

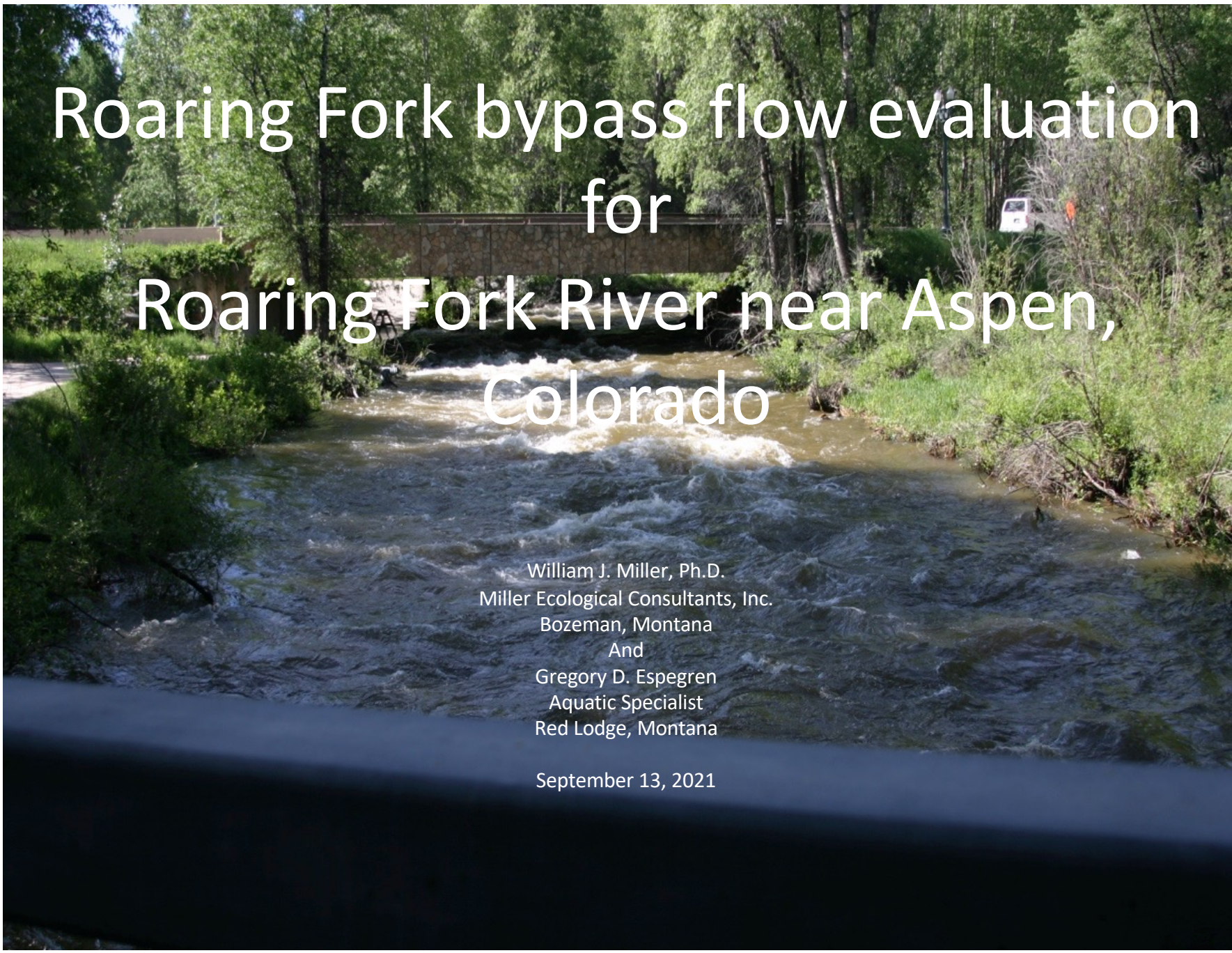


Agenda | September 13, 2021 4:00 PM
Pitkin County Administration Bldg
530 E Main St 1st Floor
Aspen, CO 81611

Time	Administrative Items
4:00 PM	Board Comment Public Comment Additions /Deletions to Agenda
4:15 PM	Staff Reports and Project Updates Roaring Fork Bypass Flow Evaluation – Presented by: Miller Ecological Consultants Aquatic Specialists BBA Water Consultants Inc.
5:15 PM	Outreach/Education/Grants Sky Mountain Park and Glassier Open Space and Trails Updates Paul Holsinger and Liza Mitchell
5:45 PM	Fall Grant Request ECO Flight - \$30,000
6:15 PM	East of Aspen Master Plan updates
6:45 PM	Open Discussion
7:00 PM	Adjourn

Upcoming 2021 Regular Meetings: Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16

Agenda items are subject to change – Times are approximate and are also subject to change



Roaring Fork bypass flow evaluation for Roaring Fork River near Aspen, Colorado

William J. Miller, Ph.D.
Miller Ecological Consultants, Inc.
Bozeman, Montana
And
Gregory D. Espegren
Aquatic Specialist
Red Lodge, Montana

September 13, 2021

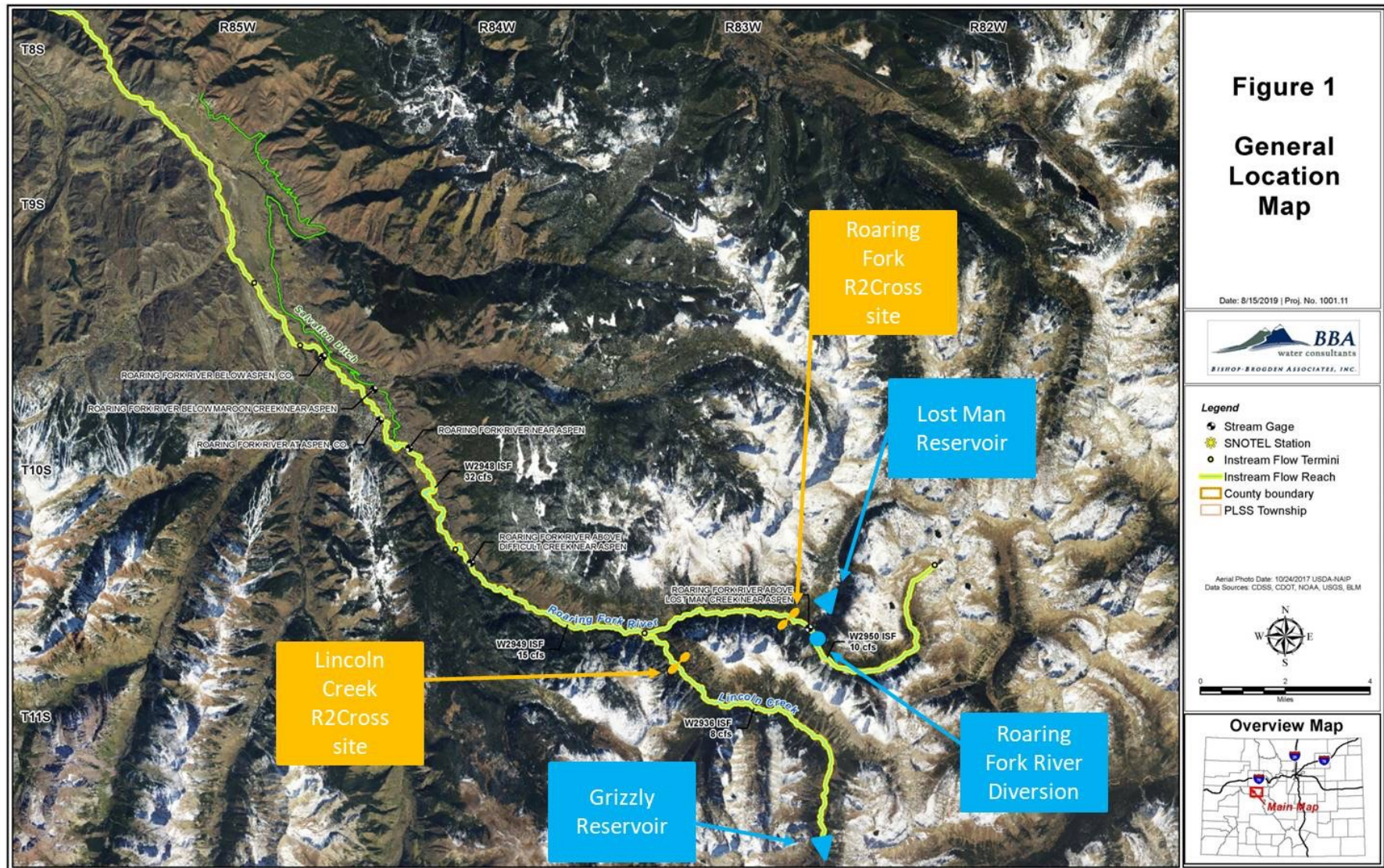
Origin of Bypass Flow

- Negotiated by County out of the Busk-Ivanhoe case
- Can only occur when Twin Lakes is in priority
- Volume available is 3,800 AF – 4,000 AF

Objectives

- Pitkin County seeks to manage bypasses and releases from the Twin Lakes collection system of the Independence Pass Trans-mountain Diversion System of 3800 to 4000 acre-feet (AF) of water from the Twin Lakes collection system in the headwaters of the Roaring Fork River basin.
- The County is now determining how these bypass flows and releases from the headwater collection system should be made to provide the greatest benefit to the Roaring Fork River and its tributaries.

Study Area



Methods

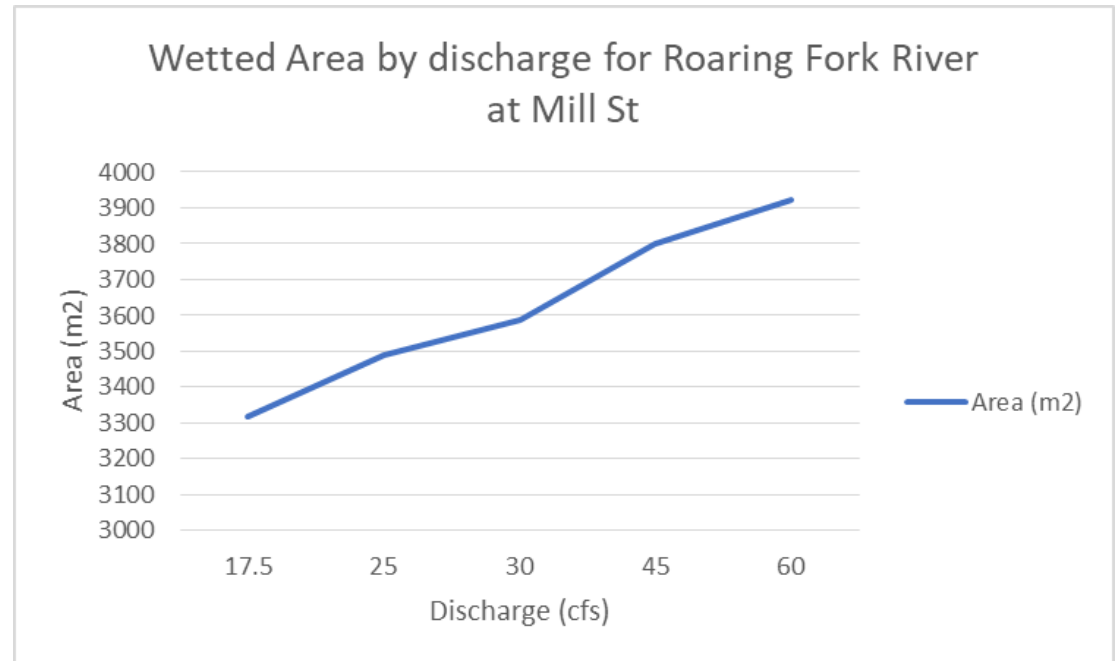
- Physical Data
 - Review of River2D- Two dimensional stream habitat evaluation from 2011 study in Aspen and CWCB ISF for the Roaring Fork
 - 2019 - New R2Cross data in Lincoln Creek and upper Roaring Fork upstream of Lost Man Creek
 - Hydrology analysis by BBA Water Consultants, Inc.
- Biological Data
 - 2020 - Macroinvertebrate samples at four locations in upper Roaring Fork basin
 - Two on Lincoln Creek
 - Two on the Roaring Fork
 - Fish – visual assessment

Roaring Fork in Aspen

Current Condition of the Roaring Fork in Aspen

- Habitat
 - The late summer base flows appear to be most effected by upstream diversions
 - The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) holds an instream flow for 32 cfs in the study area, which is junior to other upstream water rights
 - The late summer flows are lower than 32 cfs in many years
 - Flows can be as low as 15-20 cfs and have less wetted area available for macroinvertebrate production than flows greater than 30 cfs.
 - There is approximately 20% less habitat at 17 cfs than at 30 cfs.
 - If base flows were at or higher than the 32 cfs minimum flow invertebrate food base would likely increase with the wetted area.

Roaring Fork at Mill St. total wetted area by discharge



Habitat change by discharge for Roaring Fork in Aspen

Discharge	Rainbow Trout			Brown Trout		
	Adult	Juvenile	Fry	Adult	Juvenile	Fry
17.5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25	309%	28%	119%	56%	31%	119%
30	600%	52%	201%	83%	57%	201%
45	1765%	121%	443%	137%	135%	443%
60	2835%	173%	649%	159%	192%	649%

Discharge	Rainbow Trout			Brown Trout		
	Adult	Juvenile	Fry	Adult	Juvenile	Fry
30	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
45	166%	46%	81%	30%	50%	81%
60	319%	80%	149%	41%	86%	149%



Upper Roaring Fork Basin

Lincoln Creek above Tabor Creek



Lincoln Creek at the R2Cross Site



Lincoln Creek R2Cross

Lincoln Creek - 8/28/2019

Habitat Criteria Results

Measured Discharge = 8.91 cfs

Bankfull top width (ft) = 30.17

CWCB ISF = 8 cfs year round

	Habitat Criteria	Discharge (cfs)	Meeting Criteria
Mean Depth (ft)	0.3	2.55	
Percent Wetted Perimeter (%)	50	2.34	
Mean Velocity (ft/s)	1	21.04	

Roaring Fork Upstream of Lincoln Creek



Roaring Fork Upstream of Lost Man Creek



Upper Roaring Fork R2Cross

Roaring Fork upstream of Lost Man Creek - 8/28/2019

Habitat Criteria Results

Measured Discharge = 4.32 cfs

Bankfull top width (ft) = 23.49

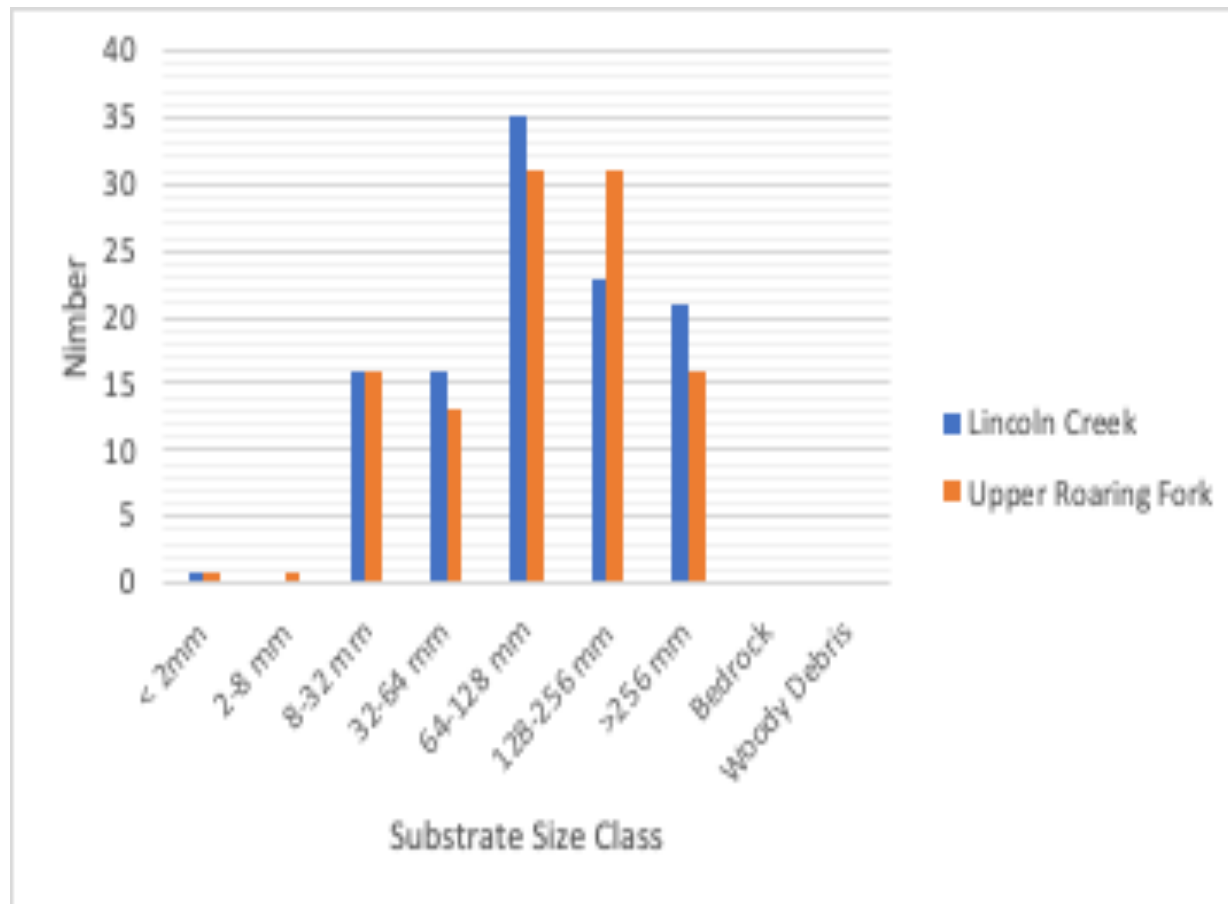
CWCB ISF = 10 cfs year round

	Habitat Criteria	Discharge (cfs) Meeting Criteria
Mean Depth (ft)	0.23	0.75
Percent Wetted Perimeter (%)	50	0.32
Mean Velocity (ft/s)	NA	NA

Lincoln Creek and Upper Roaring Fork Macroinvertebrates

METRIC	RF ABV LOST MAN	RF ABV LINCOLN	LINCOLN ABV TABOR	LINCOLN @ R2 SITE
Density (#/m ²)	7422 $\pm$ 1965	8012 $\pm$ 1965	81 $\pm$ 104	508 $\pm$ 295
Biomass (g/m ²)	0.595 $\pm$ 0.317	0.593 $\pm$ 0.470	0.016 $\pm$ 0.020	0.057 $\pm$ 0.035
S-W Diversity	2.41 $\pm$ 0.33	2.56 $\pm$ 0.35	1.82 $\pm$ 2.24	3.40 $\pm$ 0.87
S-W Evenness	0.535 $\pm$ 0.025	0.569 $\pm$ 0.074	0.931 $\pm$ 0.084	0.880 $\pm$ 0.083
Taxa Richness	23 $\pm$ 3	23 $\pm$ 3	4 $\pm$ 6	15 $\pm$ 6
# EPT Taxa	14 $\pm$ 4	14 $\pm$ 5	1 $\pm$ 2	9 $\pm$ 6

Lincoln Creek and Upper Roaring Fork Substrate Composition



Operational rule for bypass recommendations

- Objective: Manage for a natural shaped hydrograph and keep flows at or above the minimum flow during summer. If available, additional bypass should be made to keep summer flows in the Roaring Fork in Aspen between 30 cfs and 45 cfs from July 15 through September 15.
- The target summer bypass evaluation should begin in early Spring each year. The April 1st each year could be used to check snowpack forecast for the upcoming runoff projection. The projected runoff should be classified by year type as Wet, Median, or Dry. Note: the year type is an example as a starting point and should be refined to match the earlier designations of dry average dry, average wet and wet.

A scenic view of a river flowing through a forest. The river is in the foreground, with water reflecting the surrounding trees and sky. The banks are rocky and covered with green grass and shrubs. The forest is dense with trees showing vibrant autumn colors, including yellows, oranges, and reds. A large evergreen tree stands prominently on the right bank. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Questions-Discussion



OST Memorandum

TO: Healthy Rivers and Streams Board
FROM: OST Staff
SUBJECT: OST Project Update
DATE: September 13, 2021

Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (OST) staff have been working toward accomplishing action items specified within OST fee owned management plans. Many of these action items are related to promoting riparian health and water conservation. OST would like to update the Healthy Rivers and Streams Board (HRSB) regarding planning and projects occurring on Sky Mountain Park and Glassier Open Space.

Sky Mountain Park

The original (2012) Sky Mountain Park Management Plan was a product of Pitkin County Open Space and Trails in collaboration with the Town of Snowmass Village and City of Aspen Parks, Trails and Open Space. Preservation of this 2,400-acre relatively unfragmented area was a remarkable multi-jurisdictional and community effort. The Plan is being updated this year, with targeted studies, public comment, and current conditions guiding the path forward: Sky Mountain Park will continue to be managed for natural resource protection, as well as public access/recreation, agricultural heritage and scenic value.

OST staff will provide the HRSB with a brief update on the natural resource conditions and water-related management action items proposed in the draft 2021 Sky Mountain Park Management Plan update. A draft update of the management plan for Sky Mountain Park is expected to open for public comment on Sept. 17.

For updated information on the Sky Mountain Park Plan update process:

<https://www.pitkinostprojects.com/sky-mountain-park.html>

Glassier Open Space

The Glassier Open Space management plan was update in December 2020 and included action items to support irrigation improvements to the agricultural areas of the property and enhance wildlife habitat. The action items were intentionally broad as OST investigated opportunities. Action item 4.1.3 (Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation Partnership) states;

4.1.3 AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Staff will work with partners to develop a long-term, holistic plan that focuses on both agricultural efficiencies and biodiversity improvement projects. The plan will focus mainly on the agricultural area(s) historically utilized by producers, evaluating where OST can evolve current management practices to both benefit lessees and improve wildlife habitat. As part of the partnership and plan development, data will need to be collected to help inform conversations around irrigation practices, soil health and habitat needs.

In addition to organizing interested partners, staff will investigate grant opportunities, including (but not limited to): NRCS, CPW's Habitat Protection Program

(HPP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Topics that will need to be discussed and evaluated include (but are not limited to):

Hydrological Investigation – Examine current wet areas across the property, determine their current habitat and pasture values, evaluate impacts if there was to be a shift in irrigation regimes, explore mitigation alternatives if there are impacts, identify innovative water operations to maintain irrigated areas and allow for improved forage and wildlife habitat.

Pasture Land Improvements – Assess options to maintain and/or improve agricultural production. Identify other opportunities to improve soil health through land uses practices and/or compost amendments.

Habitat Improvements – Determine which wildlife species to serve, the target plant communities, and if there is opportunity to provide a wildlife movement corridor between upland areas and the river.

Potential partners include: NRCS, Eagle County, agricultural lease holders, CPW, Home Supply Ditch, and neighbors who may be interested in similar goals.

The first phase of the improvements are planned and a full presentation will be made at the HRSB meeting.

PLAN SUMMARY

Sky Mountain Park is managed for natural resource protection, recreation, agricultural heritage and scenic value. The 2021 Management Plan update for Sky Mountain Park (The Park) is a continuation of the 2012 management plan. The actions identified in this plan seek to enhance the area's ecological integrity and address recreation pressures. Many of the attributes that make the Park such an important place to protect are also what make it a popular place to recreate.

It is the intent of this management plan to promote the long-term resilience of the natural ecosystem through careful planning, ecological assessments, habitat restoration and/or enhancement, and adaptive management.

Trail based recreation is a significant use and new management strategies focus on ensuring all users feel safe and welcome and understand the appropriate trail etiquette. Proposed improvements continue to uphold the established mitigation strategies such as seasonal closures and dog restrictions and seek to ensure that impacts to biodiversity are minimized.

Adaptive management is an iterative process that sets management actions and monitors and evaluates results to inform adjustments to implementation and respond dynamically to changing recreation and ecological management needs, changing climate and community values.

PARTNERS AND ROLES

Sky Mountain Park is a collection of open space parcels owned by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (OST), the Town of Snowmass Village (TOSV) and the City of Aspen Parks and Recreation (COA). Pitkin County OST coordinates across jurisdictional boundaries to manage the area cohesively.

PARK CONDITIONS

Sky Mountain Park is a large enough, semi-contiguous area to provide effective habitat for many wildlife species, from pollinators to large mammals, and to maintain intact native plant communities. The area includes several ridges, valleys and basins and

supports a diversity of habitat types. The Park serves as an ecological refuge for plants and animals, as well as an important movement corridor for wildlife.

Natural resource studies conducted since the 2012 plan show that current recreational use is not negatively impacting natural resources within the Park. Seasonal recreational use is restricted to trails, and while the intensity of use has increased, this has not led to an increase in the areal extent of impact on natural resources, and violations to seasonal closures remain minimal. The natural resource action items represent a continuation of current stewardship efforts, with a focus on actions that promote biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Recreational use of Sky Mountain Park reached its highest levels in 2020, a year of unprecedented outdoor recreation fueled by the Covid-19 pandemic, with just over 79,000 passersby counted on trail counters. It is yet to be seen if this dramatic growth in trail use will continue into the future.

According to feedback from the online survey, which is consistent with camera data, the most frequent way users experience the Park is mountain biking. Interestingly, more than half of all users also report that they bike or walk to access the Park instead of driving, which underscores the Park as an accessible recreation destination.

While Sky Mountain Park has a high rate of compliance with the rules and regulations that guide public use, increased use has led to requests from the community for additional safety and recreation management actions. Many of the education and outreach action items represent a continuation of current safety and education efforts, with a focus on actions that promote trail user etiquette and broadening the outreach efforts and programming to a larger cross-section of the community.

Community feedback supported maintaining a limited number of events at Sky Mountain Park, which is consistent with the current management approach. Updated policies for commercial and special uses represent a continuation of limited events on Pitkin County's properties with clarification provided on the number of events permitted annually and participant caps.

PUBLIC OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

OST developed the initial online survey, advertised from May 15 to June 15, 2021, to understand general patterns of use at the Park, what attributes are most valued, and what community members believe is working well or in need of change. ***A total of 665 participants responses were collected.***

Survey respondents rate a typical visit to the Park with 4.5 stars. Beauty and protection of scenic views and protection of wildlife habitat were two of the most important attributes respondents felt that the Park provides. Trail safety and user conflicts were also identified as important; however, in their current condition many respondents felt this attribute fell short of their expectations.

The major themes pulled from the survey include:

1. Designate **Directional Trails** to increase safety.
2. Address **User Conflicts** and safety.
3. Enhance **Connectivity** of trails system including interior loop trails and ties to greater area trails system.
4. **Educate** Users on trail etiquette and enforce rules.
5. Support **Skills Progression** for all ages and abilities from beginner to advanced.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This document tracks the acquisition history leading to the Park today and describes the numerous accomplishments since the 2012 Plan in **Section 1. Appendix B** provides greater detail on the progress of the 2012 management actions. An update on the Park's current condition, complete with references to relevant studies is found in **Section 2**. In **Section 3**, feedback from the community is summarized. **Appendix C and D** contains the full engagement results.

Management Actions described in **Section 4** emerged as a product of background research, assessment of the current park conditions and stakeholder input. This plan is a near- to mid-range planning tool to budget for management actions to preserve this place for future generations of people and wildlife. **Section 5** provides an easy-to-use matrix to measure progress in the years ahead.

QUICK FACTS

Total Open Space Acreage:
2401.7 acres

Trail Miles: 28

88% of Park trails are closed seasonally from December 1 through May 15 for protection of wintering wildlife and many trails are closed to dogs.

Access and Parking: Trail access via parking at Buttermilk, Brush Creek Park-and-Ride lot and Snowmass Village Recreation Center.

Years of acquisition: 1991-2019

Funding Partners: Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (OST), Town of Snowmass Village (TOSV), City of Aspen (COA), Aspen Valley Land Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

Open Space Values: Wildlife habitat, scenic views and recreational trails spread over a conglomeration of open space holdings centered in the Brush Creek Valley.

For a complete list of Park Rules, including regulations, special-use and commercial use policies see page 53.

1.4 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This plan update builds on past accomplishments and celebrates the remarkable investments made to the Park since the first plan, prepared in 2012. The initial plan set forth management actions for nine topic areas, which have been consolidated in this effort to five: natural resources; recreation; agriculture; outreach and education; monitoring and stewardship; and maintenance. See Appendix B for full status of 2012 Management Plan Actions. With many of the management actions complete or underway, an update to the conditions of Park are further detailed in Section 2.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

NATURAL RESOURCES

- A seasonal closure to all recreational use has been established from December 1 – May 15. Exceptions to this closure are Highline and Lowline trails.
- 105 acres of overly mature Gambel oak were mechanically treated to mimic natural fire disturbance. The result is greater age class diversity across the landscape with improved vegetation health, and more palatable forage for elk and mule deer, bears and small mammals within the treated area (see page 28 for project update).
- Elk hunt has effectively prevented a refuge effect and associated overbrowsing of vegetation within the park.
- Noxious weeds, while present, are being controlled and the oak mastication treatment areas are relatively free of noxious weeds (see page 27 for project update).
- Silverleaf milkvetch, a state critically imperiled species that is found in the Park, is healthy and has not been adversely affected by new trails.
- A beaver deceiver was installed to protect irrigation infrastructure without negative impacts

on beaver and beaver populations

- Plans were prepared and implementation is underway to restore two old agricultural ponds to native riparian habitat, and the adjacent former agricultural pasture back to native grass and shrublands (see page 29 for project update).
- Seven Star I was considered for a trail in the 2012 Plan, but subsequent decisions kept this a trail-free area for the benefit of wildlife.

MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP

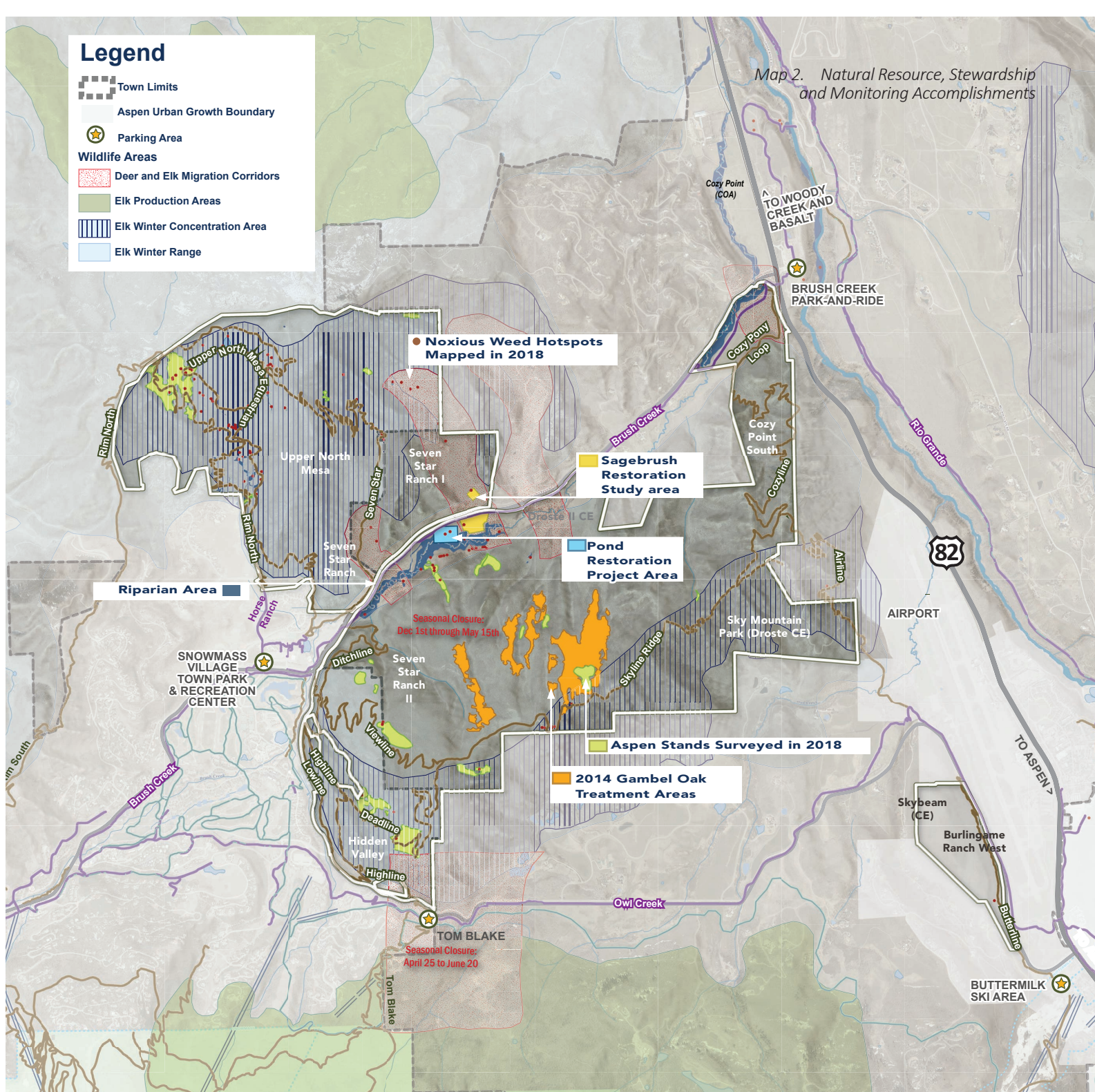
- Avian monitoring is conducted every 3-5 years, with statistical analysis and reporting every 10 years. The next report will be released in 2022.
- Mammal survey results confirm the effectiveness of the habitat treatments and the successful management of multiple uses of the property.
- Targeted studies of aspen stands were completed. Only four of 17 stands showed significant decline and were assessed for potential intervention.
- A geomorphological assessment on lower Brush Creek indicated little evidence of degraded channel form or sediment dynamics negatively impacting the watershed health, functional riparian communities or infrastructure.



Legend

-  Town Limits
-  Aspen Urban Growth Boundary
-  Parking Area
- Wildlife Areas**
 -  Deer and Elk Migration Corridors
 -  Elk Production Areas
 -  Elk Winter Concentration Area
 -  Elk Winter Range

Map 2. Natural Resource, Stewardship and Monitoring Accomplishments



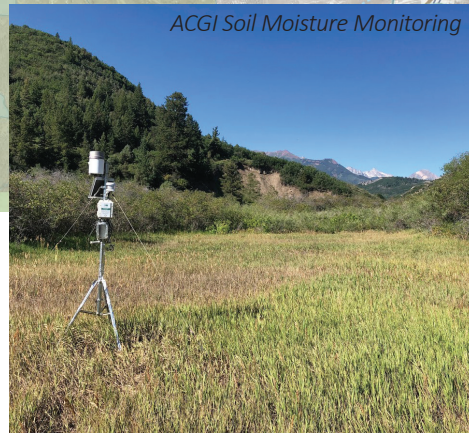
**88% OF TRAIL MILES
CLOSED SEASONALLY
FOR PROTECTION OF
WILDLIFE**



**DOGS ARE RESTRICTED
FROM 55% OF PARKS
TRAILS.**



Silverleaf milkvetch



ACGI Soil Moisture Monitoring

SKY MOUNTAIN PARK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Management actions will directly inform OST work plans over time and provide ways of communicating achievements at Sky Mountain Park to the public, the Open Space and Trails Board and Board of County Commissioners. Management Actions were developed based on background research, assessment of the current conditions, progress made following the adoption of the 2012 Plan and community/stakeholder input. Management actions are detailed in Section 4 of the 2021 Management Plan and the timing, partners and anticipated implementation costs is found in Section 5.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

NR.1	Passively maintain geomorphological integrity of Brush Creek in conjunction with beaver activity.
NR.2	Restore old ponds to riparian habitat.
NR.3	Improve "at-risk" riparian and aquatic resources.
NR.4	Explore opportunities to increase or establish a buffer between trails and sensitive aquatic resources.
NR.5	Enhance old pasturelands with native sagebrush plant communities.
NR.6	Continue mechanical treatment of mature Gambel oak to improve wildlife habitat.
NR.7	Assess forest health across the Park and local landscape to identify priorities for future forest-health improvement projects.
NR.8	Control noxious weeds as required by the State of Colorado.
NR.9	Continue the elk hunting program/lottery at Sky Mountain Park with a modification to allow hunting from trails.

Key Updates

Most Natural Resource Management Actions continue efforts from the 2012 Plan and build on accomplishments.

Action 1.7 begins to look at the context of the Park through an through a larger, systemwide forest health assessment and management plan spanning a number of OST properties.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

R.1	Construct an additional route as close as possible to the existing Airline Trail to separate uphill from downhill mountain bike traffic.
R.2	Install airport observation area and interpretive display.
R.3	Formally designate Deadline Trail as a downhill-only mountain bike trail and install signage/update OST maps.
R.4	Implement Park closure from dusk to dawn.
R.5	Review best management practices and use patterns from recreation providers and land managers addressing user conflicts through separated use trails, directional trails, alternating use days, and other strategies.
R.6	Install seating area made of natural materials at the top of Viewline Trail.
R.7	Implement a policy to mandate use of certified weed-free hay on equestrian trails.
R.8	Monitor the potential to provide a singletrack connection between Ditchline Trail and Cozyline Trail.
R.9	Acknowledge SMP in the context of greater, regional trail connectivity and work with partners on future trail improvements.

Key Updates

Following significant investments in developing the current network of trails at SMP over the last 10 years, **Actions 2.1, 2.3 and 2.5** seek to address user conflicts and safety concerns expressed in the public comments.

Actions 2.1 directs construction of an additional trail.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

EO.1	Implement a trail safety and etiquette campaign.
EO.2	Provide interpretive signage to communicate restoration and habitat improvement projects.
EO.3	Increase joint coordination of OST notifications via text messages and emails related to events.
EO.4	Coordinate public education opportunities such as birding hikes and other natural resource tours with RFC, ACES or similar groups.
EO.5	Encourage use of the Park among under-represented user groups and members of the community.

Key Updates

Action 3.1 increases OST trail safety efforts.

Action 3.5 supports statewide measures to address inclusivity in the outdoors.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

AG.1	Cozy Point South will continue to be managed by the City of Aspen's Cozy Point Ranch lessee. Responsibilities include irrigation, crop production (currently hay) and noxious weed control.
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MONITORING AND STEWARDSHIP ACTIONS

MS.1	Continue to support Aspen Global Change Institute (AGCI) monitoring stations.
MS.2	Explore water-quality testing data and needs along Brush Creek.
MS.3	Monitor aspen forest health and consider options to promote regeneration in declining aspen stands as needed.
MS.4	Project-specific monitoring, pre- and post- intervention.
MS.5	Maintain and improve collaboration with area natural resource managers and private landowners.
MS.6	Implement routine resource monitoring for wildlife, vegetation, riparian and wetland resources.
MS.7	Continue to monitor recreational use.

Key Updates

Action 5.6 establishes OST data protocols for methodology and recommended monitoring intervals [Table 6].

MAINTENANCE ACTIONS

M.1	Bi-annual maintenance of all singletrack trails including, but not limited to: corridor trimming, sightline improvements, drainage improvements, signage replacement/updates and other miscellaneous trail-related needs.
M.2	Provide necessary maintenance to the existing, overgrown equestrian and hiking loop trail on Upper North Mesa.
M.3	Remove old pump infrastructure and electric when no longer needed, and remove old, broken sprinkler heads from pasture.
M.4	Annual maintenance of all paved trails including, but not limited to: mowing of trail edges, sweeping, crack-sealing, volcano removal, signage replacement/updates and other miscellaneous trail-related needs.
M.5	Bi-annual maintenance of soft-surface trail (shoulder of Brush Creek Trail and pasture section of Cozyline Trail) including, but not limited to: grading, compacting and adding more crusher fine material on an as-needed basis.
M.6	Provide necessary maintenance of all open space signage in and around the Park. Any new signage will follow the 2014 Pitkin County OST Signage Design Guidelines.



EcoFlight request for Pitkin County Healthy Rivers Board 2021 Fall Grant Cycle

Organization: EcoFlight

Address: 307 L AABC, Aspen, CO 81611

Contact: Jane Pargiter, Conservation Director – jane@ecoflight.org, 970-429-1110

Grant project title: Aerial Advocacy for protecting the Crystal River

Amount requested: \$30,000

A. Goals of the Healthy Rivers Board

The extent to which the proposed grant request/project meets the stated goals, objectives and on-going projects/priorities of the River Board.

1. Must be complete, clear and concise, with specific dollar amounts in total and for each element of the project;
2. Must fulfill the intent of the ballot language.

EcoFlight is requesting a \$30,000 Pitkin County Healthy Rivers grant to complete strategic overflight programs that will engage stakeholders and decision makers in the effort to protect the Crystal River as Wild and Scenic. A Wild and Scenic designation through Congress will protect the river's natural, cultural and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the benefit of the Roaring Fork watershed now and in the future. This designation would permanently protect the Crystal River from new dams or diversions, without impacting existing water rights, and keep water in what is one of today's last untamed, undammed natural rivers, thus ensuring ecological health, recreational opportunities, and wildlife and riparian habitat.

As Colorado's population continues to grow, so do the demands for water and the threat of trans-basin diversions, which could be detrimental to the health of the Crystal River. A Wild and Scenic designation would permanently protect the water in the Crystal from being targeted by water developers, dam-builders or any other detrimental in-stream activities, while keeping ranchers' and other current users' existing water rights intact.

B. Viability of the Project

The extent to which the proposed grant request/project is practical, will be completed as proposed and/or may require other resources to be fully completed, and the extent to which the project can be repeated in other locations such that it will not be limited to a single event.

1. Must address an essential need;
2. Demonstrates collaboration and/or partners with other agencies.

EcoFlight's mission is to educate and advocate for the protection of remaining wild lands and wildlife habitat using small aircraft. Our Crystal River overflight programs will be an important strategic component in the local campaign to secure Wild and Scenic protections for the Crystal River.

There are two steps that must be completed for a river to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS) – eligibility and suitability. The Forest Service found the Crystal River to have outstandingly remarkable values for its scenic, historic and recreational character, making it eligible for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The next step, suitability, will take support for



suitability documents and draft legislation for Congress to consider and act to designate the river for inclusion into the NWSRS.

As is typical with conservation efforts throughout the West, our senators have indicated that they prefer to see strong local support at the town or county levels before they act on issues like these. Therefore, it is crucial to build a groundswell of support from local citizens and governments, and to communicate this support to Colorado's leaders in congress.

This is a viable project, from the EcoFlight perspective, as EcoFlight has a proven history of doing this type of work. EcoFlight was a founding partner in the Thompson Divide Coalition and together with our many partners working on this, Thompson Divide Coalition, Wilderness Workshop, Conservation Colorado and others, EcoFlight flew the Colorado governor, Colorado US Senators, and almost all County Commissioners, mayors and City Councilmen and women of the Roaring Fork Valley. The net result is that Thompson Divide is mostly protected, and will hopefully with the passage of the CORE Act become fully protected. EcoFlight will do likewise with the Crystal River. EcoFlight will conduct a series of overflights based out of Aspen, Glenwood or Gunnison airports with river and conservation advocates, local elected officials from the towns of Marble, Carbondale and Gunnison, and Pitkin County, Gunnison County, media and residents of the Crystal River valley.

All parties will need to work together to successfully create lasting protections for the Crystal River. The aerial perspective provided on overflights is a highly effective way to educate passengers about the Crystal River watershed and the importance of the proposed Wild and Scenic designation. These overflights are a remarkably powerful platform for bringing together citizens with elected officials and the press to engage on the issue in a positive way, and to earn media that will help educate the wider public on why the Crystal deserves protection. From the seat of a small, single-engine airplane, passengers will see first-hand the scenic beauty of the Crystal River watershed, and will gain a deeper understanding of the impacts that threats like new dams or diversions would impose on this vital waterway. Passengers will share the exciting and intimate experience of flying in a small airplane, seeing the landscape from the unique aerial perspective. It is from this shared experience and perspective, that passengers will find a commonality and a place from which to work together.

EcoFlight will work closely with our local partners to organize effective overflights, build strategic passenger lists and execute effective post-flight outreach and follow up. EcoFlight is regularly communicating and coordinating with a coalition of partners including the Crystal River Valley Caucus, Wilderness Workshop, Roaring Fork Chapter of the Sierra Club and other conservation advocates on targeted invites to strategic passengers.

C. Public Need, Accessibility and Appreciation

The extent to which the proposed grant request/project will be seen, appreciated and/or used by the public.

1. Does not duplicate existing services or programs;
2. Must serve and be appreciated by people who live and/or work in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork watershed;
3. Includes a specific Public Relations strategy;
4. Demonstrates an appropriate need for public funding.

A strong showing of support at the local and county levels will be necessary for our two Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper to recommend to Congress to designate the Crystal River for Wild and Scenic status.



The airplane will be used as a platform to bring together officials from the Town of Marble, Gunnison County and Pitkin County and spark informed conversations and engagement on the Wild and Scenic proposal. Information gained on the flights will inform our elected officials and the general public about the importance of this designation, help clarify any misconceptions, and highlight the diverse interest and support for the effort. Flights with local media will help highlight the scenic beauty of the Crystal, and inform the public about the benefits of a Wild and Scenic designation through earned media. Our conservation partners will be on hand to steer messaging and values-based conversations about the watershed.

Post-flight follow up will include outreach to all partners and passengers with photos from the flight and conservation messaging, networking with supporters, and EcoFlight will produce a short informational video about the effort and why it is necessary to protect the Crystal through a Wild and Scenic Designation. This video will be a shared tool among our conservation partners who will distribute the video to their members and use it as a call to action for citizens to get involved, and take action when there are opportunities to engage in the campaign.

These are all crucial steps in building a strong grassroots network of support for Wild and Scenic as we build momentum and political will for congressional action on the Crystal River. An additional set of overflights will target Senators Hickenlooper and Bennet and their staff and will use overflights to give them a better understanding of the Crystal River Watershed. The flights will highlight local and regional support by including supportive public officials, business owners, ranchers and stakeholders on the flights. Overflights are highly informative and eye-opening when viewing a watershed from the air, and help passengers fully understand the scope of each river's reach. The experience leaves a lasting impression on our elected leaders and their staff, and the personal connection with the watershed leaves them better equipped to take bold action.

D. History of the Requesting Party

The extent that the requesting individual/entity has been successful in other projects or efforts and is known in the community.

EcoFlight's call to action is to work with all sides of an issue, the plane providing a platform for conversation to happen in order to find solutions. The aerial perspective and our ability to connect people can be used to help build bridges between current conflicting viewpoints, and a way to help Americans find common ground, bringing tribes, partisan alliances, and faith-based groups together.

Since 2002, EcoFlight's small airplanes have been used as a platform to connect ranchers with senators and members of Congress, town trustees with environmental advocates, county commissioners with mountain bikers, and sportsmen and women with the press. For example, overflights have led to in-depth conversations with policy makers about how the Thompson Divide supports the environmental, cultural and economic values of communities in the Roaring Fork Valley, and why it is worth protecting from oil and gas development. EcoFlight has worked with our partners to organize effective overflights that have produced countless articles, news stories, short films, letters to the editor and social media engagement that have elevated the Thompson Divide from a little-known concept to a nationally-recognized landscape in a larger fight to rein in fossil fuel development, protect wildlife habitat and combat climate change.

EcoFlight pilot and president Bruce Gordon has extensive knowledge of the landscape and over 30 years of experience in flying for conservation advocacy. EcoFlight's small staff has expertise in working on



place-based conservation campaigns with grassroots organizations throughout the West and will work hand in hand with our conservation partners on strategic messaging, timing, passenger lists and follow up to leverage the overflights to have the most impact.

EcoFlight is currently working on campaigns on multiple watersheds and rivers, on protecting and enhancing the Yampa, on Wild and Scenic designation for the headwaters of the Gila River in New Mexico, on removing dams on both the Klamath and Snake Rivers, on potential Wild and Scenic for the headwaters of the Verde in Arizona, and on all aspects of the Colorado River.

E. Budget, Measurements and Accountability

The extent to which the proposed grant amount is appropriate to the project scope and includes other appropriate sources of funding. The extent that the project includes specific measures for success and reporting of progress and results to the River Board.

1. Demonstrates financial stability and presents accurate budgets and financial reports, measurements and accountability;
2. Specific measures of progress and success;
3. Reporting plan to the River Board/others.

EcoFlight is committed to securing permanent protection for the Crystal River and the natural, cultural, scenic, recreational and economic values that it supports. To ensure long-term success for conservation campaigns, it is important to have buy-in from multiple partners and diverse sources of funding. A significant number of our funding partners at the state and regional level have committed funding that supports the 30 by 30 initiative which aims to protect 30% of our nation's lands and waters by the year 2030. Protecting the Crystal River from new dams or diversions will help maintain in-stream flows for the health of the river and the life it supports – fitting directly into the 30 by 30 effort which is supported by both our Senators and President Biden.

Progress and success will be tracked and reported to the River Board through the following progress indicators: number of passengers, number of earned media articles/images with positive conservation messaging, number of video views, number of engagements with targeted elected officials, resolutions from towns and counties. EcoFlight will produce image and video galleries that will be shared with our conservation partners and network for use in printed or digital communications and will be available to the River Board, the media and the public.



Itemized expenses:

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Staff time	
Strategy, outreach and communications and messaging w/ partners	\$6,000
Flight planning, coordination & logistics	\$4,000
Post-flight follow up outreach and messaging, distribution	\$6,000
Video production and editing (in-house videographer)	\$9,000
Pilots	\$5,000
Total Staff expense:	\$30,000
Flight expense	
Airplane fuel	\$6,000
Fixed airplane expenses (insurance, maintenance, parking)	\$5,000
Ferry flights to Glenwood/Gunnison	\$3,000
Total flight expense	\$14,000
TOTAL COST	\$44,000

Funds or in-kind donations available for project:

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Wyss Foundation (secured)	\$7,000
Local individual donations (pending)	\$2,000
General operating fund (secured)	\$2,000
SkiCo Environment Foundation (requesting)	\$3,000
Pitkin County Healthy Rivers Grant (requesting)	\$30,000
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE (B)	\$44,000



GRANT CRITERIA SCORE CARD

ECO FLIGHT \$30,000 Board Member Name:	Points Possible
Goals of the Healthy Rivers and Streams Board	0-100
The extent to which the proposed grant request/project meets the stated goals, objectives and on-going projects/priorities of the River Board. 1. Must be complete, clear and concise, with specific dollar amounts in total and for each element of the project; 2. Must fulfill the intent of the ballot language.	
Viability of the Project	0-100
The extent to which the proposed grant request/project is practical, will be completed as proposed and/or may require other resources to be fully completed, and the extent to which the project can be repeated in other locations such that it will not be limited to a single event. 1. Must address an essential need; 2. Demonstrates collaboration and/or partners with other agencies.	
Public Need Accessibility and Appreciation	0-100
The extent to which the proposed grant request/project will be seen, appreciated and/or used by the public. 1. Does not duplicate existing services or programs; 2. Must serve and be appreciated people who live and/or work in Pitkin County & the Roaring Fork Watershed; 3. Includes a specific Public Relations strategy; 4. Demonstrates an appropriate need for public funding.	
History of the Requesting Party	0-100
The extent that the requesting individual/entity has been successful in other projects or efforts and is known in the community.	
Budget, Measurements and Accountability	0-100
The extent to which the proposed grant amount is appropriate to the project scope and includes other appropriate sources of funding. The extent that the project includes specific measures for success and reporting of progress and results to the Healthy Rivers Board. 1. Demonstrates financial stability and presents accurate budgets and financial reports, measurements and accountability; 2. Specific measures of progress and success; 3. Reporting plan to Healthy Rivers Board/others.	



GRANT CRITERIA SCORE CARD

NOTES

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

September 13, 2021

TO: Healthy Rivers Board

FROM: Lisa MacDonald

SUBJECT: East of Aspen-Independence Pass Master Plan

Information: Ellen Sassano, Pitkin County's Sr. Long Ranger Planner, is seeking comments from the River Board and staff regarding the draft East of Aspen –Independence Pass Master Plan update.

Specific topics related to water are highlighted in yellow on the following pages.

This is an opportunity to identify issues and recommendations for action in this area that may support future endeavors.

The plan and attachments can be found at:

<https://pitkincounty.com/1384/East-of-AspenIndependence-Master-Plan-Up>

Requested Board Action: Provide comments on draft master plan

Attachments: Draft East of Aspen/Independence Pass Plan

2020 EAST OF ASPEN-INDEPENDENCE PASS MASTER PLAN

Draft 8.4.2021

Adopted...



2003 Plan Prepared by the East of Aspen Caucus
With Assistance from the Pitkin County Community Development Department
2019 Plan Update Prepared by TGMCLLC. Land Use Planning

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- A. East of Aspen-Independence Pass – Existing Conditions Report
- B. Future Land Use Map (will be developed after adoption)
- C. Implementation Plan, Including Code Amendments (to be added after adoption)
- D. Link to 2003 East of Aspen-Independence Pass Master Plan
- E. Link to Pitkin County Weed Management Plan

Commented [TM1]: Redo the TOC once the Plan is in final format

INTRODUCTION

The East of Aspen/Independence Pass planning area (Planning Area) is one of the gateways to Pitkin County and the Aspen area. State Highway 82, Pitkin County's major transportation route, traverses the area and offers spectacular views of Richmond Ridge and Independence Pass. While residential development exists within close proximity to Aspen, the majority of the land within the Planning Area is federally owned (United States Forest Service (USFS) or has been purchased or is managed by the local Pitkin County Open Space and Trails program. The upper reaches of the Planning Area to the County line contain USFS lands and pristine wilderness. The Hunter-Fryingpan and Collegiate Peaks Wilderness Areas encompass most of the Planning Area. The Planning Area also includes the spectacular Hunter Creek area and Smuggler Mountain as well as the eastern portion of land along Richmond Ridge. Additionally the planning area includes the boundaries of the Aspen Mountain Ski Area and other private ownership on the face of Aspen Mountain.

The current planning area boundaries are very similar to the boundaries described in the 2003 East of Aspen-Independence Pass Master Plan. The only changes made to the boundary for this master plan occur along the west side of the Planning Area and were made to reflect changes proposed in the draft update to the Master Plan for the adjacent Castle Creek Caucus Area.

Due to its size, this Planning Area is divided into four subareas, as it was in the 2003 Master Plan. These subareas or neighborhood planning areas (NPA's) are listed below:

- Tagert Lake East (Independence Pass)
- Tagert Lake West (East of Aspen Caucus Area)
- Aspen Mountain – (Richmond Ridge and the Ski Area)
- Smuggler-Hunter Creek (face of smuggler Mountain /Hunter Creek and the Fryingpan wilderness area)

The Planning Area includes one recognized caucus area, known as the "East of Aspen Caucus Area." This caucus area shares the same boundary as the Tagert Lake West NPA.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide information regarding existing conditions within the Planning Area including environment, resources, infrastructure, and development (see Appendix A); and to provide direction for elected and appointed officials for making land use policy and regulatory decisions relative to the future of the East of Aspen Planning Area.

This plan incorporates policies and ideas from a number of Pitkin County policy documents including the *Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines* and *Draft Language by Topic Area for potential Master Plan Updates*. In addition, consideration was given to retaining consistency between this master plan and the master plans of adjacent planning areas and with planning documents for overlapping government entities such as the US Forest Service. It is the intention of the County to adopt master plans that provide future land use direction ~~for future growth~~ consistent with the policies found in the Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines, key examples of which are provided below:

- ***“It is the policy of the County to locate future urban development within adopted urban growth boundaries in order to eliminate residential sprawl and strip commercial development, to ensure the provision of adequate service levels and transportation connectivity, to preserve agriculture, forestry and open space land uses, and to maximize the utility of funds invested in public facilities and services. Land outside the growth boundaries will be deemed most appropriate for the preservation of agriculture, natural habitat, environmental resources, open space and rural residential uses.”***
- ***“New development should be compatible with and not fundamentally change the character of any neighborhood or area”***
- ***“Pitkin County seeks to preserve its natural, rural scenery and natural landmarks for the benefit of its residents and the continued viability of its resort economy.”***
- ***“To the extent possible, the County seeks to protect scenic corridors along highways, County roadways and mountain road systems.”***
- ***“It is the policy of the County to ensure that the night sky can be viewed by citizens without the interference of unnecessary artificial light from growth, urbanization and highway development.”***

THE ROLE OF THE MASTER PLAN (AND PLANNING PROCESS)

The East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area includes the East of Aspen Caucus Area, as shown on Figure 1 of Appendix A of this master plan. In 1998, the Pitkin County voters adopted Article IV, Caucuses, as part of the Pitkin County Home Rule Charter, stating in the preamble that:

“the word [caucus] connotes representative democracy at the most local level where policies are formulated and recommended by the people whom they most affect ... these policies provide elected and appointed county officials with recommendations to enact just laws and policies.”

(Pitkin County Home Rule Charter, Section 4.0)

Caucuses are recognized, by law, as recommending bodies with two primary responsibilities as summarized in the following provisions found in the Home Rule Charter:

4.6 Function: A caucus, upon recognition by the Board, shall have a recommendatory function for all matters directly affecting the caucus area and shall permit its members to report minority views, as well as majority views, and a division of votes with any such recommendation. Further, a caucus shall have a recommendatory function for all planning matters affecting the caucus area, as well as other County matters affecting the caucus area including, but not limited to, budgetary and work program matters.

4.11 Master Plans: The County Commissioners and the Planning and Zoning Commission will encourage the development of Caucus Master Plans. The County Commissioners shall specify the criteria for the Caucus Master Plan development procedures and local caucus approval. Caucus Master Plans which satisfy such criteria shall be recognized by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and County Commissioners. The Caucus Master Plan shall be considered as one of the primary advisory documents in the development of county laws, rules, and regulations which affect caucus areas.

(Pitkin County Home Rule Charter, Sections 4.6 and 4.11)

The Colorado State Legislature also adopted mandatory comprehensive planning legislation (C.R.S. 30-28-106(4)), which requires Pitkin County to master plan the entire County. Individual caucuses, such as the East of Aspen Caucus, adopt plans pursuant to the Pitkin County Charter, which are then forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Commission for final adoption under the land use code.

This East of Aspen-Independence Pass Master Plan is hereby incorporated with and made a part of the Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan. The Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan and its parts, including this Master Plan, serve as the duly adopted Pitkin County Master Plan as required by C.R.S. 30-38-106. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, this Master Plan, despite any reference to the Comprehensive Plan or any Caucus Master Plan in the Pitkin County Code, shall not be construed as any regulation or requirement or prohibition of law and shall not be binding on any Pitkin County elected official or representative.

Add a paragraph discussing the master plan review and adoption process once the process has been completed.



OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 1 - LAND USE & ZONING

1.1 LAND USE PATTERN

Develop zoning and other land use regulations to support a land use pattern that transitions between and acknowledges the unique characteristics of the following uses and areas:

- The very low density, backcountry residential and informal recreation uses and the commercial recreation use (within the Aspen Mountain Ski Area permit boundary) in the *Richmond Ridge* area;
- The rural residential use in the *Tagerts Lake West (East of Aspen Caucus)* area and;
- The rural residential and informal recreation uses in the adjacent *Castle Creek Valley/Caucus* area which provides access to and is also impacted by uses in the Richmond Ridge/Aspen Mountain area located within the East of Aspen Planning area.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following Land Use Designations have been used in the Action Items below in order to identify the intended future land uses for various parcels:

Conservation: Intended to reflect resource conservation uses for federal, state and locally owned public lands or lands held in conservation easements.

Public: Intended for publicly owned facilities, such as Colorado Department of Transportation (“CDOT”) properties, etc

Large Lot/Conservation: Intended for properties with conservation values (wildlife, agriculture, etc.); minimum 35 acres with “conservation” incentives (Growth Management exemption, extended vesting, as examples) for larger lots; Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) approach with options for variance from underlying zoning standards to facilitate conservation.

Low Density: Minimum 35 acres with incentives for lowering allowable density -. In some cases, would be a “transition” zone between Rural/Remote and more intense zone districts such as AR-10 or those in the UGB area.

Low Density/Low Intensity/Open Space/Recreational: Minimum 35 acres; intended to reflect the open space and recreational values of the property with the ability for low density and low intensity (relative to house size) residential development.

ZONING

The planning area includes the following zone districts:

<u>AR-10</u>	<u>Agricultural/Residential</u>
<u>RR</u>	<u>Rural & Remote</u>
<u>Ski Rec</u>	<u>Ski/Recreation</u>
<u>TR-1</u>	<u>Transitional Residential-1</u>
<u>TR-2</u>	<u>Transitional Residential-2</u>

While current zoning designations generally support the goals of preservation of natural resources and character within the Planning Area, this Master Plan recommends several zoning amendments:

1. Amendments to the Rural and Remote zone district are noted below:

Any future modifications to zoning should be consistent with the intent of the following zone district(s).

~~"The RR (Rural/Remote) zone district is intended to: (i) conserve and protect the natural environment and its resources, while allowing for limited recreational uses and limited residential development, (ii) preserve the small scale, low-density backcountry character and lifestyle, (iii) retain undeveloped areas, and (iv) allow for the transfer of development rights to areas that are more appropriate for development. This district accommodates only small new structures and very limited types of development."~~

The following amendments are recommended for consideration to ensure that the Rural and Remote(R/R) zone continues to achieve it's stated intent:

"The RR (Rural/Remote) zone district is intended to: (i) conserve and protect the natural environment and its resources, while allowing for limited recreational uses and limited residential development, (ii) preserve the small scale, low-density backcountry character and lifestyle, (iii) retain undeveloped areas, and (iv) allow for the transfer of development rights to areas that are more appropriate for development. This district accommodates only small new structures and very limited types of development."

A. Strengthen Rural/Remote regulations to address substandard-sized lots in a manner that accords with the original intent of the zone, by:

- Making single-family homes (or their functional equivalent, resort cabins) on substandard sized lots, a special review use;
- -Allowing for a limitation on the square footage of improvements on substandard lots in order to ensure that development is proportional to lot size;
- Limiting the activity envelope on substandard sized lots to the smallest envelope possible, including a building envelope at site plan review that minimizes the impact to small sites that are highly constrained by hazard areas;
- Developing Special review criteria for substandard sized lots that allows for a limitation on the number of non-contiguous activity envelopes available for multiple uses;
- Developing criteria to assess whether it's appropriate to retain an "historic" unit and build a new single-family home on a substandard sized lot, and clarifying the review required for an historic unit's retention in connection with new development;

- Limiting the circumstances in which multiple principal uses are permitted on substandard sized lots(?)

B. Strengthen activity envelope and site plan review in the Rural/Remote zone to adhere to the policies of Pitkin County and the purpose of the Rural/Remote zone, by:

- Setting minimum setbacks based on thirty-five acre zoning, including the ability to reduce the size of the development if a smaller setback is sought at the Board of Adjustment;
 - o Alternatively, start with an assumed setback based on thirty-five acre zoning. If that setback cannot be achieved on a specific site, given every effort to reduce the size of the development and its footprint, then allow consideration of revised setbacks, assuming substantial, competent evidence that the development will not: (1) fundamentally change the character of the adjacent area; (2) substantially diminish the value of an adjacent site; or (3) impair the public's enjoyment of adjacent publicly owned land;

C. Mitigate adverse impacts of SKI-REC uses on adjacent Rural/Remote zoning, by:

- o Amending the SKI-REC zone to eliminate "resort cabins" as a potential use in the zone, or alternatively, for lands rezoned from Rural/Remote to the SKI-REC zone.

2. Rezone public lands within the Planning area to the RS-G (Resource-Government) zone district, where appropriate.

LAND USE & ZONING OBJECTIVES BY NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREA (NPA)

Tagert Lake West NPA

Objectives

1. Maintain the rural residential character, including the environmental and visual quality.
2. Zoning should reflect the resource conservation uses that currently exist within the Tagert Lake West NPA.
3. Utilize the RS-G (Resource-Government) zone district -on locally owned conservation parcels to reflect the intended open space and conservation use.

Action Items

1. Maintain the existing AR-10 zoning on the valley floor.
2. Rezone public lands within the Planning Area, which are currently zoned AR-10 to the Resource-Government zone district to preclude residential development and reflect the resource conservation uses that currently exist on US Forest Service and other government-owned lands. (Conservation designation.)

Tagert Lake East NPA

Objectives

1. Zoning in the Tagert Lake East NPA should be in keeping with the existing undeveloped public lands and should maintain the natural scenic character of the corridor along Highway 82 to the county boundary.

Action Items

1. Maintain Rural-Remote zoning to provide the maximum protection of the natural undeveloped public lands within the Planning Area.
2. Special uses on state and federal properties should be reviewed for consistency with this Master Plan.

Aspen Mountain/Richmond Ridge NPA

With the exception of ski area improvements and structures there is very little residential development on the mining claims off of the Aspen Mountain and Richmond Ridge Roads on the Independence Pass side of Richmond Ridge. These areas do contain Rural and Remote (R/R) residential cabins or have utilized TDRs to preclude the property from further development. The Aspen Mountain Ski Area contains ski area improvements and structures and consists of private mining claims and public lands subject to Aspen Skiing Company's Special Use Permit issued and administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The Aspen Mountain Ski Area Master Plan, as accepted by the U.S. Forest Service and approved by the County and amended periodically, generally directs development, uses and activities within the ski area. The base of the Aspen Mountain Ski Area is located within the City of Aspen and not included with this Master Plan. However, several private parcels on the face of Aspen Mountain, not within the ski area boundary, are within the Neighborhood Planning Area.

Objectives

1. Zoning should reflect the resource conservation, backcountry residential and dispersed recreational uses that exist within the Aspen Mountain/Richmond Ridge NPA.
2. Special event uses and activities on state and federal properties should be reviewed for consistency with this Master Plan.
3. Maintain Rural/Remote zoning on the privately held parcels and public lands along Richmond Hill Ridge and to the east of the SKI-REC zoned area, except lands directly adjacent to the ski area may be rezoned to SKI-REC to expand the Aspen Mountain Ski Area boundary with necessary U.S. Forest Service and County approvals, *(and only when such expansion is specifically identified within the approved Pitkin County Aspen Mountain Ski Area Master Plan in effect at the time of the zone change request.)* (Staff addition) .
4. Preserve the open space and recreational values on the face of Aspen Mountain.

Action Items

1. Rezone public lands within the NPA which are currently zoned AR-10, to the Resource-Government zone district to preclude residential development and reflect the resource conservation uses that currently exist on US Forest Service and other government-owned lands. (Conservation designation.)

2. Coordinate with CDOT and USFS regarding special use activities and special events.
3. Rezone parcels on the face of Aspen Mountain to Low Density/Low Intensity/ Open Space/Recreational, Rural and Remote, TR-2 and/or SKI-REC zone districts based on location and use, subject to compliance with the rezoning criteria in the Land Use Code, including consistency with the applicable Pitkin County Master Plan(s).
4. Limit any rezoning from the Rural-Remote zone district to SKI-REC in the Richmond Ridge area and to the east of the Aspen Ski Area to areas and uses that are clearly compatible with and do not change or erode the character of the Rural Remote Zone.

Smuggler/Hunter Creek NPA – Hunter Creek Valley

Objectives

1. The face of Smuggler Mountain (as viewed from the City of Aspen) should remain undeveloped for visual (open space) character and recreational uses, with the exception of the lower part closest to city limit below elevation 8230. An open space designation is more appropriate for the portion of Smuggler Mountain facing the City of Aspen with a R/R designation beyond the ridge road to the northeast.
2. The top and back of Smuggler Mountain should be maintained as R/R in order to preserve the rural mountain character.
3. The larger tracts on Red Mountain to the north and east of Red Mountain Subdivision should be maintained as larger tracts and be precluded from further subdivision in order to preserve a buffer between existing dense residential use and R/R-zoned public lands above.
4. Zoning on private conservation parcels on Red Mountain (Duroux Ranch conservation parcel) should reflect the intended conservation uses of the property.

Action Items

1. Rezone the AR-10 zoned large lots between the Red Mountain Subdivision and the Hunter Creek Valley to a zone district which would preclude further subdivision and retain a buffer between the R/R zone and the higher density zoning of Red Mountain Subdivision. (Low Density designation.)

2. Rezone public lands and locally owned conservation parcels, currently zoned AR-10, to the RS-G zone district to preclude residential development and reflect the resource conservation uses that currently exist on the land (Conservation designation.)
3. Rezone the large conservation parcel (the north Duroux Ranch) to the RS-G zone district.

1.2 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines and the Board of County Commissioners note the following regarding growth management:

“Utilize growth management and the Land-Use Code to create an equitable, sustainable and resilient regional quality of life and economy for the future, and to meet our climate action objectives.”

“It is the policy of the County to manage the rate at which development applications are approved, as well as the type, location, quality and ultimate quantity of growth.”

Pitkin County does not generally support extensions of public utilities such as municipal water and sewer lines outside of the Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs).

Objectives

1. Ensure that growth within the Planning Area occurs at a slow rate consistent with the recent past and with other county policies related to growth and development.
2. Permit home size above growth management exempt square footage allowances in the Tagert Lake West NPA on parcels where visual and environmental quality can be maintained.
3. Maintain the visual quality of the area, specifically from Highway 82, and along Richmond Ridge Road.

Action Items

1. Amend the scenic overlay maps and zone districts to incorporate guidelines that will address the visual concerns associated with larger home development and development within Rural and Remote areas of the East

of Aspen - Independence Pass Planning Area. Work with East of Aspen - Independence Pass residents to identify areas that are not currently, but should be, mapped for scenic review (specifically along Highway 82, and along Richmond Hill Road).

2. In order to preserve the scenic character of the existing open valley floor and flanking mountainsides, utilize the Scenic View Protection criteria in the Pitkin County Land Use Code as part of the development review process for all lands identified on the Scenic View Protection maps, as amended pursuant to the action item #1, above.
3. Encourage the Community Development Department to continue its practice of monitoring growth and development within the Planning Area and to utilize this data in future efforts to refine the Land Use Code in response to substantive changes in growth trends.
4. Analyze existing home size-related regulations and recent development data to determine whether changes to house size regulations are warranted to preserve the existing visual character, address climate action objectives and/or manage other growth impacts within the Planning Area.
5. Continue to allow the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area to be considered for approval of TDR receiver sites subject to the review process and criteria contained in the Pitkin County Land Use Code.

TRANSFERABLE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Reserve for discussion

SHORT TERM RENTALS

Reserve for discussion

1.3 PUBLIC LANDS

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines note the following regarding public lands and recreation:

“It is the policy of the County to preserve the physical environment; to improve County-wide recreational and trail opportunities; to ensure citizens’ rights of appropriate access to public lands on roads and trails historically open to the public; and to protect existing open space from urbanization and development in order to maintain quality of life and enjoyment of the environment.”

“The County seeks to preserve and protect public lands from the impacts of incompatible development by promoting land uses within and nearby public lands which are compatible with public use of those lands, and with preservation of the natural environment.”

“The County seeks to promote and encourage the transfer of private inholdings to public ownership with the objective of promoting consistent management of the public lands to reduce conflicts between private owners and developers and the public at large.”

“Federal land exchange where public lands may be exchanged and privatized, should be consistent with and further the policies of Pitkin County, including preserving or enhancing recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, agricultural heritage, scenic viewplanes and public access. In addition, such exchanges should result in no net loss of equal quality publicly owned acreage within the Roaring Fork Watershed.”

“The County supports collaborative efforts between local, state and federal agencies in the development and updating of Resource Management Plans for public lands.”

Objectives

1. Manage private and public land development through zoning and access limitations appropriate for the entrance to the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area in order to protect public lands and enhance the recreational experience.

Action Items

1. Rezone public lands within the Planning Area, which are currently zoned AR-10 to the Resource-Government zone district to preclude residential development and reflect the resource conservation uses that currently exist on US Forest Service and other government-owned lands. (Conservation designation.)

1.4 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines provide the following policy guidance regarding residential development:

“Lands outside the (urban) growth boundaries will be deemed most appropriate for the preservation of agriculture, natural habitat, environmental resources, open space and rural residential uses.”

“Pitkin County seeks to preserve its natural, rural scenery and natural landmarks for the benefit of its residents and the continued viability of its resort economy.”

“Creative design approaches, including clustering as an example, are encouraged to integrate siting in harmony with the environment and consistent with land use policies. Such development tends to minimize the cost of governmental and other services, maximize open space, preserve agricultural lands, and minimize automobile congestion and hazardous conditions on public roads and highways.”

Objectives

1. Future residential development within the Planning Area should be consistent with, and complimentary to, the rural character of the area. The natural environment should dominate a person's experience of the valley. To this end, residential development should be defined by extremely low-density, single-family residential housing of moderate size and bulk consistent with scenic, environmental, and climate action objectives in this Master Plan.

Action Items

1. Ensure that zoning promotes and protects the agricultural and rural residential character and existing low-density residential development patterns of the area, providing incentives for the preservation of open, agricultural, and other natural resource lands and allowing for very low-density development of sensitively sited single-family homes.
2. Consider revising Land Use regulations to allow the County to vary house size depending on the visibility of the residence from public roads.

(Also see zoning change recommendations under the *Zoning* Section of this Plan.)

1.5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines note the following regarding citizen housing:

“It is the policy of the County to encourage the existence of a supply of desirable and affordable housing for persons employed in Pitkin County, those with special needs, senior citizens, and other qualified persons. Pitkin County seeks to preserve existing affordable housing to the extent possible and to encourage the development of affordable housing within established urban growth boundaries, where employment, services and facilities are typically already established.”

“It is the policy of Pitkin County to promote the availability of affordable housing for employees generated by proposed development.”

“A diversity of housing types and densities is necessary in order to ensure affordable housing for a range of individuals and families. Deed-restricted housing for full-time versus seasonal employees is preferred for development, especially within Urban Growth Boundaries.”

“Affordable housing of urban or suburban densities is not encouraged outside the Urban Growth Boundaries if it promotes sprawl or other development inconsistent with this or other policies or regulations of the County. Affordable housing outside Urban Growth Boundaries may be acceptable if it is: (i) Employee Dwelling Units (EDU) and Caretaker Dwelling Units (CDU); (ii) job related on-site housing; (iii) conversion of existing locally serving housing; (iv) on-site required mitigation housing; or (v) replacement of existing affordable housing.”

“Special attention should be directed to providing for dispersal of housing for low and moderate income families and low income senior citizens throughout the residential areas of the Urban Growth Boundaries with due consideration to other policies of the County and the availability of water and sewer service, fire protection, public transportation, employment, shopping, schools, social services, and recreational activities.”

“Rehabilitation of existing residential facilities is promoted where feasible. The purchase and buy-down of existing units throughout the county is encouraged since it promotes affordable housing goals without increasing growth rates or impacts.”

“The use of energy conservation and innovative home building techniques in order to reduce construction and/or operating costs without sacrificing safety

or desirability of the housing is encouraged and supported. When appropriate, the revision or adoption of building codes will be encouraged to meet this objective. For deed restricted housing projects, a preference will be given to developers and contractors that utilize such techniques.”

Objectives

1. To the extent possible, direct affordable housing to the urban growth boundary portion of the Planning Area. Caretaker or employee dwelling units are acceptable within the Planning Area.

Action Items

1. Discourage new affordable housing within the rural portion of the Planning Area (outside the Aspen Urban Growth Boundary - UGB) except for Employee Dwelling Units (EDU) and Caretaker Dwelling Units (CDU) as currently permitted in the Land Use Code.
2. Encourage the purchase and buy-down of existing units within the UGB portion of the Planning Area as one measure to promote affordable housing without increasing growth rates or impacts.
3. ~~Add other policies here based on input from area residents.~~

1.6 COMMERCIAL/CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL USES & SPECIAL EVENTS

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines note the following regarding new commercial development:

“New commercial development should be located within established urban growth boundaries unless it is of a scale and capacity deemed to be appropriate within identified boundaries.”

Objectives

1. Preclude commercial uses that would change the rural residential character of the area.

Action Items

1. Modify zoning, if necessary, to prohibit commercial uses (other than home occupations as defined in the Pitkin County Land Use Code, [commercial permits issued by Pitkin County Open Space and Trails](#) and agriculture-related commercial uses, such as horse boarding and hay sales) within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area.
2. Develop provisions to prohibit the use of residential properties as primarily commercial, short-term rental properties. [For Discussion](#)

1.7 MINING CLAIMS/MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

The Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines note the following regarding new mineral development:

“Pitkin County supports a reduction in energy consumption for both the County organization and the community at large, while advocating for the development of clean, environmentally sound renewable energy resources and technology.”

“Mineral development should be limited to that which provides energy that will be developed and utilized with negligible degradation to air and water quality or quantity; and without detriment to public lands, wildlife, agriculture, and rural character that sustain the local and regional tourist-based economy.”

Objectives:

1. Protect lands within the Planning Area from the environmental impacts of mining, mineral exploration, oil and gas drilling and exploration, sand and gravel pits, rock crushers, concrete batch plants, large-scale geothermal extraction or exploration and other extractive operations.

Action Items

1. Strictly enforce all existing local, state and federal regulations governing mining, mineral exploration, oil and gas exploration and drilling, sand and gravel pits and all other extractive operations when such operations are proposed within the Planning Area.
2. Seek to improve the existing regulations governing mining, mineral exploration, and other extractive operations in the Pitkin County Land Use Code to prevent such activities from occurring on private lands within the Planning Area and, to the extent possible, discourage such activities on public lands.

- a. Revise the Land Use Code definition section to include “extractive operations” and incorporate oil and gas, fracking, geothermal, mineral exploration, drilling and mining in this definition.
 - b. Consider establishing a more stringent set of review criteria for special use permits for extractive operations.
3. In the event that mineral extraction is practiced in this planning area, such practice should be done in an environmentally sound manner, subject to the Pitkin County Land Use Code.
4. ~~Add policies regarding mining claims based on input from Community Development Department and area residents.~~

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENT

2.1 WATER RESOURCES/AQUATIC HABITAT/RIPARIAN/WETLANDS

Several Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines address water quantity, quality, water/utility service and septic, as follows:

“It is the policy of the County to preserve and protect its present water resources, recognizing the County’s semi-arid character and that significant transmountain and transbasin diversions and the vested rights of senior appropriators have materially curtailed the availability of water resources. Furthermore, wetlands and riparian ecosystems, which are important to maintaining the overall balance of ecological systems; and are important plant communities, wildlife habitat and movement corridors, should be conserved, protected and restored. The County seeks to protect citizens’ rights to permanently protected minimum stream flows in rivers and creeks, and to the preservation of remaining natural riparian areas and wetlands.”

“The right to maintain and not exceed the carrying capacity (sustainability) of the land and water, including protecting water quality.”

“Land uses within the region should be designed to preserve and protect present water resources and to avoid significant adverse effects on the quantity, quality, or dependability of water resources in the County; Land uses should protect against significant increased salinization of water, loss of minimum instream flows, and the need for future major public expenditures to reacquire or redistribute water resources.”

"To protect water resources and/or riparian habitat, development in areas adjacent to water bodies, functional irrigation ditches and natural watercourse areas should maintain adequate setbacks where necessary."

Objectives

1. Protection of all creeks, wetlands, other surface waters and riparian areas is a high priority within the Planning Area and must be carefully considered in any private development proposal or public improvement project.

Action Items

1. Modify run-off and/or erosion control regulations to the extent necessary to ensure that water quality meets or exceeds federal, state, and local standards for health/safety and environmental quality.
2. In addition to surface water protection, land use and development review should consider implications for aquifer depletion and subsurface water quality and impacts to domestic water wells.
3. Efficient use of water by irrigators, homeowners, agricultural users, and other water users to conserve water along with the adoption of appropriate efficiency measures and programs to protect healthy flows in Planning Area creeks is encouraged. Encourage the installation and use of efficient irrigation systems for both homeowners and agricultural users.
4. Establish and enforce regulations against the spread of harmful chemicals on agricultural properties and in road maintenance, pest management, and weed management practices.
5. Promote regional watershed planning and collaboration which is fundamental to maintaining vibrant, healthy rivers and outstanding water quality in the Colorado River Basin, along with intergovernmental agreements and participation in water court proceedings, as warranted.
6. Development should not disturb the integrity of existing and natural drainage patterns. Land use and development activities that subject areas to increased potential for damage by flood, erosion or sedimentation, or increase the potential for water pollution are discouraged.

2.2 SCENIC QUALITY

Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines state the following relative to scenic quality:

“To the extent possible, the county seeks to protect scenic corridors along highways, county roadways and mountain road systems.”

“Appropriate buffer strips should be preserved along federal, state, and local roadways to protect public views, minimize safety concerns and environmental impacts and to preserve corridors for future transportation facilities.”

“It is the policy of the County to ensure that the night sky can be viewed by citizens without the interference of unnecessary artificial light from growth, urbanization and highway development.”

“It is the policy of the County that its natural, rural scenery be preserved for the benefit of its residents and the continued viability of its resort economy. Undergrounding of utility lines is supported where and when appropriate to minimize visual impact.”

Objectives

1. Protect the scenic rural character in the East of Aspen - Independence Pass Planning Area as defined by the open, lush riparian valley and undisturbed mountainsides. Maintain the primitive and remote visual character within the Aspen Mountain/Richmond Ridge NPA and the Smuggler/ Hunter Creek NPA and maintain the face of Smuggler Mountain as an undeveloped hillside as viewed from the City of Aspen.

Action Items

1. Work with the Community Development Department to identify lands within the Planning Area that are not currently but should be, included within the mapped Scenic View Protection Area . **The revised Scenic View Protection Area maps should consider views from Hunter Creek Road and Richmond Hill Road.**
2. **Strengthen the County’s scenic regulations to effectively regulate areas of high importance in the Rural/Remote zone district, by:**

- Listing all of Pitkin County's claimed public roads as areas subject to scenic review, such as Richmond Hill Road, Little Annie Road, Midnight Mine Road, and Express Creek Road;
 - Updating scenic standards so they allow for reduction of development where necessary to preserve scenic values.
3. Utilize the Scenic View Protection criteria in the Pitkin County Land Use Code as part of the development review process for all lands identified on the Scenic View Protection maps, as amended pursuant to the action item one above, in order to preserve the scenic character of the existing open valley floor and flanking mountainsides.
 4. ~~Encourage~~ Ensure that the Community Development Department has resources to continue to enforce the Pitkin County lighting regulations.
 5. Encourage the County to consider amendments to the lighting regulations to further minimize the impacts of outdoor lighting as new information and technology is made available.
 6. ~~Add others based on input from area residents.~~

2.3 AIR QUALITY

Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines state the following relative to air quality:

"It is the policy of the County that development not degrade air quality."

Objectives

1. Preserve the current air quality within the East of Aspen/Independence Planning Area for current residents and future generations.

Action Items

1. Ensure that current regulations governing air pollution at the local, state, and federal level are enforced within the Roaring Fork Valley.
2. Continue efforts to control air pollution through enforcement of current policies and regulations including the Air Pollution Control and Solid Fuel Burning Devices and Restaurant Grill provisions of the County Code.

3. Work with the County and the City of Aspen on continued monitoring of air quality within the Caucus Area.
4. Continue to strengthen regulations, policies, and procedures to address the impacts of construction on air quality.
5. Encourage the development and use of alternative energy vehicles.
6. Encourage the use of existing park and ride and other existing transit services and facilities.
7. Utilize a balance of incentives and land use/building/energy code regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2.4 CLIMATE CHANGE & PREPAREDNESS/RESILIENCY

Pitkin County's climate is already changing, and additional changes are anticipated throughout the 21st century and beyond. These local climate shifts will take place within the context of regional and global changes, all of which may result in conditions unprecedented in human history. The impacts of climate change are likely to affect residents, ecosystems, and environmental amenities.

For Pitkin County, climate change will likely include longer summertime warm periods, earlier onset of spring snowmelt, more precipitation arriving as rain rather than snow, and longer dry periods with heavier precipitation events in between. These types of changes could exacerbate already risky wildfire conditions, flood hazards and place extra pressure on watersheds, and negatively affect important ecosystems.

Pitkin County Policy guidelines state the following relative to Climate Change and Resiliency

"Pitkin County acknowledges that the economic and environmental consequences of inaction with respect to climate change are potentially catastrophic for the natural environment and current and future generations in communities worldwide. At the same time, Pitkin County endeavors to address causes of climate change at a local and national level, we strive to be proactive in adaptation planning for resiliency relating to local land use and natural resource management. We support coordinated and collaborative efforts between local, state and federal agencies to design and implement strategies to address climate change and resiliency."

- ~~Wildfire: Land use and forest management strategies to address the potential for wildfire, particularly at the wildland/urban interface, and to respond to a wildfire event.~~
- ~~Flood: Land use and natural resource management strategies to address flood hazard and to respond to a flood event.~~
- ~~Water Availability: Land use and natural resource management strategies to maintain healthy streams, reduce potential for drought, and to develop strategies in the event of drought to address potable water supply, wildfire potential, forest health, the local/regional recreation/tourist economy, fisheries, and agriculture.~~
- ~~Biodiversity: Forest management strategies to maintain biodiversity as a means to limit impacts of changing climate.~~
- ~~Resilient Infrastructure: Design and location of buildings and structures to withstand adverse conditions related to changing climate.~~
- ~~Economic Resilience: Strategies to encourage a diverse economy to respond to changing snowpack and other climate related factors as they may impact tourism."~~

Objectives

1. Actively address the threats presented by climate change in order to protect the environment, the wildlife, and residents within the Planning Area. Inaction, with respect to climate change, is potentially catastrophic for the natural environment and all those who rely upon it. The residents and landowners within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area will endeavor to address energy consumption at the local level and to develop greater resiliency in local land use and natural resource management.
2. To restore a safe and stable climate, mobilize across all sectors to rapidly drawdown or remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and to implement measures that will reach zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Action Items

Climate

1. Support and implement direction and goals established and periodically updated in the Pitkin County Climate Emergency Resolution and Climate Action Plans adopted by Pitkin County, including at a minimum, but not limited to:

- Reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by 90% from 2020 levels by 2050 through the measurable implementation of policies that preserve community character and equitably distribute policy impacts among those of different socio-economic and racial backgrounds;
- Cooperating with other jurisdictions, special districts, utilities and organizations, local municipalities and other counties, to adapt infrastructure, land-use, and regional and environmental resources for the impacts of Climate Change;
- Equitably involving citizens and stakeholders of all socio-economic and racial backgrounds in outreach and education programs to determine and provide best practices for Climate Change adaptation and mitigation;
- Working towards net-zero energy use;
- Encouraging installation of renewable energy technologies;
- Working towards the diversion of construction and demolition waste and debris from the Pitkin County Solid Waste Center;
- Continually supporting and developing regional mass transit efforts and transportation solutions.

RESILIENCY

1. **Wildfire:** Work with Pitkin County to develop and use forest management strategies to address the potential for wildfire, particularly at the wild land/urban interface, and to respond to a wildfire event.
 - a. Promote land use and forest management strategies to mitigate increased wildfire potential.
 - b. Enable landowners to create defensible spaces by helping secure fire mitigation funding.
 - c. Encourage wildfire resistant buildings and landscaping by providing tax incentives and reducing building and/or other permit fees.
 - d. Promote land use and forest management strategies to mitigate increased wildfire potential.
 - e. Endeavor to educate Planning Area residents and land owners regarding wildfire issues, including outreach to the public (See T-Lazy-7 Ranch's wildfire information, Appendix D).
2. **Flood:** Assist in developing and using natural resource management strategies to address flood hazard and to respond to a flood event, including prohibiting all new development in areas prone to flooding.

3. **Water Supply:** Actively promote protection of all water sources within the Planning Area through conservation and irrigation that supports subsurface aquifers and natural springs and policies that ensure stream protection, including the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan.
4. **Ground Water:** Residents of the Planning Area support water protection and enhancement projects that align with the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan.
 - a. We support a county-wide water conservation plan that includes the Planning Area in order to protect the area from unreasonable depletion of underground water supplies. This plan should be a collaborative effort with the City of Aspen, to ensure that water conservation is integral to municipal water use and planning , and is considered in the review of new development within the urban growth area and/or City annexations .
 - b. We support Pitkin County's policy to protect the quality and quantity of ground aquifers, encourage the development of source water protection plans, with assistance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and implement applicable best management strategies.
 - c. We support Pitkin County's efforts to increase awareness of domestic source water protection issues, ensure application of best technologies for water efficient fixtures in buildings, and encourage the retrofitting of existing homes with water efficient fixtures as opportunities allow.
 - d. We support Pitkin County's policy to provide incentives for the reuse of gray water for domestic irrigation, legal commercial activity, and establish effective and workable regulations governing gray water re-use in order to eliminate or minimize environmental impacts and health and safety concerns related to such re-use within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area.
5. **Surface Water:** We support Pitkin County's policy to not only develop natural resource and water use management strategies to maintain healthy streams, but to also develop strategies to address potable water supply, wildfire potential, forest health, the local/regional recreation/tourist economy, fisheries, and agriculture in the event of a prolonged drought.
 - a. Pitkin County should encourage the use of irrigation that supports subsurface aquifers and natural springs in the application of agricultural irrigation water.

- b. Pitkin County should protect Creeks within the Planning Area against damming and other diversions to serve growth, which itself contributes to climate change.
6. **Biodiversity:** We recommend developing forest management strategies to maintain biodiversity as a means to limit impacts of changing climate.
7. **Resilient Infrastructure:** Pitkin County should develop regulations for the design and location of new buildings, roads, bridges, and other structures to withstand adverse conditions related to changing climate.
8. **Economic Resiliency:** We support the development of strategies to encourage a diverse economy in order to respond to changing snowpack and other climate-related factors as they may impact tourism and to develop plans and regulations to rebuild in the aftermath of a natural disaster (e.g. wildfire, flood) to promote a rapid return to economic sustainability.
9. **Food Security:** We recommend exploring regulations for the encouragement of local food growers and markets, where feasible, in order to rely less on outside sources.

2.5 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Pitkin County Policy guidelines state the following relative to cultural and historic resources:

“It is the policy of Pitkin County to ensure that historic and archaeological resources are preserved, protected and maintained. Every effort will be made to identify and protect prehistoric and historic sites that meet national, state, or local criteria for historic designation from neglect, destruction or harmful alteration.”

Objectives

1. Preserve, protect and maintain historic and archaeological resources located within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area, especially those that meet national, state, or local criteria for historic designation.

Action Items

1. Encourage the County to continue to refine the Historic Preservation section of the Land Use Code to promote the broadest participation possible in the preservation of historic and archeological resources within the Planning Area and throughout the County.
2. Encourage property owners, whose property contains historic or archeological resources that may meet local, state, or national designation standards to meet with the Pitkin County Community Development Department to explore the requirements and benefits of seeking protection for such resources under the Historic Preservation Regulations in the Land Use Code.
3. Determine whether it's feasible for collaboration between the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board Support non-profits and the U.S. Forest Service in their efforts to preserve existing deteriorating historic cabins in the Hunter Creek Valley on U.S. Forest Service lands.
3. Add more here pending input from area residents.

2.6 WILDLIFE

The following policy statement from the Pitkin County Policy Guidelines provides guidance regarding the County's overall intent with the respect to the protection of wildlife habitat:

"It is the policy of the County to ensure that proposed land uses (including structures) are compatible with the ecosystem of wildlife habitats and do not pose immediate, long term or potential detrimental impacts to such habitats. The County seeks to preserve, restore and perpetuate native wildlife and plant diversity by maintaining sufficient habitat."

Objectives

1. Maintain and enhance the quality wildlife habitat within the East of Aspen/ Independence Pass Planning Area.

Action Items

1. Support and implement the recommendations of the 1997 "Roaring Fork Biological Inventory."

2. Consider the adoption of land use regulations that include a broad perspective in terms of wildlife habitat, including the concept of “biodiversity,” which places greater importance on preserving a broad spectrum of plant and animal species as opposed to a few “indicator” species.
3. Incorporate any applicable findings and recommendations of the Roaring Fork River Watershed Biodiversity Initiative and the Roaring Fork Watershed Wetland Study into the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Master Plan when the study has been completed and the findings are available.
4. Encourage the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department to continue monitoring and analyzing potential impacts on wildlife and riparian habitat associated with the recreational activities and facilities within the Planning Area, particularly at the North Star Nature Preserve, to determine whether refinements to current use restrictions, or additional restrictions on use, should be considered in order to achieve the resource preservation and recreation management goals contained in the North Star Nature Preserve Management Plan (2020).

2.7 WILDFIRE

The following policy statements from the Pitkin County Policy Guidelines provide guidance regarding the County’s overall intent with the respect to wildfire protection and the provision of emergency services:

“We support coordinated and collaborative efforts between local, state and federal agencies to design and implement land use and forest management strategies to address the potential for wildfire, particularly at the wildland/urban interface, and to respond to a wildfire event.”

“The County seeks cooperation with emergency service agencies in establishing emergency access road standards that adequately address safety needs in the context of rural character. “

Development in natural hazard areas should be avoided. When avoidance is not possible, mitigation should be designed and implemented to minimize potential harm to life, safety, health, and property.

Objectives

1. Cooperate with the Pitkin County Community Development Department, the Aspen Fire Protection District, and other appropriate government agencies to establish and administer wildfire policies and programs to minimize the danger and destruction associated with wildfires within the East of Aspen/Independence Pass Planning Area.
2. Encourage Planning area residents to proactively engage in self-support measures to ensure their own safety in the event of wildfire.

Action Items

1. Consider modifying County land use and building regulations to require that retroactive "defensible space" standards be met by all existing residences when a building permit is sought for remodeling.
2. Establish and distribute a hand-out to all landowners containing a clear protocol for ditch burning and other controlled burns and providing a description of the process, contacts, and information necessary to obtain the required burn permit from the County.
3. Residents should ~~Work~~-work with Pitkin County, the Aspen Fire Protection District and the Colorado State Forest Service to develop a community evacuation plan to prepare for a wildfire event or other natural or man-made disaster that may occur.
4. Develop a strategy with Pitkin County, the Fire Protection District, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the U.S. Forest Service, to determine the best solution for resolving conflicting mitigation requirements when there are wildfire, as well as other environmental constraints, on a proposed development or remodel site.
5. Encourage all existing properties, Homeowners Associations, and subdivisions to seek wildfire risk assessments from the responsible and qualified agencies, and to implement and maintain home ignition zone landscaping and structure/site maintenance recommendations.
6. Support County Climate Change and Preparedness policies that address wildfire hazards and management including the following:
"Encourage coordinated and collaborative efforts between local, state and federal agencies to design and implement land use and forest management strategies to address the potential for wildfire, particularly at the wildland/urban interface, and to respond to a wildfire event."

2.8 SLOPES & FLOODING

Pitkin County Policy guidelines state the following relative to flooding:

“We support coordinated and collaborative efforts between local, state and federal agencies to design and implement land use and natural resource management strategies to address flood hazard and to respond to a flood event.”

“Development should not disturb the integrity of existing and natural drainage patterns. Land use and development activities that subject areas to increased potential for damage by flood, erosion or sedimentation, or increase the potential for water pollution are discouraged.”

Objectives

1. “Protect the integrity of existing natural drainage patterns. Land use and development activities that subject areas to increased potential for damage by flood, erosion or sedimentation, or increase the potential for water pollution are discouraged.”

Action Items

1. ~~Work with the USFS regarding management practices for the Warren Lakes area as it relates to Warren Creek.~~
21. Work with the Tagert Lake West neighborhood, CDOT and the USFS to establish best management practices ~~for the Warren Lakes area as it relates to Warren Creek.~~relative to Warren Creek.
32. Work with the US Forest Service to address the management of USFS lands above the Roaring Fork Valley to avoid potential impacts associated with erosion and flooding in the valley below.

SECTION 3 - INFRASTRUCTURE & ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

3.1 ROADS/TRAFFIC & SAFETY

Pitkin County Policy guidelines state the following relative to transportation and roads:

“The County encourages transportation programs, modes and land use patterns that minimize automobile congestion, promote safety and reduce sources of air pollution.”

“Where practical, the County seeks to retain existing unpaved roads as a reflection of our rural character. The County also seeks to preclude winter maintenance extending farther into remote areas of the County. The safety and rural character impacts likely from increased winter maintenance is avoidable and undesirable.”

“The County seeks cooperation with emergency service agencies in establishing emergency access road standards that adequately address safety needs in the context of rural character.”

“New and upgraded roadways should be designed, engineered, and constructed to minimize environmental and aesthetic damage and future maintenance costs consistent with public safety needs.”

“Development that causes significant road service level reductions is discouraged.”

“Roadway capacity improvements should integrate alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycles and transit, and pedestrian ways so as to add “people carrying” capacity to the roadway, not just vehicular capacity, whenever feasible.”

Highway 82

Objectives

1. Make safety improvements to Highway 82 for motorists and bicyclists relative to sharing the road.

Action Items

1. Pitkin County should work with CDOT to extend the paved shoulders for cyclists and to widen the pavement area, to improve safety, on the uphill

side of the highway where the road comes very close to the wetlands (in close proximity to mile marker 45).

Commented [TM2]: Is this segment of road still a problem, has it been improved since 2003?

2. Manage/formalize recreational parking used to access the North Star Preserve and Roaring Fork River from Highway 82 within the Planning Area.
3. The County should continue to work with CDOT to install/maintain emergency phones at strategic places on Independence Pass above the Winter Closure Gate.
4. Appropriate buffer strips should be preserved along federal, state and local roadways to protect public views, minimize safety concerns and environmental impacts, and to preserve corridors for future transportation facilities.

Lincoln Creek Road

Objectives

1. Maintain Lincoln Creek Road as a recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.

Action Items

1. Maintain the current "Limited Service Area Road" designation in the County's Road Maintenance and Management Plan which is consistent with the desire to maintain Lincoln Creek Road as a rural, recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.
2. Keep unpaved roads in their current condition with regular maintenance to eliminate washboards and other safety hazards but without further widening, straightening, or changing the type of surface (except where safety is an issue).

Smuggler Mountain Road

Objectives

1. Maintain Smuggler Mountain Road as a recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt Road

Action Items

1. Maintain the current "Limited Service Area Road" designation in the County's Road Maintenance and Management Plan which is consistent with the desire to maintain Smuggler Mountain Road as a rural, recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.
2. Any improvements to Smuggler Mountain Road will be subject to consistency with the 2003 Smuggler Mountain Road Settlement Agreement as long as that agreement is in effect.

Hunter Creek Toll Road

Objectives

1. Maintain Hunter Creek Toll Road as a recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.

Action Items

1. Maintain the current "Limited Service Area Road" designation in the County's Road Maintenance and Management Plan which is consistent with the desire to maintain ~~Lincoln~~-Hunter Creek Road as a rural, recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.
2. Honor the terms of the settlement agreement between the County, US Forest Service and the private property owners regarding maintenance and use of the Hunter Creek Toll Road.

Richmond Hill Road

Objectives

1. Maintain Richmond Hill Road as a recreational, rural, scenic road.

Action Items

1. Maintain the current "Limited Service Area Road" designation in the County's Road Maintenance and Management Plan which is consistent with the desire to maintain Richmond Hill Road as a rural, recreational, narrow, scenic, dirt road.

2. Adhere to the management of the road as approved in the 1999 “Richmond Ridge/ Little Annie Management Plan.”

Aspen Mountain Road

Objectives

1. Maintain Aspen Mountain Road as recreational access to the National Forest, acknowledging the summer and winter needs of the Aspen Mountain Ski Area and acknowledging the use of the road pursuant to the Aspen Mountain SKI-REC Master Plan, as approved by the County.

Action Items

1. Maintain the current “Low Service Area Road” designation in the County’s Road Maintenance and Management Plan which is consistent with the desire to maintain Aspen Mountain Road as a gravel recreational road that has low to limited traffic volumes and receives no winter, and limited summer, maintenance.

3.2 TRANSIT

The following County Land Use Policy Guideline exists regarding transit:

“The County encourages transportation programs, modes and land use patterns that minimize automobile congestion, promote safety and reduce sources of air pollution.”

Objectives

1. Support the current mass transit system and improvements that may increase its ability to provide continued, convenient service to the broadest possible ridership base and reduce automobile traffic and associated greenhouse gas emissions, while ensuring that the rural character within the Highway 82 corridor is preserved.

Action Items

1. Explore the need and economic feasibility of extending the current dial-a-ride service as far as Difficult Campground.
2. The City and the County, along with RFTA, should pursue the development of several parking spaces on the east edge of town adjacent to bus service in order to allow East of Aspen residents to use public transit and curtail additional cars coming into Aspen (without the need to extend the service further from town).

3.3 UTILITIES: WATER SERVICE & SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Water Service /Water Quality

While the City of Aspen Water Service Area extends into the western portion of the Planning Area, a majority of the residential development within the Planning Area relies on wells and septic systems.

Pitkin County Policy guidelines state the following relative to utilities:

“It is the policy of the County to regulate public and private utility extensions. Areas served by such extensions must be found suitable for development in accordance with the Pitkin County Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code.”

“Pitkin County generally does not support extensions of public utilities such as municipal water and sewer lines outside of the Urban Growth Boundaries.”

Objectives

1. Pursue all readily available means to guarantee the availability of clean, healthy drinking water to every residence in the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area while maintaining the current quality and quantity of surface and ground water.

Action Items

1. Enforce current Pitkin County Environmental Health Department regulations which require the issuance of an OWS permit prior to the sale of properties served by one or more OWS system(s) or prior to the issuance of a building

permit (where the permit valuation exceeds \$30,000) for a property already served by one or more OWT system(s).

2. Monitor wetlands and wells to determine the extent (if any) to which water quality has been impacted.

Sewage Disposal

The Aspen Consolidated Sanitation District (ACSD) provides sewer service to a few properties immediately adjacent to the City of Aspen within the Planning Area and to a handful of properties to the south of The Preserve. The remainder of the Planning Area relies on individual septic systems.

Pitkin County Land Use Policy Guidelines related to sewage treatment and disposal:

“Pitkin County generally does not support extensions of public utilities such as municipal water and sewer lines outside of the Urban Growth Boundaries.”

“Adequate sewage treatment facilities must be feasible and available to serve existing and new developments. Sewage treatment facilities must be maintained at a level that ensures water quality protection.”

Objectives

1. Encourage property owners within the Planning Area to manage wastewater disposal in a manner that protects groundwater and surface water quality.

Action Items

1. Monitor water quality in the Roaring Fork River and its tributaries and specifically monitor older septic systems within the planning area, especially in the Tagert Lake West NPA along the Roaring Fork River.
2. Modify runoff and/or erosion control regulations to the extent necessary to ensure that water quality meets state and local standards for health/safety and environmental quality.

3. Implement modifications to the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) regulations as necessary to ensure that water quality in streams and wells meets applicable health/safety and environmental quality standards.
4. Consider establishing incentives to encourage property owners with older OWT systems to upgrade or replace those systems.

3.4 OPEN SPACE/TRAILS/RECREATION/TOURISM

The following policies from the County Policy Guidelines provide some guidance regarding the County's overall intent with the respect to open space, trails, and recreation:

"It is the policy of the County to preserve the physical environment; to improve County-wide recreational and trail opportunities; to ensure citizens' rights of appropriate access to public lands on roads and trails historically open to the public; and to protect existing open space from urbanization and development in order to maintain quality of life and enjoyment of the environment."

"Ski Areas: Pitkin County favors expansion of alpine ski area terrain at the 4 existing mountains rather than creation of new ski areas due to the needs associated with base area development and transportation. Currently the 4 mountains have the capacity and variety to serve the skiing public with the base areas being located either in the heart of Aspen or Snowmass or along existing serviceable transit routes. Expansion of terrain may be acceptable only with strict consideration for maintaining healthy wildlife populations and habitat, and under circumstances that result in no degradation to roadless or wilderness areas. Coordination with the Forest Service and ski area proponents regarding any ski area development must consider both on and offsite impacts such as affordable housing, transportation, waterways, air quality and adjacent neighborhoods."

"Open Space and Trails Board: The County supports the Open Space and Trails Board in the acquisition maintenance and management of open space properties, for multiple purposes including recreational, wildlife, agricultural, scenic and access purposes; and in the acquisition, preservation, development, maintenance and management of trails for similar purposes. Parks, open space and public recreation facilities are encouraged throughout the County."

"Trails: Non-motorized transportation alternatives, such as trails for bicycles, horses, pedestrians and cross-country skiers are encouraged. The County supports preservation and enhancement of access to trails; and

development of bike and pedestrian ways that provide links between communities, residential and employment areas, commercial centers, recreational and open space areas, and educational facilities. Where motorized and non-motorized uses of trails are proposed or exist in common or in close proximity to one another, the County supports consideration of separate and distinct trails for each use. Efforts will be made to preserve existing and to secure new access points to public lands consistent with County and Federal plans and policies.”

Open Space

Objectives

1. Maintain and manage the locally owned open space through the use of open space management plans. As these plans are developed and later updated, input should be sought from the residents of the planning area.
2. Manage use of locally owned open space to minimize issues specific to associated parking, traffic and capacity to ensure compatibility with residential use in the Planning area.

Action Items

1. Participate with the Open Space and Trails Board in the process of reviewing new or updated open space management plans for all county-managed open space parcels within the Planning Area.
2. Implement approved Open Space Management Plans as may be periodically updated. Plans for open space management within the Planning area include but are not limited to the 2020 North Star Preserve Management Plan and the 2012 Smuggler Mountain Cooperative Plan.
3. Support collaborative efforts between local, state, and federal agencies in the development and updating of Resource Management Plans for public lands.
4. Rezone publicly owned parcels intended for conservation purposes to “Public” or “RS-G.”
5. Work with the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department to monitor and analyze potential impacts on wildlife habitat associated with the

recreational activities and facilities within the Planning Area to determine whether refinements to current use restrictions, or additional restrictions on use, should be considered in order to protect critical wildlife habitat.

6. Support U.S. Forest Service funding to manage existing campgrounds within the Planning area to address overuse and eliminate related natural resource damage.
7. Consider revisiting and revising the Little Annie/Richmond Ridge Plan as necessary; and/or if the Plan is found to still be current, work with the County, the USFS and user groups to devise successful strategies to implement the plan. [\(For Discussion.\)](#)

Trails

Objectives

1. Preserve existing trails and other recreational opportunities within the Planning Area and maintain the quality of the recreational experience.

Action Items

1. Maintain current parking facilities at trailheads in good condition.
2. Pitkin County, the USFS and backcountry user groups should work together to monitor use levels on existing backcountry roads and trails and consider measures to manage impacts to existing backcountry roads and trails, especially trailhead parking capacity and noise pollution associated with motorized vehicles such as dirt bikes and ATV's.
3. Maintain the current trail system and access to public lands through private lands, where it currently exists, unless it is determined, through an open study process conducted by the USFS, that a particular trail should be relocated or closed.
4. Where new trails are contemplated, work with the County and agencies, as appropriate, to conduct careful study of the location and use of such trails to ensure compatibility with the existing rural character of the Planning Area and to minimize impacts on nearby private properties and public roads.
 - a. Proposals for new trails should require review and approval by Pitkin County subject to comments by residents and property owners within the Planning Area and a finding of compatibility with the objectives and action items contained in this Master Plan.

Recreation & Tourism

Objectives

1. Manage commercial recreational use of publicly owned open space in such a way that it does not conflict with or curtail the enjoyment of the open space by other users.
2. Aspen Skiing Company operates Aspen Mountain Ski Area subject to a Special Use Permit issued and administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The Aspen Mountain Ski Area SKI-REC Master Plan, as approved by the County, governs development, uses and activities within the Aspen Mountain Ski Area within the SKI-REC zone district. Support continued maintenance and improvements at the Aspen Mountain Ski Area, which are consistent with the current approved Aspen Mountain Ski-Rec Master Plan, provided those improvements do not adversely impact the existing rural residential character within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area.

Action Items

1. Work with the Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Department to Implement the policies and management actions contained in the management plans for the open space areas within the Planning Area including the North Star, James Smith and Smuggler Mountain areas.
2. In the event that requests are made for changes to the status quo at the Aspen Mountain Ski Area, support the following direction:
 - Coordination with the US Forest Service and ski area proponents to ensure that ski area development consider both on and off site impacts such as affordable housing, transportation, waterways, air quality and impacts to adjacent neighborhoods.
3. Preclude development of new ski areas (as opposed to expansion of terrain within permit boundaries at existing ski areas.)
4. Coordinate with the Aspen Skiing Company and the Pitkin County Community Development Department to ensure that residents and property owners within the East of Aspen – Independence Pass Planning Area have ample opportunity to review and comment on any future revisions to the Aspen Mountain Ski-Rec Master Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Add discussion of future land use objectives and how they are achieved on the Future Land Use Map when the plan gets closer to adoption.

APPENDICIES

- A. East of Aspen-Independence Pass Existing Conditions Report
- B. Future Land Use Map (will be developed after adoption)
- C. Implementation Plan, Including Code Amendments (will be added after adoption)
- D. Add link to Smuggler Mountain Road Settlement Agreement
- E. Link to Pitkin County Weed Management Plan:
<https://pitkincounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/18557/Weed-Management-Plan-2019>