Carolyn Holmberg Preserve
at Rock Creek Farm
Management Plan Update

Open House
March 11, 2020
4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
Presentation at 5 p.m.
Mission

To conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values

Goals

▶ To preserve rural lands and buffers
▶ To preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public
▶ To provide public outreach, partnerships, and volunteer opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of Boulder County’s open space
▶ To protect, restore, and interpret cultural resources for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations
▶ To provide quality recreational experiences while protecting open space resources
▶ To promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides
▶ To develop human resources potential, employ sustainable and sound business practices, and pursue technological advancements
Planning Area
1,124 acres

Key features

- Purchased to preserve the open space buffer zone and agricultural lands
- Birds of Prey Foundation rehabilitation center
- 3.3 miles of public trail system
- Designated cultural landscape
- Critical wildlife habitat areas
- Riparian creek corridors, wetlands, and significant natural communities
- Oil and gas wells
Cultural & Natural Resources
Dedication of Rock Creek Farm as Carolyn Holmberg Preserve

“Mighty Oaks From Tiny Acorns Grow”

The true measure of life is to plant trees under whose shade one does not intend to sit

CAROLYN BRYANT HOLMBERG (1944 - 1998) dedicated much of her life to nurturing a vision of locally owned, public open space which is now a nationally respected program. Carolyn served as the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Director from 1983 to 1998 and played a pivotal role in preserving 40,000 acres of farm, ranch, wetland and forests from development.

Rock Creek Farm was the first acquisition Carolyn promoted while she served as a volunteer member of the Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee in 1979. These open lands around you represent to her many of the values of open space preservation...wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, community buffers, historic landmarks, prime agricultural land and recreation.

Until her death, Carolyn continued in her tireless efforts to acquire special places like Rock Creek Farm for future generations. She, along with the writer Edward Abbey, believed deeply that...we must save a little room and time for the free play of the human spirit, the wild play of the animal kingdom and the space for tiny acorns to grow.

“An oasis of calm in the midst of urban life, Carolyn Holmberg Preserve offers a tranquil setting for both humans and wildlife.”
Estimated Visitors

2015 Visitor Study¹ (N=80)
- Broomfield (28%)
- Lafayette (21%)
- Louisville (15%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail Use</th>
<th>in 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stearns Lake Trailhead</td>
<td>35,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Miller Trail</td>
<td>15,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc Amora Link</td>
<td>15,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradleboard Trail²</td>
<td>8,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75,953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top three activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Point</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>N=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Hiking (43%)</td>
<td>Biking (24%)</td>
<td>Fishing (11%)</td>
<td>1,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Biking (38%)</td>
<td>Running (29%)</td>
<td>Hiking (15%)</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Biking (37%)</td>
<td>Hiking (29%)</td>
<td>Fishing (15%)</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹2015 Visitor Study includes system-wide demographics and satisfaction survey.
²The Cradleboard Trail was closed from mid-April to late July to protect sensitive wildlife in the area.
Fall U-Pick-Em Pumpkin Patch and Corn Maze
Proposed Plan Goals

Preserve & Enhance
- Critical wildlife habitats
- Unique stands of shortgrass prairie
- Wetlands and riparian areas
- Historic/archaeological resources

Maintain
- Agricultural production and associated water rights

Provide
- Compatible recreational use
Proposed Update Objectives

- Guide management of open space resources
- Identify opportunities for enhancement
- Provide for sustainable use and stewardship
- Incorporate input from public stakeholders
- Review the most up-to-date information
- Ensure plan is fiscally sound
Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm

Proposed vision

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm is a working landscape of farming, ranching, irrigation features, and reservoirs, intertwined with critical wildlife, wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats, that preserves its distinct history and provides regional trail connectivity and recreational amenities for current and future generations.
Proposed Plan

Update Topics

- Farm operations
- Water
- Visitor access and accessibility
- Historic buildings, cultural and paleontology resources
- Wildlife, riparian, and wetland habitat areas
- Grassland restoration
- Prairie dog management
- Birds of Prey Foundation operations
- Standard Operating Procedures
Visitor Trail Use / Wildlife

- Proximity of regional trail to nesting birds
- Seasonal wildlife closures of regional trail
- Detours that do not meet trail standards
Prairie Dog Policy
Land Designations

- Pink = No Prairie Dogs
- Blue = Habitat Conservation Area
  - 99-acre Habitat Conservation Area
- Orange = Multiple Objective Area
  - 40-acre preserve
  - Several hundred additional acres
Prairie Dogs / Farm Operations / Grassland Restoration

- Active prairie dog colonies
- Prairie dog encroachment
- Impacts to native grasses and rangeland

In 2014, staff and volunteers reinforced existing prairie dog barrier fencing at the prairie dog preserve.
Prairie Dogs / Farm Operations / Grassland restoration

- Prairie dog and cattle grazing impacts
- Extensive bare ground, prone to loss of soil
- Several invasive weed species

June 2019

November 2019
Historic Buildings / Farm Operations

- Suitability of farm headquarters site and historic buildings for modern farm operations
- Stewardship of historic buildings
Proposed Plan
Update Topics

- Farm operations
- Water
- Visitor access and accessibility
- Historic buildings, cultural and paleontology resources
- Wildlife, riparian, and wetland habitat areas
- Grassland restoration
- Prairie dog management
- Birds of Prey Foundation operations
- Standard Operating Procedures
Update Planning process

Internal Scoping
(Fall 2019)
- Renewed vision
- Desired future conditions
- What’s working
- Focused changes
- Data gaps

Initial Public Comment
(March/April 2020)
- Open house
- Online survey
- POSAC update

Plan Development
(May-July 2020)
- Existing conditions
- Options assessment
- Staff-preferred alternative(s)

Public Review
(Aug./Sept. 2020)
- Public meetings
- Site visit(s)
- 30-day public comment

Plan Adoption
(Fall 2020)
- Revise to reflect public comments
- POSAC hearing
- BOCC hearing
More information...

Visit boco.org/CHPplan
  ▶ All open house materials posted on the web page
  ▶ Online comment form to leave input

Contact me
  ▶ Marni Ratzel
    mratzel@bouldercounty.org
    303-678-6271
Questions?