



# Parks & Open Space

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## PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<b>TO:</b>	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
<b>DATE/TIME:</b>	Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Commissioners Hearing Room, 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor, Boulder County Courthouse, 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder, CO
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study
<b>PRESENTER:</b>	Marni Ratzel, Resource Planner II
<b>ACTION REQUESTED:</b>	Recommendation to the BOCC on partner agency preferred alternative

### Background

For many years, there has been a desire to create a multi-use link from Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) to Walker Ranch. To that end, Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS), the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP), and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) partnered to complete a feasibility study and planning process to consider opportunities for the multi-use connection.

In November 2018, and after careful consideration of the feasibility study evaluation and findings, the three partner agencies jointly shared a preliminary preferred alignment for an Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch multi-use trail connection that recommended the North Route (using segments N1-N2-N4). There also was agreement among the project partners that current challenges such as parking capacity, congestion, park access, and the Eldorado Springs interface must be addressed as part of the future planning, design, and construction phases.

In December 2018, staff updated the Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) and shared the overall feasibility study findings and initial community feedback on the preliminary partner recommendation. The information presented to POSAC is available in the December meeting [agenda packet](#) and [presentations](#). At that time, POSAC requested additional information to support their consideration of making a recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners. In response, the staff discussion section of this memo includes a focus on those topics for which the board requested additional information:

- Reviewing Eldorado Springs townsite community concerns.
- A summary of BCPOS trail miles accessible to different user types.
- Supplemental information on trail user conflicts.
- Management strategies to address trail user conflicts.
- Supplemental information on the North Route impacts to the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) on OSMP lands.
- Discussion of the No Action/Existing Conditions option.

## **Partner Agency Recommendation**

After collaboration to complete the feasibility study, careful consideration of the findings, and public input from community stakeholders, the project partners have finalized a recommendation for consideration by Boulder County and City of Boulder open space advisory boards. The three partner agencies affirm their joint recommendation of the North Route (using segments N1-N2-N4) as the preferred alignment for a multi-use trail connection. The project partners recommended this alternative because it completes the multi-use trail connection in a way that best balances the conservation and recreation needs of the area. The North Route will:

- Provide a quality visitor experience for multi-use recreationists.
- Result in significantly fewer environmental impacts than the South Route.
- Meet multi-use design standards to accommodate bicyclists.
- Improve the sustainability of the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail.
- Integrate the new multi-use trail with current uses and future activities within Eldorado Canyon State Park.

Staff also recommends that Boulder County continue working with the City and CPW in collaboration with stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that mitigate capacity-related issues impacting the greater Eldorado Springs community. We support ensuring that capacity mitigation efforts are in place before the trail is opened to biking.

## **Public Process**

Over 100 people attended the first open house that was held on Aug. 28, 2018. This forum kicked off an initial comment period on: A) the project timeline and process, B) the analysis topics to be used to evaluate the alternatives, and C) the routes to be included in the feasibility study. Approximately 475 comments were received when the comment period closed on Sept. 11, 2018. Two documents capture this feedback and are published on the project web page: A [Compendium of Initial Public Comments](#) and [Summary and Responses to Initial Public Comments](#). While the comment form did not specifically ask about route preferences, many respondents provided their preliminary preferences. All comments were considered in developing the feasibility study and preliminary recommendation.

On November 28, 2018, the project partners hosted a second open house and comment period to present the feasibility study findings and a preliminary partner agency recommendation for a preferred alternative regarding a multi-use trail connection. Over 120 community members attended.

Both open houses were publicized on the project web page and social media, through e-mail blasts, fliers posted at trail heads by all three agency partners and within the state park, and a direct mail postcard to over 200 property owners in the vicinity of the Eldorado Springs State Park entrance (including the Eldorado Springs townsite), Crescent Meadows, and the trailheads at Walker Ranch.

As part of the second round of public engagement, the public was encouraged to visit the project web page and complete an online questionnaire to submit feedback on the preliminary partner agency recommendation. The questionnaire closed on Sunday, Dec. 9, 2018, with more than 670 unique respondents completing it. While the online questionnaire is not a statistically significant survey, it is a good resource that captures the views of community stakeholders who chose to provide feedback on the agency recommendation. Written comments also were received by individuals and organizations. Three documents capture this feedback and are published in the project web page: A [Summary of Online Questionnaire Responses](#), [Online Questionnaire Responses](#), and [Compendium of Comments Received by Written Correspondence](#).

Overall, a majority of stakeholders who provided feedback indicated support for the preliminary agency recommendation. Of significance is that over 90% of Eldorado Springs residents who provided feedback did not support the preliminary partner agency recommendation. Additionally, a theme expressed by many respondents, regardless of their level of support for the trail is that access,

local traffic congestion, and parking impacts to the state park and greater Eldorado Springs community need to be addressed before planning, designing, and constructing a multi-use trail connection.

Public comments received after the formal public comment period closed on Dec. 9 and through Jan. 14 are provided as **Attachment A**. Staff has not included these comments in the summary or analysis of public comments.

The January POSAC meeting will provide the opportunity for the public to provide comment along with any recommendations that POSAC may provide. The City of Boulder Open Space Board of Trustees and Boulder County Commissioners will respectively host public hearings in February and March (tentative) to consider and take action on the final partner agency recommendation on the preferred alternative for a multi-use trail connection. Community stakeholders may also attend these meetings and provide verbal testimony during the public hearing portion of the agenda item.

### **Staff discussion**

The feasibility study provides a technical review of anticipated impacts and demonstrates that a multi-use connection is feasible. The analysis found that while the south route would have a major impact on environmental and cultural resources, the North Route is anticipated to have significantly fewer impacts. The feasibility study also demonstrates that either route would have major impacts on the state park and the greater Eldorado Springs community. In particular, the introduction of the regional multi-use trail would likely increase traffic, parking demand, and access to the park, as well as potential for conflict between trail users.

There is agreement among the partner agencies that the policy direction set by the multi-agency recommendation and the corresponding public approval process is important to affirm that a regional trail is part of the future for this area and is a factor to integrate into future management strategies. The shared commitment to the North Route facilitates continued collaboration among the partner agencies, helps align long-term planning, funding, and resources, and creates a platform to work with the community on addressing access, local traffic congestion, parking impacts, and trail user conflicts.

Additional information requested by POSAC in December on the key findings of the feasibility study and public feedback elements of the feasibility study are detailed below.

### *Reviewing Eldorado Springs townsite community concerns*

Local and state land management agencies, visitors, and Eldorado Springs residents have been experiencing capacity-related challenges such as congestion, parking, and crowding issues for decades. These current challenges to Eldorado Canyon have been a theme expressed by public comments throughout the planning process, and these issues were evaluated as part of the Eldorado Canyon State Park Interface analysis topic in the feasibility study.

As expected, the study found that a multi-use trail is likely to increase visitation to Eldorado Canyon State Park and has the potential to worsen current conditions. The partner agencies recognize that there are implementation challenges and are confident that collaborative management actions can minimize their impacts. If the recommendation to develop the North Route is approved by decision-makers, a next step is to address existing capacity conditions and plan for the future. The shared goal is to continue working on strategies that provide access; connect visitors to enjoyable experiences; address traffic, community, and crowding issues; and protect resources.

In 2019, CPW will initiate a Visitor Use Management Plan for Eldorado Canyon State Park. This effort is an opportunity for the three partner agencies, state park visitors, and the Eldorado Springs community to examine and address issues. The process will include robust public input to seek ideas for possible solutions, to weigh options, and to generate a final plan that will attend to existing capacity issues at the park.

An initial task will be to develop a public engagement plan that ensures the Eldorado Springs community, state park recreationalists, and adjacent public land managers are represented. Involvement from and collaboration among these community stakeholders will be essential.

The planning process will allow land managers and stakeholders to gather and analyze all options and will include multiple opportunities for public input. Some possible strategies that are currently being used in other popular recreation destinations, and that could be considered in the planning process, include:

- Shuttle or bus services to limit vehicle traffic.
- Infrastructure redesign and improvements.
- Trail redesign and improvements.
- Permit and reservation systems.
- Limits on use by visitor type and days of the week.

The timeline for the Visitor Use Management Plan is:

- Early 2019: CPW will secure funding for a consultant.
- Early 2019: Internal scoping.
- Mid-late 2019: RFP for consultant, design public process.
- 2020: Conduct public process to gather ideas and strategies, provide alternatives, and generate a final plan.

Independent of this project, several projects have been developed to alleviate existing issues within the park. These include the following:

- ECSP Entry Station Upgrade: CPW has funded planning and design to upgrade and improve the entry station, which will allow for a more efficient processing of visitors as they enter the park and will also provide a vehicle turn-around for times when the park is full or closed.
- Streamside Trail Extension: The park is in the early planning stages to extend the Streamside Trail along the north bank of South Boulder Creek to reach the Rincon parking area near the Visitor Center. This trail, once designed and completed, will provide better trail connectivity and circulation through the Inner Canyon for all visitors, and will reduce pedestrian traffic on the road. This planning is anticipated to commence in the near future.

Summary of BCPOS trail miles accessible to different user types

Boulder County Parks & Open Space offers a total of over 120 miles of trails, all of which are open to pedestrians at over 20 different open space properties. The table below provides a summary of trail miles as of May 2018 by surface type and type of user.

Trail User Type	Natural Surface		Improved Surface		Total	
	Miles	Percent	Miles	Percent	Miles	Percent
Pedestrian	69.4	100%	51.8	100%	121.2	100%
Bikers	55.8	80.4%	51.2	98.8%	107.0	88.3%
Equestrians	67.9	98.0%	47.8	92.3%	115.7	95.5%
Dogs	35.4	51.0%	51.2	98.8%	86.6	71.5%

About 57% of trails on open space are natural surface, while 43% have been improved. Most trails also are open to bikes, dogs, and equestrians. Natural surface trails are mostly located on BCPOS

properties in the mountains. These are often narrow, with steeper grades, and may not be accessible by all ages and abilities of trail users. In general, improved trails provide a wider (generally 8-foot) crusher fines, family-friendly trail that accommodates most ages and abilities. In limited locations, these trails may have a steeper grade and/or a concrete surface.

#### Supplemental information about trail user conflicts

The feasibility study evaluated potential changes to visitation rates and impacts on visitor conflicts in the Visitor Experience section. Figure 19 in the study shows that estimated use of the Eldorado Canyon Trail could increase by up to 33% during the busy summer months, which would be up to 60 additional visitors using the trails per day (on average). This equates to one additional person on the trail every 12 minutes over the course of a 12-hour summer day. However, the N1 segment of the North Route is anticipated to experience less conflict because the existing trail would remain open to create a hiking loop in ECSP. This would likely disperse visitors and reduce impacts to visitor density.

With respect to overall visitor conflicts, a summary of results from visitor surveys conducted by the OSMP and BCPOS departments is presented on page 72 of the feasibility report. An estimated 5% of visitors reported having a conflict. Of the visitors who reported a conflict, about 14 to 33 percent of the reported conflicts were related to bikes.

Visitor studies and inventories help BCPOS monitor management practices, and improve resources and park visitor experiences. Every five years, the department conducts a system-wide visitor satisfaction survey. These studies complement regular annual research and look at long-term trends in visitor demographics, preferences, attitudes, and behaviors.

The BCPOS survey data contained in the feasibility study draws from the 2015 Five-Year Visitor Study, which consisted of 2,275 surveys (response rate 63%) at 19 Boulder County Parks & Open Space properties, including 14 parks and five regional or neighborhood trails. According to the survey, the majority of BCPOS visitors overall are hiking (41%), biking (27%), running (8%), or walking dogs (8%), and a visitor's primary activity remains consistent with previous surveys. Over 90% of visitors did not experience conflict with other visitors on the trail. Regardless of whether the visitor experienced conflict or not, most of the park visitors did not feel crowded at all during their visit (70%).

As part of the 2015 five-year study survey, 134 respondents were surveyed at the Walker Ranch Loop and Ethel Harrold Trailheads. Similar to the countywide trend, primary activities are hiking (43%) and biking (34%). Eight visitors shared that they experienced visitor conflict. This represents less than 6% of all visitors surveyed as part of the five year study at the Walker Ranch Loop trail.

**Attachment B** includes a one page summary of findings for the Walker Ranch Loop trail. Additional trends are provided in the [2015 Five-Year Visitor Study](#).

#### Management strategies to address trail user conflicts

The Visitor Use Management Plan that CPW will initiate in 2019 will include a review and consideration of policies to manage visitor experience and conflict on trails. Potential strategies could include trail redesign and improvements, permit and reservation systems which could help limit the overall number of visitors on trails, and limits on use by visitor type and days of the week.

On county open space, BCPOS has a very active outreach program to address proper bicycle etiquette and encourage good behavior in parks and on regional trails. In addition to BCPOS Education & Outreach and Resource Protection staff, volunteer rangers and Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol (BMBP) volunteers visit parks to provide a uniformed presence, encourage responsible use of open space, and educate park visitors about regulations when appropriate. In 2017, a total of 143 volunteers spent about 2,400 hours just on BCPOS trails and observed or contacted nearly 38,000 visitors. BMBP is a self-organized multi-agency group through Boulder Mountainbike Alliance (BMA). In addition, POS staff and volunteers conduct trailhead displays about wildlife, trail etiquette, and safety

at parks on a rotating basis. Since audible warnings are the preferred form of communication, during bike-themed trailhead displays staff and volunteers offer bike bells to cyclists if they are willing to mount them on their bike on the spot.

Another initiative already underway is an Interagency Trail Courtesy Study funded by a GOCO grant awarded to Jefferson County Open Space working in partnership with BCPOS, OSMP, and CPW to help reduce conflict on trails. The study includes a focus on Eldorado Canyon State Park, Marshall Mesa, and North Table Mountain Park. Phase one of the study includes extensive research of similar projects around the country and will gather data on trail conflict during the busy summer 2019 season. Phase two of the project will create new signage based on initial findings before conducting more research to evaluate its effectiveness.

*Supplemental information on the North Route impacts to the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area (HCA) on OSMP lands*

The North Route alignments are generally on public lands managed by CPW and OSMP. The staff memo from OSMP staff to the Open Space Board of Trustees which provides more background on the potential impacts to the Western Mountain Parks HCA is included as **Attachment C**.

Approximately 700 feet of the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail traverses BCPOS-managed land to make the connection to the Walker Ranch Loop trail. The N4 alignment would likely require the construction of four switchbacks and approximately double the length of this segment of trail on BCPOS land. All materials used for construction would be sourced on site. A re-route of 1.5 miles from the Ethel Harrold Trailhead occurred in close proximity to this location in 2015. The natural resource identified near this proposed alignment on BCPOS land is a small intermittent drainage with riparian vegetation, which will not be impacted by the trail alignment as currently proposed.

*Discussion of the No Action/Existing Conditions option*

A summary of the No Action/Existing Conditions option is provided on page 9 of the feasibility study, and is detailed below.

The **No Action** option would not complete a multi-use connection that accommodates biking activities. With no new trail connection, the No Action option would not achieve the desired objectives of the project. This also means that the No Action option also would not address current issues or achieve desired improvements that have been codified in public planning and policy documents guided by public engagement and input.

Support for this connection is identified in the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan and Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, the Walker Ranch Management Plan, and the City of Boulder Eldorado Mountain/Doudy Draw and West Trail Study Area (TSA) plans. The connection also is identified as one of “the Colorado 16” (16 in 2016) priority trails in the 2016-2026 Colorado State Trails Plan and Department of Natural Resources Colorado the Beautiful program.

The Eldorado Springs area has experienced transportation, parking, and access issues for decades. State Highway 170 is owned and operated by the Colorado Department of Transportation. It becomes a private road when it enters Eldorado Springs and the road transitions to a dirt surface. CPW has an easement for access to the state park and residences to the west of the state park. Boulder County has been working with the park and other stakeholders to develop options in an effort to address ongoing transportation and parking issues along the private road through the Eldorado Springs townsite. A transportation improvement project initiated in 2012 has not yet gained traction. The trail feasibility study and a special use permit request for modernization of Artesian Springs is bringing new attention and momentum toward implementing solutions. A potential impact of the No Action option is that the current alignment and collaborative climate among the three partner agencies and stakeholders may dissipate, and, once again, resources will shift to other priorities within each agency.

**POSAC Action Requested**

Recommendation to the Boulder County Commissioners for 1. approval of the North Route (using N1-N2-N4) as the preferred alignment for construction of a multi-use trail connection between Eldorado Canyon State Park and Walker Ranch, 2. continuing to work with OSMP and CPW in collaboration with stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that mitigate capacity-related issues affecting the greater Eldorado Springs community, and 3. ensuring capacity mitigation efforts are in place before the trail is opened to biking.

Suggested motion language: I move to approve 1. the North Route (using N1-N2-N4) as the preferred alignment for construction of a multi-use trail connection between Eldorado Canyon State Park and Walker Ranch, 2. continuing to work with OSMP and CPW in collaboration with stakeholders to develop and implement strategies that mitigate capacity related issues affecting the greater Eldorado Springs community, and 3. ensuring capacity mitigation efforts are in place before the trail is opened to biking.

**Attachments**

- A. Public comments received from Dec.10, 2018 through Jan 14, 2019
- B. Walker Ranch Property Analysis from 2015 Five-Year Visitor Study
- C: Jan 16, 2019 memorandum from OSMP staff to the Open Space Board of Trustees

## Public comments received between Dec. 9, 2018 and Jan. 14, 2019

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From: Janna Gustafson [mailto:jannagust@gmail.com]  
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2019 1:33 PM  
Subject: Please come

As a neighbor of Eldorado Springs, I invite you to come for a visit. Please drive through Eldorado State Park all the way to the Ranger visitor station at the end of the road. This will give you insight in preparing yourself for the upcoming discussions concerning adding cars carrying mountain bikes to this road.

Thank you,  
Janna Gustafson

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From: Mike Vandeman [mailto:mjvande@pacbell.net]  
Sent: Saturday, January 12, 2019 9:09 PM  
To: Boulder County POS Info  
Subject: Mountain Biking in Our Parks

Re: [http://www.dailycamera.com/guest-opinions/ci\\_32379711/wendy-sweet-mountain-biking-community-supports-eldo-walker](http://www.dailycamera.com/guest-opinions/ci_32379711/wendy-sweet-mountain-biking-community-supports-eldo-walker)

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <https://mjvande.info/mtb10.htm>. It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking...

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <https://mjvande.info/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Mountain bikers also love to build new trails - legally or illegally. Of course, trail-building destroys wildlife habitat - not just in the trail bed, but in a wide swath to both sides of the trail! E.g. grizzlies can hear a human from one mile away, and smell us from 5 miles away. Thus, a 10-mile trail represents 100 square miles of destroyed or degraded habitat, that animals are inhibited from using. Mountain biking, trail building, and trail maintenance all increase the number of people in the park, thereby preventing the animals' full use of their habitat. See <https://mjvande.info/scb9.htm> for details.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video:  
<http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous:  
[https://mjvande.info/mtb\\_dangerous.htm](https://mjvande.info/mtb_dangerous.htm) .

For more information: <https://mjvande.info/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

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**From:** Laura Osborn

**Sent:** Friday, January 11, 2019 11:11 AM

**Subject:** Proposed Eldorado Springs - Walker bike trail

As a Boulder County Parks and Open Space volunteer for the past twelve years at the Meyer's Gulch portion of Walker Ranch, I wish to state my misgivings in regard to the proposed bike trail between Eldorado Springs State Park and Walker Ranch.

Due to over-crowding and the parking limitations at the State Park, many bike riders will park at the Walker Ranch or Meyer's Gulch trailheads on Flagstaff Road. Meyer's Gulch has approximately 39 spaces available for trail users. Families, elderly and nature lovers are the main visitors to Meyer's Gulch. On the weekends, these spaces fill quickly. Parking is prohibited along Flagstaff Road. As there is a connector trail to main Walker parking lot from Meyer's Gulch, mountain bikers would potentially impact the ability for others to visit this trailhead. Once this trail is established, the impact on the entire Walker Ranch area will be significant. Not only would commercial groups use this area, as they do all areas on Flagstaff Mountain. This trail would attract users from the nearby towns outside Boulder County, including the Denver area. The impact on Boulder County residents and current user groups would be quite detrimental.

Construction of the new multi-use trail would significantly impact hikers. If the multi-use trail is approved, the County should consider closing the trail to bikes on specific days. This would enable hikers to have a safe and enjoyable experience on designated days. For this reason, Boulder County's Betasso Preserve currently closes the trails to bikers on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The proposed N4 trail could significantly impact wildlife and vegetation on approximately 20 acres of land which is currently designated as a Habitat Conservation Area. Bikes are restricted to the main trail and are prohibited on

the four fire roads at Meyer's Gulch mainly for this reason. Over the past 12 years, I have noticed a decline in observations of wildlife such as Dusky Grouse, bears, bobcats and other sensitive species. I attribute this decline to the increase of user groups on the Meyer's Homestead Trail. Constructing a new trail through an area which has a long history of shielding animals from humans will negatively disrupt most species within the HCA.

Laura Osborn  
Boulder, Colorado

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**From:** Betina Mattesen  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 10, 2019 10:16 AM  
**Subject:** Birdwatching and Quiet Use - EldoradoTrail

I had incredible bird sightings on the high cliffs while on the City portion of the Eldorado Trail the other day. I always hike with binoculars. People often ask me what I've seen and seem to tune in more to what's around them. I feel like they're a good reminder that the natural world is more than an outdoor gymnasium. Contemplative connections with nature - Vitamin N - are essential for us all.

It's hard to imagine this tradition of quiet hiking and wildlife appreciation not being destroyed with intensive Denver-Boulder bike use, especially on the levels being predicted.

I don't hate bikers - I pedal around on my bike too - but it's not my religion. But I think biking's impact on public land is the new extractive industry. It is funded by companies flocking to CO selling very expensive mechanized and motorized bikes. Many Boulder County bikers have been irresponsible in building unsustainable trail systems motorized dirt bikers now love. Temperament tends to be entitled and petulant. When I wrote in a forum that a proposed trail might degrade habitat someone responded "oh no, all the baby animals are going to die". A rec planner I know said they can't take no for an answer. And, of course, the culture is rogue and some enjoy making and poaching illegal trails. In Boulder we had "The Angry Ranger" Trail on Flagstaff through golden eagle nesting habitat.

I do expect you to set an example and promote environmental literacy and a good land ethic for those who lack it. Bikers may thank you when they're older and discover something important to them on the beautiful, high, quiet Eldorado Trail that they didn't catch from the seat of a fast bike. Thanks.

Betina Mattesen  
Illegal Motorized Task Force  
Forest Watch  
Nederland

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**From:** brigitte tawa  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 09, 2019 1:24 PM  
**Subject:** Biking trail junction between walker ranch and eldorado canyon

My name is Brigitte Tawa and I live on Prado dr by Eldorado spring dr for the last 12 years.

I am writing to you for I will not be able to attend the meeting in January and I have just been informed of this project.

I hope you will take the time to read my email and answer me.

I am very concern about this junction because it is going to create way more traffic on Eldorado spring dr which is already an issue on the week ends and the town of Eldorado springs does not have the parking facility to accept more traffic at all. It is already always an issue especially in the summer and the park is always full.

How are you going to solve this?

I do not see any plan on parking addition in the proposal. I wonder anyway where you would do it for the canyon is very narrow.

I feel for the people of Eldorado springs who will have to deal with even more traffic.

I don't understand why it is that urgent to make that connection. We have already plenty of bike trails around the city and county. Plus it does have an impact on the quality of the trails and would require even more maintenance.

Could you let me know if the city and county even thought about all this?

I realize how much the biking community here has a power but it is where the city and county should take in consideration every body and not just the biking people.

Unless you are thinking of establishing a shuttle from 93/Eldorado spring dr to the canyon to eliminate the over load of traffic, I don't see how you are going to find space for all those cars.

I am looking for your answer.

Please let me know if there are also other way for me to heard on that project.

Thank you,

Brigitte Tawa

4440 Prado dr  
Boulder CO 80303

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**From:** "Laura Osborn" <[losborn@indra.com](mailto:losborn@indra.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, December 16, 2018 2:03:59 PM

**Subject:** Daily Camera Editorial on Eldo-Walker trail

As a 12 year volunteer at Meyer's Gulch (Walker Ranch) under the supervision of Susan Spaulding, I feel that the members of POSAC see this editorial which was published today (Sunday 16 Dec. in the Daily Camera). Would you be so kind as to forward this to the members prior to the meeting on the 20th. Many of these members may not subscribe to the Camera and I feel that a few good points have been brought up for consideration. I would appreciate a response. Thank you,

**From the Daily Camera, Sunday, December 16th**

Guest commentary

*Slow down on bike trail proposal*

By Roger Briggs

Mountain bikers have long envisioned a trail connecting Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch, and over the last 20 years the city of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, Boulder County Parks and Open Space and Colorado Parks and Wildlife have all committed to exploring the feasibility of such a trail. These three agencies recently

released a 132page feasibility study ([boulder county.org/open-space/ management/eldo-walkerconnection](http://bouldercounty.org/open-space/management/eldo-walkerconnection)) concluding that it would be possible to construct such a trail, about 5 miles long, roughly following the existing Eldorado Trail. Some of the proposed trail would be entirely new construction and some would be shared with the hiking trail.

This connector trail is the missing link that would create a continuous system of mountain biking trails from Superior to Walker Ranch, including the existing single-track at Marshall Mesa, Flatirons Vista, Doudy Draw and Spring Brook. Mountain bikers would be able to access this system from many entry points along this corridor — people coming from Golden could start at the Flatirons Vista trailhead or Marshall Mesa, other visitors from the Denver area could start anywhere from Superior to Marshall Mesa, Doudy Draw and Eldorado Canyon, while Boulderites could ride from home.

Once in this system of trails the possibilities for loop rides and out-and-back rides would be endless, and the total miles of connected trails would far surpass any other destination within an hour of Denver. Boulder will have created a truly first-class mountain biking amenity, arguably the best in the Front Range. The over-crowded trailheads in Jefferson County that now serve the Denver-metro area would see some relief as riders discover the Marshall-Walker corridor.

This sounds great to me as a mountain biker, but there is a bigger picture. From this future vision, let's rewind back to the present, to one Saturday last summer when I took an early morning hike in Eldorado Canyon and was leaving the park around 10 a.m. As I exited at the east gate I found a line of cars seven deep waiting to enter the park, and at that moment the "Park Full" sign was going up, as it does most weekends. The many cars winding up through town were all being turned back, to search for parking places further down. Just below the park is the Hot Springs Pool, whose owners rightfully reserve their spaces for paying customers.

The rest of Eldorado Springs is well posted with no parking signs, so the slow caravan of cars continued down through town to where the pavement of Highway 128 begins. As I reached this point, there were cars parked along the highway as far as I could see.

Driving out, I finally passed the last parked car and took a deep breath, just in time to see more cars ahead parked along the highway, overflowing from Doudy Draw and South Mesa Trail. All of these places, right now, are beyond capacity on peak days.

One idea is to run a shuttle bus on peak days from Highway 93 into Eldorado to alleviate parking problems. Mountain bikers would not need to ride the shuttle bus because they can park at many starting points and ride from any of them. It will be the climbers, hikers and picnickers — anyone not on a bike — who will be riding the shuttle bus when all the parking is gone in Eldorado Canyon and cars line the highway all the way out to Doudy Draw.

Here's what I can't resolve.

The entire corridor from Marshall Mesa to Eldorado Canyon is beyond capacity right now, yet we are considering something that would attract large numbers of new visitors. How will we manage all these new visitors from the entire Denver metro area who want to come to the biggest and best mountain biking area around? What will be the impact on all the other visitors? We must address these questions fully, honestly and with empathy.

If we want to go further in the planning of the Eldorado-Walker Connector Trail it should be with eyes wide open, fully understanding what an attraction this would be and thoroughly considering its impacts on non-biking visitors, the town of Eldorado Springs and Eldorado Canyon State Park. We need to slow down and make a sound decision that brings the greatest good.

There are several opportunities to make your voice heard, including the Jan. 24 Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee meeting, or the Feb. 13 city of Boulder Open Space Board meeting or the Boulder County Commissioners' March meeting.

*Roger Briggs is a Boulder native who mountain bikes, climbs and hikes.*

**From:** Tim M Hogan [mailto:Tim.Hogan@colorado.edu]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 10, 2018 3:32 PM  
**Subject:** Eldo-Walker project

Friends,

I had been out of town for the past ten days when I sat down to examine the recent information and submit comments yesterday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. Much to my chagrin, I discovered there was little more than a minimal survey. I have spent some time today searching for emails to whom I might submit more substantive comments. I hope these might be admitted into the record.

Regarding mountain biking, a recent Patagonia catalog wrote: "It's hard to imagine a better region than Colorado's Front Range for any cyclist to cut his or her teeth. The cycling communities there are deeper than anywhere in the country, maybe the world." I include this here to emphasize the untoward pressure such a community places upon OSMP/BOCO lands; a pressure on full display at recent open houses and in the compendium of initial public comments on the Eldo-Walker project.

Mountain bikers are always ready to trumpet their willingness to share the trails with runners and hikers, equestrians and dog walkers, but the fact of the matter is once bikes are allowed on a trail these other users are pushed away and the routes become a single user bike track. From the southern grasslands and Doudy Draw, to the northern foothills and the route being engineered through the HCA on Joder, to the miles of trails available to bikers on County Open Space and on USFS lands throughout the Boulder District, our public land agencies have been more than accommodating to riders. Add to this the amenities provided by the city and county in the form of bike parks and an extraordinary system of bike paths, and one can only ask: What more does the cycling community want?

It appears the southern route has been taken off the table. On the other hand, the northern alignment lies proximate to one of the least travelled Habitat Conservation Areas in the Boulder Mt. Parks, the area on the west side of Bear and South Boulder Peaks. Increasing use on the southern boundary of the HCA will lead to increased fragmentation and impacts on wildlife. The current trail traverses steep, south facing slopes, necessitating excavation and rerouting to accommodate the increase in visitor impact. Over time, multi-use trails require increased management and maintenance. Equestrian use on the current trail is relatively light, but anticipated bike use could easily increase the need for maintenance many times over. As alluded to above, I fear the introduction of riders will result in the trail becoming largely a mountain bike route as hikers, equestrians, and runners are driven away by the constant need to be looking over their shoulder for bikes moving at startlingly rates of speed. The mountain bike community is dismissive of this claim, but it has occurred on public lands across Boulder County, as near to the proposed route as Doudy Draw and its environs.

While I am relieved the southern route appears to have been set aside due to ecological and economic costs, I am wary of the northern route. This alignment has been looked at numerous times over the years, and dismissed for a variety of reasons. If it was easy it would have been done a long time ago. Not only is the route itself problematic; it seems it might very well become a magnet for riders from around the Front Range flooding Eldorado State Park, exacerbating congestion at the west end of the park. While some locals might ride from town, one can only imagine the line of cars from riders coming from Denver and elsewhere.

While my sense is the No Action alternative is being used as a “baseline,” I hope it will be seriously considered as an option if the social and ecological impacts become insurmountable. Not all public lands can accommodate all user groups, nor should they be asked to do so.

Thank you for your consideration ...

Tim Hogan  
Boulder 80304

## Walker Ranch Loop

134 respondents

### Property Description

Walker Ranch Loop offers challenging terrain on approximately 10 miles of multi-use trails. The property is close to Boulder, off of Flagstaff Road. The park also contains 2.5 miles of South Boulder Creek where visitors can fish. Respondents' answers reflected the following demographics, visitation patterns, and opinions:

### Visitor Demographics

A visitor to Walker Ranch Loop is likely:

- From Boulder (35%), outside Colorado (13%), or outside Boulder County (not Denver) but in Colorado (13%)
- To not live in Boulder County (37%) or have lived in Boulder County for 15 or more years (20%)
- To be male (66%)

### Primary Visitor Activities

	2015	2010	2005
Hike	43%	42%	33%
Bike	34%	41%	63%
Run	9%	10%	2%
Fishing	8%	2%	--
Walk the Dog	3%	--	--
Other	3%	5%	4%

Walker Ranch Loop has:

- The second highest percentage of people who visit with friends, along with Walker Ranch Meyers Homestead Trail (38%)
- A high percentage of first time visitors (41%)
- The second highest percentage of people that visit once or twice a year, along with Caribou Ranch (22%)

### Visitor Experience

Visitors rated Walker Ranch Loop an average of 9.0 and Walker Ranch Ethel Harrold an average of 8.6 out of 10.0 based on:

- Good/great trail and/or park (43 comments)
- Aesthetic beauty, scenery, and views (37 comments)
- Well maintained, clean (29 comments)
- Good fishing (9 comments)
- Quiet, not crowded (8 comments)

### Visitor Feedback

The most common improvements mentioned for Walker Ranch Loop were:

- Better and/or more maps/signs/trail mile-markers (10 comments)
- Provide a water fountain (9 comments)
- More trails (9 comments)

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Board of Trustees

FROM: Dan Burke, Interim Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks  
 Steve Armstead, Interim Deputy Director  
 Mark Davison, Community Connections and Partnerships Division Manager  
 Mark Gershman, Planning and Design Supervisor  
 Kacey French, Planner II

DATE: January 16, 2019

SUBJECT: Written Information: Eldorado Canyon to Walker Ranch Connection

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**Background**

For many years, there has been a desire to create a multiuse link from Eldorado Canyon State Park (ECSP) to Walker Ranch. To that end, Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS), the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) (the partner agencies), partnered to complete a feasibility study and planning process to consider opportunities for the multi-use connection.

After collaboration to complete the feasibility study and careful consideration of the findings, the partner agencies jointly recommended the North Route (using segment N1-N2-N4) as the preliminary recommendation for a preferred alignment. There also was agreement among the project partners that current challenges such as parking capacity, congestion, park access, and the Eldorado Springs interface must be addressed as part of future planning, design, and construction phases.

Staff provided an update to the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) in December and presented the feasibility report, preliminary partner recommendation, and results of the community questionnaire. The December 2018 questionnaire asked respondents how supportive, or not, they were of the preliminary recommendation and reasons why. At that time the board requested additional information to support their consideration of making a preferred alignment recommendation as an agenda item in February.

This update focuses on those topics for which the board requested additional clarifications and/or information on and includes:

- Supplemental information on the North Route including impacts to the Western Mountain Parks Habitat Conservation Area (HCA).
- Potential tools and management strategies to address the implementation challenges, especially those surrounding the Eldorado Canyon State Park interface and capacity related topics such as access, parking, and congestion.
- The process and OSBT involvement in future planning, design, and implementation phases.

**Consideration of North Route impacts to the Western Mountain Parks HCA**

The potential impacts to the Western Mountain Parks HCA have been evaluated and informed decisions from the outset of the feasibility study and planning process. This section of the memo will highlight previous decisions relating to HCA impacts, and impacts related specifically to consideration of the alternative alignments N4 and N3 on the HCA, and other differences between N3 and N4. North Route alternatives can be viewed in **Attachment A**.

Previous decisions relating to Western Mountain Parks HCA impacts – routes considered, dismissed, and retained

At the beginning of the process two potential routes (in addition to N3 and N4) were identified for consideration to connect the western end of the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail to Walker Ranch but were dismissed. They were not included in the feasibility report due to a higher level of concern about the impacts to the HCA. These other routes are shown in **Attachment B**. Routes 4 and 5 (as numbered in the attachment) extended north from the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail, with route 4 returning south to connect back into the existing trail area and route 5 continuing north and connecting into the Ethel Harold Trailhead. Although these conceptual alignments were considered to provide sustainable trail routes and visitor experience advantages, they were removed from further consideration due to concerns about fragmentation and other impacts to wildlife habitat, more specifically the number of crossing of riparian habitat/drainages in an HCA.

Alternative N4 was intentionally designed and specifically studied to assess if it were possible and how to best minimize impacts to the HCA while meeting desired trail standards and visitor experiences. If selected as the preferred alternative future design work will continue to focus on refinements that minimize impacts to natural resources within the HCA while meeting desired trail standards and visitor experiences.

HCA impacts of the North Route and between N3 and N4

Environmental impacts were evaluated in the feasibility report by analyzing potential impacts to the following evaluation criteria:

- Wetland and Riparian Habitat
- Significant Natural Communities
- Wildlife Habitat Impacts
- Undisturbed Habitat Impacts

This section of the memo highlights the differences between N3 and N4 based on the above evaluation criteria and provide supplemental information where relevant.

*Wetland and Riparian Habitat*

The feasibility study evaluated riparian habitat impacts based on the number of times the trail routes cross mapped riparian areas which were recently mapped on OSMP. The conceptual N4 alignment would result in two new stream crossings and removal and restoration of the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail (N3) stream crossing. The N3 alignment would retain the existing stream crossing.

The feasibility study concluded N4 would have minor impacts, and N3 would be insignificant since the route follows the existing trail corridor through the wetland and riparian habitat. The existing N3 crossing and the N4 crossings are ephemeral streams with limited riparian vegetation contributing to resource staff's assessment that the impacts are minimal. Additionally, the current (N3) stream crossing is physically unsustainable and over time impacts to the HCA would likely occur due to trail widening and erosion in the drainage. Improving the physical sustainability of the N3 stream crossing would require substantial infrastructure such as a bridge, less developed infrastructure improvements would not significantly improve the trail sustainability and require on-going maintenance. The new (N4) stream crossings will be constructed sustainably, with minimal infrastructure, and likely minimize long-term impacts on riparian habitat over time.

### *Significant Natural Communities*

The two sensitive plant communities that N4 comes close to or intersects the periphery of are both shrub savannahs dominated by mountain mahogany. These shrub communities occur on the south and southwest facing slopes which could be avoided, or impacts minimized during future trail design phases. Due to the ability to entirely or mostly avoid sensitive natural communities the impact to significant natural communities in the HCA for N3 and N4 were considered similar and insignificant.

### *Wildlife Habitat Impacts*

Wildlife habitat impacts were evaluated by assessing trail route impacts to the following:

- Sensitive wildlife habitat
- Golden eagle half mile nest buffers
- Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM) known and potential habitat
- Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) Critical Wildlife Habitat areas
- CPW - Tracked Species Habitat

This section of the memo will focus on the wildlife evaluation criteria most relevant to OSMP lands and/or the north route and include sensitive wildlife habitat, Golden eagle ½ mile nest buffer, and PMJM Habitat. The north route does not intersect BCCP Critical Wildlife Habitat areas. The CPW species data was also reviewed, and recognizing it is at a broad scale indicated there are no/insignificant impacts associated with re-routes proposed along the north route.

### *Sensitive Wildlife Habitat*

The polygons labeled as “Sensitive Wildlife Habitat” (**Attachment C: North Routes Sensitive Wildlife Habitat**) includes buffers around observations of flammulated owls and the known location of Cooper's hawk nests. The small re-routes required of section N2 would occur outside of the nesting season to minimize disturbance. Based on staff experiences and comparable observations throughout OSMP, a perceived increase in human use of the trail is unlikely to impact them as the distance from the trail and location of the nests on the landscape offer adequate protection and buffer from trail users. Section N2 is the only north trail segment that intersects sensitive wildlife habitat and the impacts are anticipated to be insignificant.

### *Golden eagle half mile nest buffers*

Figure 9 in the feasibility study (**Attachment C: North Routes Sensitive Wildlife Habitat**) depicts a half mile buffer around a Golden Eagle nest along the South Boulder Peak ridge. There has not been a nesting attempt at this nest site for the past 10 years. Because of this, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFS) would not consider this an active nest per the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (which considers eagle nests still active 5 years following the last nesting attempt). Additionally, there is 1000 ft elevational difference between the nest (7880 ft) and the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail (6880 ft.). In wildlife staff's expert judgement and using information and observations from similar situations with golden eagle nests across OSMP (e.g. Lefthand Palisades, Skunk Canyon, and Flagstaff), this vertical difference in conjunction with the linear distance between the nest and the trail provides sufficient protection for the historic nesting site, even with an increase in human use of the trail. In addition, the section of trail within the buffer will only undergo minor re-routes, and construction to complete these would occur outside of the eagle nesting season. N2 is the only north trail segment that intersects the Golden eagle half mile nest buffer and the impacts are anticipated to be insignificant.

*PMJM Potential Habitat*

The USFS would be consulted in regard to PMJM potential habitat and trail design would be guided by the consultation to limit impacts. The only segments to intersect PMJM potential habitat are N3 and N4, and both intersect the same habitat and impacts are anticipated to be similar and insignificant.

*Undisturbed Habitat Impacts*

In the feasibility study, habitat impacts were evaluated by assessing the overall change to large tracts of undisturbed (without trails) habitat. The multi-jurisdictional undisturbed habitat along the North Route was estimated at 1,613 acres. N3 would result in an estimated 3 acres (1%) loss. N4 would result in an estimated 24 acres (2% lost). Both N3 and N4 were considered to have insignificant impacts to the multi-jurisdictional undisturbed habitat block.

Per the board request to understand the impacts particular to the Western Mountain Parks HCA a similar analysis was undertaken. Attachment D, Figure 1 shows the HCA. The Western Mountain Parks HCA is 4079 acres. N3 would result in an estimated two acres (or .05%) loss to the HCA. N4 would result in an estimated 19 acres (or .5%) loss to the HCA.

However, the Western Mountain Parks HCA is not an undisturbed habitat block, there are several existing trails that cross the area. Using similar methods and buffers as used in the feasibility study, the undisturbed OSMP habitat block in the HCA is approximately 794 acres (**Attachment D: Figure 2**). Segment N3 would result in an estimated 2 acres (or .3%) loss to undisturbed habitat. N4 would result in an estimated 19 acres (or 2.4%) loss to undisturbed habitat. (**Attachment D: Figure 3**). Given the similar acres and percent of undisturbed habitat lost staff considers the impacts to be insignificant.

Visitor Experience and Trail Sustainability differences between N3 and N4

While the environmental impacts of N3 and N4 are the same or similar there are large differences for trail sustainability and the visitor experience. These are highlighted below:

- *Visitor Experience/Trail Aesthetic and Character* -While all of N4 will likely be rideable for advanced and intermediate riders, it is estimated by OSMP staff that approximately 75% of N3 will likely be rideable for an advanced rider. Approximately up to 25% will be hike-a-bike for advanced riders, and even more intermediate riders. N3 will be significantly more difficult than N4 and has very limited flexibility to incorporate a range of difficulty or adjust the difficulty during the design phase when compared with the N4 alternative.
- *Trail Sustainability and Maintenance* – Segment N4 would achieve the desired bike trail standards, while substantial portions of N3, approximately 75% cannot meet desired design standards. As such, the costs to maintain N3 will be higher.
- *Visitor Conflict Management* - The potential for visitor conflict along N3 will be higher as the trail will not be designed with appropriate sight lines, grades and other techniques that can minimize potential conflicts.

**Best Management Practices and other potential management strategies to address implementation challenges.**

The feasibility study and public comments identified challenges to successful implementation of a multi-use connection due to existing conditions and constraints that exist in the park and the surrounding town site of Eldorado Springs. Particular challenges exist regarding state park access and parking. These conditions currently present challenges, and it is anticipated that the multi-use trail would increase park visitation by an estimated 7% (up to about 60 additional trail visitor per day, on average).

Staff heard interest from the OSBT that in addition to an interagency commitment, a better understanding of the best management practices, tools and management strategies would be helpful to provide reasonable assurances that those challenges and other issues could be addressed. If the North Route is

approved as the preferred alignment, the next step will be a public process to identify the most appropriate tools and management strategies to address implementation challenges. The tables below list potential tools, best practices and management strategies for consideration; at this time there are no commitments or decisions regarding specific actions or strategies except for those specifically identified (actions denoted with an \*). The intent of sharing this information is to provide an idea of the range of practices that could be employed and/or considered.

<b>Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Tools</b>
Locally fund new seasonal shuttles that connect remote parking to trailheads/entrances
*Redesign ECSP entrance station to provide a turnaround for vehicles
Road improvements: Boulder County, CPW, and Artesian Springs negotiate agreement for improvement of private road through Eldorado Springs
* Parking enforcement of illegal parking violations in Eldorado Springs and along Highway 170
*Paid parking for non-residents: OSMP southern trailheads currently charge a parking fee for visitors who reside outside of Boulder County.
On-line or mobile parking reservation system
Reconfigure/redesign parking areas to increase parking supply
Paid parking for all visitors
Variable parking pricing based on demand
Increased funding for enforcement
Increase/expand current parking areas
Partner with Transportation Network Companies (TNC). TNCs are organizations, such as Uber, that matches passengers with drivers via websites and mobile apps.
Provide dedicated drop off/pick up areas for TNC at trailheads/entrance stations
Traffic calming features
Trailhead/entrance station connections to bike network/lanes
Amend “no bikes” regulations at some trails that provide connections between and to trailheads
Social media promotions on “peak” and “off peak” days
Traffic management and enforcement plan for peak days
*Advance parking notification/variable message board (along 93 indicating when the park is at capacity)
*Prohibit entrance to ECSP by vehicle when all parking spots are taken
*Recordings and messaging stating there is no available parking
*Redirecting visitors to other properties
Parking webcams to display current supply
Carpool/vanpool spaces
Reduce parking at current trailheads
Purchase RTD service to expand local routes to trailheads/areas
Roadway access management (medians, curbs, and signs)

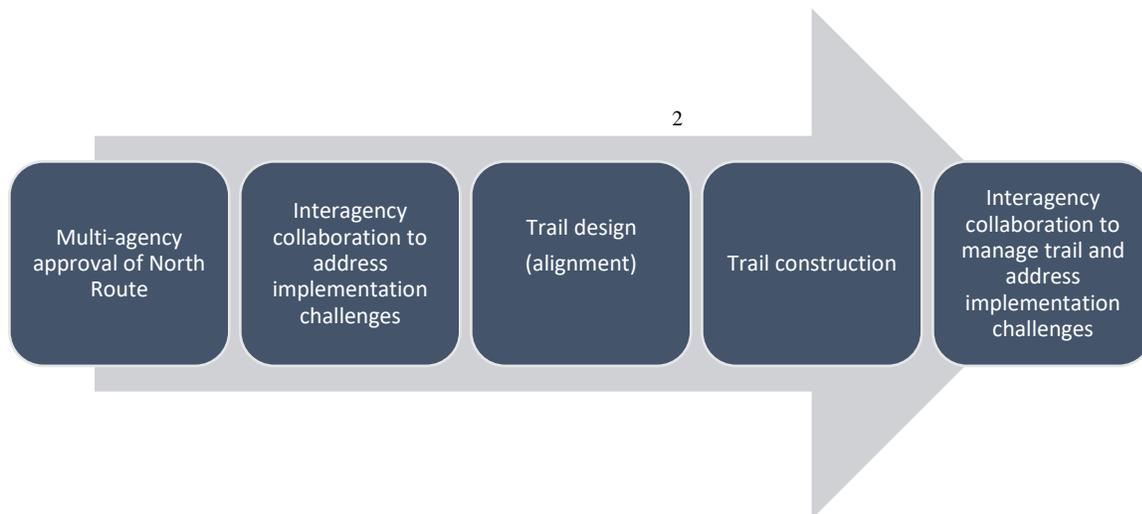
<b>Potential Visitor Conflict and Experience tools</b>
ECSP Trail improvements/expansions, such as the extension of the Streamside Trail to disperse visitors and provide an alternative to using the road
* Consistent trail courtesy messaging- OSMP, CPW, and Jefferson County Open Space are currently partnering on a trail courtesy study with the goal of consistent visitor messaging.
Require permits and reservations for access to Eldorado Canyon State Park
Eldorado Canyon State Park Visitor Use Management Plan
*Trail design elements to reduce bike speed and increase visibility

Signs to reinforce etiquette and warn of high use areas
*Education, outreach and enforcement
*Separated Uses - N1, within the state park, will retain the existing Eldorado Canyon Trail for climbing and hiking use. A new trail will accommodate biking. <sup>1</sup>
*Boulder Mountain Bike Patrol and other related volunteer trail stewardship efforts
Increased education, outreach and enforcement at and following trail opening

<b>Natural and Cultural Resource protection Best Management Practices</b>
* Pre-construction surveys to identify and avoid rare plants.
* Cultural resource survey to confirm presence or absence and mitigate/avoid as appropriate prior to construction
* Adherence to OSMP Ecological Best Management Practices for Trail Design, Construction, Maintenance, and Closure on OSMP lands to minimize impacts to the HCA.
*Adherence to OSMP Ecological Best Management Practices related to invasive plant management and mitigation

**Process and OSBT involvement in future planning, design, and implementation phases.**

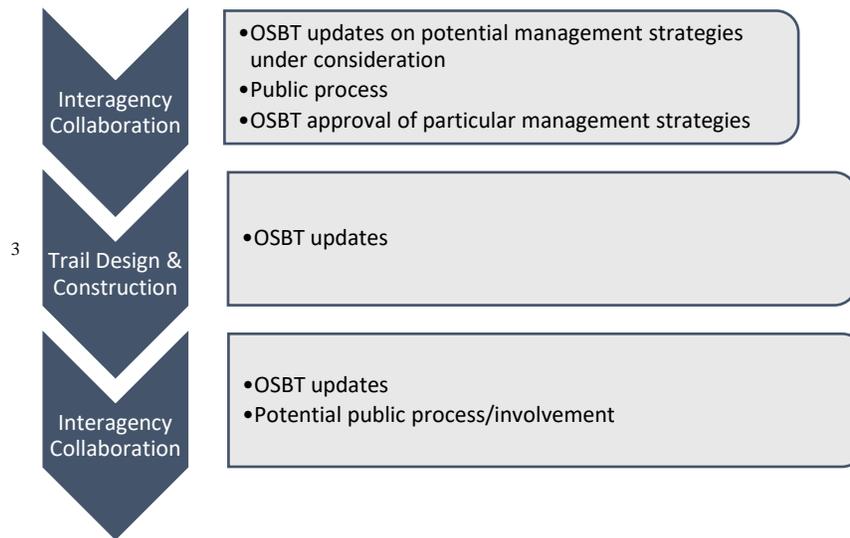
If the north route is approved the multi-year implementation process would follow the general steps outlined below:



<sup>1</sup> The section of N1 within the state, and for which there would be separate trails, is the most visited portion of the trail. The annual daily average for that portion of the trail is 125 daily visitors. OSMP visitor estimates for the portion of the Eldorado Canyon Trail on OSMP lands is 24 daily visitors. An estimated 81% of visitors just hike the first section of the trail within the state park, and for which a separate trail is proposed.

<sup>2</sup> If the joint agency recommendation is adopted and approved, the agencies may begin to seek funding for design and construction of the multi-use trail at the same time as the collaboration and public process to address implementation challenges. While trail design may occur concurrently, it is intended the trail will not be built until after the public process and implementation of strategies to address existing conditions.

The OSBT would be involved through the combination of updates and potential approvals/action items.



The OSBT would receive updates on implementation, including management strategies being considered to address implementation challenges, trail design progress and construction timing and when the process has completed an implementation phase and is progressing to a subsequent phase.

The OSBT would receive updates on the development and implementation of management strategies that are:

- Consistent with TSA commitments (West and Eldorado Mountain Doudy Draw (EMDD))
- Do not change existing OSMP regulations
- Do not require significant capital improvements/funds
- Primarily related to Eldorado Canyon State Park improvements

Management strategies that may be brought to the board as an action item, include, but are not limited to strategies that:

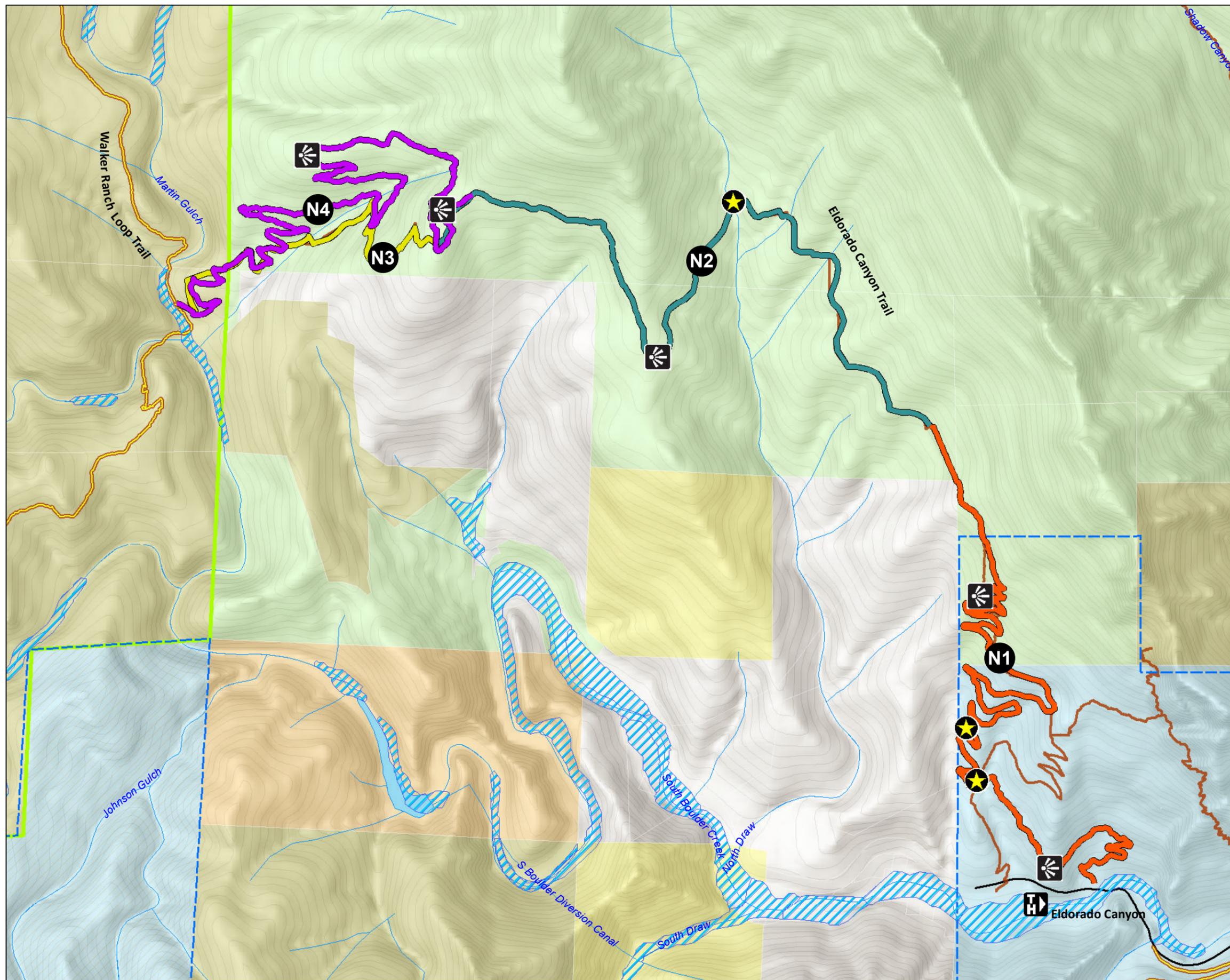
- Amend TSA commitments (West and EMDD)
- Amend existing OSMP regulations
- Require significant OSMP capital improvements/funds
- Require other significant financial investments by the city
- Are significant improvements or modifications to and/or impact OSMP lands.

<sup>3</sup> If the joint agency recommendation is adopted and approved, the agencies may begin to seek funding for design and construction of the multi-use trail at the same time as the collaboration and public process to address implementation challenges. While trail design may occur concurrently, it is intended the trail will not be built until after the public process and implementation of strategies to address existing conditions.

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**Figure 3.  
North Route Alignments**

Eldorado Canyon – Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study



**Alternative Sub-Routes**

- N1
- N2
- N3
- N4
- Riparian Areas and Wetlands
- ★ Point of Interest
- Primary Viewpoint
- H Trailhead
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Neighborhood Road
- Stream/River
- 20-Foot Contour

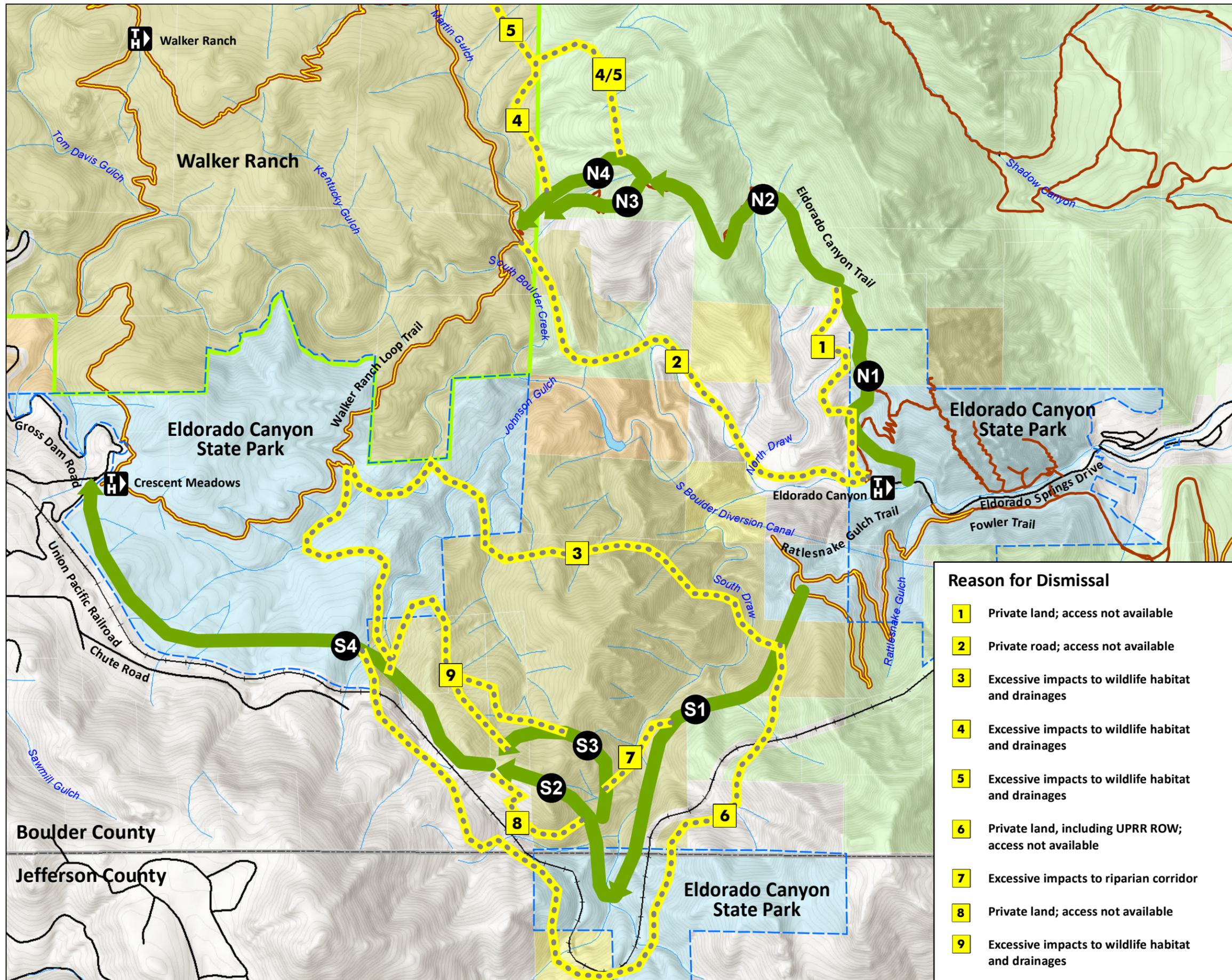
**Land Manager**

- Eldorado Canyon State Park Boundary
- Walker Ranch Boundary
- Boulder County
- City of Boulder
- State of Colorado – Boulder County
- State of Colorado
- Denver Water
- Bureau of Land Management



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**Figure 2. Routes Considered and Dismissed**



Eldorado Canyon – Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study

- 1 Routes Previously Dismissed from Analysis
- Routes under consideration
- H Trailhead
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Railroad
- Neighborhood Road
- Stream/River
- 20-Foot Contour

**Land Manager**

- Eldorado Canyon State Park Boundary
- Walker Ranch Boundary
- Boulder County
- City of Boulder
- Boulder County – City of Boulder
- State of Colorado – Boulder County
- State of Colorado
- Denver Water
- Bureau of Land Management

**Reason for Dismissal**

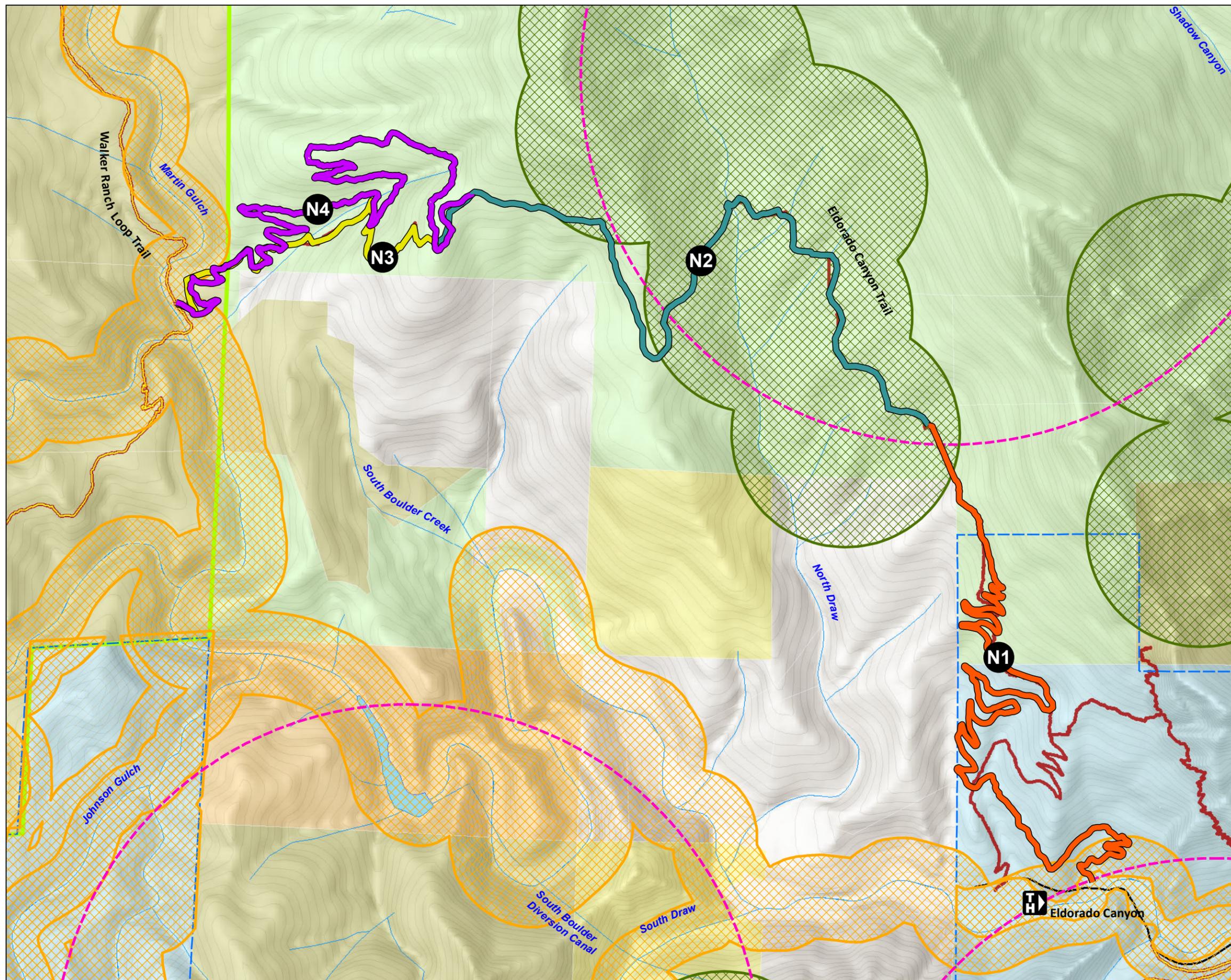
- 1 Private land; access not available
- 2 Private road; access not available
- 3 Excessive impacts to wildlife habitat and drainages
- 4 Excessive impacts to wildlife habitat and drainages
- 5 Excessive impacts to wildlife habitat and drainages
- 6 Private land, including UPRR ROW; access not available
- 7 Excessive impacts to riparian corridor
- 8 Private land; access not available
- 9 Excessive impacts to wildlife habitat and drainages



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**Figure 9. North Routes Sensitive Wildlife Habitat**

Eldorado Canyon – Walker Ranch Trail Feasibility Study



**Alternative Sub-Routes**

- N1
- N2
- N3
- N4

- Trailhead
- Golden Eagle 1/2-Mile Nest Buffer
- Sensitive Wildlife Habitat
- Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Habitat
- Existing Hiking Trail
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Neighborhood Road
- Stream/River
- 20-Foot Contour

**Land Manager**

- Eldorado Canyon State Park Boundary
- Walker Ranch Boundary
- Boulder County
- City of Boulder
- State of Colorado – Boulder County
- State of Colorado
- Denver Water
- Bureau of Land Management



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OSMP Western Mountain Parks HCA and Undisturbed Habitat Impacts

Figure 1. Western Mountain Parks HCA

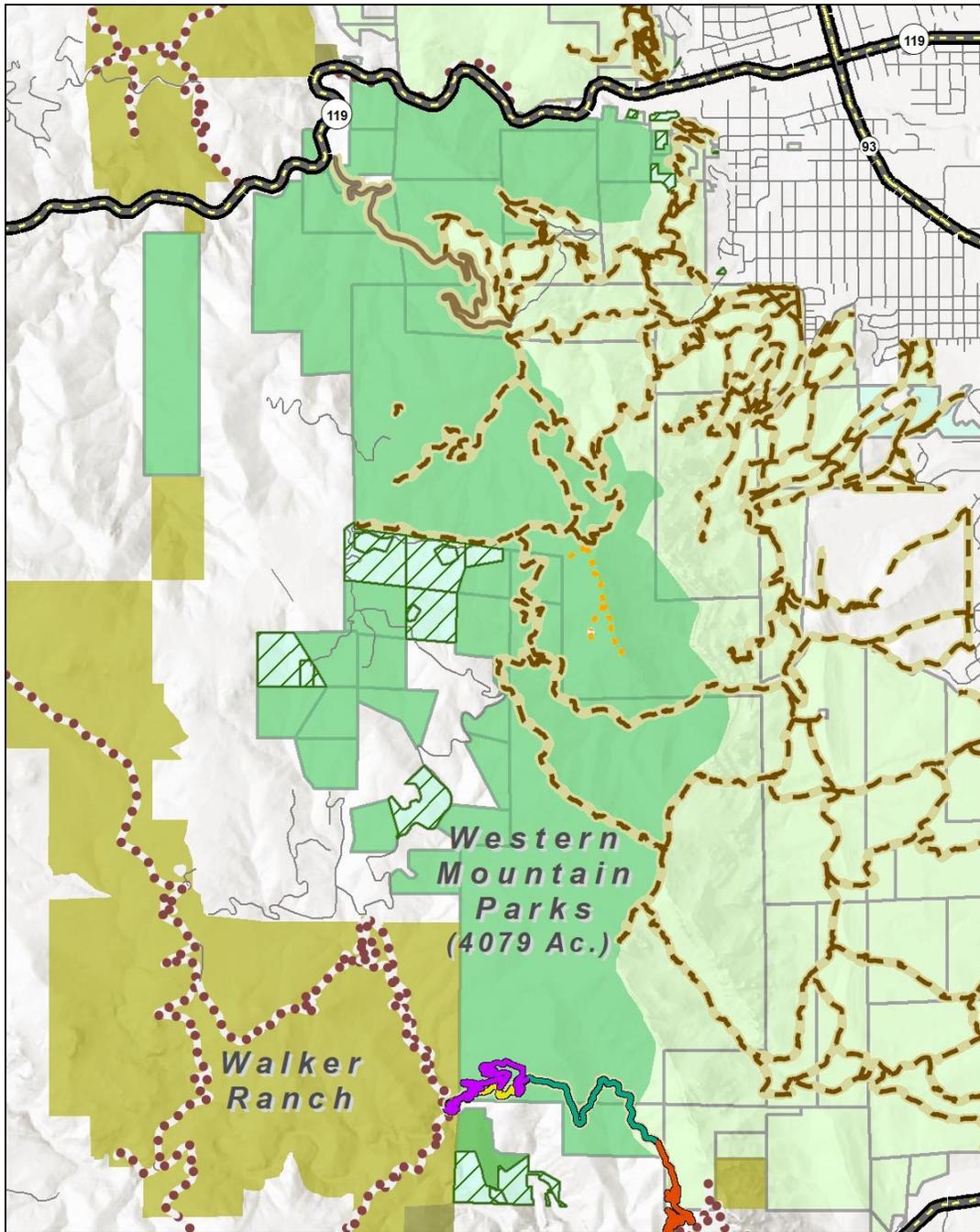


Figure 2. Current Undisturbed Habitat Impacts

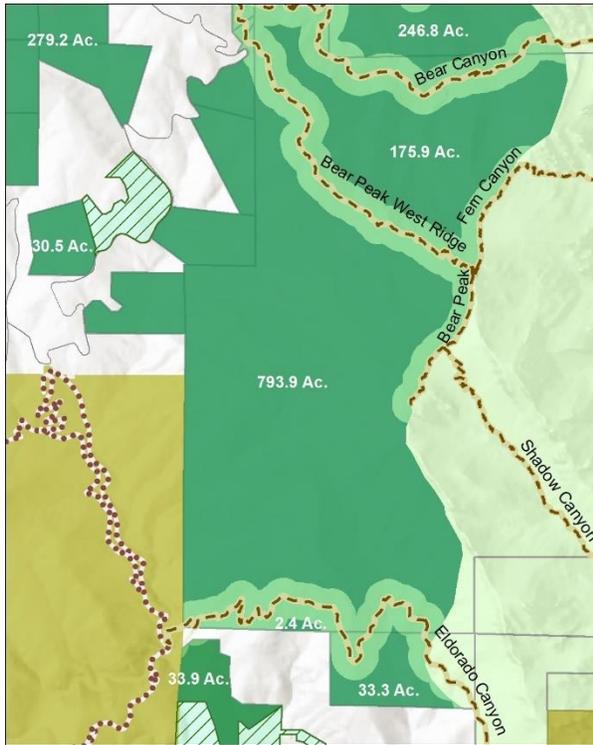


Figure 3. N4 Undisturbed Habitat Impacts

