



*Cortina Trail – completed 2019  
Photo: Tripp Fay*

2019

# STATE OF THE OPEN SPACE REPORT

# Open Space and Trails Program At a Glance

- ✓ **17,489+ acres** protected; 8,819 ac in fee ownership
- ✓ ~ **\$1,250,000/year** allocated to land acquisition
- ✓ **\$35,234,240** spent to date on acquisitions
- ✓ **2019** – Property tax funding approved by **78%** of Summit County voters

Lands protect recreational access, backcountry character, scenery, historic and natural resources, prime wildlife habitat, agricultural heritage, buffers between communities, and extensions of public lands

Since 1995, the Open Space and Trails Program has made **347 property acquisitions** and worked with over **200 landowners** to preserve their properties as a legacy for future generations.



Winter grooming on the Iron Springs section of the Recreational Pathway near Frisco

**Mission Statement:** To identify, protect and manage open spaces, trails and trailheads to preserve and maintain Summit County's rural mountain character, unique natural areas and high quality of life for residents and visitors.

# 2019 Open Space Program Highlights

## 2019...by the numbers:

- ✓ **15** property acquisitions, and **3** trail easements totaling **156** protected acres at a cost of **\$636,036**
- ✓ **\$420,000** in new grant awards
- ✓ **1,315** volunteer hours; estimated value **\$32,875**
- ✓ Over **15,840 lineal feet** of new and rerouted **natural surface trail**
- ✓ Over **1,000 lineal feet** of new **Recpath sidepaths**
- ✓ **6,760 pounds** of trash removed from backcountry cabins
- ✓ Issued **23** Summit County Special Event Permits, **11** Dillon Reservoir Special Event Permits, and **24** Dillon Reservoir Special Use Permits

- **Mill Levy Open Space Funding**– Voters overwhelmingly supported continuing mill levy funding for open space preservation, trail construction/maintenance, natural resource protection & other public programs with no future sunset.
- **Cortina Trail**– Constructed 1.44-mile trail connecting town neighborhoods to a vast network of National Forest system trails and lands.
- **Swan River Restoration**– Following construction completion and site revegetation, Reach A of the restored Swan River officially opened to the public.
- **Tenmile Canyon Recpath Cleanup**– Major snow and debris removal following 23 avalanches crossing the Recpath.
- **Hazardous Fuels Reduction**– Hazardous fuels removal on over 32 acres on Mesa Cortina/Wilderness Open Space.
- **Swan Mountain Recpath** – Installed over 1,000 lineal feet of new sidepaths in two locations along Swan Mountain Road where the Recpath shares the roadway.

# 2019 Open Space and Trails Budget

Total expenditures from the Open Space Fund were **\$2,015,107** in 2019.

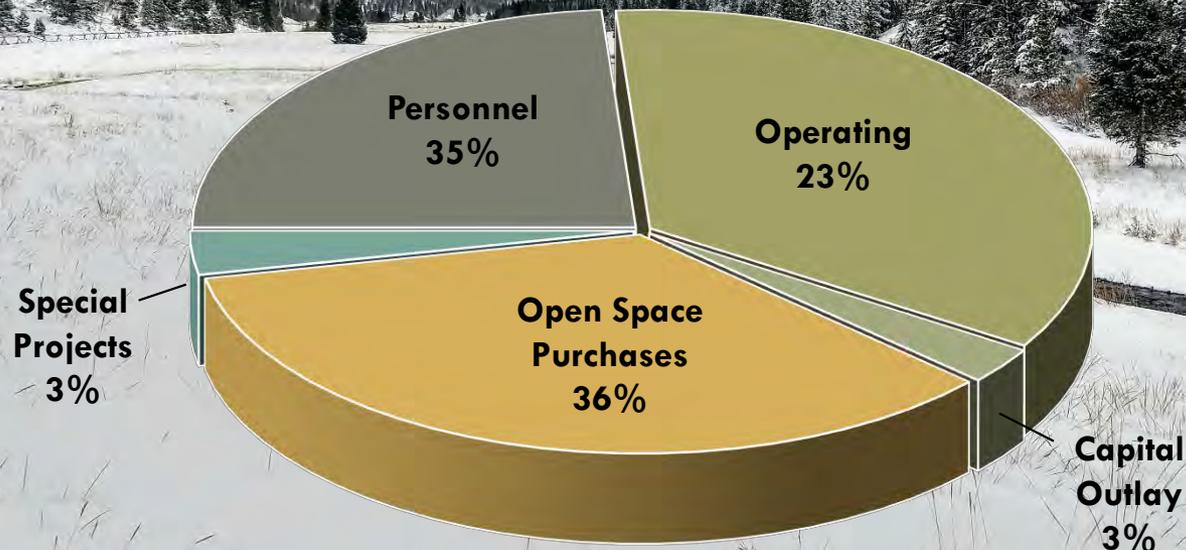
Open Space projects utilized over **\$58,000** in grants and matching funds in 2019 and have secured over **\$5,700,000** in funding towards pending projects.

## Open Space Fund

<b>Operating</b>	<b>\$478,887</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>\$710,170</b>
<b>Capital Outlay</b>	<b>\$54,850</b>
<b>Open Space Purchases:</b>	<b>\$706,300</b>
<b>Special Projects</b>	<b>\$64,900</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>2,015,107</b>

## Grants and Matching Funds

Tenmile Canyon Avalanche Cleanup	\$58,164
<u>Grants Secured for Pending Projects</u>	
Knorr Ranch	\$866,000
Fremont Pass Recpath Extension	\$4,390,000
Dillon Dam Recpath Shoulders	\$44,585
Swan River Restoration (Reach B)	\$420,000
<b>Total Grants &amp; Matching Funds</b>	<b>\$5,778,749</b>



# Open Space Protection Program

- ✓ **Lower Blue River Basin:** More than half of the total acreage is protected by conservation easements. At 5,810 acres, Shadow Creek Ranch Conservation Easement is the Program's largest protected property. Strong partnership with Town of Silverthorne.
- ✓ **Tenmile River Basin:** A combination of land acquisitions preserves the scenic qualities of the Tenmile Range.
- ✓ **Snake River Basin:** Clean-up of abandoned mines improves water quality. Focus on protection of backcountry mining claims and historic sites to maintain rural mountain character.
- ✓ **Upper Blue River Basin:** 4,330 acres (~89% of all Upper Blue acquisitions) have been purchased in partnership with Town of Breckenridge.

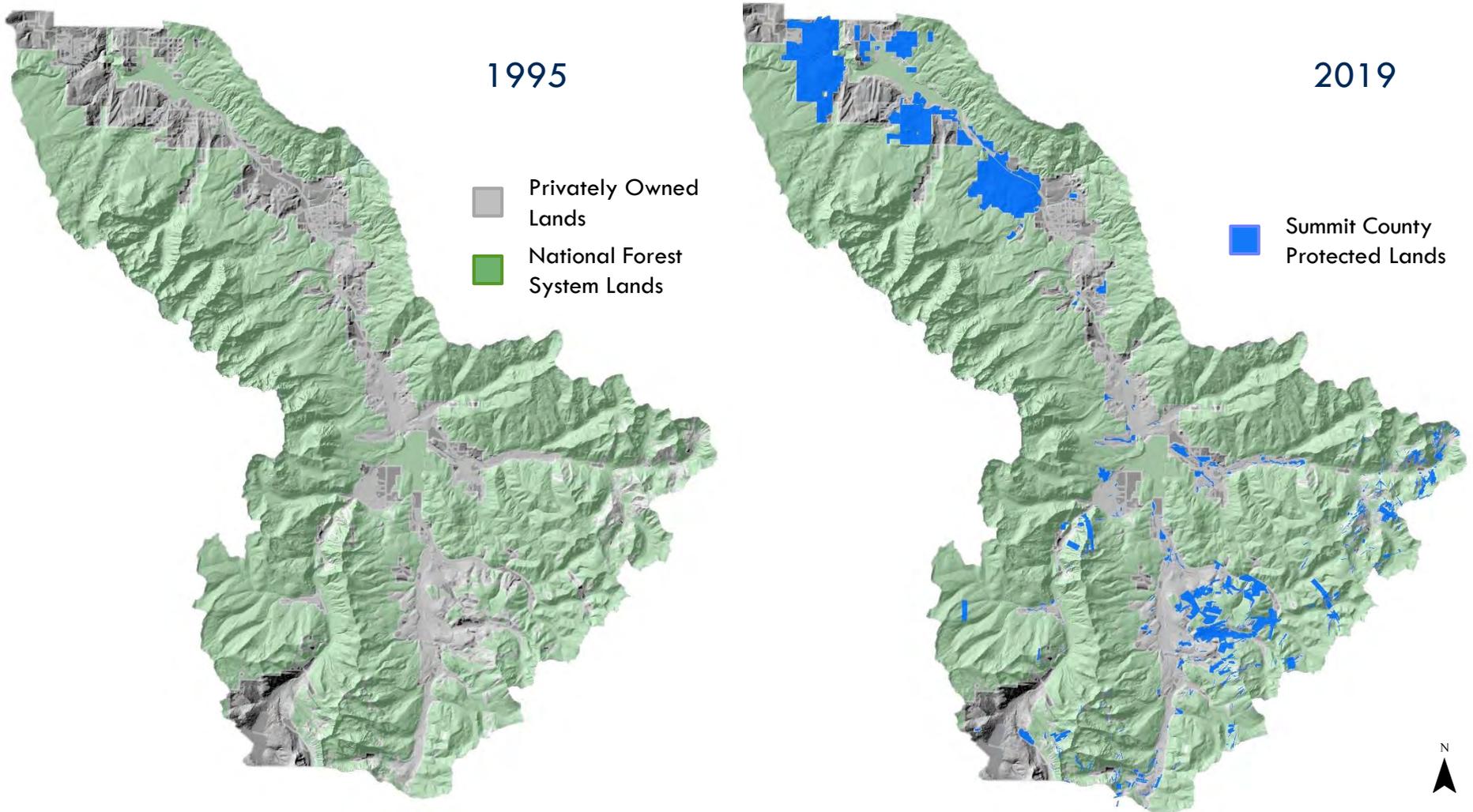
<b>Basin</b>	<b>Acres Protected</b>	<b>Open Space Fund Purchase Price (\$)</b>	<b>Estimated Value of Donation Outside Purchase Amount (\$)</b>
Lower Blue	9,626.55	11,379,584	43,099,951
Tenmile	1,132.04	1,848,669	1,516,265
Snake	1,751.08	5,410,947	6,565,708
Upper Blue	4,979.57	16,595,041	28,915,664
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,489.24</b>	<b>35,234,240</b>	<b>80,097,588</b>

The open space protection program has been funded through property taxes approved by Summit County voters in 1993, 1999, 2003, 2008, and 2019. The annual acquisition budget is approximately \$1.25 million.

The program has leveraged its acquisition funds at nearly a 3:1 ratio with contributions from Great Outdoors Colorado, partnerships with towns, and donations from private landowners.

The Open Space and Trails Department acquires lands to protect the scenic beauty, natural habitat, backcountry character and recreational opportunities of Summit County. Acquired properties are managed to protect their natural resource values while allowing for sustainable access and use.

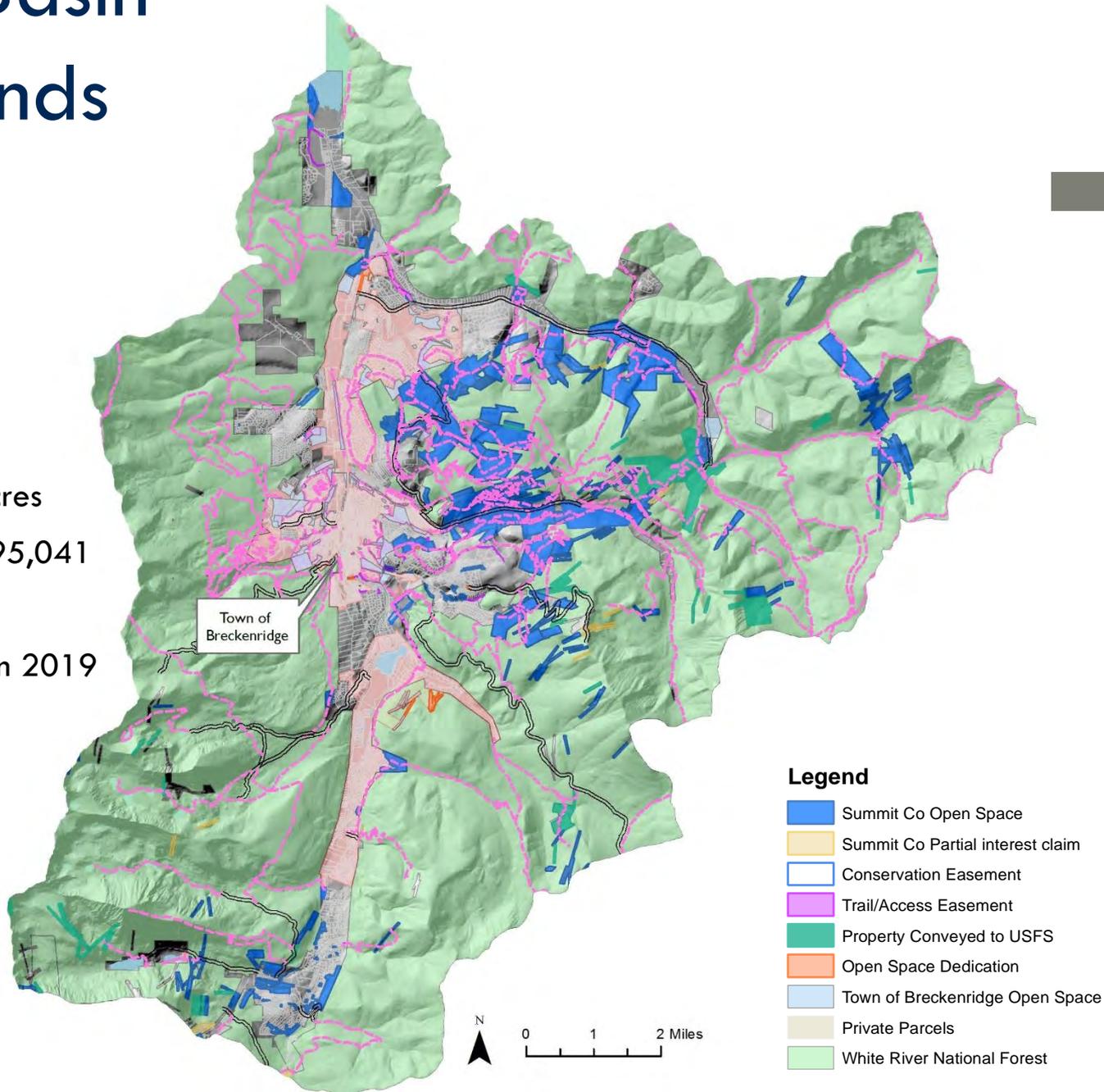
# Protected Lands Overview ~ 1995-2019



# Upper Blue Basin Protected Lands

## Protected Since 1995

- ❑ Total Acres = 4,979.57 acres
- ❑ Acquisition Costs = \$16,595,041
- ❑ Cost Per Acre = \$3,333
- ❑ Ten property acquisitions in 2019 totaling 111.69 acres



# Upper Blue Program Highlights

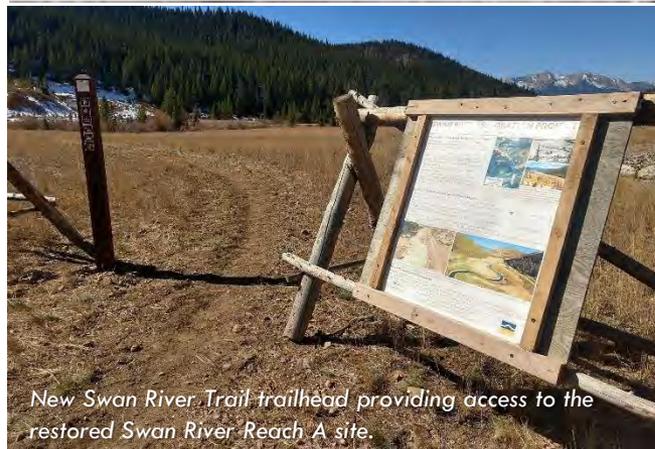
- Public access, trails, and outdoor recreation
- River restoration: Blue River at Fourmile Bridge and Swan River
- Historic preservation: Golden Horseshoe mines and other historic structures
- Mine reclamation: Swan River restoration, abandoned mine cleanup, & Wellington Oro water treatment plant in French Gulch
- Wetlands protection in headwater streams and rivers
- View corridors and buffers between communities
- Partnerships: Town of Breckenridge and US Forest Service



Construction of the new Red Pig Trail near the Wellington neighborhood outside of Breckenridge.



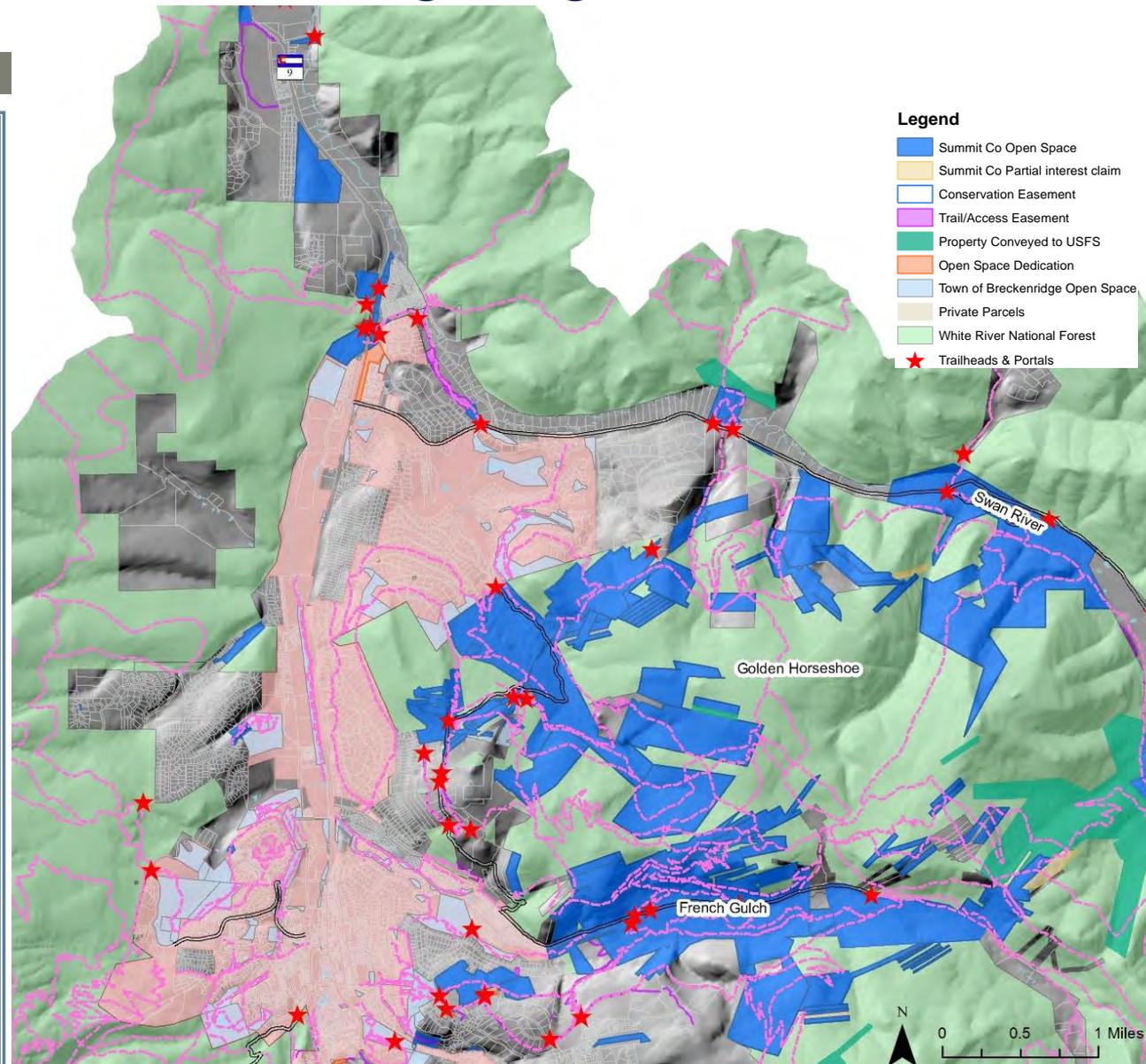
Ongoing stabilization and cleanup efforts at backcountry cabins (Mountain Pride Cabin near Baldy Mountain.)



New Swan River Trail trailhead providing access to the restored Swan River Reach A site.

# Upper Blue Basin Highlights – North

- ✓ Over 35 trailheads & trail access points
- ✓ Trail highlights: Golden Horseshoe trail system, Galena Ditch, Western Sky & Barney Ford area
- ✓ Abandoned mine clean-up and historic mine structure preservation
- ✓ Restoration and cleanup of dredge mined streams
- ✓ Partner with Town of Breckenridge on ongoing maintenance and trail construction



# Upper Blue Program Highlights – Golden Horseshoe Special Use Permit

- Through a Special Use Permit from the USFS, the County and Town of Breckenridge are partnering to construct and maintain over 100 miles of natural surface trails, recreational routes, and tracks groomed for winter recreation in the 14,000 acre Golden Horseshoe Special Use Permit Area east of Breckenridge.
- The Permit Area includes the French Gulch and Swan River drainages and much of the front side of Baldy Mountain, extending to the Continental Divide to the east and Blue River Valley to the west.



The Galena Ditch Trail connects vast trail networks from Swan River Valley to French Gulch, the Continental Divide, and Colorado Trail



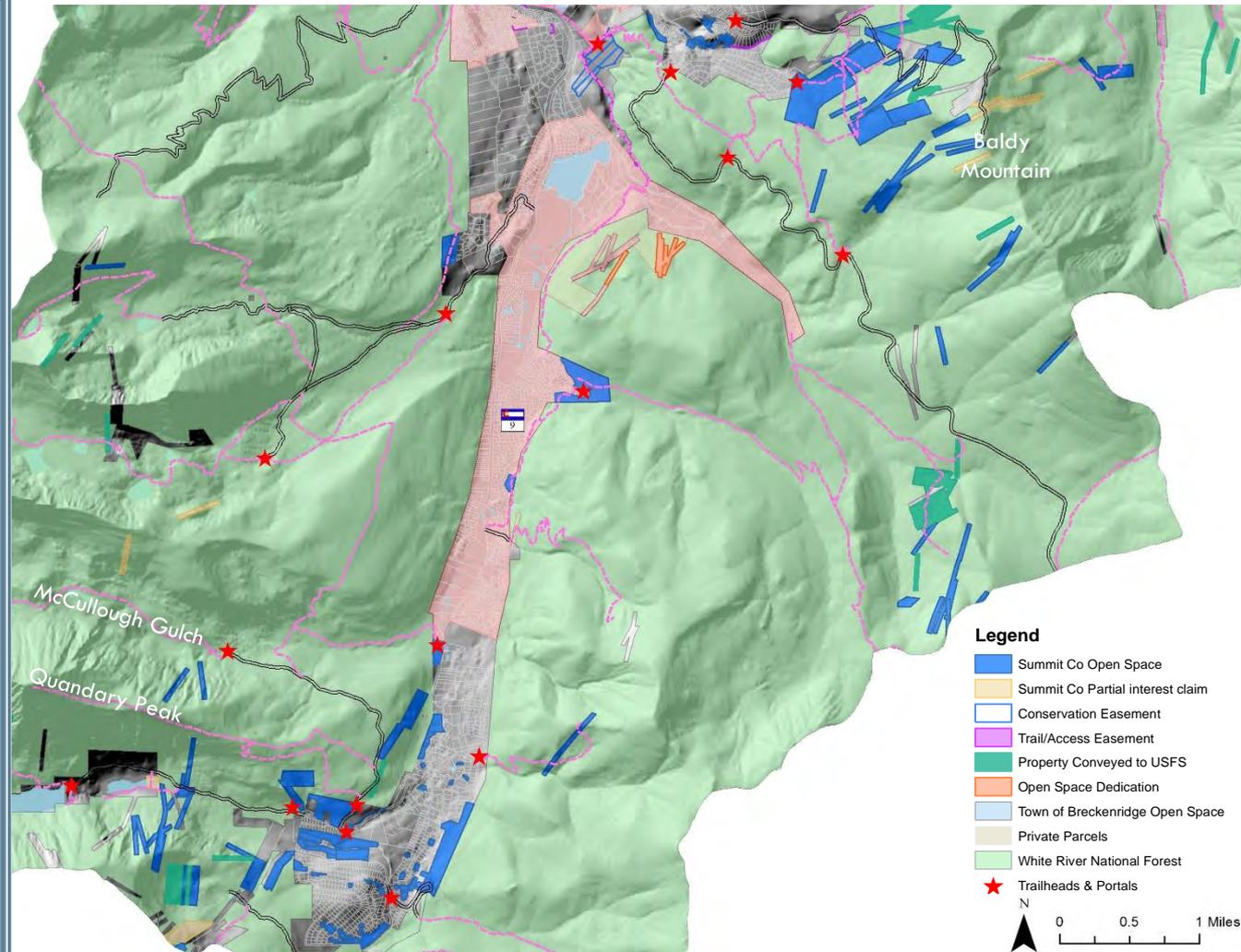
Laurium Open Space providing exceptional winter and summer recreational access to the front side of Baldy Mountain



Winter Recreation on the front side of Baldy Mountain

# Upper Blue Basin Highlights – South

- ✓ 17 trailheads & trail access points
- ✓ Highlights:
  - Preservation of scenic character and recreation through Open Space acquisitions
  - Quandary, Pennsylvania Gulch, and McCullough Gulch trails & trailheads
  - Baldy Mountain trails & trailheads
  - Upper Blue River wetland & beaver habitat protection

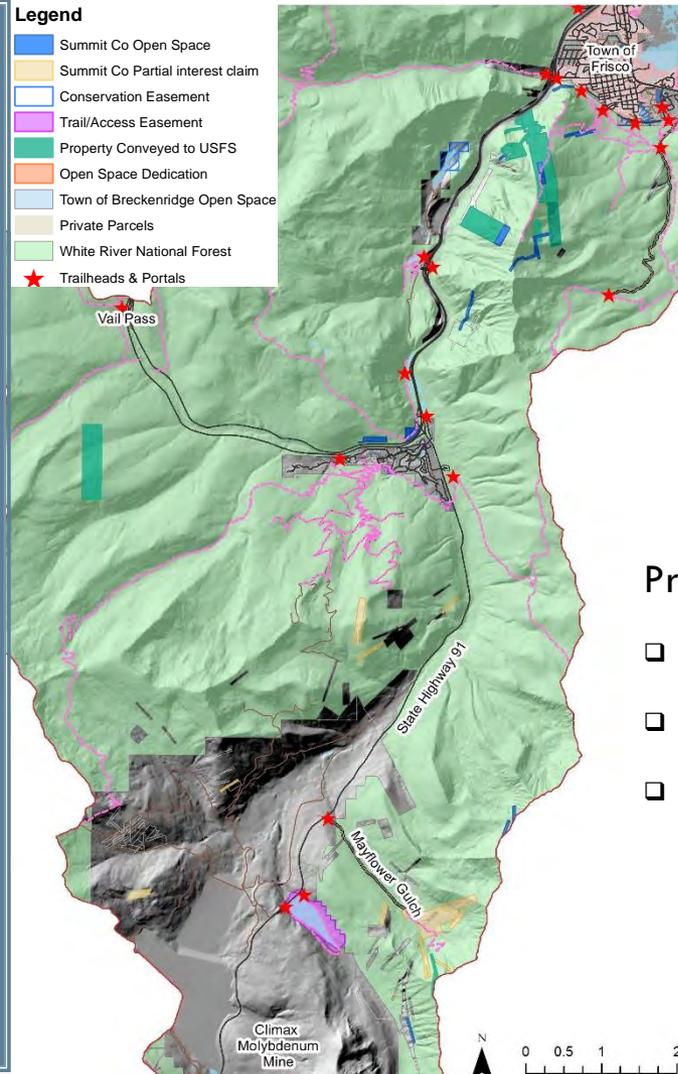


# Tenmile Basin Highlights

- ✓ Tenmile Canyon Recreational Pathway
- ✓ Fremont Pass Recreational Pathway  
- construction planned for 2020
- ✓ Clinton Reservoir trails & trailheads
- ✓ Colorado Trail
- ✓ Mining Claims: Peak One Claims, Copper Mountain Claims
- ✓ Historic Masontown Site
- ✓ Mayflower Gulch:
  - Scenic viewshed – one of most visited & photographed areas in Summit County
  - Protection of access to recreation opportunities
  - Preservation of historic mining structures

## Legend

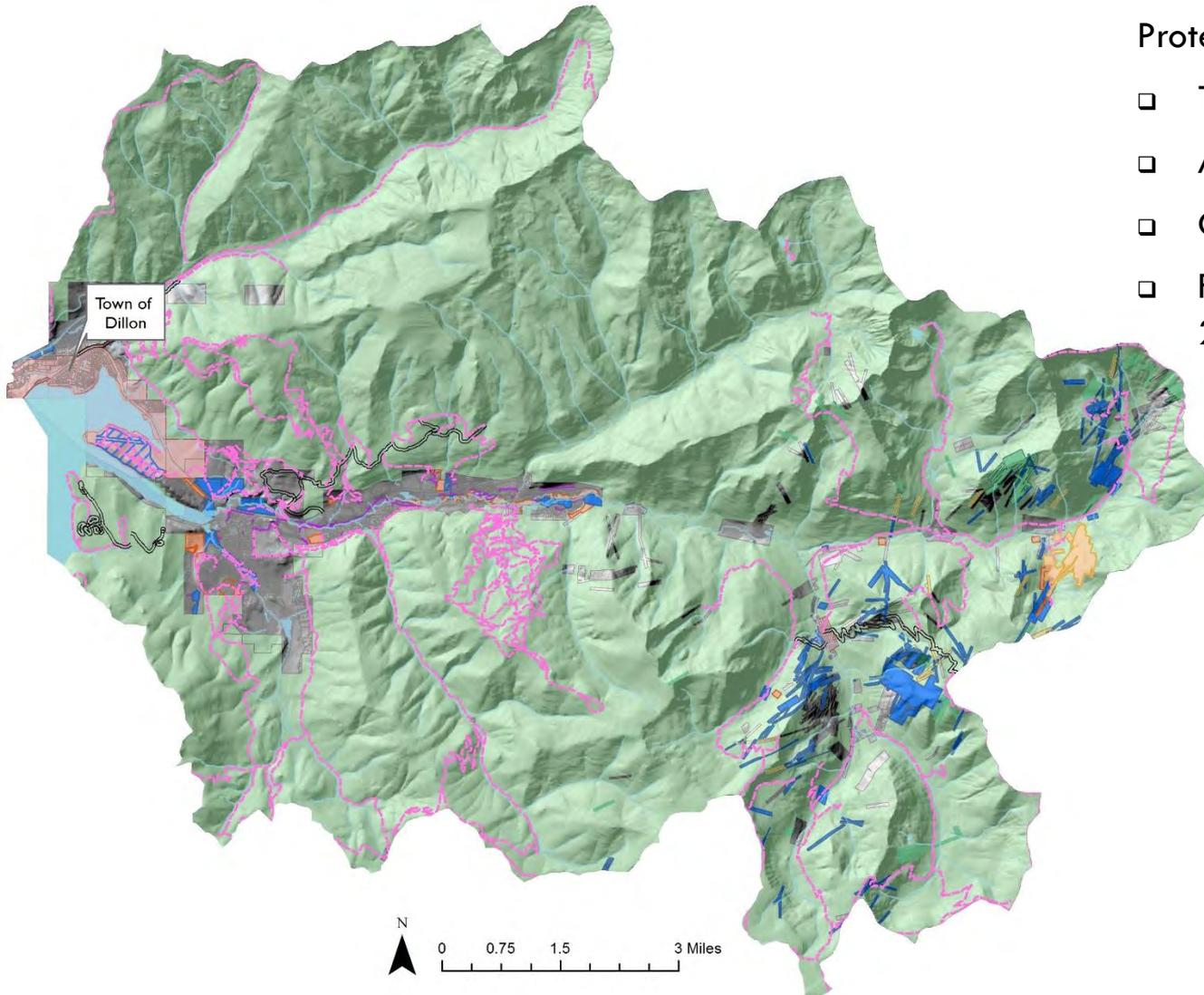
- Summit Co Open Space
- Summit Co Partial interest claim
- Conservation Easement
- Trail/Access Easement
- Property Conveyed to USFS
- Open Space Dedication
- Town of Breckenridge Open Space
- Private Parcels
- White River National Forest
- ★ Trailheads & Portals



## Protected Since 1995

- ❑ Total Acres = 1,132.04 acres
- ❑ Acquisition Cost = \$1,848,669
- ❑ Cost Per Acre = \$1,633

# Snake River Basin Protected Lands



## Protected Since 1995

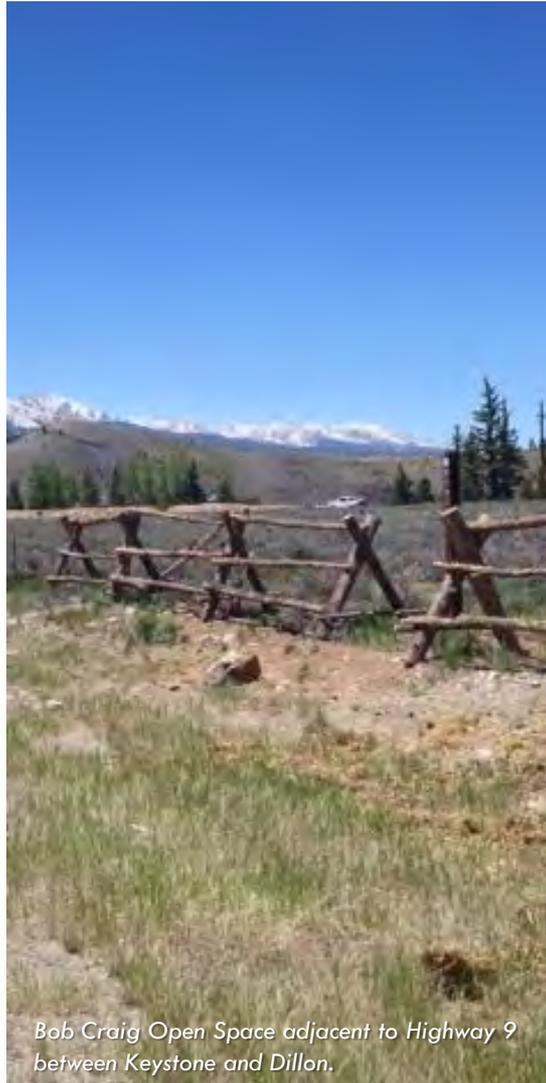
- ❑ Total Acres = 1,751.08 acres
- ❑ Acquisition Costs = \$5,410,947
- ❑ Cost Per Acre = \$3,090
- ❑ Five property transaction in 2019 totaling 18.85 acres

## Legend

- Summit Co Open Space
- Partial interest/Restrictive Covenant
- Conservation Easement
- Trail/Access Easement
- Property Conveyed to USFS
- Open Space Easement/Dedication
- Private Parcels
- White River National Forest

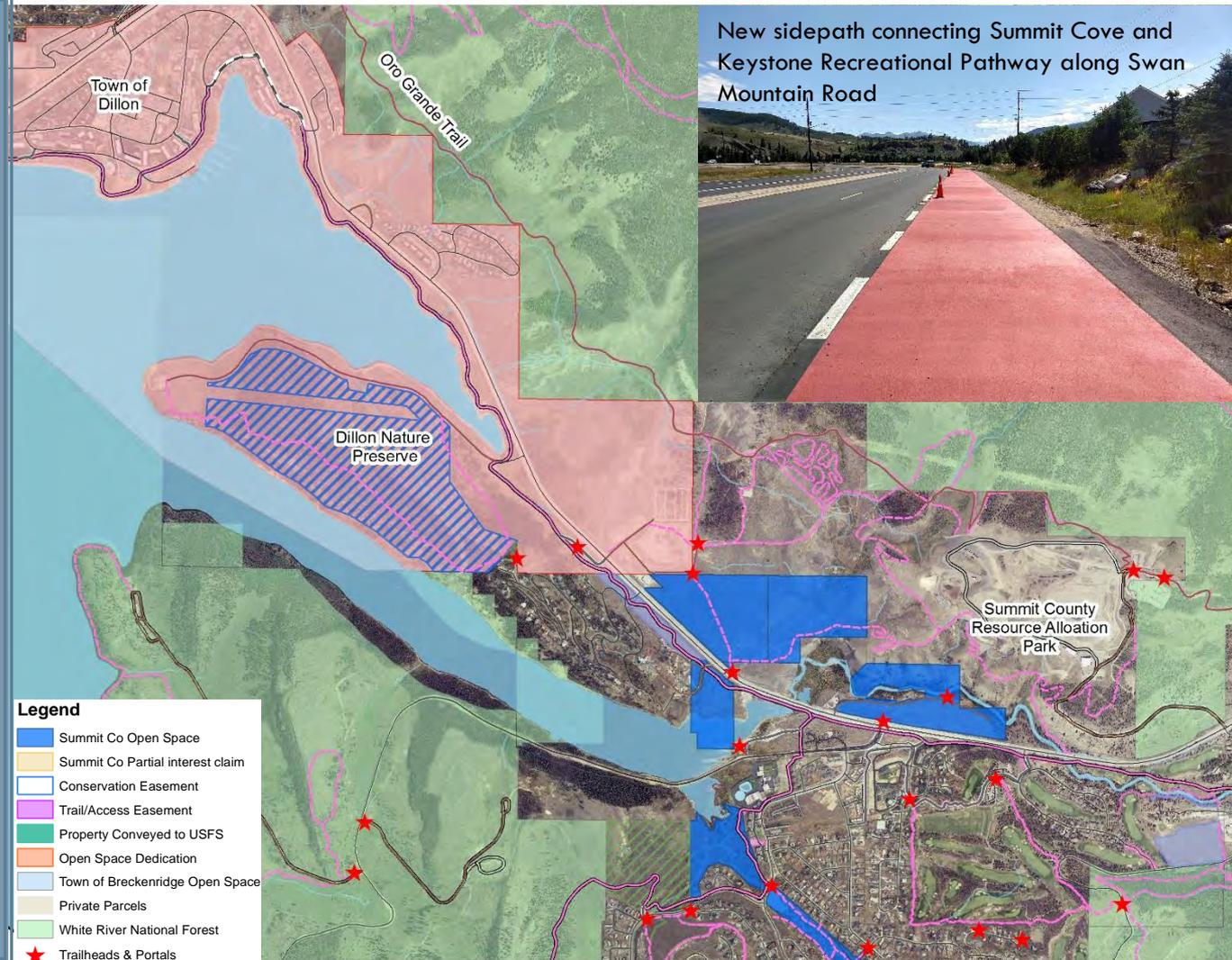
# Snake River Basin Highlights

- ✓ Protection of backcountry character and mountain scenery
  - Protection of dispersed mining claims prevents additional roads and development resulting in a highly fragmented landscape with limited recreation opportunities
- ✓ Mine reclamation in support of water quality improvements
- ✓ Wildlife habitat protection: lynx corridors and elk migration paths
- ✓ CDNST: Continental Divide National Scenic Trail access
- ✓ Historic preservation
- ✓ Access: many trails & trailheads



# Snake River Recreation and Trails

- ✓ ~ 25 trailheads & trail access points
- ✓ County Trails: Oro Grande, Tenderfoot, Rossetter/Keystone Golf Course, Soda Creek Greenbelt
- ✓ Snake River and Swan Mountain Recreational Pathway
- ✓ County Trail highlight: SCRAP Trail Network- Snake River Bluffs, Sage, Buzzsaw
- ✓ Dillon Nature Preserve conservation easement



# Snake River Highlights – Montezuma

- ✓ Protection of backcountry character & dispersed mining claims
- ✓ Recreation & access to the National Forest
- ✓ Preservation of historic resources like the Saints John Townsite

## Legend

- ★ Trailheads & Portals
- Summit Co Protected Land
- Partial Interest/Restrictive Cov
- Property Conveyed to USFS
- Private Parcels
- White River National Forest

N 0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Saints John Townsite



Interagency mine cleanup and reclaimed wetlands at the Saints John Townsite.



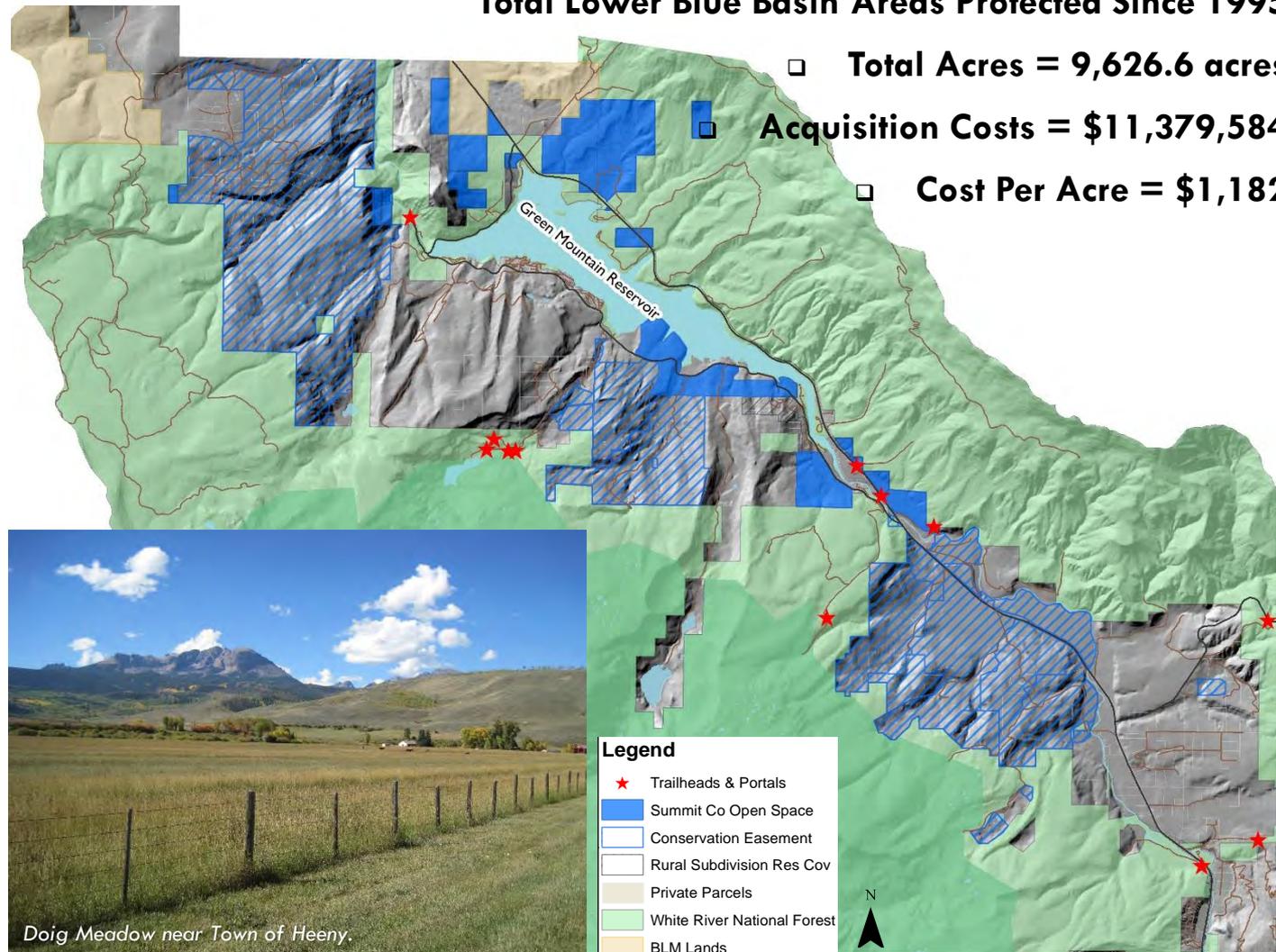
1880's Supervisor Cabin at the Saints John Townsite.

# Lower Blue Basin Highlights – North

- ✓ Protection of Summit County's agricultural heritage
- ✓ Preservation of ~10 miles of scenic viewshed along the Gore & Williams Fork Ranges
- ✓ Acquisition of private inholdings on public lands
- ✓ Access to the Lower Blue River

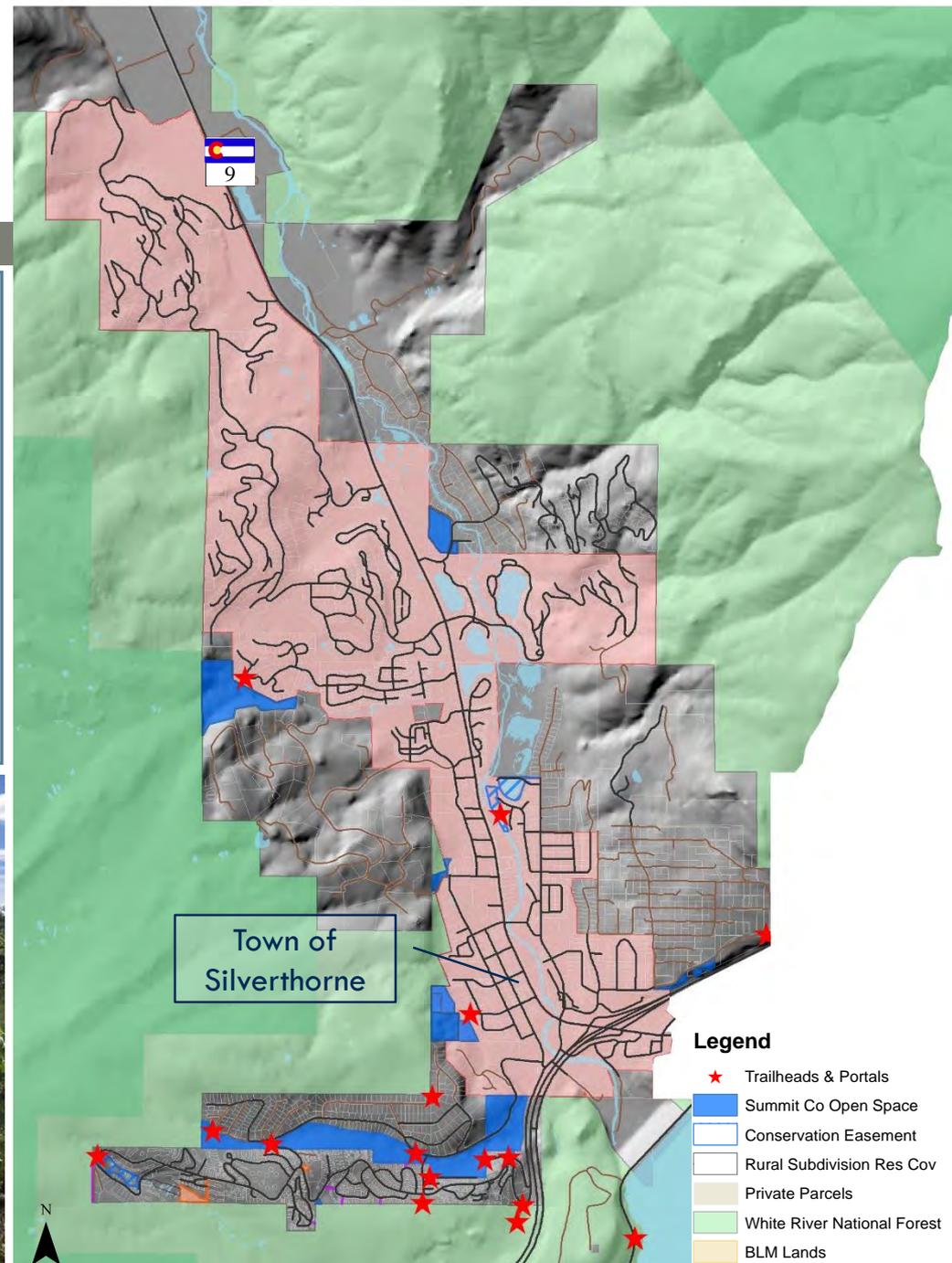
## Total Lower Blue Basin Areas Protected Since 1995

- Total Acres = 9,626.6 acres
- Acquisition Costs = \$11,379,584
- Cost Per Acre = \$1,182



# Lower Blue Basin Highlights – South

- ✓ Access to recreation and the National Forest: ~13 trailheads & trail access points
- ✓ Buffers between developed areas
- ✓ Wetland & sensitive resource area protection
- ✓ Partnership: Town of Silverthorne & USFS
- ✓ 2020 Planning: Frisco – Silverthorne Trail Connection between Meadow Creek and Salt Lick Trail System



# Summit County Recreational Pathway

## Ongoing Goals & Challenges:

- ✓ Capacity Analysis
  - Completed Recpath use and capacity analysis in 2019
- ✓ Connection to Lake County
  - Tenmile Canyon Extension construction scheduled for 2020
- ✓ Providing excellent user experience with increasing numbers & diversity of uses
- ✓ New regulations allowing Class 1 e-bikes

- Summit County maintains 38 miles of Recpath outside of town jurisdictions
- One of the Open Space Program's most visible and cherished resources
- ~\$9.2 million historic construction cost - primarily grant-funded
- Over 200,000 user visits per year
- ~\$200,000 per year allocated to maintenance
- Volunteers maintain 35 unique sections throughout the system through "Adopt-a-Recpath" Program



# Natural Surface Trails and Trailheads

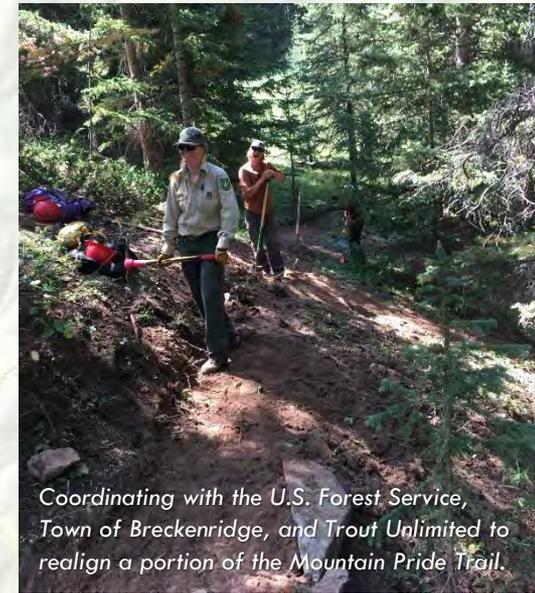
## Ongoing Goals & Challenges:

- ✓ Maintaining access to public lands
- ✓ Securing easements
- ✓ Public information and signage
- ✓ Consistency with USFS and town management goals
- ✓ Balancing enhanced recreational amenities and diverse uses with preserving ecological values

- Together with its partners, Summit County manages over 100 trailheads and local trail access points
- The County also manages over 100 miles of singletrack and 50 miles of dirt roads with its partners



*Recently completed Swan River Trail below Brown's Gulch provides a new trail connection to the Golden Horseshoe trail network*



*Coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service, Town of Breckenridge, and Trout Unlimited to realign a portion of the Mountain Pride Trail.*

# Hazardous Fuels Reduction

*Maintaining healthy, diverse forests while reducing wildfire hazard*



*Dead and dying trees may pose a significant fire hazard and were removed.*

*Wildlife come back shortly after the timber felling work is done.*

- ✓ Local voters passed the Stronger Futures Fund in 2019. It provides \$1 million annually for wildfire mitigation programs and strategies, including hazardous fuels reduction on open space
- ✓ 32 acres of the Mesa Cortina Open Space were treated, removing dead/dying trees, ladder fuels, and reducing tree density to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk
- ✓ Summit County partnered with the Colorado State Forest Service to complete this complex fuel reduction project, which required hand felling and working around steep slopes, sensitive riparian areas, and residential neighborhoods



*Heavy machinery is used to stack and load merchantable timber.*

*Merchantable and accessible timber was removed with equipment while non-merchantable and inaccessible timber was piled for burning.*

# Our People

## Open Space and Trails Staff

Brian Lorch – Director

Katherine King – Senior Resource Specialist

Jason Lederer – Senior Resource Specialist

Michael Wurzel – Resource Specialist

Karen Russell – Principal Administrator

Brad Kremske – Seasonal Resource Specialist

Paul Molnar – Seasonal Technician

Nathan Guild – Seasonal Technician

Carl Meinieke – Seasonal Technician

## Open Space Advisory Council

Turk Montepare, Chair – Upper Blue Basin

Terry Craig – Snake River Basin

Bruce Fitch – Tenmile Basin

Robert Gregory – At Large

Arthur Hardin – At Large

Diane Hunt – At Large

Jeff Leigh – Lower Blue

Todd Rankin – Upper Blue

Laura Rossetter – Tenmile Basin

John Taylor – Lower Blue Basin

John Uban – Snake River Basin

# Partnerships

The Open Space and Trails Program maintains ongoing partnerships with numerous key stakeholders and landowners. Our work would not be possible without their collaboration and support, as well as the strong support of the citizens of Summit County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[SUMMITCOUNTYCO.GOV](http://SUMMITCOUNTYCO.GOV)

