
- 0.7% increase natural habitats
- 0.7% Increase singletrack for mtb
- 0.7% Increase the paid staff in order to provide more educational opportunities for all ages not just children
- 0.7% Increases enforcement to mitigate off-leash dogs
- 0.7% Installation of single-track trails along the Regional trail would be cheap and easy
- 0.7% Intensive pond maintenance
- 0.7% irrigation system

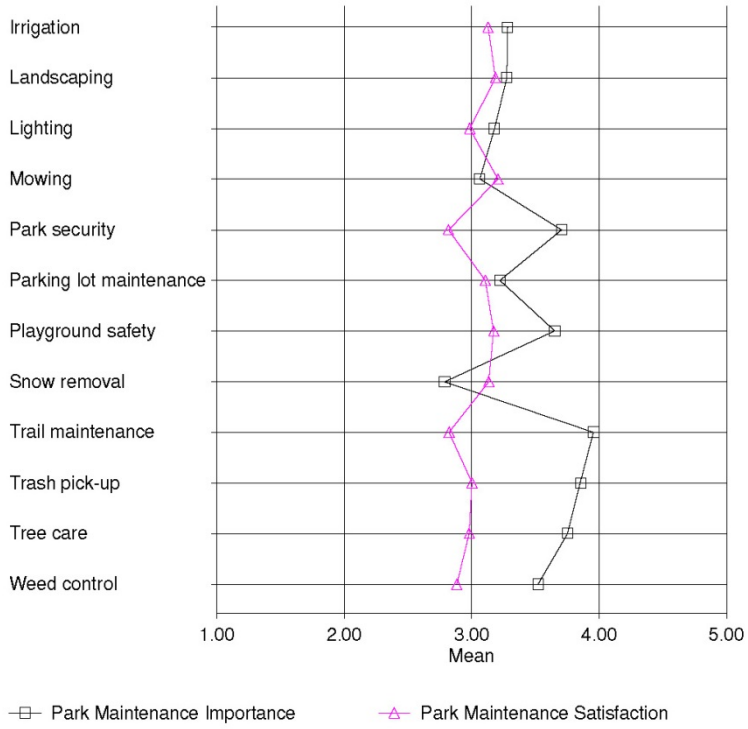
- 0.7% Just keep improving
- 0.7% Just wish it was closer to us...we live in Briargate. 🙂
- 0.7% limit as much as possible to leave-no-tract nature theme
- 0.7% Longer continuous paved bike trail
- 0.7% Longer Open Hours/Seasons for Visitor Center and Restrooms.
- 0.7% Maintenance!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 0.7% make sure it is for handicape pepole.
- 0.7% marked pathways
- 0.7% More attractive and family friendly appearance
- 0.7% More bathrooms
- 0.7% More hiking and walking trails
- 0.7% More information about woodducks
- 0.7% More input from the community
- 0.7% More open space and running trails
- 0.7% More opportunities for access to Fountain Creek
- 0.7% More opportunities for wildlife to exist
- 0.7% More options for enjoyment
- 0.7% More publicity about its existence
- 0.7% More recreational equipment.
- 0.7% More restrictions in the wildlife area, such as tips to talk quietly, not play music, etc
- 0.7% More restrooms.
- 0.7% More single-track trails
- 0.7% More teeth in the protection of what we already have. To many not following rules of the park.
- 0.7% more trail options
- 0.7% more!
- 0.7% Move trails to higher ground where possible and actually repair the trails damaged.
- 0.7% N/A
- 0.7% Nature Center expanding hours
- 0.7% Neaten up
- 0.7% Need more enforcement to keep dogs on leash.
- 0.7% Need more weed control to favor native plants, especially in meadows.
- 0.7% Needs better attractions. There needs to be a reason to go there.
- 0.7% No change, but the addition on the Nature Center is fantastic. What a rich resource this is for our community!
Programming is excellent.
- 0.7% Nothing
- 0.7% Nothing ! I only bring my class once a year and it is all wonderful.
- 0.7% nothing actually, it is a nice park
- 0.7% Parking lot at Nature Center
- 0.7% paved main trails
- 0.7% Paving of the regional trail
- 0.7% Performing Arts Venue
- 0.7% Picnic facilities near the education area
- 0.7% Plant more trees to help recover the ones killed by the chemical issues and drought.
- 0.7% Preservation of existing wildlife areas.
- 0.7% probably enforce the leash law
- 0.7% Provide more funding.
- 0.7% Put in an 18 hole disc golf course
- 0.7% Regulate Fort Carsons use of the park. Finding a parking spot is impossible on certain days or in the morning hours.
- 0.7% Remove the Siberian Elm from the front of gazebos and creek path to allow for better wildlife viewing and keeping
DOGS ON LEASH!
- 0.7% Restore all facilities at Willow Ponds
- 0.7% Signage EVERYWHERE to KEEP DOGS ON LEASH!! ENFORCED!! Or a NO Dog park.
- 0.7% Single track biking trails
- 0.7% Sometimes the sewer smell effects appetites
- 0.7% Surveillance camera at all parking lots
- 0.7% Take out trees that are not native and weeds
- 0.7% The cost to rent a pavilion is too high
- 0.7% The lack of cleanliness around the water. I wish people weren't able to leave their trash near the pond when they're
fishing. It just doesn't seem like the right place.
- 0.7% The ponds need to be better maintained.
- 0.7% The severe cutting back of the natural vegetation around the fishing ponds resulting in the destruction of the natural
habitat of the small animals
- 0.7% the smell of the ponds
- 0.7% The state of the creek and the erosion around it.
- 0.7% To beable take dogs on leash.
- 0.7% trash around the park
- 0.7% Update the Playgrounds with the possibility of having a play set for younger children as well as older kids
- 0.7% Upgrade trail system

0.7% Year round bathroom facilities!
 0.7% Year Round Restrooms

Select three issues that are most important to you for the Master Plan to address. (choose only three)				
	Counts	Percents	Percents	
			0	100
Maintenance of existing facilities	172	61.6%		
Preservation of open space for passive recreation	153	54.8%		
Preservation of the floodplain to minimize flood damages to parks and infrastructure	127	45.5%		
Improvement of existing facilities	102	36.6%		
New facilities to meet user needs	86	30.8%		
Enforcement of park rules and regulations	65	23.3%		
Safety	55	19.7%		
Communication and engagement with park users	31	11.1%		
Other	5	1.8%		
Totals	*	*		

* Note: Multiple answer percentage-count totals not meaningful.

Fountain Creek Regional Park Maintenance



Fountain Creek Park Maintenance Importance

Park Maintenance Importance	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4	Rated 5	Totals	Mean	Mean	
								1	5
Trail maintenance	2 0.8%	6 2.4%	81 32.0%	76 30.0%	88 34.8%	253 100.0%	3.96		
Trash pick-up	5 2.0%	7 2.7%	89 34.9%	73 28.6%	81 31.8%	255 100.0%	3.85		
Tree care	3 1.2%	14 5.5%	87 34.4%	87 34.4%	62 24.5%	253 100.0%	3.75		
Park security	4 1.6%	24 9.6%	89 35.5%	59 23.5%	75 29.9%	251 100.0%	3.71		
Playground safety	9 3.6%	20 8.0%	94 37.5%	54 21.5%	74 29.5%	251 100.0%	3.65		
Weed control	9 3.6%	27 10.8%	91 36.4%	70 28.0%	53 21.2%	250 100.0%	3.52		
Irrigation	18 7.4%	37 15.2%	92 37.9%	50 20.6%	46 18.9%	243 100.0%	3.28		
Landscaping	12 4.9%	36 14.6%	107 43.5%	54 22.0%	37 15.0%	246 100.0%	3.28		
Parking lot maintenance	5 2.0%	38 15.3%	124 50.0%	59 23.8%	22 8.9%	248 100.0%	3.22		
Lighting	16 6.4%	47 18.7%	95 37.8%	62 24.7%	31 12.4%	251 100.0%	3.18		
Mowing	15 6.0%	53 21.4%	107 43.1%	47 19.0%	26 10.5%	248 100.0%	3.06		
Snow removal	14 5.7%	84 34.0%	107 43.3%	24 9.7%	18 7.3%	247 100.0%	2.79		

Fountain Creek Regional Park Maintenance Satisfaction

Park Maintenance Satisfaction	Rated 1	Rated 2	Rated 3	Rated 4	Rated 5	Totals	Mean	Mean	
	1	2	3	4	5			1	5
Mowing	4 1.7%	12 5.2%	164 71.3%	32 13.9%	18 7.8%	230 100.0%	3.21		
Landscaping	4 1.7%	25 10.9%	145 63.0%	36 15.7%	20 8.7%	230 100.0%	3.19		
Playground safety	2 0.9%	26 11.3%	149 64.8%	36 15.7%	17 7.4%	230 100.0%	3.17		
Snow removal	5 2.2%	18 7.9%	160 70.5%	29 12.8%	15 6.6%	227 100.0%	3.14		
Irrigation	9 3.9%	18 7.8%	153 66.2%	36 15.6%	15 6.5%	231 100.0%	3.13		
Parking lot maintenance	5 2.2%	26 11.3%	156 67.5%	27 11.7%	17 7.4%	231 100.0%	3.11		
Trash pick-up	5 2.2%	44 19.0%	143 61.6%	25 10.8%	15 6.5%	232 100.0%	3.00		
Lighting	13 5.6%	36 15.6%	139 60.2%	27 11.7%	16 6.9%	231 100.0%	2.99		
Tree care	10 4.4%	37 16.3%	144 63.4%	19 8.4%	17 7.5%	227 100.0%	2.98		
Weed control	15 6.5%	49 21.1%	128 55.2%	28 12.1%	12 5.2%	232 100.0%	2.88		
Trail maintenance	17 7.3%	59 25.4%	117 50.4%	26 11.2%	13 5.6%	232 100.0%	2.82		
Park security	15 6.5%	59 25.4%	123 53.0%	23 9.9%	12 5.2%	232 100.0%	2.82		

Please list any other activities or facilities you would like to see provided at the Fountain Regional Park.

- Off leash dog park please! Pet owners need more run areas for their pups.
- do not over develop the park. It is a wildlife preserve and should be maintained as such. Open space without development is important to every community. Other parks can fill many of the recreational needs listed above.
- WiFi
- bathrooms and drinking fountains please
- Please just focus on making this a clean beautiful area. This place isn't broken, what exists just needs to be improved.
- I check Archery Range which is the reason I wanted to see survey. Would not need to be large 2 to 4 lanes should meet local need. It is a long way from this area to Bear Creek Park. Safe place needed in the valley for individuals (like me) and for youth groups (such as scout troops) to shoot. (last one of these Archery did not even get mentioned).
- Life ring station
- I'm totally for improvements that enhance, promote, and educate folks on birding and nature viewing and conservation.
- hunting
- none
- keep majority of park natural.
- More creekside venues.
- I want to that the park is kept neat and builds and ground taken care of. How come do we need to make our regional parks with lots of activities. She the intro verge want areas guitar and little or no improvements. Our taxes are included with improvements.
- Field grass and surface improvements
- A variety of nature and bird classes/nature education would be appreciated. An education facility or expansion to the nature center would facilitate this and encourage an appreciation for nature and natural surroundings.
- rock climbing opportunities

- Just a dog park
- How about a small arms range (hand guns only)?
- A facility to park bicycles, so you could maybe rent a space where to park bikes so they would be safe and protected and you wouldn't need to bring them each time you want to ride.
- This is sounding like the same push in Bear Creek park where development=improvement=good. How about things like safety and maintaining natural areas?
- This park should remain a nature park. It might make a difference in my answers if I knew where these things would be, but if they interfere with wildlife, athletic courts etc. should not be in the park other than Duckweed which is already there.

Please provide any additional comments regarding the current state or future of Fountain Creek Regional Park below.

- Great park, add a dog park
- We love the new addition and exhibits at the nature center. We also love the focus on protecting the creek and conserving water. This is so important!
- Please consider building secondary trail routes and access points (where possible) into the plan to alleviate extended trail closures. Thanks!
- Love the park!
- I think Fountain Creek Regional Park is such a great place in the context of the Front Range Trail, it would really make a big difference if we could keep the trail open north to Colorado Springs. I feel that new or expanded facilities should not be a priority when there are so many maintenance issues! (trails, invasive weeds, trash, etc.)
- Keep as much natural as feasible.
- El Paso County continues its failure to enforce ordinances against off-leash dogs. An unenforced ordinance is an invalid ordinance and leaves El Paso County and its Citizens liable for damages in lawsuits.
- Improve the access to electricity in the pavilions for playing and listening to music.
- Don't forget any new amenities create the need for more staff during a time the County is short on funds for personnel.
- I feel that the fishing ponds and Cruise Trail do not get their share of attention. Most of the maintenance is concentrated on the picnic area/park down the road. There are many completely dead large trees in the fishing ponds area that only receive attention when they fall over and block the trail. There was an abandoned small bike chained to a tree for MONTHS before it was removed. Just a few examples.
- I think disc golf would be a great addition to the park. Seems to be plenty of unused land to make opportunity for one of the fastest growing sports today.
- Please add disc golf. I creates a easy form of exercise for me and my boys. Thanks
- more disc golf facilities, ranges
- I am the owner of Throw Colorado. We are a disc golf company focusing on the expansion of disc golf in the state of Colorado. If you have any questions about disc golf or if you would like to go and play a round to see what so many people are asking for please fell free to call me at 405-420-1697. Thank you and have a wonderful holiday season.
- Fountain Creek Regional park is a gem, providing probably the best wildlife observation opportunities in the regional park system. It's a great place for walking or running, great for families, good place to watch birds.
- Don't fight Fountain creek. Waste of money. Realign the trails as the bank changes.
- Bear Creek seems to be the favored child, Fountain Creek deserves additional attention (adequate staffing for a start)
- We are looking forward to spending lots and lots more time at the park!
- Left general comments in another section, not knowing if there would be another opportunity. The Nature Center is a true gem!!
- There are many traditional parks in the El Paso County area. Fountain Creek is unique due to its streams and ponds. The major mission of this park should be to maintain/enhance the natural resources and provide educational and recreational opportunities around these natural attributes.
- none
- The best thing is the education provided by the nature center.
- Please remember lots of Colorado springs natives and introverts like the less amount of change to our regional parks. I would like to have the county have the ability to get more land to keep the land to be built on by reactors.
- I love FCNC and the people who work/volunteer there. Keep up the great work.
- Colorado Springs Astronomical Society does star parties at this location two times during the summer We'd like to have more engagement with the Nature Center to expand this activity to connect more people with the night sky and possible daytime, safe, solar observation activities.
- I know funds are scarce for the parks department. I feel this park is well used and we have used it several times over the years. It is a nice area.
- I come for many reasons, and will continue to volunteer at both parks.
- fountain creek regional park is a gem in the rough. i believe with the proper attention to key areas it can become one of the best in the county.
- Is open carry of hand guns allowed? If not, when will this change.
- It's a nice park your doing a good job. Great to see new opportunities may be available to park patrons.
- It's a beautiful area with lots of potential! :)
- I don't know where park is so I don't know anything about it. But I do know it is important to have parks. So thank you for your concerns on the park. I will try to visit it in the near future.
- I think it is a lovely park and am not all that familiar with all the issues you bring up in the survey.
- Please review the need for pond dredging around the Nature Center complex.

- Keeping the Park updated and in good condition is important.
- The nature center staff have added so much to my daughter's (and other children's) understanding and appreciation of nature and the environment.
- Enforce dog control
- Great job. Keep up the good work!
- The park should remain mostly a nature area. I don't know of a location in the park where other recreational facilities could be located that would not negatively impact wildlife, and there are already too few places of this size in the county where wildlife is (mostly) protected.
- Fountain Creek Regional Park is a wonderful asset. What a great place to see turtles and waterfowl!

~ Fountain Creek Regional Park ~

Master Plan – 2016

~ Summarized Results of Stakeholder Interviews ~

- **Organization’s Utilization of Fountain Creek Regional Park:**
 - Trail system for running, hiking, cycling
 - Volunteering for events like Creek Week
 - Birding and wildlife viewing
 - Fountain Creek Nature Center programs and activities

- **Fountain Creek Regional Park’s Best Asset?**
 - Floodplain, wetlands, and riparian environment
 - Fountain Creek Nature Center / Programs / Camps
 - Duckwood Active-Use Area
 - Wildlife and waterfowl
 - Trail system
 - Close location to communities of Fountain, Security, Widefield

- **Expansion or Improvement of Current Facilities:**
 - Expand/extend trail system
 - Floodplain and creek restoration/fortification
 - Additional Nature Center programs for teenagers
 - Wetlands expansion
 - Improved interpretive displays
 - Connect park visitors to Fountain Creek
 - Restrooms – more of them / open year around
 - Improved park entrances and signage on Highway 85
 - Expand the active use areas
 - Additional playgrounds and picnic areas

- **New Programs or Facilities:**
 - Performing art venue / amphitheater
 - Community garden
 - Outdoor exercise equipment
 - Solar garden / solar panels on buildings / solar energy displays
 - New trails / singletrack trails
 - “Tools” for visitors: binoculars, magnifying glass, nets
 - Off-leash dog park
 - Creekside recreation area
 - Picnic area near Fountain Creek Nature Center
 - Establish major trailhead for Front Range Trail

~ Fountain Creek Regional Park ~
Master Plan – 2016

First Public Meeting
January 27, 2016 – 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Fountain Creek Nature Center

~ Results of Public Input Exercise ~
Total Dot Counts with Online Survey Ranking in Parentheses

- **Single Favorite Activity**
 - Hiking / Walking – 10 (1)
 - Wildlife Viewing / Bird Watching – 7 (2)
 - Regional Trail – 3 (5)
 - Playgrounds – 2 (11)
 - Nature Center – 1 (3)
 - Cycling / Mountain Biking – 1 (4)
 - Educational Programs / Camps – 1 (6)
 - Dog Walking – 1 (7)
 - Fishing Ponds – 1 (8)

- **New Facilities or Programs**
 - Cultural Events – 20 (2)
 - Outdoor Interpretive / Interactive Displays – 14 (4)
 - Dog Park – 11 (12)
 - Community Garden – 10 (7)
 - Demonstration Garden – 8 (1)
 - Beach / Creekside Recreation Area – 8 (6)
 - Amphitheater – 8 (8)
 - Singletrack Mountain Bike Trails – 8 (11)
 - Natural Playground – 7 (3)
 - Archery Range – 6 (13)
 - Splash Park – 5 (15)
 - Geocaching – 4 (14)
 - Bocce Ball Court – 3 (16)
 - Disc Golf Course – 2 (10)
 - Pickleball / Paddleball Courts – 2 (20)
 - Shuffleboard Court – 2 (21)
 - Exercise Course – 1 (9)
 - Zip Line (Children’s) – 1 (17)
 - Tennis Courts – 1 (22)

- **Additional Comments**
 - Use of portable restrooms as alternative to expensive, permanent facilities.
 - Make flood recovery project information available to the public.
 - Better lighting and signage at entrances to the park.
 - Get existing parking lot lights working again.

- Post “Stay on the Trail” signage.
- **Master Plan Overall Goal Suggestions:**
 - Off-leash dogs and pet waste a problem, as they disturb wildlife. Address this issue through the enforcement of park rules, or contain the issue with the establishment of an off-leash dog park.
 - Increase dialog with other groups to promote connectivity between communities.
 - Establish a conservation easement over the park, such as at Bear Creek Park, as adjacent commercial and residential developments are eminent, and such developments encroach on the park and could pose a stormwater drainage hazard to park lands.
 - Coordinate stormwater management.
 - Acquire property to serve as a buffer zone to new development.
 - Rebuild the Hanson Trailhead Area to a higher, more sustainable standard.

~ Fountain Creek Regional Park ~
Master Plan – 2016

Second Public Meeting
April 28, 2016 – 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Fountain Creek Nature Center

~ Results from Public Comment Session ~

- In regards to improvements at Willow Springs Ponds:
 - Consider curb, gutter, and sidewalk installation.
 - Please, no dog park. Preserve wild areas for wildlife.
 - The dog park effectively disjoints the riparian corridor. We have so much development, and Fountain Creek’s riparian strip has ever-increasing value for wildlife. Let’s maintain it. No dog park!
 - Fountain Creek Regional Park is an “Important Bird Area.” This is a designation by the National Audubon Society. The area just south and southwest of the proposed dog park, near Mile Marker 18, is a very prolific area for migratory birds. Please leave this area alone.
 - The proposed dog park is in a very sensitive area where birds take refuge away from the (regional) trail. This location would disrupt the flow of migrants in the riparian corridor. Please consider another location.
 - The parks are for everybody. Public input put the dog park in the top 15, and dog owners make up a large portion of the taxpayers who support the entire park system. Socialized dogs are calmer, quieter, and better on leash. Dog parks provide that socialization.

- In regards to improvements at the Duckwood Active-Use Area:
 - Potential (community) garden partners: Salvation Army, Fountain Senior Center.
 - Fountain Creek Regional Park isn’t really the most interesting terrain for singletrack (trails). Would you rethink all of the development you’re planning? We have too few wild areas. Do you have maintenance money set aside for all of these projects?
 - Consider permeable paving if parking lots must be paved.
 - Allocate more funds toward natural area enhancement.
 - Disc golf? There is a course in Widefield (Community) Park, and one east of Fountain. Is this overkill?
 - Maintenance needs to keep up with development.

- In regards to the Hanson Trailhead Area:
 - Unauthorized digging east of the bridge is creating drainage problems.
 - Channelizing Fountain Creek and cutting out the meander reduces the natural value of the creek. The giant dike across the creek was blown out last year just after completion. Let’s, for once, stop trying to control nature.
 - Are guarantees in place for health issues, such as E.Coli, at the creekside recreation area?