



## **SECTION 04**

**CLOSING THE MANAGEMENT GAP**


# INTRODUCTION

The recommendations of this Plan build upon the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan, including management strategies for the overall Ring and specific strategies that are necessary for closing the southwest gap. Existing segments of the Ring have been implemented largely through the steadfast advocacy, leadership and many volunteer hours provided by Friends of the Peak with the support of stakeholders, federal, state and local agencies. Closing the southwest gap and long-term management of the Ring will require additional management and operational strategies that expand the roles of the partner agencies and current non-profit leadership. Consistent with the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan, each governmental agency will be responsible for implementation of the Ring within their respective jurisdiction. The Plan outlines clear roles for non-profit partners including:


- Vision, leadership & organizational structuring
- Fundraising
- Trail planning
- Trail construction
- Trail maintenance
- Interim management
- Operational strategies
- Plan implementation

In addition, the Plan seeks to leverage the energy and strengths of existing agencies and organizations in the Pikes Peak region that value the Ring.


# PLAN OBJECTIVES

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-  Review existing management and operational models for benchmarking


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  -  Identify currently available management, maintenance and operational resources


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  -  Identify resource gaps and community based, sustainable solutions


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  -  Identify policies, standards and procedures to guide the maintenance efforts of volunteers, community service groups and work crews

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  -  Identify funding opportunities for trail construction

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  -  Gain approval and implementation of Plan by city, county, state, federal and other land management agencies
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# VISION & LEADERSHIP

FOTP has served as the catalyst and community voice for implementation of the Ring. In 2016, TOSC added their voice of advocacy to the project and joined efforts with FOTP to pursue funding through GOCO to develop a master plan for the southwest gap and the management of the entire Ring, effectively becoming co-champions for the Ring. While the USFS Pikes Peak Ranger District and Colorado Springs Utilities are expressly identified as the early champions of the overall vision for the 1999 Pikes Peak Multi-Use Plan, the creation of a new advocate and management entity, envisioned as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused exclusively on the management of the Ring the Peak, is recommended to be the keeper and champion of the vision for completing the Ring and closing the southwest gap.

# BENCHMARKING

A key component to the Master Plan Process was to identify a sustainable operations and management model for the Ring. The Consultant Team evaluated six existing management organizations with similar attributes to the Ring. The analysis sought to understand why these benchmark organizations are successful and how to apply their traits to the unique characteristics of the Ring. The Consultant Team recognizes that each organization is unique and what works well in some contexts might not work well for the Ring. The extensive information collected through this process has been analyzed and summarized into key takeaways in following pages.



# ARKANSAS HEADWATERS RECREATION AREA - *Colorado*



The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) is recognized as one of the nation's most popular locations for whitewater rafting and kayaking on the Arkansas River the most commercially popular river in the United States. AHRA is managed by the Colorado State Parks and Wildlife Department. The following are the key takeaways from a phone conversation with Rob White, AHRA Park Manager.

## Trust

Gain the trust of the community. Respond to needs and concerns immediately.

## Citizens

Establish a Citizen Task Force (CTF) to work through issues. The CTF works on compromise and consensus.

## Rangers

Have seasonal or full-time peace officers/rangers for education and enforcement.

## Fees

Build support through user fees, commercial permitting fees and limited state funding.

# GEORGE S. MICKLESON TRAIL - *Black Hills, South Dakota*



The George S. Mickelson Trail passes through national forest land, with areas that pass through privately owned lands where trail use is restricted to the trail only. The George S. Mickelson Trail is maintained by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission. The following are the key takeaways from a phone conversation with Dana Garry-Reiprich, Park Manager, Black Hills Trails.

## Fees

Fees are collected at trailhead locations for use of the trail.

## Public

No fees are required for use of trails within municipalities.

## Rangers

Rangers are critical for education and enforcement. The presence of rangers on the trails is sufficient for compliance.

## Access

Provide access and facilities at regular frequency along trail

# RIO GRANDE TRAIL - *Pitkin County, Colorado*



The Rio Grande is a rails to trails project, which is built in the Aspen Branch of the historic Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. In 1997, the right-of-way corridor was purchased with a combination of funding by local governments, GOCO, Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, and the Colorado Department of Transportation. The following are the key takeaways from Gary Tennenbaum, Director of Pitkin County Open Space and Trails and from Brett Meredith, RFTA Trails and Corridor Manager.

## Organization

One organization manages trail. Consistent philosophies on management, regulations and maintenance.

## Volunteers

Volunteer organizations provide clean-up and other minimal trail projects on the lower portion of the trail.

## Permits

Unified event permitting process for use of entire trail. Monetary responsibility for any damage to trail.

## Funding

Majority of funding comes from transit fees and local open space taxes.

# THE COLORADO TRAIL- *Colorado*



The Colorado Trail is Colorado's premier long distance trail. Stretching almost 500 miles, it is maintained through voluntary and public involvement in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and BLM. The following are the key takeaways from a conversation with Bill Manning, Executive Director of The Colorado Trails Foundation.

## Make it Happen

Greater value to have trail than not even if it is in a temporary location. Find a way even if it's not the most desirable location.

## Presence

Keep a presence with all state and local jurisdictions to maintain relevancy and interest in the project.

## Rangers

Increased users does not equate to increased good stewards. Rangers are critical for education and enforcement.

## Active Board

Having a working, active Board with many skills is important.

# N & S SLOPE RECREATION AREAS - *Pikes Peak Region*



The South Slope watershed is a diverse and biologically rich landscape. Recreational opportunities are designed to be as low impact as possible to protect sensitive areas. The North and South Slope Recreation Areas are managed by the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services through an agreement with the Colorado Springs Utilities. The following are the key takeaways from conversation with Jon Carlson, City of Colorado Springs Special Improvement Maintenance Districts Administrator.

## Fees

Use of South Slope is restricted based on limited paid parking passes. Use of North Slope is based on fee paid to use Highway.

## Volunteers

Major trail maintenance is done by volunteer groups.

## Rangers

Having a ranger presence is critical for compliance with rules and regulations. Funding for rangers and operations comes from user fees.

## Location

Rangers should be trained with Wilderness First Aid and have communication devices to receive and send messages.

# TAHOE RIM TRAIL - *California*



The Tahoe Rim Trail is 165+ mile single-track trail open to hiking, equestrians and mountain biking. The trail circumnavigates the ridge lines of the Lake Tahoe Basin crossing six counties, four National Forests, three wilderness areas, two states and one state park. The following are a few of the key facts from Morgan Fessler Steel, Executive Director of the Tahoe Rail Trail Associations by means of a completed questionnaire.

## Local

Work with local businesses who benefit from increased recreational tourism as a result of the Trail.

## Organization

Management Plan which spells out responsibilities of all jurisdictions or organizations involved.

## Balance

Balance increased numbers of users while trying to preserve the user experience and the land.

## Funding

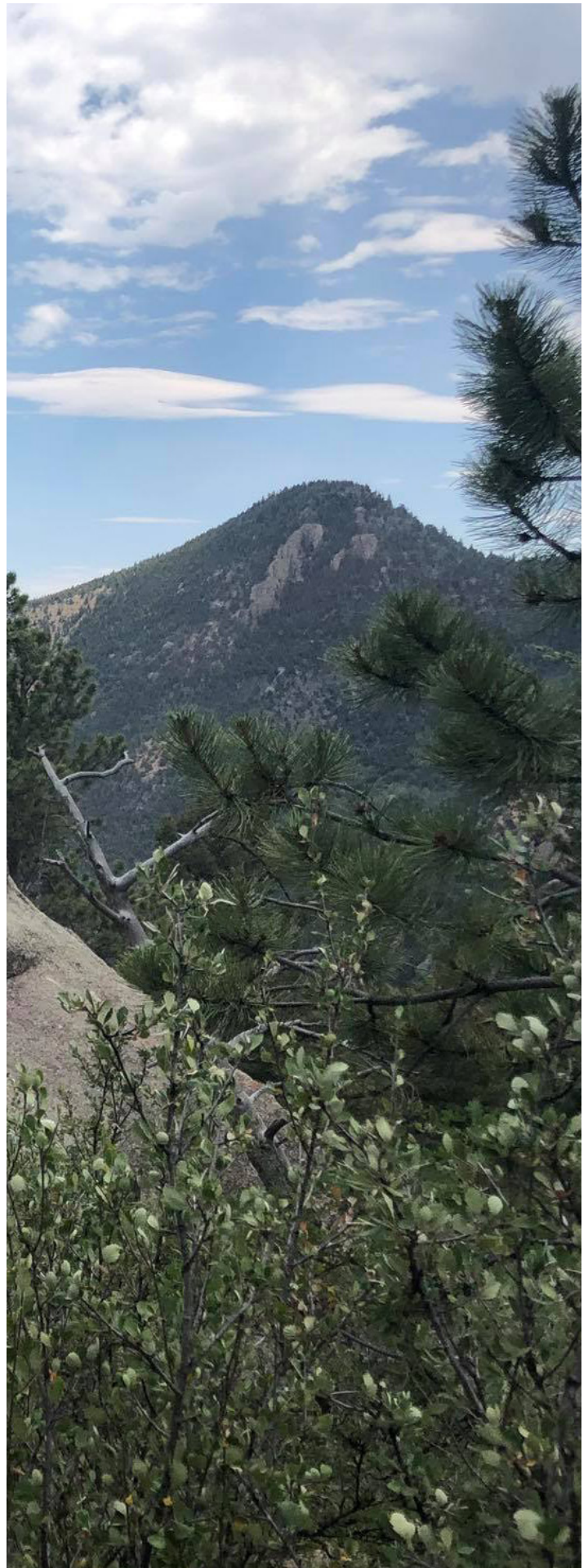
Funding for the trail and organization comes from user fees, membership and grants.

# LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

The scope and size of the Ring trail system lends itself to the establishment of a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization to serve as the advocate, facilitator, fund-raiser, project manager and liaison between the many agencies, landowners and local communities. **The Ring the Peak 501(c)(3) non-profit organization** (Ring non-profit) will serve as a catalyst for implementation, development, completion and operation of the Ring and, working with the members of the **Task Force**, affiliated businesses and land managing agencies, coordinate closing the southwest gap and coordinate long-term management and maintenance of the entire Ring. The **Ring the Peak Project Manager (Project Manager)** and Task Force will assist the Ring non-profit to facilitate and advocate for the fulfilment of the vision for the Ring and closure of the southwest gap.

The future leadership and organizational structure for the Ring is envisioned with TOSC to provide interim leadership for the management and development of the Ring trail during the formation and establishment of the Ring non-profit. Roles and responsibilities will need to evolve and expand as the focus continues to shift from implementation to management of this unique recreational resource. The long term and interim leadership for the Ring including the roles and responsibilities of the Ring non-profit are described in the following pages.



## LONG-TERM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Exhibit 4.1



## LONG TERM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

For long-term sustainability of operations and management for the entire length of the Ring a clear understanding of the roles and responsibility of each party will be critical. The long-term organizational structure for the operation and management of the Ring is illustrated in Exhibit 4.1. The Ring non-profit will consist of a board of directors, Project Manager, additional Ring non-profit staff and volunteers. Within the long term organizational structure the Ring non-profit will:

- Advocate for the Ring and seek its full completion, protection, preservation and funding with members of local, state and federal agencies and private land managing agencies
- Assist with obtaining the necessary approvals and acquisitions for constructing and maintaining the Ring
- Build strong relationships with officials at the local, state and federal levels and seek champions in city halls and the state capitol to celebrate and spearhead the mission of the Ring
- Apply relevant regulations and procedures to shape the strategic direction and policies of the Ring

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Ring non-profit board of directors will help further the goals and vision of the Ring with the acknowledgment these roles and responsibilities may evolve over time. The Ring non-profit board of directors will apply their expertise in outdoor recreation, trail management, marketing, law and fundraising to the development of strategic direction and policies for the Ring. The Ring non-profit board of directors will select the Ring non-profit staff such as the Project Manager. The Ring non-profit board of directors will collaborate with the Task Force, to identify the direction for successful completion, operations and management of the Ring. The Ring non-profit board of directors will convene regularly as needed to advance the goals and objectives established in the Plan.

### **TASK FORCE**

Acting as the advisory group in cooperation initially with the TOSC board of directors and later with the Ring non profit board of directors, the Task Force will contribute to shaping the strategic direction and policies of the Ring. The TOSC board of directors and staff will establish the Task Force early into the implementation of this Plan to provide assurance that the diverse spectrum of Ring users is represented in the direction and policies of the Plan moving forward. In the long



term organizational structure Task Force members will be selected by the Ring non-profit board of directors. This Task Force, consisting of seven interest areas, will have specific roles, functions and processes. The Task Force will champion implementation strategies and policies for the completion and management of the Ring and assist in identifying resources to put these implementation strategies and policies into action. Task Force members will provide valuable input for the Ring non-profit board of directors to consider when implementing the Plan recommendations. The Task Force will assist in providing an open communication link to all interested parties affected by decisions of the Ring non-profit. The Task Force will utilize their experience and knowledge to assist the Ring non-profit and Project Manager in resolving management problems along the trail system corridor as they arise. Members of the Task Force are recommended from the following:

- United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Local government representatives (representing municipal, county or city officials)
- Outdoor recreation industry
- Environmental organizations
- Property Owners
- Trail users (representing all types including hiking, biking, equestrian, motorized, etc.)

Task Force members will be able to demonstrate interest and experience with the issues throughout the Ring. Members must be capable of representing their respective interests while working as productive members in a team setting. The Task Force will meet a minimum of once each quarter.

**PROJECT MANAGER**

The Project Manager will carry out the implementation strategies for the Ring to close the southwest gap under the direction of the Ring non-profit board of directors to ensure the leadership and organizational vision for the Ring continues to be maintained and developed. The Project Manager will serve as the Ring trail system central manager and will:

- Identify and prioritize funding opportunities for Plan implementation
- Serve as the liaison between the Task Force, stakeholders, the Ring non-profit and land managing agencies
- Work under the direction of the Ring non-profit and in conjunction with community groups, private landowners, and government agencies

- Convene and attend Task Force meetings
- Coordinate gaining needed access, acquisitions and easements, etc.
- Oversee the plan to close the southwest gap in the Ring
- Coordinate trail construction for the Ring
- Coordinate long-term management and maintenance of the Ring
- Coordinate evaluation and monitoring of the Ring
- Gather user, community and stakeholder input and feedback
- Identify changes in program and approach
- Identify and Implement marketing strategies to promote the Ring
- Seek funding, in particular for acquisitions, approval processes and construction.

The Project Manager and the Ring non-profit board of directors will coordinate and collaborate with the Task Force, government agencies, stakeholders and private land owners for the completion, promotion and management of the Ring. The Project Manager may work with additional staff and volunteers for any of these responsibilities.

## INTERIM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Exhibit 4.2 outlines the organizational management structure for the Ring in the interim until the formation of the Ring non-profit. After being established by the TOSC board of directors and staff the Task Force will provide interim recommendations to the TOSC board of directors and staff until the Ring non-profit is formally established. This will allow various agencies and organizations to be involved with and be a part of the early Plan implementation and management.

The opinions and insights of Task Force will be especially valuable in the development of strategic policies and direction for the Ring. The Task Force will utilize their experience and knowledge to assist the TOSC board of directors and staff in developing the Ring non-profit and addressing management problems along the trail system corridor as they arise.

## INTERIM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Exhibit 4.2



### TOSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In the interim the TOSC board of directors and staff will fill the role of the Ring non-profit until the Ring non-profit is formed and operational. The TOSC board of directors will maintain the momentum for completing the Ring and assist in guiding the creation of the Ring non-profit. The board of directors will meet to discuss the Ring as needed to discuss immediate concerns and identify changes in program and approach until the formation of the Ring non-profit.

### TOSC STAFF

TOSC staff will carry out the implementation strategies for the management of the Ring project and to close the southwest gap under the direction of the TOSC board of directors to ensure the leadership and organizational vision for the Ring continues to be maintained and developed. TOSC staff will:

- Form the Ring the Peak non-profit as a Colorado 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- Work with the TOSC board of directors to establish the Task Force

The TOSC board of directors and staff will coordinate and collaborate with the Task Force, government agencies and private land owners during the establishment of the Ring non-profit.

# TRAIL DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

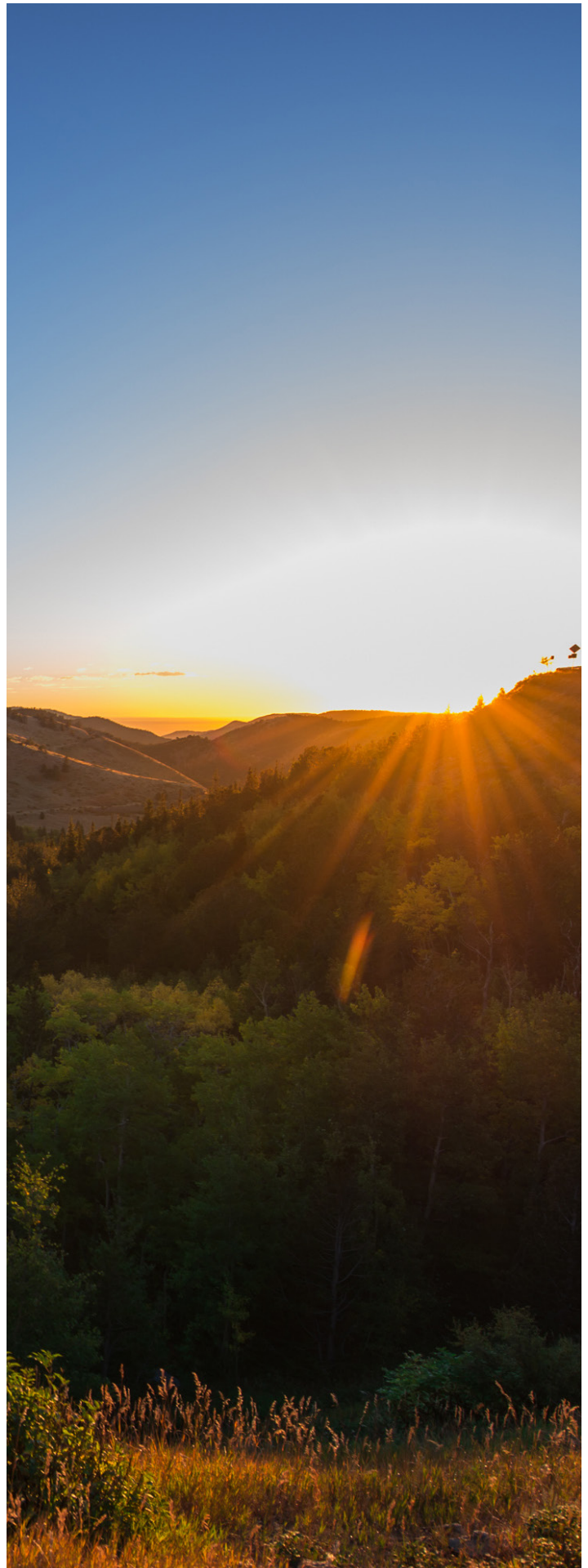
The implementation of the Plan is intended to help the collaborating private, public and non-profit entities make the completion of the Ring into a reality and will require:

- A commitment on the part of decision makers and the public to close the southwest gap
- Approval from the land owners or land managers through each new segment of trail
- Trail construction
- Funding
- Ongoing trail maintenance and repair

A critical next step in the Ring implementation process is to clarify and formalize jurisdictional responsibilities for each trail segment. Regular maintenance of the Ring and associated support facilities contribute to successful operation of the Ring. However, with multiple jurisdictions, agency involvement and ownership of land along the proposed trail corridor, it is necessary to have a clear understanding, with written agreement between the agencies at the onset of the efforts, to close the southwest gap in the Ring and identify the roles and responsibilities of each agency related to the entire Ring. Because the project crosses multiple jurisdictions and land managing agencies, it will be important to have each entity understand their role as well as who will take the lead and when.

## TRAIL PLANNING

In accordance with the overall vision and goals for the Plan, the recommended trail corridor alignment is designed to provide a quality trail experience in a manner that is sustainable and responsive to the surrounding natural environment. To support and sustain the variety and level of expected use the proposed trail corridor for the Ring needs to be a resilient system consisting of a wide array of well planned, designed, constructed and managed trails that are supported by a mosaic of public and private interests. The Ring should inspire stewardship and invite people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds to enjoy the Ring and use them to connect to their public lands while protecting and conserving natural and cultural resources.



The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will support trail planning efforts as follows:

- Coordinate with responsible land managing agencies for in the field interpretation of the proposed trail corridor to close the southwest gap as identified in this Plan
- Help determine what approvals and acquisitions are needed and facilitate approval processes and acquisitions
- Assist in identifying enhancements to existing segments of the Ring where appropriate, such as erosion control measures, connector trails, loop trails, spur trails and water sources
- Engage and assist agencies, such as Teller County or the Palmer Land Trust, in land and easement acquisition from property owners to replace segments on or along roads with trails

## TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will work with land managers to establish trail design standards for the Ring to serve as technical guidelines for the survey, design, construction and maintenance of the proposed trail corridor. These criteria include: appropriate uses, tread, surface, grade, cross slope, clearing and turns. The scale and scope of the trail to close the gap in the Ring will benefit from a combination of trail construction efforts from professional trail construction services (contractor) and volunteer groups. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will support and assist land managing agencies with trail construction efforts by:

- Assist land managing agencies in the assessment of each segment of the proposed trail corridor for suitability for trail contractor or volunteer efforts
- Assist as needed in selecting, hiring, and monitoring contractors and contract work
- Act as the liaison to volunteer groups
- Coordinate volunteer efforts with contractor work
- Assist in identifying and obtaining grants, donations, and other funding sources for trail construction.
- Assist in outreach and notification efforts to landowners and managing agencies when trail construction is to begin adjacent to their respective properties



## TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Trail maintenance is critical to sustaining the Ring. Maintenance needs should be evaluated and prioritized. Maintenance of the Ring will be accomplished through the joint effort of many volunteer, local, state and federal agencies. The maintenance needs of the Ring will vary along different trail segments, depending on surface and design, surrounding landscape, land managing agencies and other factors. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will be responsible for supporting and assisting land managers and land managing agencies in implementing the Ring maintenance standards and strategies. The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will work closely with local and regional volunteer groups for a variety of tasks to support and sustain the Ring. The Ring non-profit, Task Force and the Project Manager will examine the possibility of creating an Adopt-a-Trail program to fund new construction, repair, renovation, maps, trail brochures, facilities (bike racks, picnic areas, birding equipment) and maintenance support. The Project Manager will act as liaison and assist in coordinating maintenance efforts with the land managing agencies and with volunteer groups. Maintenance of the Ring trail is the responsibility of each respective jurisdiction, but volunteers groups will be an important component of trail maintenance work, supported by and with the approval of the land managing agencies.



The role of the Ring non-profit and Project Manager in support of maintenance of the Ring will be to:

- Pursue memorandums of understanding with land managing agencies around the Ring
- Support the assessment of maintenance needs and help determine the best course of action
- Assist in maintenance efforts of local, state and federal agencies
- Connect volunteers and volunteer programs with needed projects and events
- Support efforts to provide notice of temporary closure of trails in order to conduct repairs, maintain public safety and reestablish vegetation
- Designate reference point locations along the Ring for trail maintenance and monitoring

The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will assist land managing agencies in identifying and coordinating potential volunteer projects and maintenance efforts that may include:

- Develop a core group of trail maintenance volunteers that have completed basic training regarding trail construction and maintenance techniques
- Help establish an Adopt-a-Trail program to ensure that trail conditions are monitored and documented annually
- Utilize and coordinate with volunteers and user groups to accomplish relevant tasks
- Assist land managing agencies in ensuring trail repairs shall be as sustainable as possible while maintaining aesthetic, natural and cultural resource values
- Support efforts to close social trails to protect sensitive natural resources, wildlife and public and private lands
- Facilitate efforts to coordinate annual trails maintenance by assembling resource, maintenance, and ranger staff as well as pertinent volunteers to jointly assess maintenance needs and help determine the best course of action

## ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

Construction of the proposed trail corridor requires the USFS and BLM to conduct an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) where it is proposed on federal land. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will support the BLM and USFS in conducting the environmental review under NEPA.

## RIGHT-OF-WAY & ACCESS EASEMENT ACQUISITION

The proposed trail corridor presented in this Plan traverses through federal, state, county, city, and private lands. This trail corridor was created with the understanding that partnership with private landowners and easements would be critical to the trail corridor’s success.

## LAND ACQUISITION PLAN

The development of a land acquisition plan will help the Ring non-profit and Project Manager support and assist an acquisition agency, such as Teller County or the Palmer Land Trust, in the creation of a roadmap that can be followed throughout the acquisition process. This Plan identifies potential methods of trail access to complete the southwest gap in the Ring. The Project Manager, Ring non-profit, and the acquisition agency will work together to decide on the appropriate method for each parcel to secure trail access for the Ring. The potential methods of acquisition described below are meant to be used as tools for securing trail access. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will function in a support role to the acquisition agency.

## POTENTIAL METHODS OF ACQUISITION

### DONATION

Normally, acquisition for parks, trails and open space requires some interest in land to be donated by the landowner or purchased by a governmental agency or a non-profit organization. Donation has also been used as a tool to avoid inheritance tax, capital gains taxes and other property taxes. Many times the term dedication is used synonymously with the term donation. It is important to note that dedication arrangements are specifically controlled by state statute and those statutes may control what types of specific interests may be transferred.

### PUBLIC TRUST

The creation of a public trust can be thought of as the common-law version of a statutory dedication. In its most basic form, a public trust doctrine stems from the idea that some types of natural resources should be held in trust for the benefit of the general public.

### LEASE

Under a typical lease scenario, the subject land is rented from the landowner by the acquiring agency for a set term and

price. Land leases may vary greatly in term, price, purpose and form.

### **TRAIL EASEMENT**

Under a typical easement agreement, only those uses and interests set out in the easement agreement are transferred to the grantee. Easements for trails are typically permanent in nature whereby the underlying ownership is retained by the landowner, but access is permanently allowed over the property. A public access easement is normally permanent in nature and, as the name implies, grants the public access to a specific property when a full conservation or preservation easement is not required. The conditions of use attributable to the easement are defined in the easement agreement itself.

### **FEE SIMPLE ACQUISITION**

In a fee simple acquisition, the landowner conveys full title to the land and the entire “bundle of property rights” to the grantee. This includes the right to possess the land, use the land, exclude others from the land and to alienate or sell the land. A fee purchase scenario may be the preferred method of acquisition; however, some factors may limit the ability of the acquiring organization in exercising a fee simple purchase of the land to be used as a trail.

### **CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

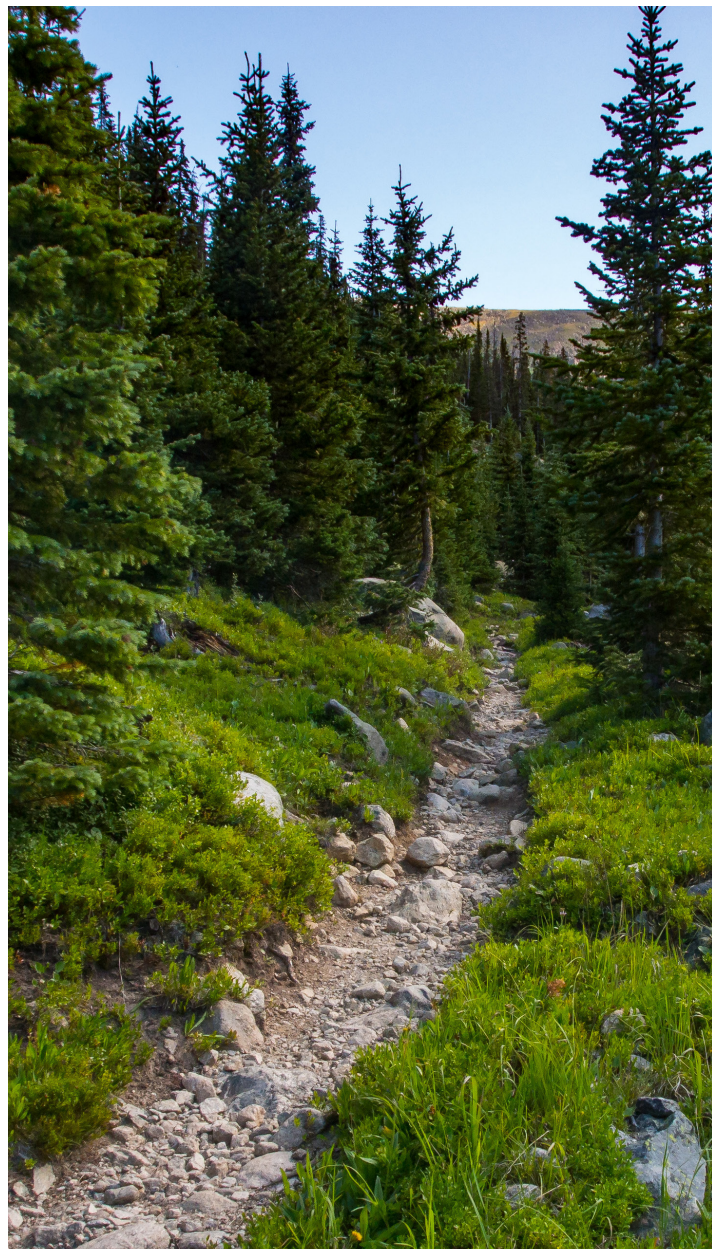
A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that a landowner may enter into with a qualified conservation organization (typically a land trust, such as Palmer Land Trust), restricting particular development and uses of the landowner’s property in order to protect certain resources. The landowner retains ownership of the property after a conservation easement is conveyed. The conservation easement conveys certain rights to the property to the designated land trust. A conservation easement does not have to encompass an entire parcel of land. A conservation easement may include public access but also might not. What public access is included depends on the specifics of the conservation easement. Conservation easements are perpetual and every conservation easement is unique and subject to conditions agreed upon by the parties.

### **RIGHT OF WAY**

Portions of the proposed trail corridor is on the right of way (ROW) of HWY 67 and CR-81. This is public ROW for Colorado Department of Transportation (HWY 67) and Teller County (CR-81) who reserve the right to ensure ROW availability

for public use. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager will engage agencies such as Teller County and Palmer Land Trust to secure right-of-way Use Permits from the Colorado Department of Transportation and Teller County Department of Transportation to use the right-of-way along HWY 67 and CR-81 for the Ring. For right-of-way access and easement acquisition associated with the Ring, the Ring non-profit and Project Manager will:

- Align the interests of property owners and land preservation agencies, such as Teller County or Palmer Land Trust
- Build relationships with private property owners
- Work with land managing agencies to establish memorandums of understanding, agreements etc., with state and federal departments, municipalities and private landowners.



# MANAGEMENT

The strategy of this Plan for trail management and maintenance is to maintain the functional use of the Ring, eliminate potential hazards, provide for public safety, protect natural resources and maintain the aesthetic quality of the trail's environment. A wide variety of management tools can be employed to address management needs. Management of the Ring will be accomplished through a cooperative management structure requiring the resources and assistance of numerous collaborating entities. The Ring travels through numerous jurisdictions, each with their unique mix of assets, capabilities, needs, goals and political priorities. Management will be the responsibility of each land managing agency through which the Ring travels. Management of the Ring will require regular inspections and maintenance of trails to identify and correct existing or potential problems, ensure public safety and minimize liability. The frequency of trail inspections and maintenance will be dependent on seasons, weather conditions and staff and volunteer availability.

The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will assist land managing agencies in developing and implementing policies and procedures to guide the maintenance efforts of volunteers, community service groups and work crews. The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will assist and support day-to-day operational and administrative tasks performed by governments and volunteer groups. This strategy will allow for leveraging the financial and labor resources of various agencies to manage multiple lengths of the trail. This will also allow individual jurisdictions the flexibility to address site-specific conditions while accomplishing the overall goal of a unified trail system. The Ring non-profit will:

- Assist land managing agencies in the overall management of the Ring
- Work with the Task Force to identify and leverage the unique mix of assets, capabilities, needs, goals and political priorities of the numerous local jurisdictions involved in the Ring
- Act as liaison between these entities to ensure the successful management and completion of the Ring
- Assist Stakeholders and land managing agencies in the application of consistent management strategies along the Ring
- Provide local jurisdictions with flexibility to address site-specific conditions while accomplishing the overall goal of a unified Ring

- Actively support public agencies and private land owners to discourage and prevent trespassing and the development of social trails on private lands

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A regional destination trail like the Ring offers distinct opportunities and experiences. However, it is not enough to build the trail. Programs need to be implemented that attract users, develop and tailor small businesses to capture the Ring spending, market the Ring as a destination and hold events at key sites along the Ring. The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will:

- Coordinate with the adjacent communities, such as Victor and Cripple Creek
- Act as a catalyst for local economic opportunities associated with the Ring
- Partner with organizations such as the Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance to identify new strategies and support for the Ring
- Assist outreach efforts to local businesses on the economic potential of the Ring
- Support marketing by communities along the Ring as portals through which the trail may be accessed
- Assist in the identification of additional economic opportunities throughout the Ring in the form of outfitters, guides, shuttles, campsites, cabins, restaurants, bed and breakfasts and hotels

# EDUCATION & PROMOTION

The promotion and marketing of any trail project requires creativity, time and funding. To implement and support such an endeavor as the Ring, requires promotion and marketing. The success of completing the Ring depends on potential users and supporters' awareness of its existence. It is important to ensure that appropriate means are used to inform the public about the Ring and the wide range of user experiences and trail characteristics it encompasses. Multiple access points and connections to communities present both challenges and benefits to the recreation market for the Ring. To realize these opportunities for the Ring, the Ring non-profit and Task Force will:

- Assist in identifying new and burgeoning avenues for destination trail tourism
- Support education efforts on the rich cultural history and scenic resources that will be available at the completion of the Ring
- Reach out to media to provide publicity for the Ring

- Maintain and update the Ring website and e-newsletters
- Communicate rules and regulations to trail users through trailhead signage and website
- Develop and implement educational information and outreach programs to enhance protection and enjoyment of the Ring
- Assist in addressing the growing need for providing information to trail users regarding basic facts, such as access points and trail routing
- Assist in the placement of wayfinding signage, rules of use signage, trail map signage and regulatory signage at key locations along the Ring
- Coordinate and facilitate the periodic assessment of signage to ensure the placement is serving the intended purpose

## SPECIAL EVENTS & PERMITTING

Issuing permits for organized events on the Ring is the responsibility of the managing agency or jurisdiction of the property on which the Ring is present. Coordination and issuing of permits will be accomplished by the managing agency where the entire trail or where a significant majority crosses more than one jurisdiction. Special use permitting for events staged on or associated with the Ring will be conducted in accordance with special use laws, regulations, policy, guidelines and this Plan. The Ring non-profit will support managing agencies of the properties along the Ring and will:

- Assist land managing agencies to ensure special use permitting for events staged on or associated with the Ring will be conducted in accordance with special use laws, regulations, policies and guidelines of land managing agencies
- Support the efforts of land managing agencies to manage activities throughout the entire length of the Ring in accordance with land, social, wilderness, and other constraints
- Create a resource manual to guide event coordinators for staging events and navigating the permitting process.
- Work with event coordinators to incorporate sustainable Leave No Trace principles when planning and holding events along the Ring
- Maintain a calendar of events permitted along the Ring

## FUNDING & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Management and maintenance of the Ring requires ongoing and reliable resources. Throughout the development of the Plan, stakeholders repeatedly advocated ongoing responsible management of the Ring including trail maintenance, prevention and closure of social trails, preservation and enhancement of natural resources with special emphasis on bighorn sheep and watersheds, protection of private property owner rights, and ongoing education and enforcement of rules and regulations. The Plan acknowledges that land managing agencies currently have limited funding and resources available to support the Ring and future funding is uncertain. The existing programs benchmarked for this Plan provide a range of funding strategies and mechanisms to be considered. The Ring non-profit and Project Manager, in partnership with land management agencies and stakeholders, will actively explore and evaluate long-term funding sources and mechanisms such as donations and memberships, operational grants and partnerships, parking passes, dedicated use taxes, commercial permits, and user fees to support the long-term sustainability of the Ring. Potential options for grant and fundraising sources include:

- Allocations from municipal government
- Grants from non-profit foundations
- Donations and sponsorships from businesses
- Donations from individuals
- In-kind and donated services in the form of materials, labor, equipment, operators
- State and federal grant programs
- Support from tourism and recreation taxes and fees

## ENFORCEMENT

The Ring travels through numerous local jurisdictions, each with their unique mix of goals, rules and resources for enforcement. The rules and enforcement of these rules will be the responsibility of the managing agency or law enforcement agency through whose jurisdiction the proposed alignment for the Ring crosses. The Ring non-profit and the Project Manager will support and coordinate with local jurisdictions and managing agencies to:

- Facilitate engagement efforts with land managers to establish common consistent rules and regulations for the entire Ring
- Support the establishment and distribution of protocols for trail supporters, trail users, volunteers and property owners to report enforcement issues

- Establish a volunteer trail ambassador program to support local jurisdictions and managing agencies to provide a welcoming presence along the Ring and at trailheads

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

The size, scope, remoteness and diversity of jurisdictions along the total length of the Ring is a challenge for emergency service providers. Existing emergency service providers within the Pikes Peak region will be responsible for the segment of the Ring within their jurisdiction. The Ring non-profit will act in a support role to local emergency services and be responsible for:

- Work with emergency service providers to identify and map geographic service areas and access points along the Ring
- Assist in determining landmarks and other location reference points to designate locations along a trail to be used by emergency response
- Work with emergency service providers to create educational information for trail users at trailhead signage and on the Ring website
- Assist in the equipping of trail volunteers with basic safety protocols
- Support efforts to ensure volunteer projects have a safety plan in place and emergency service providers are informed of trail events and work days

## EPILOGUE

The Ring Master Plan is rooted in the hopes, dreams and vision of many trail users that have aspired to one day circumnavigate Pikes Peak. The Plan represents significant compromise on the trail alignment, made possible by a firm and enduring belief by all stakeholders that the development of a unique trail experience around the Peak is a worthy goal to enthusiastically pursue. It is this enthusiasm and focus, more than financial resources, that will be needed to sustain the efforts to realize implementation.

Few trails circumnavigate a natural feature as iconic as Pikes Peak, passing through a broad spectrum of geologic provinces, ecological life zones and vegetation communities from alpine tundra to wet meadow marshes. The Ring, by virtue of its geographic expanse, its route through diverse local, state and federal lands around Pikes Peak and its cornucopia of natural and cultural resources, has the unique

potential to provide visitors with an inspirational outdoor experience, attain national and international recognition and invigorate the economies of local communities.

Implementation is where the recommendations in this Plan can come to life. Taking action on the items and opportunities identified in this Plan honors the efforts and countless hours dedicated by the Project Team, stakeholders and the community during the planning process, as well as the decades of effort from many agencies' staffs and nonprofit volunteers that formed the existing parts of the Ring. The recommendations emerging out of this Plan portray the dedication of stakeholders and the community to not only complete the Ring, but do it in ways that enhance recreational experiences, are environmentally sustainable, protect and preserve natural resources, expand community outreach and maintain visitor safety.

The tremendous progress toward completing and managing the Ring could not have been made without the support and dedication of the Project Team, stakeholders, landowners and surrounding communities, as noted throughout this Plan. Looking ahead, these partnerships will continue to be extremely important in the coming years to complete the Ring and manage it in a sustainable manner for the future. With approval of this Plan TOSC, FOTP and the City of Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, the sponsors and grant recipients, confirm their dedication to completing the Ring and managing the entire trail in a manner that is thoughtful, community driven, conscientious of natural resources and considerate of future generations.



Photo by Friends of the Peak

