

Falls Creek Ranch Trails Plan

January 2023

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Overview

The 2023 Falls Creek Ranch Trails Plan establishes a vision, objectives, trail standards, and a scope for managing and improving the trails on Falls Creek Ranch (FCR) common property.

The plan is based upon [a survey of FCR residents](#) and is created through collaboration of the trails committee. The plan is subject to approval by the FCR Board, with renewal every five years. The trails committee will update and revise the plan as additional feedback is captured and present it to the FCR Board.

Vision

Our vision is for FCR to have a thriving trails system that brings residents together, enhances their health and well-being, and preserves the unique, natural character of the area. The trail system will be accessible, safe, and welcoming for all residents, regardless of age or mobility, and will provide opportunities for various forms of outdoor recreation. It will also be mindful of the impact on individual properties and the need for responsible trail maintenance.

Objectives

The FCR Trails Plan has several key objectives for maintaining and improving the trail system while balancing the needs of the community.

Understanding and educating trail users

- A trail map will be created, updated, and shared yearly with all residents. The trail map will not be posted on any publicly accessible platforms.
- Guidelines will be published for reducing user conflict on multi-use trails and for reducing impacts to property owners and the environment.
- Trail entry points into FCR will have No Trespassing signs installed.
- Digital trail sources will be updated and monitored with the goal of reducing trespassing, including:

- All Strava segments on FCR will be flagged as “private.”
- All OpenStreetMap trails will be removed or marked as “status:informal” and “access:private.”

Improving the sustainability and placement of trails

- Identification and maintenance of all trail locations with significant erosion issues.
- Potential rerouting of trail segments that cross lot boundaries.
- Establishing at least 3-4 annual trail maintenance events to be completed on existing trails.
- A survey of informal trails will be completed and informal trails will be assessed for removal from the trail system and restoration.
- Ensuring that all trails conform to best practices and commonly accepted standards such as the following:
 - US Forest Service [trail standards](#)
 - Bureau of Land Management and International Mountain Bike Association [guidelines](#)

Meeting the needs of trail users

- All trails will be classified as either class 1, 2, 3, or 4, which generally corresponds to the difficulty and design of the trail.
- Establish a central loop that meets the definition of a class 1 trail and is accessible by all trail users across all abilities.
- Provide trail access for lots that currently do not have direct access to the trail system.
- Provide trail routes that allow residents to avoid road segments.
- Provide a class 1 trail from the north boundary of FCR to the FCR Lake.

Matters Outside the Purview of the Plan

- Maintenance and management of trails on neighboring USFS or other private property. This includes trails in locations such as Dyke Canyon, Falls Creek, Tripp Gulch, High Meadows Ranch, and Hidden Valley.
- Addressing trespassing beyond educating trail users about boundaries and analyzing how a trail project might change patterns of usage.

Trail standards

Zones

This plan proposes two zones to guide trail management planning. These zones are established with sensitivity to the needs and desires of individual FCR residents.

Residential

The residential zone encompasses all areas of FCR common property proximate to lot boundaries.

Nonresidential

The nonresidential zone encompasses all other areas of FCR common property that are not proximate to lot boundaries.

Class

The primary goal of the FCR Trail Plan is to accommodate all residents while protecting the natural character of FCR. To this end, it is important to classify trails.

- Class 1 trails have a wide, easy-to-follow tread, may have many structures such as drainage dips or water bars, and accommodate all trail users.
- Class 2 trails have an established tread, may have some structures, and accommodate most trail users.
- Class 3 trails may be difficult to follow, have few structures, or be designed for a specific trail user.
- Class 4 trails are informal trails, are not designed for a specific trail user, and are unmaintained. These trails may be recategorized to improve sustainability and meet the FCR Trails Plan objectives.

Trails Committee Scope

Transparency and feedback

The trails committee strives to work for all residents of FCR and will actively seek feedback with the following guidelines for proposed projects:

- All trail projects that significantly alter the character of an existing trail or add a new trail will have a minimum feedback period of 30 days.

- All substantial trail projects will be shared with all residents through a trail project proposal document containing a map, project objectives, and impact analysis.
- All residents will be given the opportunity to comment on proposed trail projects.
- All residents will be given the opportunity to submit trail project proposals.

Authority on Trail Project Decisions

The trails committee **shall have** authority on trail projects with any of the following characteristics:

- Maintenance only
- Minor reroutes within the existing trail corridor
- In the region defined as Nonresidential
- In the region defined as Residential and not having substantial negative feedback

The Board **shall have** authority, with the advice of the trails committee, on trail projects with any of the following characteristics:

- In the region defined as Residential and having substantial negative feedback

Expiration and Modification

The authority granted in the FCR Trails Plan shall expire two years after approval by the Board. Substantial modifications to the FCR Trails Plan shall require Board approval.

Budget

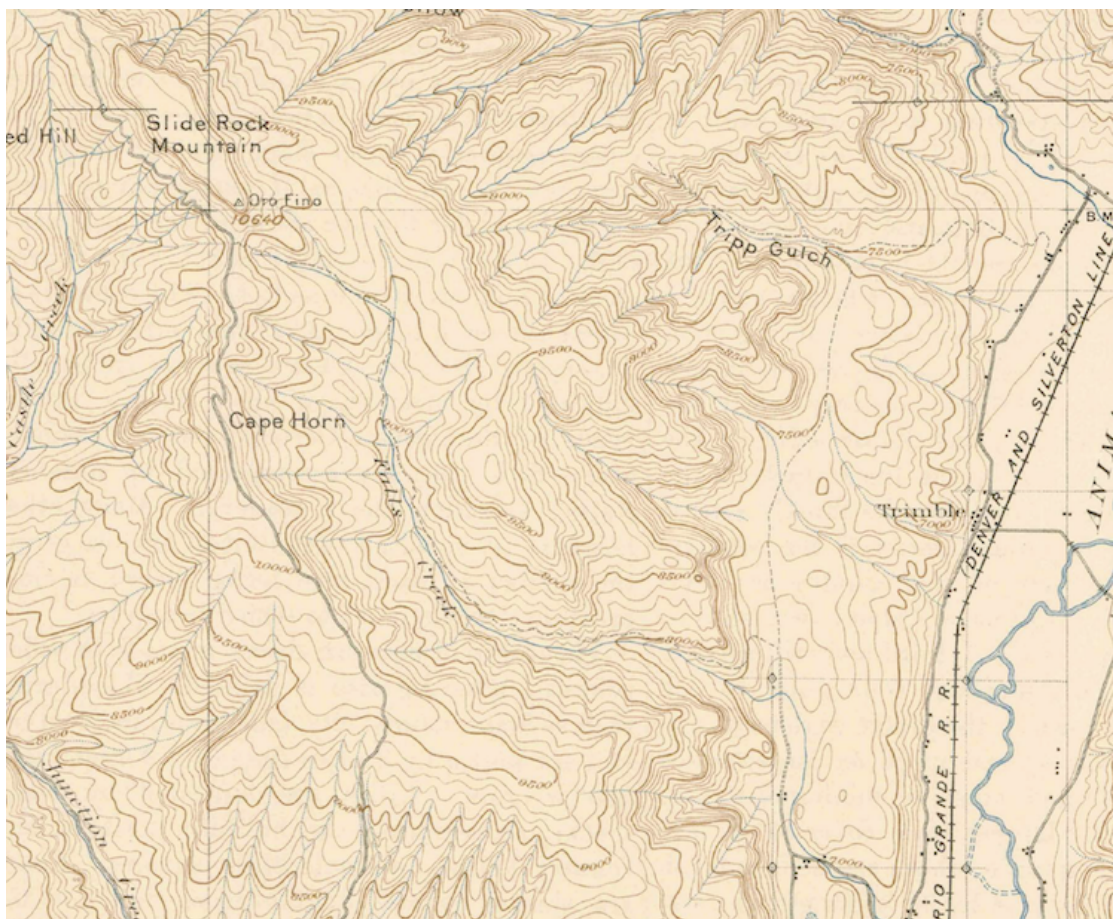
The trails committee and trail projects shall not have a budget unless explicitly approved through future Board action.

Appendix

Historic Trails

There is a long history of trails on FCR, with the first USGS map published in 1896 containing multiple trails that are still in use today. These trails are likely much older, as the Falls Creek rock shelters were inhabited as early as 700 BCE.¹

Mining and logging operations in the 20th century established many additional trails and roads on and surrounding FCR, including areas such as Dyke Canyon and the Mason Cabin area.



USGS 1896 Map Showing Trails on FCR²

¹ Encyclopedia Staff. (2015, November 05). Falls Creek Rock Shelters Archaeological Site. Colorado Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/falls-creek-rock-shelters-archaeological-site>

² <https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/topoexplorer/index.html>