IRON SPRINGS OPEN SPACE
MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Summit County Government
Open Space and Trails Department
March 31, 2005

Amended by: Michael Wurzel
Summit County Government
Open Space and Trails Department
December 31, 2018
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INTRODUCTION

This land management plan was created to identify allowed uses and management direction for the Iron Springs Open Space, hereinafter referred to as the “Property.” The Property was acquired by Summit County as open space primarily to protect the undeveloped buffer and view corridor along Highway 9 between the Town of Frisco and the developed areas around Farmer’s Korner. The intent of this document is to provide guidelines for sustainable enjoyment of the Property by residents and visitors of Summit County, while protecting the open space values for which the Property was acquired.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. General Location and Accessibility of the Property

The 33.96 acre Iron Springs Open Space is located in the Upper Blue River Basin of Summit County approximately two miles east of the Town of Frisco. The Property is bisected by Highway 9, overlooks the Dillon Reservoir, and is adjacent to the Summit High School campus (see Figure 1). Driving from Frisco, the Property is located on either side of State Highway 9 (SH 9). No parking is currently available on the Property, but the Property is accessible to the public via the Recpath and nearby trailheads, like the Hospital, Dickey Day Use, and the Blue River Inlet.

B. Property Ownership History and State Highway 9 Iron Springs Project

The Property was previously owned by the Denver Water Board as part of lands associated with the Dillon Reservoir complex. Since its inception, the Summit County Open Space and Trails Department (OST) has identified the Property as a priority to protect because the Denver Water Board had identified the Property for potential disposition as “surplus” lands which were not essential for operation of their water system. In January of 2003, OST purchased the Property from the Denver Water Board with the assistance of a $150,000 open space grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and $43,810 from the Town of Frisco. The property was subdivided from other Denver Water Board lands through a Subdivision Exemption Plat (Record #707706) prior to purchase.

In 2017, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) obtained required approvals and funding to widen SH 9 from 2 to 4 lanes and re-route a segment of it through the Property. Summit County and the Continental Divide Land Trust (CDLT) participated in the process that led to CDOT obtaining the required approvals for the SH 9 Iron Springs Project. Summit County and CDLT supported the SH 9 Iron Springs Project, subject to protection of their interests as communicated to CDOT in such processes. A portion of Summit County’s financial contribution to the SH 9 Iron Springs Project was Summit County’s conveyance to CDOT of a 8.22 acre area of the property in fee simple (see Figure 2) in exchange for an 11.63 acre area of the past SH 9 right of way no longer needed for highway purposes after completion of the SH 9 Iron Springs Project. That 11.63 acre parcel now contains the Recpath.
C. Deed of Conservation Easement and First Amendment

Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan
In June of 2003, Summit County entered into a third-party conservation easement granted to CDLT. This third-party conservation easement was a prerequisite to GOCO open space funding. The Deed of Conservation Easement was recorded June 23, 2003, at Reception No. 720889 of the Summit County Clerk & Recorder’s Office. The purpose of the Conservation Easement is “to assure that the Property will be retained forever predominantly in its scenic, open space, and natural condition and to prevent any use of the Property that will significantly impair or interfere with the Conservation Values of the Property.” The original Management Plan was drafted to meet the requirements set forth in Section 2 of the Conservation Easement. The purpose statement confines use of the Property, “to such activities, including without limitation, those involving natural resource protection; use, maintenance, and repair of Iron Springs Road/County Road 986 as a public right-of-way, historical interpretation and passive recreation …”

The conservation easement prohibits any activity on or use of the Property inconsistent with the purpose of the easement and lists the following activities as expressly prohibited except as outlined within in the conservation easement document:

a. Construction of Buildings and other Structures;
b. Fences;
c. Subdivision;
d. Commercial Timber Harvesting;
e. Mining;
f. Paving and Road and Trail Construction;
g. Trash and Waste;
h. Storage of Vehicles and Equipment;
i. Disturbance of Soil and Water;
j. Motorized Vehicles;
k. Commercial or Industrial Activity;
l. Signage or Billboards;
m. Commercial Feedlots;
n. Other Actions or uses in violation of Easement.

In February 2016, Summit County and CDLT amended the Conservation Easement to the Iron Springs Open Space to reflect changes in the Property due to the SH 9 Iron Springs Project. The First Amendment to the Conservation Easement was recorded February 23, 2016, at Reception No. 1145256 of the Summit County Clerk & Recorder’s Office. The First Amendment to the Conservation Easement requires amendments to the Baseline Report and the Management Plan for the Iron Springs Open Space. This amendment to the Management Plan was drafted to meet the requirements set forth in section 2 of the Conservation Easement.

D. Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Frisco
In return for the Town of Frisco’s contribution to the purchase of the Property, Summit County entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town on February 18, 2003, at reception No. 711593. This agreement limits the use of the Property, stating “the Property shall remain undeveloped for open space and recreational uses pursuant to the terms and conditions set forth in the Summit County Land Use and Development Code for property zoned OS, Open Space Zone District, as such terms and conditions exist on the date of the Agreement. The agreement does not convey any ownership or interest in the property, but sets forth remedies in the event that the County ceases to use part, or all, of the Property for open space or recreational purposes.

E. Management Plan Approvals and Amendments
The draft Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan was reviewed by the Summit County Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) on February 2, 2005. Amendments were made based upon public comments and OSAC recommendations and the document was forwarded to the Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) with a recommendation for approval. The Iron Springs Management Plan, dated April 18, 2005, was adopted by the BOCC on April 26, 2005. The purpose of the management plan is to provide guidelines for sustainable enjoyment of the Property by the people of Summit County, while protecting the open space values for which the Property was acquired. This Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan Amendment must be approved by the BOCC to meet the requirements set forth in section 2 of the Conservation Easement.
Figure 2: SH 9 Iron Springs Project Parcel Exchange

SECTION 31, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 77 WEST
6TH P.M., SUMMIT COUNTY, COLORADO

LOT 1

LOT 2

SH-9 PROPOSED

LOT 3

E 1/2, W 1/2

3-EX
506,616 SQ FT
TO COUNTY &
LAND TRUST

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF SUMMIT
RECEPTION 707920
TRACT A
IRON SPRINGS EXEMPTION PLAT

LOT 4

RW-3B
332,573 SQ FT
TO CDOT

RW-3A
25,435 SQ FT
TO CDOT

SUMMIT COUNTY / CONTINENTAL DIVIDE LAND TRUST EXHIBIT

SH9 IRON SPRINGS

ST. 09/1-042

Sheet Number 1

Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

A. Property Description and Location
The Iron Springs Open Space is legally described as Tract A in the Subdivision Exemption Plat of Iron Springs, at Reception No. 720889, and Tract 3-EX, at Reception No. 1145255, less and except Tracts RW-3A and RW-3B, at Reception No. 1132165, all of which are located in the west ½ of Section 31, T.5S., R.77W. of the 6th P.M., Summit County, Colorado. After the SH 9 Iron Springs Project land exchanges, the Iron Springs Open Space was enlarged from 30.55 acres to 33.96 acres in size, a 3.41 acre increase (see Figure 2). The Property borders Denver Water on the north and east and is bisected by State Highway 9 right of way; the Property borders Summit County High School on the south and the White River National Forest on the west. Figure 1 indicates the approximate boundaries for the Property. Boundaries of the Property include approximately 2982 feet adjacent to Denver Water on the north and east, approximately 2488 feet adjacent to SH 9 and SH 9 right of way, approximately 289 feet adjacent to Summit High School on the south, and approximately 2767 feet adjacent to US Forest Service on the west. Iron Springs now consists of two relatively long, narrow strips, bisected by SH 9. The elevation of the Property ranges from approximately 9040 to 9120 feet above sea level, according to USGS mapping.

B. Open Space Values
Staff has identified the Property as meeting six of the seven open space selection criteria in the Summit County Open Space Protection Plan:

1. Access - The property provides public trail access from the Summit County Recreational Pathway to National Forest Lands to the West via Iron Springs Road.
2. Buffer – The Property is part of an undeveloped buffer between the unincorporated Farmer’s Korner area to the south and the Town of Frisco to the west.
3. Cultural – The Property includes the Dillon Placer site, which has been identified as eligible for the National Historic Register.
4. Extensions – The Property is an extension of National Forest Lands to the West and Dillon Reservoir operational lands, which will remain as undeveloped open space, on its east side.
5. Recreation – The property includes a segment of the Frisco/Breckenridge paved recreational pathway that receives substantial passive recreational use by the public.
6. View Corridors – The Property is very visible to travelers along State Highway 9 and includes approximately 0.5 miles of highway frontage.

C. Environmental Hazards
To the knowledge of the Summit County Open Space and Trails Department, Environmental Assessments completed on the Property are limited to site assessments by staff and a transaction screen completed by Kenrick Pocius, County Engineer, on November 28, 2001. These assessments identified no Environmental or Health / Safety concerns on the Property. Portions of the property were historically mined as part of the Dillon Placer, but site visits have identified no substantial environmental concerns.

D. Health and Safety Concerns
No substantial public safety concerns have been identified in site visits to the property.

E. Buildings and Structures
No buildings or permanent structures are located on the Property.

F. Roads

Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan
Approximately 1250 feet of the SH 9 and its right of way, tract RW-3B, bisects the Property, which forms a boundary of a total of approximately 2500 feet on both sides of SH 9 adjacent to the Property. Approximately 250 feet of SH9 and its right of way, tract RW-3A, are adjacent to the southeast boundary of the Property, for a total of approximately 2750 feet of SH 9 right of way adjacent to the Property.

G. Trails
The Summit County Recreational Pathway (Recpath) was moved from its original location that transected the property in a generally east-west direction to the former SH 9 right of way, tract 3-EX, which was deeded to the county in the SH 9 Iron Springs Project Parcel Exchange (see Figure 2), which is in a generally north-south direction. The former Recpath alignment was demolished, its grade removed, and then revegetated. The new Recpath alignment on tract 3-EX is approximately 2420 feet in length and affords beautiful views of the Dillon Reservoir. On the southern tract of the Property after crossing a tunnel on the SH 9 right of way, there is another approximately 850 feet of Recpath that runs adjacent to the wet meadows near Summit High School, for a total of approximately 3270 feet of Recpath on the Property.

Staff has identified a series of old skid trails running north-south through the Property that had been used for timber management but had generally revegetated. These skid trails have provided access for mountain pine beetle management activities under County ownership.

H. Ditches and Water Rights
There are several ditches that cross the property that were likely a part of Dillon Placer mining operations in the early 1900’s, according to the Colorado Cultural Resource Survey. This survey indicates these ditches fed water to mining operations from the Blue River via the Blue Danube Ditch, but have since generally grown in with vegetation. There are no active ditches or diversions present on the property and no water rights are associated with the Property.

I. Parking and Access
The Recpath provides the primary public access to the Property. Although there are no trailheads on the Property, there are several nearby including the Hospital, Dickey Day Use, and the Blue River Inlet.

J. Signage
Signage on the Property is currently limited to signs along the Recpath. There are standard traffic control signage, directional signage, and carsonite mile marker sign posts. In addition, there is a sign identifying the property and recognizing GOCO support for purchase of the property. Also, there is an interpretive panel installed by CDOT interpreting the Dillon Placer. The 2005 Dillon Placer Mining Claim Site Summary and Interpretation suggest interpretive signage is appropriate in this area. Signage prohibiting motorized and snowmobile use of the Recpath is located adjacent to the Property and adjacent properties. No other signage is currently present to identify the Property or state allowed or prohibited uses.

K. Zoning
The Property is zoned OS, or Open Space Zone District (OS). This is a strict zoning that does not allow for future development of the Property.

L. Easements and Encroachments
The following easements were identified during the purchase of the Property:
1. Public Service Company of Colorado, 1962: 100 foot wide easement for electric utilities. Overhead lines are present in the area of this easement.
2. Public Service Company of Colorado, 1993: easement to install underground utilities within the 100 foot wide easement granted in 1962. Markers for the underground gas line are present.
3. United Church of Christ, 2001: 50 foot right-of-way to utilize Iron Springs Road (Reception #652197). Given the location of the right-of-way, the terms of the agreement, and its lack of use by the church, this interest may be terminated.

The above mentioned Conservation Easement also limits uses of the Property. No other easements or encroachments have been identified on the Property.

M. Fences
Fences on the property are in various states of repair, especially in areas where public access is unlikely or extremely steep hillsides are present. The fencing on the property is primarily multi-strand barbed wire on wood or metal posts. The following provides a general description of fencing on the Property as of the time this Baseline Report:

- Fencing between the Property and USFS lands is continuous north of SH 9 and is generally in good repair. South of SH 9, fencing between the Property and USFS lands is discontinuous. Sections of this fence near the southwest property corner were repaired in 2003 to discourage motorized access onto the National Forest up the steep hillside near the southwest corner of the Property.
- Several other remnant sections of drift fences are present on the property.
- Fencing is not present between the Property and the Summit High School campus to the south.

N. Unauthorized Public Use
Existing unauthorized public use of the Property by snowmobiles, ATV’s, and four-wheel drive vehicles has been an ongoing concern. The Conservation Easement specifically restricts public motorized use on the Property to authorized, established routes. Snowmobiles riding on the Recpath diverge onto the wet meadow and sage portions of the Property near Highway 9. Snowmobiles, ATV’s, motorcycles and other motorized vehicles have also created an unsustainable route that leaves the Recpath near the southwest corner of the Property and proceeds up the hillside onto the National Forest. Forest Service personnel have requested Summit County’s assistance in precluding this use. Open Space Staff installed a double fence with signage prohibiting motorized use of this trail and have been monitoring this restriction since it was installed.

Summer motorized users have also left tracks in the wet meadow, but the overall impact has yet to do significant resource damage. This unauthorized summer motorized use is of particular concern for both resource protection and weed control. Signage prohibiting motorized use of the bike path is present and additional signage, fencing, and/or other actions are may be necessary to limit unauthorized public uses of the Property.
NATURAL, ECOLOGICAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. Vegetation
Four primary vegetation communities have been identified on the Iron Springs Open Space:

1. Lodgepole Pine: Lodgepole pine stands dominate the northern portions of the Property. These stands have been identified as relatively even aged with sparse understory. A substantial portion of the stand is composed of small diameter trees due to crowding. Indications of some remnant aspen clones were identified within the stand. A larger area (less than 2 acres) dominated by aspen is also present between the Dillon Placer site and the Recpath. The primary concerns identified within the lodgepole stand are infestations of mountain pine beetle and dwarf mistletoe. Management for mountain pine beetle is discussed below. Dwarf mistletoe is prevalent throughout much of the stand and could limit the potential to recoup costs of forest management activities.

2. Mountain Big Sagebrush/Grass/Forb Meadows: Approximately seven acres of the property are dominated by upland grasses and forbs interspersed with mountain big sagebrush and individual or small groups of lodgepole pines. Old cross fences on the property indicate this area was once grazed, but these meadows have not been grazed by cattle in over fifteen years. These meadows, along with those on adjacent USFS lands, have been identified by the Division of Parks and Wildlife as severe winter elk range and evidence of large animal grazing has been observed in site visits.

3. Wet Meadow: This site was identified on two inventories of wetlands in Summit County. In 1996, Whitehorse and Associates identified approximately 5.6 acres of wet meadow, a portion of which extended onto the adjacent High School property. The Summit County Wetland Functional Assessment, completed by SAIC in April 2000 reclassified this wetland as a low-gradient slope wetland with organic or mineral soils. Both of these inventories were completed based upon interpretation of aerial photography. The CDOT information (Exhibit A) provides additional information regarding the wet meadow and mitigation measures associated with the SH 9 Iron Springs Project.

4. Disturbed sites/Placer gravels: The approximately five-acre Dillon Placer site is dominated by gravel with very sparse vegetation and virtually no surface soils. This disturbed area is primarily surrounded by relatively thick lodgepole pine and aspen. Individual lodgepole pines and dispersed grasses have colonized small areas within the mined site. Several relatively steep human-induced cuts are present within the Dillon Placer. A portion of the Highway 9 road cut south of the Dillon Placer also appears to be within the Property. Disturbed sites on the property also include the shoulders of the Recpath and Iron Springs Road. Areas disturbed by SH 9 and Recpath construction have been revegetated after the construction process to preserve the scenic beauty of the open space.

B. Noxious Weeds
Noxious weed infestations were identified as a primary concern at the time of acquisition of the Property, and they still are a considerable concern, although the situation has improved dramatically. The Summit County Weed Control Department undertook weed treatments on the Property while it was owned by Denver Water, along with efforts on other properties within the Dillon Reservoir Recreation Area. Annually, the Property is scouted and treated via ATV. Canada Thistle is strongly infested throughout the wet meadow. Infestations of yellow toadflax are scattered on the Property. Leafy spurge is scattered in small infestations on the Property.

In 2003, the Weed Control Department used enough herbicide to treat 12 acres of the Property. In 2018, the Weed Control Department used enough herbicide to treat only 1 acre. While noxious weeds have largely been contained through regular treatments, but there are new concerns with the SH 9 Iron Springs Project bisecting to the Property and recent USFS forest treatments adjacent to the Property.
C. Wetlands
Wetland vegetation and soils are present within portions of the wet meadow that lies between the Recpath, Highway 9, and the Summit High School property. Surface flows to the wet meadow are generally limited to intermittent flows along a channel leading from a storm detention pond on the High School property and flows from the Iron Springs drainage, because the meadow is surrounded by Recpath segments and SH 9. The CDOT information, excerpted from CDOT/Sugnet Associates Wetland Finding Data State Highway 9 – Frisco to Breckenridge (Exhibit A) indicates that a portion of the wetlands in the wet meadow were identified as fens and the remainder were classified as “emergent” in this assessment. However, subsequent wetland evaluations by CDOT indicated limited areas of the wetland contain fen characteristics.

A very narrow band of riparian wetlands may also be present along the Iron Springs drainage west of the Recpath. Although portions of the meadows north of the Iron Springs have been saturated at the time of site visits, staff considers it unlikely that the required combination of wetland vegetation, soils, and hydrology necessary to legally define a wetland exist elsewhere on the Property, but no formal delineation of wetland resources has been done outside the wet meadow portion of the Property.

The SH 9 Iron Springs Project resulted in a taking of 0.547 acres of wetlands, which were conveyed to CDOT via parcel RW-3A. Mitigation was coordinated with Summit County and the USFS. The suitable mitigation site meeting Section 404 permit requirements is identified in Exhibit A.

D. Wildlife
Wildlife habitat is not identified as a conservation value in the Deed of Conservation Easement. However, the SH 9 Iron Springs Project provides underpasses suitable for small to medium-sized wildlife, but not deer or elk, and dedicated CDOT funding for wildlife crossing studies and projects along state and federal highways in Summit County. For further information, see the USFS’s Summit County Safe Passages: A County-wide Connectivity Plan for Wildlife.

The Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) provided wildlife information identifying habitat, species, and wildlife concerns on the Property (Exhibit B). According to the CPW District Wildlife Manager, the meadows provide elk winter range and mule deer summer range. The Wildlife Manager also requests that pets be controlled, winter motorized activity be limited, and the fences on the Property be managed to enhance wildlife habitat rather than threaten or injure animals.

E. Cultural Resources
The Property includes portions of the Dillon Placer (5ST883) according to the Intensive Cultural Resources Inventory for the Realignment of State Highway 9, dated 2013, and the Dillon Placer Mining Claim Site Summary and Interpretation, dated 2005 (Exhibit C). The placer workings, prospect pit, supply ditch, drainage ditches and water feed ditches located on the Dillon Placer Mining Claim were left after the site was heavily hydrauliced and sluiced between the years of 1900 and 1905. A portion of the placer claim was submerged under the waters of Dillon Reservoir in the 1960s. The 2013 inventory states that the site is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, but fails to meet several key criterion because there is a paucity of artifacts and buried deposits associated with mining operations and major mining features, like its ditches and flumes, have been highly compromised.

An interpretive panel, adjacent to the Recpath installed by CDOT during the SH9 Iron Springs Project, provides an opportunity for the public to learn more about this significant historic site.

VISION FOR THE PROPERTY

The Property was purchased by Summit County as open space, to protect the undeveloped buffer and views
along Highway 9 between Frisco and Farmer’s Korner, provide an extension of National Forest Lands, and provide for trail-based recreational use. The conservation easement was also created to protect the conservation values of the Property. As such, uses of the Property shall be balanced to provide limited trail-based recreation while protecting the conservation values to the greatest degree possible. The following management guidelines are designed to both be consistent with and promote the intent of the conservation easement. Should a discrepancy between these two documents arise, the conservation easement shall take precedence.

**NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**A. Protection of Sensitive Areas**
All management actions and public uses of the Property shall avoid negative impacts to sensitive areas on the Property to the greatest degree practicable, including, but not limited to the wet meadow, wildlife habitat, and historical features. The Summit County Wetland Functional Assessment identified a list of management recommendations to protect wetland resources including wetland buffers zones, Best Management Practices, monitoring of wetland health with adaptive management, and education. Summit County will monitor the wetlands on the Property and take efforts to minimize impacts to the wet meadow from public usage, and place closures (seasonal or year-round) on sensitive areas if needed to protect wildlife, unique vegetation or cultural resources. A more thorough wetland survey will be completed in the event that any project is considered that could degrade wetland resources on the Property. In addition, active management will be undertaken as necessary to enforce travel restrictions set forth below and preclude other uses inconsistent with the protection of the scenic and wildlife habitat values of the forests and meadows. Motorized administrative access to the Property will be minimized to the greatest extent possible in order to avoid impacts to existing vegetation.

**B. Range Management**
Measures shall be taken as necessary to minimize public impacts to native vegetation on the Property including trampling of vegetation, compaction of soil and soil erosion. No grazing or agricultural uses will occur on the Property except as deemed appropriate for weed control or vegetation management.

**C. Forest Stewardship/Timber Management**
The County will continue to consult with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to protect and enhance forest health on the Property. The primary goal of forest stewardship and timber management on the Property is to enhance forest health, including age and species diversity, over the next ten to twenty years. The secondary goal is to mitigate the visual impacts of tree mortality from past and future mountain pine beetle infestation, or other tree diseases and insect infestations. Forest stewardship and timber management activities must protect public safety, reduce disease or insect infestations, and improve the diversity, health, and vigor of the forest, in accordance with the conservation easement.

Mountain pine beetle infestation was identified as a concern by county staff prior to the acquisition of the Property. Since then, staff consulted with the CSFS on a regular basis regarding the best way to address this infestation. In fall 2002, CSFS personnel field identified 212 infested trees and recommended direct control through the removal of infested trees. The OSAC and CDLT concurred that immediate removal of infested trees was prudent. In fall 2003, 38 trees were identified and treatment through removal of infested trees was repeated. Field surveys in fall 2004 indicated a substantial increase in pine beetle activity on the Property with almost 1,100 infested trees identified.

Following the fall 2004 beetle survey where the CSFS identified almost 1,100 infested trees were identified, county and CSFS staff concurred that the removal of infested trees was insufficient, given the extent of infestation both on the Property and on the adjacent National Forest lands. CSFS staff recommended that the county address forest stewardship on the Property with the assumption that substantial changes will occur in
the near future due to tree mortality. CSFS staff recommended timber management decisions be based upon on desired future conditions. Specifically, CSFS recommended that regeneration cuts, i.e. clearcuts, be created on up to approximately one-quarter of the total forested area on the Property. According to the CSFS, any additional timber management following this initial regeneration cut should be scheduled to maximize the age diversity of the forest.

Proposed timber management on the Property within the period of this management plan include:
1. Regeneration cuts: these cuts will center on areas of high pine beetle infestation and locations where aspen clones have been observed, in order to promote vegetation diversity through aspen regeneration;
2. Removal of dead trees in highly visible areas adjacent to the Recpath and Highway 9; and
3. Post-Harvest Thinning: over stocked stands may self-thin, but have an equal chance of becoming stagnant, which are overall less healthy and more susceptible to insects and disease (see Exhibit C).

Following the regeneration cuts, the effectiveness of forest treatments will be monitored on an ongoing basis and findings will be used to shape future management direction. The desirability of repeating a similar action on another portion of the Property in order to increase the age diversity of the forest on the property will be evaluated based upon the monitoring data.

D. Noxious Weed Management
Noxious weed management is essential to protect the resource values of the Property and surrounding areas. An integrated weed management program will utilize Best Management Practices to control noxious weeds while minimizing impacts to native vegetation, wetlands, and water resources. A backpack sprayer or off-highway-vehicle (OHV) will be employed where practical to minimize disturbances while applying herbicide. Sources of disturbances will be kept to a minimum and low impact practices while recreating will be encouraged wherever possible. Limiting motorized and mechanized uses to existing trails while avoiding new roads and trails will curtail the spread of invasive plants through recreation and vehicle traffic.

In October, 2018, the Weed Control Program Coordinator provided the following statement of potential problems and treatments for the Property:

“The greatest concern right now is the rejuvenation cuts from adjacent USFS lands that have a large number of thistles and other noxious weeds in them. These cuts border a large section of the Property, so the spread of noxious weeds onto Iron Springs is possible. The other concern is the SH 9 realignment. It created large disturbed areas and anytime that happens, weeds will become persistent. While the total volume of weeds on the Property is at an all-time low, staff still must remain vigilant for new infestations.”

The presence of leafy spurge on the Property is a key issue for the Weed Control Program as this species is a state designated noxious weed, is extremely difficult to control after it is established, and staff have identified a limited number of occurrences in Summit County. Public use of the southern portion of the Property is of particular concern to the Weed Control Program as any tread can provide a potent source of seed spread for this species, and the potential for control of this weed in Summit County may be lost if seeds germinate in the adjacent National Forest.

Weed control efforts, in general, are centered on the area around the wet meadow. Surveys of the remainder of the Property have identified fewer weed issues. However, identification, treatment, and monitoring of weed occurrences elsewhere on the Property has been placed on the annual work program. Although the Summit County Weed Control Coordinator has indicated positive results from their efforts, the Summit County Weed Control Department continues to work closely with USFS and CDOT to monitor and manage
weed populations as they occur. Weed control treatments are anticipated to continue on the Property indefinitely, into the future.

E. Cultural Resource Preservation and Interpretation
The Dillon Placer Mining Claim Site Summary and Interpretation, dated 2005 (Exhibit D) identifies four recommended management options for the Dillon Placer site: (1) preserve the site, (2) inventory the encompassing area to identify additional historical features associated with the mining operation (3) conduct archival research, and (4) construct an interpretive trail through the site. The current management direction will be to emphasize the first recommendation, the preservation of the site, and an aspect of the fourth recommendation, interpretation of the site. Rather than build an interpretive trail, which raises concerns about potential degradation of the historic site, CDOT, CDLT, and OST agreed to an interpretive sign adjacent to the site on a pull-off from the Recpath (see Figure 3). The Dillon Placer site is located on steep, rocky, denuded slopes, which could make trail construction prohibitively expensive and impactful on natural and cultural resources. The 9 SH Iron Springs Project offered an interpretive opportunity to view the site from a pull-off along the new Recpath alignment. No additional interpretive features are currently planned. However, any future interpretive features will be initiated by OST staff, and the Summit Historical Society and CDLT will be consulted in the evaluation and design of those proposed features.

Figure 3: Dillon Placer Interpretive Sign
PUBLIC USE and TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

All public uses shall conform to the Rules and Regulations for Open Space Properties, approved by the Summit County Board of County Commissioners as Resolution #2001-36 and the above mentioned conservation easement. All travel management on the Recpath shall conform to the Summit County Recreational Pathways Regulations of 2004, approved by the Summit County Board of County Commissioners as Resolution #2004-42. The following passive recreational uses shall be allowed only in a manner designed to minimize impacts to the resource values on the Property: hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing, and picnicking. Other passive recreation uses may also be allowed only if they do not negatively impact natural resources of the Property. These passive recreational uses shall remain closed areas to sensitive areas where natural and cultural resource impacts are a great concern.

A. Motorized Vehicles, ATVs, and Snowmobiles
The conservation easement associated with the Property states, “Use of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, or other motorized vehicles off of designated roads or trails, except for necessary property-maintenance purposes performed by Grantor and its contractors, is prohibited.”

Public use or parking of motorized vehicles including, but not limited to, ATV’s, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles shall not be permitted on the Property, except within the right-of-way associated with the Iron Springs Road. This shall not preclude the use of motorized vehicles to undertake actions associated with management or maintenance of the Property, Recpath, or easements associated with the Property.

The US Forest Service and Summit County Government cooperated to install a gate on the Property to exclude full-sized motor vehicle use of Iron Springs Road, as full-sized vehicle use is prohibited on the National Forest lands adjacent to the Property. In order to promote public safety along Highway 9, protect against degradation of the Property, and provide compatible management with the adjacent public lands, only motorized vehicles with a width less than 48”, snowmobiles, and non-motorized vehicles are allowed on Iron Springs Road. No action will be taken to abandon the public right-of-way associated with Iron Springs Road.

Snowmobile use of the Recpath across the Property from Farmer’s Korner to Iron Springs road may be allowed in the future if the following conditions are met: 1) winter access issues across adjacent properties are resolved to provide for legal access to and from the Property, and 2) a route through the Property can be established and maintained which does not negatively impact the resource values of the Property.

B. Mechanized Vehicles
In order to protect the native vegetation and reduce the potential for spread of noxious weeds, the use of mechanized vehicles, including mountain bikes, on the Property shall be restricted to the Recpath and Iron Springs Road. No other sustainable trail routes have been identified and off-trail use of mechanized vehicles is inconsistent with protection of sensitive areas and meadows on the Property. “Social trails” on the Property generally cross sensitive areas and/or meadows and are not sustainable for mechanized uses.

C. Horses, Livestock, and Pack Animals
In order to protect the sensitive areas and reduce the potential for spread of noxious weeds, horses, livestock, and pack animals on the Property shall be restricted to Iron Springs Road. No other sustainable trail routes have been identified on the Property.

D. Parking
No public parking exists on the Property and no additional parking facilities are proposed because there is sufficient access from adjacent trailheads. Motor vehicle access is available on the US National Forest lands west of the Property, and parking is available from nearby trailheads in Frisco. Additional parking is
available north and east of the property at the Blue River inlet on Denver Water property and from Swan Mountain Road on county property. The Recpath provides non-motorized access to the Property. Staff has researched the potential for parking at this location and has been advised that vehicles turning at Iron Springs Road from Highway 9 represent a significant safety concern. This was a primary rational for the Forest Service decision to discontinue developed uses at the Church Camp complex west of the Property, and request the closure of Iron Springs Road to full-sized vehicles. The SH 9 Iron Springs project has further constrained vehicle access at this location. Consequently, there is not a feasible and/or safe place to develop a trailhead parking facility on the Property.

**MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

The Property will be managed by the Summit County Open Space and Trails Department in cooperation with the Summit County Sheriff’s Department and other County Departments in accordance with this management plan, the conservation easement, and other relevant documents. The Office of the Summit County Sheriff has the authority to enforce any and all laws on the Property, including, but not limited to, the Rules and Regulations for Open Space Properties and the Recpath.

**A. Ongoing Management Provisions**

The Vision Statement and individual sections of this Management Plan designate that the Property will generally be managed to maintain existing conditions and avoid activities that require intensive management. This will minimize the ongoing management costs on the Property. OST also plans to utilize volunteer efforts to minimize costs to the greatest extent practical. Since county acquisition of the Property, community members have volunteered to assist in management of the Property. OST staff plan to continue to develop partnerships with homeowners and other interested groups to efficiently manage the Property.

Management actions contemplated by this plan that may require county resources include:

1. Implementation and monitoring of actions to improve the diversity, health, and vigor of the forest;
2. Ongoing removal of litter and other debris on the Property as required;
3. Ongoing evaluation of fences on the Property to insure that they meet management goals while minimizing potential safety hazards to people and wildlife;
4. Installation of property corner and property identification markers;
5. Actions required to maintain the Recpath and Iron Springs Road, including grooming the Recpath during the winter;
6. Ongoing monitoring of the Property;
7. Monitoring and treatment of noxious weed infestations; and
8. Installation of additional regulatory signage to educate the public, reduce resource impacts, and/or allow for enforcement of regulations, if deemed necessary.

The Open Space and Trails Department will also undertake other management activities to protect county ownership interests, or protect the natural resource or conservation values of the Property, as deemed necessary. No additional facilities or permanent improvements are proposed for the Property as part of this management plan.

Improvements completed or may be undertaken in the future:

1. Additional fencing or other barriers deemed necessary to protect resources;
2. Creation of sustainable trails in the event public use of social trails threatens sensitive areas; and
3. Additional interpretive signage at the Dillon Placer.

Improvements not deemed appropriate for the Property include:
1. New buildings or structures;
2. New access roads or parking areas;
3. Restroom facilities;
4. Developed picnic facilities including benches, tables, shelters, or viewing stands; and
5. Other improvements not consistent with Open Space Zone District, the Conservation Easement, or First Amendment.

B. Monitoring
The Summit County Open Space and Trails Department will monitor the Property throughout the life of this plan to ensure that the conservation values of the Property are being protected. Adaptive management through the use of monitoring is critical to exemplary management of the Property. Goals of this monitoring include:
1. Insuring that public uses are consistent with the goals of this management plan;
2. Insuring that management actions are consistent with the goals of this plan;
3. Evaluating whether the provisions of this management plan adequately protect the resources identified in this plan; and
4. Evaluating the necessity for modifications or amendments to this plan.

MANAGEMENT PLAN APPROVAL and AMENDMENT PROCESS

The purpose of the management plan is to provide guidelines for sustainable enjoyment of the Property by the citizens and visitors of Summit County, while protecting the open space values for which the Property was acquired. The Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan has been reviewed and approved by the Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) as Resolution #2005-____. The Summit County Open Space Advisory Council (OSAC) made a recommendation to the BOCC to adopt a draft of this management plan with minor changes at its meeting on February 2, 2005. This meeting was noticed through a press release, two newspaper display adds, a radio interview, and public posting of the OSAC agenda, as well as letters to all property owners within 500 feet and several other individuals or organizations that have expressed an interest in the Property. Amendments were made based upon public comments and OSAC recommendations and the document was forwarded to the Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) with a recommendation for approval. The Iron Springs Management Plan dated April 18, 2005 was adopted by the BOCC on April 26, 2005. This management plan was also reviewed by CDLT, the holder of the conservation easement.

The adopted Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan will be reviewed every five years in accordance with the conservation easement, or sooner if deemed necessary. The OSAC will evaluate proposed amendments and make recommendations for review by the BOCC. An Iron Springs Open Space Management Plan Amendment will be drafted and approved by the BOCC to meet the requirements set forth in section 2 of the Conservation Easement. Amendments to the management plan shall continue to preserve or strengthen the open space and conservation values of the Property.
IRON SPRINGS OPEN SPACE
MANAGEMENT PLAN

EXHIBIT A

DEED OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT AND
FIRST AMENDMENT TO CONSERVATION EASEMENT
IRON SPRINGS OPEN SPACE
MANAGEMENT PLAN

EXHIBIT B

WETLANDS
INFORMATION
IRON SPRINGS OPEN SPACE
MANAGEMENT PLAN

EXHIBIT C

WILDLIFE HABITAT AND
TIMBER MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
IRON SPRINGS OPEN SPACE
BASELINE DOCUMENTATION REPORT

EXHIBIT D

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORIES